

Philosophy and the Birth of Latin America

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Philosophy affected the birth of Latin America in two ways. First it inspired the famous men who started the independence movements, which led to the definitive liberation from the Spanish yoke. Once the revolution was over, philosophy influenced the development of the legal and political systems that were created to organize the life of the new states.

The impact of philosophy during the revolution was less systematic than during the creation of legal and political systems, but it was just as influential. It was less systematic because the influence of philosophy varied from one country to another, but even taking these differences into account, it was present in all areas. In Mexico, for example, the impact of the ideas of the Encyclopaedists was fairly weak, and the revolution of independence resulted from a series of social, economic and cultural phenomena owing little to them.¹

In South America, the philosophical ideas of the Encyclopaedists had more impact. They had a crucial influence on the great Miranda and, through him, on Bolivar and Bello.² San Martin was equally influenced by them in a fundamental way. During his crossing of the Andes, at the time of the expedition to liberate the peoples of the Pacific coast, he carried a set of the *Encyclopaedia* on the back of a mule.³

However, this early influence was not as significant as that which was felt during the formation of the new nations. In this stage, at the end of which the Latin American nations were definitively founded, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen – an essential aspect of the French Revolution and a direct result of the Encyclopaedist philosophy – and the American constitution, also influenced by Encyclopaedist philosophy, were the foundation on which the constitutions of the new

countries were set up. This influence was felt over the whole juridical system. The Civil Codes had been influenced by the *Code Napoleon* which, in its turn, reflected the fundamental ideas of the *Encyclopaedia*.⁴

Although it would be inaccurate to state that the revolutions of independence and the formation of the South American nations were due exclusively to philosophical ideas, it is, nonetheless, indisputable that these ideas formed a basic element of the whole process. Without these ideas, independence (supposing it could have been achieved) and the very nature of the Latin American nations would have been quite different. It is for this reason that one can state that the birth of Latin America was profoundly linked to philosophical thought. The fact that this philosophical thought affected only the elite, while the masses were completely cut off from it, does not mean that the relationship did not exist. One cannot deny that the philosophy of the *Encyclopaedia* was crucial in unleashing the French Revolution (in addition to many other causes), and yet this philosophy had not reached the French masses either.

Philosophy As Culture and Philosophy As an Instrument of Liberation

It was the Encyclopaedist philosophy that exerted its influence over the enlightened minds of the period of independence and over the elaboration of the juridico-political systems of the new nations. But Encyclopaedist thought cannot be subsumed into a single philosophy. There was a great distance between the sensualism of Helvetius and the empiricism of Voltaire, between the healthy pedagogy of *Emile* and the arbitrary fantasy of *Jacques the Fatalist*. However, this enormous, diverse, and often inconsistent panorama to which one gives the generic name "Encyclopaedist philosophy" contains two fundamental constants shared, implicitly or explicitly, by the majority of the thinkers of this movement: an ethical ideal inspired by rationalism and the conviction that authentic philosophy could and should be used to liberate the oppressed through the transformation of society.

Without going too far into the details, it must be emphasized that, despite the official empiricism of the Encyclopaedists, when

one comes to explore their ultimate hypotheses in greater depth, one usually finds undeniably rationalist aspects, even in Rousseau and Diderot (Voltaire, perhaps, being the most rationalist of all).⁵

Reason leads us inevitably to the ideals of liberty and equality. But it also allows a destructive critique of politically oppressive regimes that oppose this ideal in an arbitrary and irrational manner. In this way, philosophy played a dual role. It determined the ideal society where liberty and equality and, as a consequence, justice, reign. It also attacked everything that, in human society, was opposed to the realization of this ideal. It was simultaneously a guide to human action and an instrument of liberation.

The same thing happened in Latin America as in Europe, but in a less widespread manner. In Europe, philosophy occupied a central position in the creation of culture. It influenced the origin and development of science, it had an impact on political circles, and it pointed to the creation of a free and just society as the most important goal of history. In this way, the Encyclopaedists themselves created a collectivist philosophy that was the continuation of a process that had matured with the ideas of Spinoza and Leibniz.⁶

For Kant, the progress of civilization consisted in society becoming more and more rational – that is to say, more and more just and free – and the march toward this ideal had to be guided by philosophy. Hegel proposed something similar, as did Marx later on – in a more direct and dramatic fashion. Finally, the central role of philosophical action was magisterially defended by Husserl, who not only considered that philosophy occupied a central position in European culture but who also deemed European culture philosophical.⁷

Nothing as grandiose as this can be found in Latin America. A culture cannot be really philosophical unless it has created some philosophy. In these countries, the Western culture (including philosophy) under whose sign the revolution was carried out was entirely imported. But even though philosophy did not determine the character of Latin American culture, it nonetheless intervened directly in the process that culminated in the formation of our nations. Through its means, society was thought of as an association of free and equal people; a radical critique of existing colonial society was made and the historical goal of constructing a rational and just society was established. The leading figures in nascent Latin American history saw philosophy as an

instrument of liberation. It allowed the forces that justified European domination to be undermined and it sketched out a model of society toward which free people should march. In this way, Latin America was born indissolubly tied to a philosophy of liberation.

