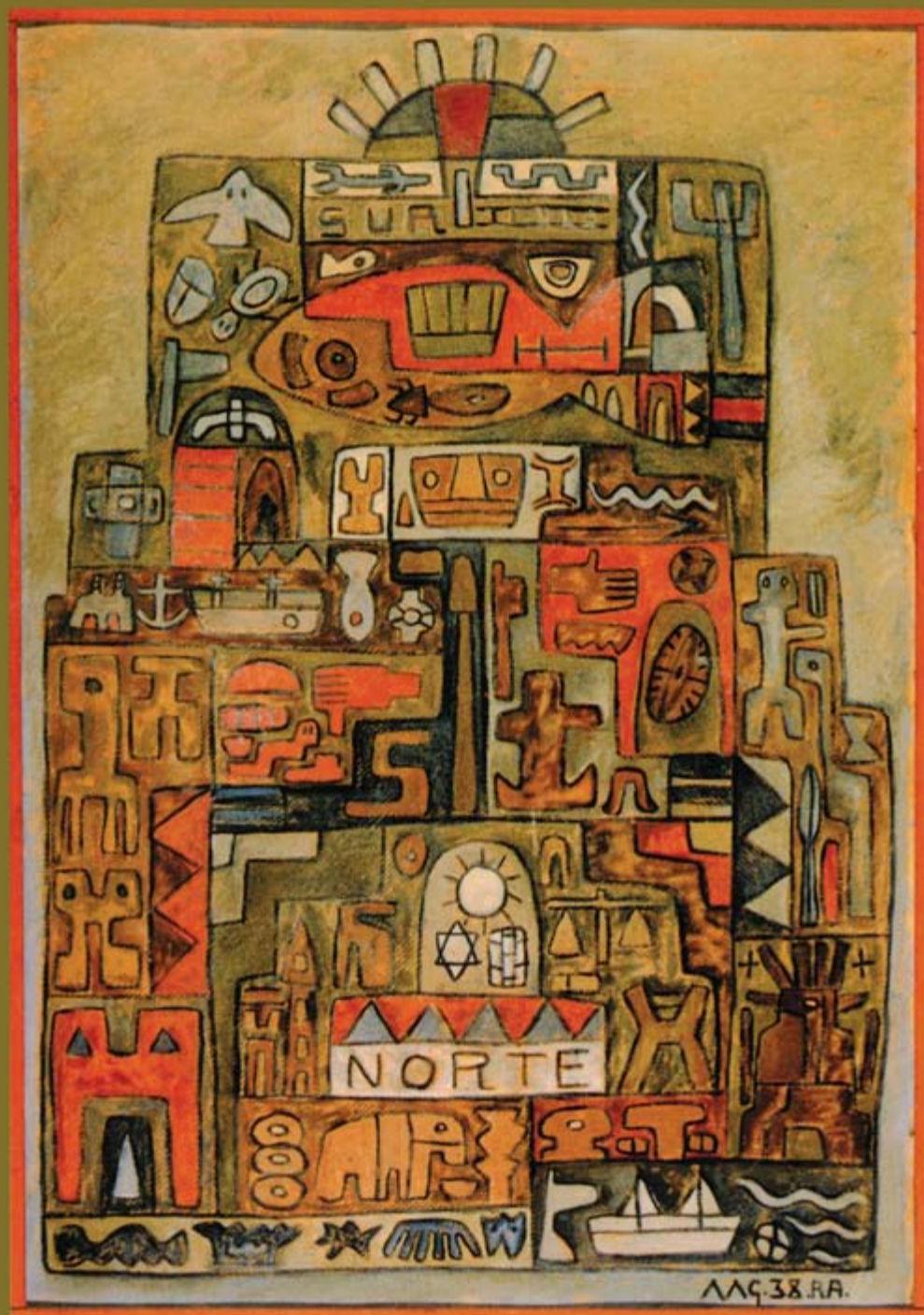


The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader

EDITED BY ANA DEL SARTO, ALICIA RÍOS, AND ABRIL TRIGO



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Cultural Studies Reader

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Edited by Ana Del Sarto, Alicia Ríos, and Abril Trigo