Philosophy As an Obstacle

Philosophy had a positive influence on the historical movement that culminated in the birth of the new Latin American nations. But, as is often the case with History, this influence was paradoxical. If it was positive regarding the origin of our nations, it was negative regarding their subsequent existence, because the social model that arose from the type of philosophy used showed itself to be unrealizable. It was a purely rational model directly deduced from the supreme principles of liberty and equality, principles that were derived in their turn from Reason as the ultimate criterion of truth and morality. If all people are to be free and equal, it is necessary to forge a society whose institutions make possible the realization of this ideal. This is only possible in a democratically organized society. Power must emanate from the people, the unique sovereign is the general will, as Rousseau authoritatively asserted. In order to avoid abuses caused by the ambitions of individuals or groups, power has to be divided so that each of its means of expression can control the others. The executive branch must keep its actions within the framework of law, the judicial branch must be autonomous, the legislative branch – the supreme branch – must represent the will of the people. Parliaments should be chosen by popular vote. Through the realization of this model, citizens would live freely and in security in a world of justice and peace.

As with all creations of Reason, the proposed model was grandiose. In affirming that society should organize itself in accordance with its rules, no one seemed to doubt its viability. Those who opposed this model belonged to a group that had lost power after the separation from Spain. Only reactionaries, who defended special interests and privileges, could oppose the voice of Reason.

It was in accordance with this fine model proclaimed during the independence movement that the new nations began to be organized. At the same time, the foundation was laid for a re-

sounding historical failure, because the model was unrealizable. It was not just unrealizable in the sense that all rational models – for example, the perfect sphere – are unrealizable, but in a much more serious and dramatic sense. After all, even if the perfect sphere is unrealizable, human progress allows one to get closer and closer to it. The “unrealizability” of the model was not the result of human incapacity to achieve perfection, but of the impossibility of even approaching the goal that had been set. From the time that Latin American nations began to be formed, the consequences of the actions of politicians, lawyers, and thinkers were completely different from those expected in the model. Even worse, these results were not only different, they were opposite. The real mechanism regulating collective behavior was completely contrary to the model they were seeking. Certainly, constitutions had been promulgated with the three powers – the executive, the legislative, and the judicial – but in practice, the executive always dominated the other two. And in many cases, the tyrannical will of a single individual was the sole effective norm. Equality did not exist. The word lost almost all of its meaning in class societies that were as rigid as those of the colonial period. For long periods freedom disappeared, and when it occasionally seemed to be being reborn, it was for the benefit of privileged groups that dominated politics and were the masters of culture. The model of a rational society where people were to live freely and equally under the sign of justice, had led to a class society where people lived with oppression and unequally, under the sign of injustice.

Why was this so? The ideal model did not have to transform itself into its antithesis. The failure of the rational model of equality and justice did not arise from any intrinsic necessity. Rather, the reality to which the model had been applied did not lend itself to model-making. The rationalism of the precursors and of the great men was naïve – not in the sense that they believed one could come to know or modify reality by the power of thought, but because, for them, if a model was good, it could be realized in any type of society.

Once in power, Bolivar, thanks to his genius, had a premonition about what was going on. He came to the conclusion that the habits acquired throughout the colonial period made the formation of a just and democratic society extremely difficult. He realized that government had to be adapted to the nature and

character of the nation for which it had been created.⁸ But he, like all those who took part in the process of forming Latin American nations, believed that the education of the masses would allow this problem to be overcome. He did not realize that, given the existing conditions, the masses simply could not be educated.