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ABRIL TRIGO

General Introduction

The main purpose of this reader is to provide a comprehensive view, documented through established texts and authors, of the specific problems, topics, and methodologies that characterize Latin American cultural studies vis-à-vis British and U.S. cultural studies. The reader, which includes essays by many of the most prominent intellectuals from both Latin America and abroad who specialize in this field, aims to provide scholars and students from all the disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences with a condensed but methodical and exhaustive compilation, but also to map out, from a critical perspective, the concrete sociohistorical and geopolitical circumstances as well as the specific problems and relevant polemics that make up the field in dialogue and in contest with other theoretical and critical discourses. Given its goal, the book's two axial hypotheses are first, that Latin American cultural studies are a disputed field in a global scenario, which cannot be fully understood or further advanced without considering its historical grounding in Latin American sociocultural processes, and second, that despite common interpretations, Latin American cultural studies are not just the product of an epistemological break, postmodern or otherwise, but also the result of specific historical continuities. Thus, through the introduction of selected readings, the book traces and displays the genealogical lines and epistemological crossroads that mark the sociohistorical and geocultural specificity of Latin American cultural studies by signaling its peculiar aesthetic, institutional, political, and cultural problematics, its diverse methodologies, and its historical antecedents, precursors, and founders, always in dialogue with a multiplicity of external influences. In order to offer different possible paths of reading amid the synchronic and diachronic tensions, conflicts, and transformations, as well as the overlapping critical trends and heterogeneous socio-

cultural realities that make up the specificity of Latin American cultural studies, the selected texts are introduced along with a map that charts the cognitive constellations, thematic networks, critical interventions, ideological fluxes, and chronological developments, as well as the position that every author in this book has in the development of the field, thus allowing the reader to choose among different routes and invent new ones.

The selection, organization, and introduction of a representative corpus of texts—an anthology, a collection, a compendium of any sort—is always a difficult task. To decide which texts and authors will be included is an agonizing process; to decide which ones will be excluded is even worse. In that sense, no definitive anthology is possible, and this reader does not intend to be the culmination of a field full of contradictions and divergent methodological, epistemological, and hermeneutic tendencies, as our own introductions clearly demonstrate. On the contrary, it has to be read as an open work, one that is in the process of becoming. However, a few words about the criteria of selection are in order. Many people would disagree with our selection, with the inclusion of certain authors or texts and the exclusion of others; many more would ask themselves why certain authors are included in one section instead of another; others might demand a better representation for women, gays, and ethnic groups, or a more nuanced balance between different disciplines or between authors from Latin America and abroad. Furthermore, some people would complain about the absence of Latino critics, but in fact, despite its many obvious connections with Latin American cultural studies, Latino cultural studies could be understood as a separate field with a different set of problems, methodologies, and intellectual traditions. As a matter of fact, the four sections in which we have organized the anthology respond to the chronological impact of certain authors or texts upon the formation and development of the field, and should not be understood as hierarchical categories. The absence of an author from any section does not imply any sort of negative judgment on her or his work. Nevertheless, after the exhausting consideration of several, sometimes opposite criteria of selection and methodological strategies, we have come up with a list of texts and authors that is not only representative of the current status of the field but, more importantly, also provides an account of its historical formation, its most outstanding ideological and methodological trends, and its main thematic axes and theoretical controversies. Therefore, we have put together a selection of texts that, for the most part, have had a significant role in the development of the field or represent a significant contribution to its current status.

An Operational Definition of Latin American Cultural Studies

What is in a name? The name is of no importance and, nevertheless, we are not so disingenuous as to believe that names are value free, empty signifiers, because it is too well known that every name is charged, ineluctably, with sedimentations of meanings linked to concrete historical foundations and institutions of power. Partially at least, to name is to possess. So, why are we including under the rubric of Latin American cultural studies so many diverse practices, which are usually assessed by their own practitioners under differing rubrics? Given the fierce resistance to the invasion of “cultural studies” from so many camps, particularly in Latin America, we could be accused of academic opportunism, of trying to capitalize on the current popularity of “cultural studies” in the U.S. academy. Or we could be accused of miscalculation. Why publish a Latin American cultural studies reader, in English, precisely when both U.S. and Latin American cultural studies have been so harshly criticized for having become institutional gears for the global control of knowledge? Should we not adopt another rubric, or adapt one of the many Latin American historical variants? Our decision is a strategic one. We do not accept the consideration of “cultural studies” as a universal trademark; we cannot accept the historical precedence or the epistemological preeminence of any particular definition of “cultural studies,” or believe it is politically prudent to cede the privilege, not of a rubric, but of the practices that that rubric names. We vindicate the specific political trajectory and the epistemological space of Latin American cultural studies, not as a branch of some universal “cultural studies” or as a supplement of British or U.S. cultural studies, but as a full-fledged field of inquiry that has its own historical problematics and trajectories. By way of summary, but with no pretense of proposing a definitive or prescriptive definition, we outline the axial features of our working interpretation of Latin American cultural studies.

Latin American cultural studies constitute a field of inquiry historically configured from the Latin American critical tradition and in constant, sometimes conflictive dialogue with Western schools of thought, such as French structuralist, poststructuralist, and postmodernist linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology of culture; German Frankfurt school and reception theory; semiotics and feminisms; and more recently, British and U.S. cultural studies. The main objects of inquiry of Latin American cultural studies are the symbolic production and living experiences of social reality in Latin America. In a word, what can

be read as a cultural text, what carries a sociohistorical symbolic meaning and is intertwined with various discursive formations, could become a legitimate object of inquiry, from art and literature, to sports and media, to social lifestyles, beliefs, and feelings. Therefore, Latin American cultural studies produce their own objects of study in the process of investigation. This means that cultural studies cannot be defined exclusively by their topics of research or by any particular methodological approach, which they share with several disciplines, but instead by the epistemological construction of those topics. Precisely in this operation, which has a cognitive (heuristic, hermeneutical, explicative, analytical) and practical (prospective, critical, strategic, synthetic) value, lies their strongly political thrust. In this sense, Latin American cultural studies focus on the analysis of institutions, experiences, and symbolic production as intricately connected to social, political, and material relations, relations to which these elements in turn contribute. Consequently, cultures can be defined as historically and geographically overdetermined symbolic and performative institutions and lifestyles specific to concrete social formations, which develop under particular modes of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and artifacts with symbolic value. *The cultural* is perhaps a better term to capture the kaleidoscopic nature of our object of study than *culture*, which generally implies some degree of reification. Thus, *the cultural* can be conceptualized as a historically overdetermined field of struggle for the symbolic and performative production, reproduction, and contestation of social reality and political hegemony, through which collective identities evolve. As such, the cultural can be considered Latin American cultural studies' privileged field of inquiry inasmuch as it is reciprocally produced by and a producer of what is experienced at the social and the political spheres. The sociohistorical overdetermination of the cultural guarantees its inextricable connection to the political. A cultural text is always part of a wider and more complex symbolic system, a field of struggle for the symbolic reproduction of social reality that is ultimately elucidated at the political sphere. Upon this operational definition, we can summarize the central tenets of our hypotheses.

SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

Latin American cultural studies are a disputed field in a global scenario, which means that they must necessarily be read against the historical background of Latin American socioeconomic and geocultural enmeshment in worldwide affairs and external influences. Just as Latin American cultural phenomena cannot be fully explicated as either ex-

clusively endogenous or exogenous processes, Latin American cultural studies cannot be fully grasped without considering their relation to British and U.S. cultural studies. This requires a dually contextual bifocal hermeneutics, capable of interpreting the text against the sociohistorical milieu in which it originated, and simultaneously against the sociohistorical milieu in which the subject's own interpretation is being produced. This critical methodology, by pitting historically set meanings and values against each other and situating the subject in the actual flux of history, prevents the entrapment of contingency politics—merely empirical and conjunctural, like identity politics—and guarantees the grasping of the contingent in comprehensive social and geopolitical formations.