In these countries, the great masses were isolated, exiled on their own land. They did not take part in the political, economic, and cultural life of the nation. The small groups that held power occupied a privileged situation. They were the masters not only of power but also of wealth and culture. In drawing up the constitution and, above all, the legal code to regulate the juridical life of the countries, they inevitably geared the whole system toward perpetuating their privileges. It is one thing to orientate political struggle according to a model; it is quite another to sacrifice one's interests in order to realize the model. Certainly, these constitutions and legal codes had a few bright aspects through which the ideal of a just society shone. But other aspects did nothing but sanction structures that suited the new dominant groups, largely made up of elements descended from the old colonial groups. The masses remained excluded from public life; they did not take part in the drafting of laws, nor were they at the heart of economic life. It was impossible for the governments to correspond, as Bolívar remarked, to the character of the nation for which they had been created.⁹ But neither Bolívar nor anyone else could envisage that the real people, the marginalized groups, could take part in the formation of the new nations.

Faced with disaster, the leaders, civilian as well as military, found it natural to exercise power in a way that answered only to their personal aims. If everything went badly, if there was nothing but corruption, if there had never been either real freedom or real justice, then why not grab power? In their proclamations, they stated their desire to reestablish freedom and justice and to combat corruption. But the atmosphere in which they had grown up prevented them from living authentically according to those values. Once the model had failed, once it was understood that it could not be put into practice and that society was nothing but an assemblage of injustices and oppressions, it was practically inevitable that power be thought of as private property.

However, the rationalist model that led to freedom, equality, and justice – that is to say, to democracy – was profoundly linked

to the birth of Latin America. The model did not disappear as an ideal, despite the failure to apply it. Throughout the general disaster which was the history of Latin America in the nineteenth century, it was always kept in mind. Even those who violated it most found themselves obliged to speak a language that used its terminology. Those who were clearly aware of the tragedy of the situation dreamed of transforming real society in order to make it correspond to the ideal. This emphasis on the model, however, helped to make its failure even more inevitable because those who defended it, or those who pretended to make use of power in order to realize it, did not understand that the model was unrealizable in the historic circumstances in which they lived. And thus Latin American history unfolded, between cynicism and idealism, led by an ideal that inevitably left it frustrated.

The Force of Culture

Passing from the world of politics to that of culture, the enormous discrepancy between the two was astonishing. Naturally, to some extent, Latin American culture reflected the political world, which, in its turn, reflected the deep social structure that rendered the model unrealizable. As such, Latin American culture helped to support the dominant groups and perpetuate oppressive social and political structures. But at the same time, this culture followed an autonomous path.

As a whole, one cannot compare Latin American culture to European or North American cultures. These cultures developed in parts of the world where social structures corresponded ever more closely to the democratic model. But bearing in mind the disastrous situation of Latin American nations, one cannot but be astonished at the difference between political and cultural life.

Gradually at first but then more quickly, Latin American culture developed in the direction of the humanist disciplines – folklore, music and popular dance, poetry, the novel, and painting, as well as law, history, and sociology. It is interesting to observe that, in colonial times, there were also important humanistic forms of cultural expression – which is not to say that there was no scientific culture. There were moments when, in theology and philosophy, colonial culture was almost at the same level as that of the colonizing metropolis. Espinoza Medrano, Briceño, Aguirre,

Alegre, and many others made significant contributions to these disciplines.

But the birth of the new nations produced a break in the philosophical tradition. Philosophy and theology continued to be taught in a few universities, but creativity disappeared. No individual devoted himself entirely to philosophy, but brilliant polymaths clearly showed the intellectual capabilities of Latin America and contributed to the foundation and development of a culture whose brilliant future was already visible. Figures like Bello (the most systematic and original of all), Alberdi, Lastarria, Bilbao, Hostos, and Marques published philosophical works, and some of them also taught philosophy.

Even though one could not yet speak of philosophical production in the sense in which it is understood today, one notices in the works of these authors an attitude profoundly characteristic of our thought: the vehement desire to assert our reality, the continuous concern, despite the difficulty, to discover a true Latin American identity. From the beginning, then, our thinkers endeavored to apply philosophy to reality and, above all, to create an authentic culture and original thought.¹⁰

Driving this concern for self-affirmation was, without any doubt, an inferiority complex. This complex was inherited from the colonial era. It arose because the social, cultural, and political reality of Latin America remained marginal in comparison with the metropolis.¹¹ Those who had been born in America felt that they were not like the Spanish and, inevitably, they tried to be like them. To facilitate independence from Spain, Latin America used ideas that did not come from the peninsula, but from a superior cultural reality, and it was inevitable that the users would aspire to resemble the creators. In addition to the inferiority complex with respect to Spain, there was a feeling of inferiority in comparison with the great European countries, from which had come the philosophical ideas of liberation, and later came an inferiority complex with respect to the United States, which, unlike Latin America, did not have any problems in making its institutions work. From all this there came, as early as the first generation of thinkers following independence, the aspiration to be capable of creating an authentic culture.¹²