RELATIONSHIP WITH BRITISH AND U.S. CULTURAL STUDIES

Latin American cultural studies did not originate in British cultural studies or in Western postmodern theories. Well before British cultural studies and postmodern writers reached Latin America, and well before British cultural studies were coined in Britain and postmodernism was born, many Latin American intellectuals were already doing some sort of cultural studies. Similarly, the genealogy of Latin American cultural studies is manifold and eclectic, and does not relate directly and solely to poststructural and postmodernist theories. They are not an offshoot of U.S. cultural studies either, which they actually antecede. Instead, they are another locally and historically grounded practice of that abstraction called “cultural studies,” as, for instance, British, U.S., and Australian cultural studies are. However, the consolidation of Latin American cultural studies in the 1980s and 1990s coincided with a dramatic turn, inextricably connected to the formation of a global theoretical marketplace, from the long-lasting influence of European modern values, theories, and thinkers (particularly from France and Germany) to Anglo-American postindustrial and postmodern academic hegemony, a phenomenon further dramatized by the large number of Latin American intellectual migrants.

SOCIOHISTORICAL CONTINUITIES

Latin American cultural studies are not just the product of an epistemological break, postmodern or otherwise, but the result of specific sociohistorical continuities in the Latin American political and cultural milieus, despite the fact that some celebrities in Latin American cultural studies trace their roots directly to European schools of thought while circumventing the opulent Latin American critical tradition. Néstor

García Canclini, arguably the most internationally emblematic representative of the field, and Beatriz Sarlo, a Latin American cultural studies scholar *malgré-lui*, rarely credit any Latin American cultural thinker beyond their own circles. This silencing is somewhat contradicted when García Canclini claims that he “became involved in cultural studies before [he] realized this is what it was called,” or when Sarlo says that she “thought [she] was doing the history of ideas” (García Canclini 1996, 84; Sarlo 1997a, 87). Obviously, if prior to becoming acquainted with cultural studies as such, they were already practicing them, it is because the field’s issues and methodologies predate it as such. Both Sarlo, a literary critic, and García Canclini, a cultural anthropologist, were working in fields already permeated by theoretical, methodological, and ideological controversies that constitute pivotal issues within Latin American cultural studies.

According to Julio Ramos, a literary critic who is concerned with the discursive, disciplinary, and institutional genealogy of national literatures, and with the central role of cultural policies in the consolidation of nation-states and their national imaginaries, Latin American cultural studies deal primarily with the emergence or the survival of ethnic identities, diasporic subjects, and subaltern lores, topics that nurture an epistemology at the limits of traditional disciplinary boundaries. These topics reflect (upon) the intensification of conflicts in heterogeneous social formations, such as the border culture of U.S. Latinos and the uneven modernity of Latin America throughout its history. The difference between current Latin American cultural studies and traditional Latin American thought is that the latter bet on the integrative capability of national literatures and art, while the former questions them as apparatuses of power. The fact remains, however, that not only the topics of inquiry, but most importantly the institutions and practices of knowledge in Latin America have always been “heterogeneous, irreducible to the principles of autonomy which limited the disciplines in the United States or France, for instance.” Latin American cultural thinkers since the early nineteenth century have “worked, precisely in the interstitial site of the essay, with transdisciplinary devices and ways of knowledge” (Ramos 1996, 36). They are, in the truest sense, the early precursors of Latin American cultural studies.

SOCIOPOLITICAL FRACTURES

Latin American cultural studies also originated as a hermeneutical and critical response to the economic, social, political, and cultural transformations of Latin American countries and societies under the impact of

transnational finance capitalism and the globalization of culture experienced since the early 1970s. The crushing of democratic popular movements and the installation of repressive regimes paved the way for the neoliberal dismantling of local industries and social legislation, the privatization of state enterprises, the deregulation of labor and speculative capital, the twenty-fold increase of national debts, and the overall immersion in global capitalism and transnational mass culture.

Has the national question been superseded by globalization? Do new social movements and the emergence of previously suppressed identities replace national imaginaries? Is civil society outside, above, or against the nation-state? Does the deterritorialization of capital deterritorialize old territorial allegiances? Two axes intersect here. On one hand, the problematic of the nation-state and its articulation to the global markets, which leads to the core issues of citizenship and consumption, identities and the subject; on the other hand, the problematic of modernity, with the subsequent impact of the postmodern and the postnational, globalization and its articulation to the local and the national, and the passage from an international sphere to transnational networks.

The politics of the 1960s were guided (and many times dogmatically misguided) by the premise that the main contradictions of the times were *bourgeoisie versus proletariat* and *imperialism versus nation*. Such contradictions subsumed every single sociopolitical conflict and allowed for the formation of popular national blocs in order to carry out the pending national-democratic and social revolutions. Dependency theory, pedagogy of the oppressed, and theology of liberation, among the most important critical paradigms to emerge from Latin America in that period, directly nurtured and/or responded to the said premise. Later, imperialism and the nation, the main characters in this drama, faded from the scene, alongside the mere concept of social class. Imperialism, with the end of a bipolar world, the advent of flexible postindustrial capitalism, and the dispersal of its centers, lost its currency. If it is no longer possible to think in terms of modern economic and cultural imperialism, how can the peoples of the periphery name these postmodern, apparently de-centered, transnational centers of power? How can they devise liberating political strategies without being able to name this imperial postmodern, this flexible, ubiquitous, omnivorous regime? Correlatively, how can these peoples name themselves, that is, create themselves as agents of their own destiny? The national question is still a capital issue in Latin America, alongside neocolonialism, the popular, modernity, and modernization. So is dependency theory, a vernacular form of post-Marxism—not to be confused with other forms of post-Marxism, which proclaim the

demise of Marxist thought—and anticolonialism—not to be confused with postcolonial studies, which assume the demise of anticolonial struggles—whose main objectives of economic justice, popular democracy, and cultural emancipation are still unfulfilled.

This is the reason why the need to insist upon the political is medullary to any project within Latin American cultural studies. As a matter of fact, Latin American intellectuals have always been intricately linked to politics and the political, both in theory and practice. But since politics has become old-fashioned and reading culture in political terms has become *à la mode*, more than ever the status of the political needs to be elucidated politically (Jameson 1990a, 44). What is the articulation between culture and politics, or better yet, between the cultural and the political? The interpretation of cultures in political terms should not end up depoliticizing politics. On the contrary, a more rigorous discernment of the mutually overdetermined status of the political and the cultural should allow for a deeper and renewed politicization of both politics and cultures on the understanding that they still constitute two discernible—although never discrete or autonomous—spheres of social action. Culture is overdetermined by the political as politics is overdetermined by the cultural, but yet there is a specifically political praxis as well as a specifically cultural one. And here is where utopia comes in, because if utopia is basically a necessarily evasive horizon, it needs to be permanently reinscribed in our critical practice in the same way politics has always been inscribed in cultural studies as a tension between the intellectual and the academic, desire and knowledge (Hall 1980, 17). As Jameson has said, utopia must be named (1990a, 51), and this utopian will, renovated as practice and not just as desire, is what recreates the long tradition of Latin American thought that resonates in the intellectual adventure of Latin American cultural studies.

LATIN AMERICAN UNDISCIPLINED THOUGHT

It has become sort of commonsensical to affirm that the most characteristic feature of Latin American cultural studies is their multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, or transdisciplinary methodology, and some of their most distinguished practitioners assume this decidedly. On one hand, John Beverley, speaking from the strong U.S. academic disciplinary tradition, stresses that “the point of cultural studies was not so much to create a dialogue between disciplines as to challenge the integrity of disciplinary boundaries *per se*” (1993, 20). Néstor García Canclini’s position, on the other hand, is cautiously nuanced. Although he applauds cultural studies’ interdisciplinary methodology, he warns that “it must not be-