This generation of thinkers was succeeded by others who practiced philosophy in basically the same way. From the first generation they adopted, above all, the desire to apply philosophy

to reality. This practical way of thinking about philosophy is, without doubt, a permanent feature of Latin American philosophical thought, the origin of which goes back to the very birth of the new nations. Because philosophy played such a fundamental role in this birth, Latin American thinkers had a tendency to see in it a way of acting on reality. When positivist ideas came to these countries, they were applied immediately to the analysis of social problems and were used in the elaboration of a new model that was adapted to the new circumstances. In Mexico, positivist ideas were utilized largely to justify the power of the nascent bourgeoisie. In Brazil, their influence was so strong that they came to be practiced as a religion, which, at the same time, served to justify the power of the dominant class. On the other hand, in countries like Peru and Argentina, positivism was used to support liberal positions.¹³

Something similar happened with Krausism. As a result of rather odd circumstances (the analysis of which would be too lengthy for this article), the Krause's ideas arrived in Latin America via Spanish thinkers (Sanz del Río, Giner de los Ríos) and had a great influence in the river Plate region. Its influence also could be found in other countries, like Colombia and Peru. Krausism, in its turn, was influenced to some extent by positivism (Vergara),¹⁴ and its principle manifestations, like those of positivism, were linked to politics, law, and education. Certain authors produced interesting work, but one cannot consider the representatives of Krausism to be real philosophers.

Despite the powerful influence of positivist ideas and of Krausism, one cannot yet speak of an organized philosophical movement with masters completely devoted to teaching philosophy and researchers capable of achieving systematic production. On the other hand, other aspects of Latin American culture were on the way to achieving remarkable heights. Toward the end of the century, Latin American literature produced the brilliant Rubén Darío and even began to influence Spain itself.

Nonetheless, cultural development, even though it was uneven, was never isolated. And even though philosophy did not follow the same rhythm as literature, law, and history, it did develop noticeably. Toward the end of the last century and in the early years of the twentieth century, there began to appear scholars who devoted most of their energies to philosophy and systematically took it as a subject of study. The generation of the Patriarchs had begun.

Philosophical Normality

Starting from the generation of the Patriarchs, the development of philosophy, and the development of culture in general, began to speed up in Latin America. While Latin America slid toward political and social failure and showed itself incapable of implementing the model of a free and just society pointed out by its precursors, not to mention the new economic and industrial models put forward by the positivists and inspired by the United States, Latin American culture continued to develop with increasing vigor. Besides literature and poetry, which, in the last years of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century, reached remarkable dimensions, the plastic arts began to develop. Mexican mural painting and native arts in general expressed a powerful originality. This rapid development of the arts in recent decades represents the vitality and independence of the spirit of Latin America. Expressionism, abstract painting, and surrealism acquired a specifically Latin American style. As for the Latin American novel, its power is such that it has not only influenced Spain but recently has come to be considered one of the finest examples of the genre in the world.

Philosophy has not benefited from the same impetus. By its nature, it requires a long maturation. Nonetheless, it developed more rapidly than might have been expected, given the difficulties that reigned in the milieu where it was practiced. The generation of Patriarchs was succeeded by what is known as the generation of Constructors. Its chief representatives began to put forward a more rigorous philosophy than their predecessors. Even better, they helped to create a more favorable atmosphere for the practice of philosophy. Thanks to their teaching, a new generation came to philosophical life with a full awareness of what philosophy ought to be. Even individuals who were not disciples of the Constructors benefited from the improvement of the situation. Directly or indirectly, the Constructors promoted the creation of university chairs in all the main philosophical subjects. Library holdings were extended, specialist reviews began to flourish, philosophical societies were created, and, perhaps most important of all, people began to take notice of the existence of a Latin American philosophical community. The inferiority complex that had fueled the desire to create an authentic culture also impelled the thinkers who, in a continuous state of tension

and effort, devoted themselves to building a Latin American philosophical community. Thus did Latin America enter into what Francisco Romero, the most important of the Constructors, called "philosophical normality."¹⁵

Philosophical normality described a situation in which philosophical activity could develop in conditions favorable to rigorous academic training. From then on, growth became more rapid. This awareness of the ability to philosophize has contributed powerfully to Latin America's liberation from its original inferiority complex. In growing, in producing a philosophy that is increasingly authentic, Latin America is convincing itself gradually that it is capable of belonging to the universal philosophical community. When a former colonial culture suffers from an inferiority complex, it begins to throw the complex off from the moment when it becomes capable of creative activity in areas that, until then, had been reserved for the metropolitan culture. This is the creative path that Latin American culture in all its aspects has followed, first in the domain of literature and art, and then in the humanities, the social sciences, and law. At the present time, the vast field of Latin American culture constitutes an impressive display of creative activity, in which philosophy makes a still small but noticeable contribution – like the exact sciences, which are still in their early stages.