come a substitute for the different disciplines [which] should become involved in the study of culture, inform one another, interact, and make their respective boundaries as porous as possible. But from the pedagogic point of view, it seems to me that at university level the differences between disciplines should be kept" (1996, 86). While Beverley celebrates transgression, García Canclini recommends a complementary balance between the disciplined pedagogic moment and the ulterior multidisciplinary professional practice. But the core of the matter is that multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinarity are deeply engrained in Latin American writing, in the form of an essayist thrust that evolves from the nineteenth-century polygraph intellectual (the lawyer by profession who was also a poet, a journalist, an ideologue, a politician, a statesman). It is precisely that polygraphic practice—very close indeed to the kind of contingent, impure, deprogrammed "border text" proposed by Nelly Richard, quoting exclusively European poststructuralist writers, as paradigmatic of "cultural criticism" (1998a)—which has always already traversed discursive formations, confused social spheres, and contaminated the disciplines even before their academic institutional inception at the beginning of this century. For this reason, Latin American cultural studies cannot be defined either by its multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinary methodology, an issue which, as Neil Larsen correctly argues, is not "a serious issue any more" (Larsen 1998, 247). Moreover, as Walter D. Mignolo writes, "One could say that there is a style of intellectual production, in and from the Third World, which consists of a certain undisciplinarity. . . . It is not essentialism that explains this: it is rather the history of colonialism and the game of power and cultural scholarship in the history of the colonial countries and in the history of the colonies" (Mignolo 1998a, 112). In this sense, the undisciplined character of Latin American critical thinking would be a byproduct of the historical unfolding of colonialism in its various forms, not merely as its rhetorical and stylistic inadvertent syndrome, but also as a methodological stratagem and an epistemological tactic dependent upon the uneven development of the modern relations of cultural production.

EPISTEMIC SHIFTS

Latin American cultural studies are also the aftermath of the epistemic shifts experienced by several scientific disciplines and discursive formations. In that manner, they are the locus where human and social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, historiography, communications, and literary criticism, converge around a new conception of the cultural (as a) field of struggle that began to take shape in the 1960s and

1970s. A few centers of literary research, such as the Centro Rómulo Gallegos, in Caracas, or the Institute for the Study of Ideologies and Literatures, at the University of Minnesota, and influential cultural or political journals, such as the *Revista de Casa de las Américas*, published in Havana, or *Marcha*, published in Montevideo, had a prominent role in this process. A case in point is Angel Rama's critical, methodological, ideological, and political confrontation in the 1960s with Emir Rodríguez Monegal. As Rama summarizes this intense period, Rodríguez Monegal, who practiced an extremely elegant brand of New Criticism, played an important role in disseminating Latin American literature worldwide "from the restricted appreciation of literature by a 'pure literati.'" However, says Rama, "I had to reinsert literature into a general structure of culture, which inevitably led me to its grounding in the historical, and to work with sociological methods capable of holistic constructions, reconverting criticism to the process of letters and committing it to social demands and the Latin American community." And he adds, defining in unmistakable terms the paradigm shift: "Criticism began to be historical, sociological and ideological, providing explanations that related the work to its context and scrutinized the concrete grounding of cultural phenomena. This movement emphasized the interest in a sociology of culture . . . and Marxism" (1972, 88–89, 108).

As Hernán Vidal has put it, Rama's position embodied a "social understanding of literature" according to which "the literary critic was supposed to abandon his identity as a technical analyst of privileged texts in order to take on the identity of a producer of culture from a consciously defined political position." After this turn, concludes Vidal, "literary criticism thus moved closer to symbolic anthropology, sociology, and political science" (1993, 115). The debate between these two camps, or better yet, within these two moments in the development of Latin American criticism, ranged from the status of the literary text to the composition of the canon, from the relation between literature and art to their limits with regard to the popular, and from the technologies of literary and cultural criticism to the political role of the intellectual. All of these topics would become medullary issues for Latin American cultural studies during the 1980s. The passage from the centrality of literature (and its aesthetic interpretation) to culture (and its nuanced historical, sociological, and anthropological analysis), while it signaled a new hermeneutic strategy, which required new methodologies and assigned a new epistemological status to diverse texts, discourses, and practices, should be understood, nevertheless, more as an epistemological shift than as a paradigm break.