But this vigorous cultural creativity is counterbalanced by persistent political, social, and economic failure. Even more than failure, one must speak of decadence. Although, in recent decades, Latin American culture (including philosophy) has progressed steadily, our social, political, and economic reality has moved further away from the original model, as if culture and social reality were affected by opposite trends.

The First Impact of Philosophy: The Demystification of the Model

Philosophy always reacts to reality in a more marked fashion than the other cognitive disciplines. It assumes a determined attitude in the face of history and social dynamism. Therefore, for certain Latin America currents of thought, philosophy must be a sounding board for social and political action by offering a

model and criticizing societies which prevent this model from being realized. One rediscovers in this mission the original plan that helped the development of Latin American nations. Indeed, when a nation is being born, the ideas and projects that presided over its formation can be compared to roots anchored deeply in the soil of history. With the passing of time, the ideas no longer correspond to the facts, and the projects may fail, but the original feelings that gave life to the nation endure in its roots. Despite the hazards of history, despite the frustrations and setbacks, original ideas and projects have a tendency to reappear and turn themselves into reality. In this way, the most important model of political action, which led to independence and the formation of our countries, manifests itself anew in Latin American philosophy as soon as it possesses the necessary intellectual resources to express the old ideal in relation to the new circumstances.

When the Latin American nations were being born, philosophy was a practical instrument, a means of giving direction to society. And so it remains for a number of Latin American philosophers. Despite the numerous differences that usually result from the historical process, the model put forward is the same: a society in which everyone is equal and free, and in which all citizens can realize themselves fully as human beings. What has changed, however, is the attitude of those who present this model. The historical experience of failure has made them lose the naiveté of their precursors. The philosophers who propose the original model know that it will not be able to function unless the political reality changes. That is why Latin America must develop a radical knowledge, approaching its reality not only scientifically but also philosophically. Latin America must know the society in which it philosophizes; its history; its social, political, cultural, and economic structures; and also the type of person produced by this history and these structures. It is necessary establish an authentic representation of identity in order to construct a new model to follow. It is of the utmost importance to study how philosophical ideas have been used to try to act on social reality and what mechanisms have led to the failure of the original model, as well as what has led to the failures of all those models people have wanted to introduce subsequently.

Thus, a philosophical movement is forming that sets out from the study of ideas, and from there engages in reflection on Latin American reality, on cultural identity, and on what it means to

be Latin American. On this basis, a radical critique of the type of society formed in Latin American history is being elaborated, and a new type of society is being proposed. To achieve this goal, it is essential to change the social, political, economic, and cultural structures that keep Latin Americans within the double bind of internal oppression and external dependence. Thus philosophy must fulfill a role of liberation. The members of this philosophical movement propose to use philosophy in the same way as those who helped forge these nations in the nineteenth century. But from now on, because of the new historical context in which they philosophize, liberation has a wider meaning: it is not only Latin American but a universal liberation. A liberation philosophy cannot be local, it cannot fall into the same error as European philosophy, which talked of freedom and democracy for Europe alone. If freedom is only the concern of a few people, oppression will not disappear from the face of the earth and will continue to threaten the freedom that has been achieved. In addition, recent history has been characterized by the universalizing of human relations. Information that was once specific and exclusive has become universal. Philosophy itself has increased its feeling of universality, which is why liberation philosophy extends to the whole of the Third World and constitutes a master plan for the total liberation of all the peoples of the earth.

Because of the enormous span of Latin American thought, each of the movements of which it is composed has a complex reality that does not obey a single theoretical plan. In this way, liberation philosophy takes on different forms, each having a different character and methodology. There is an existentialist school, an Hegelian school, a Marxist school, and even an analytical school of liberation philosophy. Certainly some of them lack conceptual rigor and clear principles, but this movement is important because it brings together the results of the social critique with the actual goal. As long as Latin American social structures remain as they are, it will be impossible to live in an egalitarian, free, and just society. Thus the structures must be changed, and the change will be revolutionary.

A whole strain of Latin American philosophy thus projects itself into the historical future. Basically, liberation philosophy helps to intensify awareness of the desired social model. At a time when the decadence of institutions and the hopeless poverty of the masses create an acute awareness of the need for change,

liberation philosophy helps clarify the methodology of social transformation and the model to which Latin America and the Third World aspire. This model is the modern version, universalized in the extreme, of the imaginary model derived from the rational ideal, in which equality and freedom are the supreme values of the collective and where justice is in complete harmony with freedom. This liberation philosophy is not only opposed to the groups – national and international – currently in power, but also to all types of oppression, no matter what the source. Certainly this is a philosophy of freedom, but Latin American philosophy does not only express the thirst of its own peoples for liberation. Rather, in conformity with a constant and growing process, this philosophy has developed in all directions.

The Second Impact of Philosophy: Naive Creation

The generation that succeeded the Constructors was committed to creating an authentic philosophy. This aim is the inevitable response to the marginal situation of Latin America: incapable, given its limitations, of resembling the creators of the “model” countries. The work of the Patriarchs and the Constructors opened the way to philosophical normality. At the beginning of World War II, a new generation, “the generation of 1940,” took on a demanding task: the elaboration of a philosophy that was not content to imitate the philosophy from Europe or the United States, but that would be able to confront problems and seek solutions by its own means.

Spurred on by this ideal, this historic challenge, the generation of 1940, much more numerous and better prepared technically than the preceding generation,¹⁶ has worked without respite up to the present day. On the way, new generations have been born who have amplified and enriched the movement. One finds among them the group of political philosophers that went beyond the naiveté of the original social model that was to be put into practice. In the vast panorama that extends from the River Plate to just south of the Rio Grande, one can distinguish many tendencies and positions. Of course, the philosophy that was being practiced was Western philosophy, but that did not prevent the search for originality. Because one started to philosophize from the basis of philosophical normality, one was fully aware that

originality did not consist of wanting to invent theories, but of thoroughly understanding the great philosophical problems and, then, attacking them with all available resources. If this confrontation was conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner, original contributions would result simply from serious work.

This was how Latin America began to philosophize. Certainly, because of the initial inferiority complex, it was the desire to make an authentic and original philosophy that motivated the generation of 1940. But in practice, this generation no longer looked at the goal but at the problem and the means to resolve it. Thanks to the seriousness of their work, the new Latin American thinkers saw an inspiring theoretical panorama unfold. In this way, an increasingly influential philosophy began to develop. As the various areas of philosophy were enriched, Latin America was liberated from self-doubt. It gradually went beyond its inferiority complex and ceased to think about the problem of authenticity, which had seemed so important at the beginning. The practice of philosophy soon became "authentic" to Latin America. The younger generations, whose work built on that of the generation of 1940, thus set out in a very different spirit. They no longer felt the anguished mission of making an authentic philosophy; they no longer doubted their own creative potential. Rather, urged on by a vocation similar to that which could exist in any part of the world, these younger generations simply devoted themselves to philosophy. Latin American philosophy thus freed from its doubt and anguish, to make important contributions to the field.

Although this development is particularly noticeable in political philosophy, the philosophy of science, and moral and juridical philosophy, this did not prevent serious work from being done in other areas. Contributions to political philosophy already have been discussed. In the philosophy of science, contributions have been numerous. In physics, the fundamental concepts of new theories have been tackled, in particular quantum theories, the realist interpretation of which has been deepened in an effort to show that what is called quantum logic (orthologic) is not a real logic but corresponds to operational aspects of quantum mechanics. In recent years, work has been done on the reinterpretation of theories of physics capable of going beyond the dogmatism of the "inherited concept" (Popper, Hempel, Braithwhite) and relativist historicism (Kuhn).

The development of logic is principally centered on heterodox logics. Paraconsistent logic can be thought of as a Latin American creation, as can antinomic logic.¹⁷ This type of logic has permitted the development of an inconsistent theory of sets which constitutes, according to certain non-Latin American logicians and mathematicians, a revolution in the development of modern mathematics. In the same way, the paraconsistent approach has allowed foundations to be laid for a dialectical logic, which is developing rapidly without links to any ideological predecessor. In the philosophy of logic, there are several schools in which historicism and rationalism predominate, the latter in a form quite distant from the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

In analytical philosophy, one finds interesting contributions to the theory of meaning in natural languages, as well as attempts to formulate fundamental concepts of the social sciences. Phenomenology and existentialism are also well developed. The phenomenological method has been applied to the general logic of knowledge and Heideggerian existentialism has been applied to various fields, among which should be mentioned the study of the problems created by technology in the modern world. The application of the analytical method to ethical problems began in Latin America and there exists today a strong and rapidly developing movement of ethical analysis.