COGNITIVE CONSTELLATIONS AND THE THREE MOMENTS
IN LATIN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES

One of the most salient features of Latin American cultural history is the continual, always renovated transformation of a few cognitive constellations (see map)—ideological, thematic, and theoretical clusters around which most of the imaginary signifiers of the first long century of Latin American postcolonial life converge. The obsessive questioning of neo-colonialism, the popular, the national, modernity, and modernization, as well as national and continental identities and their internal and external others, galvanized the critical and creative efforts of generations of artists and intellectuals, thinkers and activists who were committed to the construction of modern national cultures.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Latin America went through one of its most intense historical periods, in political, economic, social, and cultural terms: from conservative and populist nationalist regimes, to revolutionary projects inspired by the Cuban Revolution and the anticolonial movement, to the military dictatorships that cleared the way for neoliberal policies and the assault of global finance capitalism; from economic neo-colonialism and import substitution modernization to conservative developmentalism and its critique by dependency theory; from the urbanization and secularization of rural populations to the expansion of the middle classes and the explosion of the college population, the progressive inclusion of new social agents in political life, and the overwhelming power of the culture industry; from the expansion of national and international mass culture to the emergence of youth countercultures and ethnic subcultures, the literary boom, the new Latin American cinema, the street theater of collective creation, and the movement of the protest song. As a consequence of this sociopolitical effervescence, these were extremely fermentative intellectual times, which witnessed the emergence of diverse theoretical proposals, characterized by a strong historical and political urgency matched by anti-imperialist and anticolonialist feelings and a new Latin American utopia. Among the main theories to emerge in this period, the theories of cultural imperialism, internal colonialism, pedagogy of the oppressed, theology and philosophy of liberation, and dependency theory stand out. All these theories and sociopolitical practices were able to crystallize, up to a certain point, a utopian Latin American imaginary by rapidly spreading through the subcontinent and becoming the first Latin American theoretical product for export, particularly to other Third World regions and amid certain metropolitan academic circles. Alongside Che Guevara's mystical look and the exoticism of magical realism, they helped to fix the external image of an unruly

1. Cognitive Constellations

NEOCOLONIALISM

MODERNITY & MODERNIZATION

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

THE POPULAR

IDENTITIES/ALTERITIES/ETHNICITIES

2. Forerunners

CALIBANISM

Fernández Retamar

TRANSCULTURATION

Rama

SOCIO-CRITICISM

Candido

GEO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Ribeiro

HETEROGENEITY

Cornéjo Polar

3. Foundations

COLONIAL STUDIES

Mignolo

MODERNITY/POSTMODERNITY

Brunner

Moniváiz,
Schwarz,
Sarlo

CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

García Candelini

MEDIA & MASS-CULTURE

Martín-Barbero

GENDER & MINORITIES

Franco

4. Practices and Polemics

POSTCOLONIALISM &
POST-OCCIDENTALISM

Larsen

TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL
STUDIES (GLOBALIZATION)

Ortiz

Yúdice

Moraña

Achugar

"LATIN-AMERICANISM"
& LATIN AMERICAN
CULTURAL STUDIES

Krasiuskauskas

Archetti

Remedí

López

Masiello

Rabasa

Beverley

Moreiras

CULTURAL CRITICISM

Castillo-Rangel-
Rosas

Flores

continent. In these circumstances, the old cognitive constellations drifted into new ones adapted to the times. “Forerunners,” the first part in this reader, presents Antonio Candido’s sociocriticism, Darcy Ribeiro’s geocultural anthropology, Roberto Fernández Retamar’s Calibanism, Angel Rama’s transculturation, and Antonio Cornejo Polar’s heterogeneity (map). These cognitive constellations amalgamate the most cogent issues and theories of the 1970s; concomitantly, these authors are direct precursors of Latin American cultural studies insofar as they function like a bridge between current practices in the field and the long tradition of Latin American critical thinking.