As for the philosophy of law, it rests on a tradition which precedes World War II. It is one of the branches where the full vigor of Latin American philosophy is in evidence. Our research on the concept of the normative system could be termed *Bahnbrechend*. At the moment, studies of the concept of "derogation" have opened new theoretical horizons. Deontic logic is beginning to develop in Latin America at the same pace as in Europe, and there is a series of comprehensive works on formal systems of juridical deduction and the semantics applicable to those systems. Deontic logic and the logic of imperatives also have been used to develop a theory of action.

Self-affirmation: Model and Progress

Despite its limitations, this account has shown sufficiently that Latin American philosophy has undergone a remarkable development in the last few decades. Today, in addition to Latin

American poetry, the novel, the social sciences, law, and history, one also can speak of philosophy. In this sense, now the humanist culture of Latin America is developing continuously and harmoniously.

There are many who think that the practice of philosophy has no meaning in a world plunged into poverty, dependent on outside centers of power, with no solution in sight. The only thing that has any meaning, they state, is revolution, a complete change of the existing system.

Latin Americans, however, believe the complete opposite. Certainly, Latin America can put up with its situation no longer, and it is due for major political, economic, and social changes in the near future. Precisely for this reason it is urgent now more than ever to have clear models toward which revolutionary action can turn – models like those proposed by the majority of liberation philosophers, in which social justice complements individual freedom.

But this is not the only reason. The culture that has been forged since the beginning of Latin American independence to the present day is not a luxury. On the contrary, it is the expression of creative energy. Despite the difficulties, despite the poverty and misery, Latin America has succeeded in creating a world in which the spirit can soar. The humanist culture that has been sketched here in broad terms is not the futile game of an oligarchy but the formidable self-expression of a people.

Some people make an exception for political philosophy, which forms part of the pervasive protest expressed today in Latin American literature and, for the most part, in the social sciences. But, for them, pure philosophy make sense only in the developed countries. They do not realize that philosophy has come to constitute a large part of Latin American identity. If Latin America gave up philosophy to the developed countries, soon its inferiority complex would return. If Latin America must carry out changes in society, it must do so without feeling inferior to those who occupy the centers of power. The more creative Latin America becomes in all cultural fields, the easier it will be to realize its proposed social model because it will have more confidence in its destiny. For this purpose, the practice of philosophy in Latin America is of the utmost importance. Thanks to it, Latin America will be able to forge a model of society that will allow its people to realize themselves fully as human beings. For Latin America,

philosophy – whether political or theoretical – is one of the most important contributions to the process of self-affirmation, on which the future depends.

Notes

1. On this particular point, see Villoro 1951; 1967. And yet, one must not think that Encyclopaedist ideas were totally absent from the Mexican revolutionary process. At the same time that the rebellion of Morelos was in full swing, in Spain the liberal revolution of the Cortes of Cadiz occurred. The latter was inspired by the Encyclopaedist philosophy and had a profound influence on Mexico. Without this influence, one cannot understand Servando Teresa de Mier, who played such an important role in the process of Mexican independence.
2. On the influence of Miranda on Bolívar and Bello, see Salcedo Bastardo, *La Casa de Miranda en Londres*. As an example of the influence of the Encyclopaedist ideas on Bolívar, we can quote the following paragraph taken from a letter that he wrote to General Santander (based then in Arequipa) on 20 May 1825: “Admittedly, I did not study the philosophy of Aristotle nor did I study the codes of crime and error, but there is a strong possibility that Mister De Mollien has not studied, as much as I have done, Locke, Condillac, Buffon, d’Alembert, Helvetius, Montesquieu, Mably, Filangieri, Lalande, Rousseau, Voltaire, Rollin, Berthot and the Classics of Antiquity.”
3. This detail was given to the author by Gregorio Weinberg.
4. It is commonly said that the Napoleonic code reflects the bourgeois ideology that dominated the French Revolution. This is certainly true, but it is also true that it reflects certain philosophical ideas that deal with the condition of class, which corresponds to the character of the Encyclopaedist philosophy itself. One example is the idea that the life of society is governed by laws that must be obeyed by all the members of the community, including those in power.
5. In order to convince oneself that Rousseau had rationalist ideas, one only has to read *Le Contrat social* and notice that he uses the word “reason” when he wants to lay the foundations for the principles of political action. As for Diderot, what he says in “Suite d’un entretien entre M. d’Alembert et M. Diderot” and in “Entre-

tiens d'un père avec ses enfants" leaves no doubt about the basis of his philosophy (Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau et autres dialogues philosophiques*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972: 166, 173, 174, 269.) Voltaire rejects the thesis of innate ideas but constantly refers to reason, clearly presupposing the existence of a faculty on which scientific knowledge, and even moral knowledge, are founded, and using principles of universal and necessary validity. Despite a language that, at first, may seem empirical, one cannot doubt that it is profoundly and authentically rationalist – not in the sense of the classical naiveté, which considers it possible to know reality through thought alone, but in the sense that rational principles, valid for all men, are necessary in order to have access to knowledge. Voltaire's rationalism appears in many of his works, in particular in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (see, for instance, the articles on "Certitude" [Certainty], "Égalité" [Equality], and "Justice" [Justice]), in his *Traité de Métaphysique*, and in *La Philosophie de Newton* (in these works, he supports a determinism that is totally incompatible with true empiricism).

6. This process comes from a long way back, from the Renaissance and even from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when Medieval thinkers such as William of Occam, Jean de Paris, and Marsilius of Padua began to attack traditional powers.
7. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie*, as well as *Erste Philosophie*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954 and 1956.
8. Miguel Acosta Saignes, *Antología de Simón Bolívar, discursos de Bogotá y de Angostura*, Mexico: U.N.A.M., 1981.
9. The situation described applies to the Andean countries, Central America, and Mexico. Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay are in a different situation. The situation in Paraguay and is more similar to the former group than to the latter. But despite their different structure, the countries of the river Plate saw the model fail just as completely. (Uruguay is the only South American country that has seemed to approach the democratic model at certain periods in its history, but so slightly that, on the whole, one can say that it is a failure.) This can be explained as follows: the nations of the river Plate are made up of large contingents of immigrants, uprooted masses facing the oligarchy, which dominates the political, economic, and cultural life of the country. The dominant group does not feel any affinities with the multitudes of immigrants, who do not have a clear awareness of the model since they did not live through the history that produced it. As a result, neither the privileged minority nor the immigrant majority has a clear idea of the democratic model, of the equality and justice that should govern

the life of society. This is the reason why, even in these countries, power is regarded as personal property. It is entirely different in the United States, where, on their arrival, the immigrants found institutions that operated democratically, and, therefore, they could adapt to them easily. In the countries of the river Plate, immigrants found something that did not work and they could not have had a clear view of how to improve the situation. Chile is in between the Andean countries – with their ancient cultures – and the countries of the river Plate. Like Uruguay, it has succeeded, on occasions and to a certain extent, in getting closer to the democratic model, but the collapse of the system, in recent years, is the result of complex causes that would take too long to analyze here.

10. What Jean-Baptiste Alberdi says on this subject is revealing: "Our fathers gave us material independence but it is up to us to conquer a proper form of civilization – to conquer the American spirit. American philosophy, American sociability are many worlds which we have to conquer" (Jorge Mayer, *El pensamiento vivo de Alberdi*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1983: 34. In a less fiery but equally explicit way, Andrés Bello expresses similar ideas (see, for example, Andrés Bello, "Las repúblicas hispano-americanas – Autonomía cultural –" *Latino-américa, Cuadernos de cultura latinoamericana*, Mexico: U.N.A.M., 1978).
11. In *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*, Buenos Aires/Mexico: Espasa Calpe, 1952, Samuel Ramos makes some interesting remarks about the feeling of inferiority of the Mexican people. His theses on this theme can be generalized, *mutatis mutandis*, to the whole of Latin America.
12. Although the case of Brazil is different from that of the Hispano-American countries (Brazil was an empire before becoming independent in 1884), one generally can say that one also finds an inferiority complex there, not vis-à-vis Portugal, but vis-à-vis large European countries and the United States.
13. On the influence of positivism in Hispanic America, see Leopoldo Zea, *Dos etapas del pensamiento en Hispanoamérica*, Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1949.
14. On Krausism in our countries, see Arturo Ardao, *Espritualismo y positivismo en el Uruguay*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1950; Arturo Andrés Roig, *Los krausistas argentinos*, Puebla: Editorial José M. Cajica Jr., S.A., 1969. See also the article "Krausismo" in the *Diccionario de Filosofía* by José Ferrater Mora.
15. On the historico-philosophical process that leads from the Patriarchs to the Builders and from the latter to the generation of authentic philosophy, see Francisco Miró Quesada, *Despertar y proyecto del filosofar latinoamericano*, Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973.

16. This does not mean that this new generation is more able or more intelligent than previous ones, but simply that it is better prepared, thanks to the generations that opened the way to make this better preparation possible.
17. Paraconsistent logic was created in Poland a few years before it appeared in Latin America, but in Brazil, it was discovered independently, and developed in a much more systematic and profound fashion.

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