The 1980s repeatedly have been called the “Latin American lost decade” due to the fact that the consolidation of neoliberal socioeconomic policies, now under the blessing of neodemocratic regimes led by technocrats and electronic politicians, had terrible consequences on the national economies and the social fabrics: underemployment and flexible employment, a truly postmodern euphemism; widespread impoverishment, particularly among the lower middle sectors; the widening of the gap between rich and poor; stratification of a small, high-consuming globalized upper class and a large, low-consuming marginalized working force; and last but not least, the brutal increase of the migratory flows toward metropolitan countries. The globalization of Latin American economies, societies, and cultures reached, in the 1980s, intensity and complexity of higher proportions. In that context, Latin American cultural studies tried to elucidate and come to terms with neoliberalism as an economic model and a market ideology, with the substitution of party politics by mass-media and consumerist democracy, and with the added social and symbolic value acquired by the cultural in everyday life, as a consequence of the new economic centrality of the symbolic—and primarily of transnational mass culture—in the information age. Accordingly, this expansive foundational moment and its necessity to apprehend such deep and vertiginous transformations is framed in the ideological skirmishes of the postmodern debate, which in Latin America begins in the social sciences entrenched in research centers founded by metropolitan foundations. In other words, contemporary Latin American cultural studies are actually founded in the intersection of the Latin American tradition of cultural analysis and the postmodern self-reflexive irreverence, at the most neuralgic moment of globalization. The old cognitive constellations shifted once again, this time with completely renovated subfields of inquiry emerging, such as colonial studies, gender and minorities, modernity and/or postmodernity, media and mass culture, and cultural hybridity (map). Jean Franco, Carlos Monsiváis, Roberto

Schwarz, Beatriz Sarlo, Walter Mignolo, José Joaquín Brunner, Jesús Martín Barbero, and Néstor García Canclini, all included in the second part of this reader, are the most prominent founders of contemporary Latin American cultural studies.

Over the backdrop of these cognitive constellations, which established the main theoretical, methodological, and thematic lines of contemporary Latin American cultural studies, the 1990s staged the blooming and the subsequent implosion of the field. The third part, "Practices," includes a selection of outstanding essays that deal with some of the most recurring topics in the field, thus providing an inevitably partial though representative picture of its current status and major trends. The frantic search for new critical paradigms and the opening of epistemological frontiers nurtured an intense theoretical exchange between opposite tendencies vying for the hegemony of the field, and reached levels of theoretical oversaturation and deconstructive hypertrophy that imploded the field, leading to the present mood of uncertainty, disorientation, and fatigue. Colonial studies led to postcolonialism and postoccidentalism; studies on media and mass culture, combined in different degrees with the modernity/postmodernity debate and cultural hybridity, led to globalization and subaltern studies; gender and minorities, filtered through postmodernism, nourished cultural criticism. The debates between these different positions, recapitulated in part 4, "Positions and Polemics," exploded around the definition and the projection of Latin Americanism and Latin American cultural studies (see map). Seemingly, by the turn of the century, most of the theoretical proposals have reached their limits, which explains their gradual return to the cognitive constellations of the 1960s and 1970s, directly or indirectly connected to classic Latin American cultural paradigms, such as dependency theory, liberation theology and philosophy of liberation, the pedagogy of the oppressed, and the theories of internal colonialism, third cinema, and collective theater. The cycle, which started with the optimistic drive of the forerunners in the 1970s, is closing upon itself. After the theoretical frenzy of the 1990s, unintelligible without the explorations of the 1970s and the discoveries of the 1980s, the study of the cultures of Latin America would never be the same, and still, it will ever be what it has always already been.



Forerunners

Introduction by Alicia Ríos

TRADITIONS AND FRACTURES IN LATIN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES

As the preceding introduction has established, “Latin American cultural studies are a disputed field in a global scenario, which cannot be fully understood or further advanced without considering its historical grounding in Latin American sociocultural processes.” Thus, “despite common interpretations, Latin American cultural studies are not just the product of an epistemological break . . . but also the result of specific historical continuities.” It is a field of enquiry that has been mapped out through a series of conflicts, combining the rich Latin American critical tradition with European and North American schools of thought.

In this introduction to part 1 I would like to consider the manner in which the very long and important tradition of the Latin American critical essay has been intersected, throughout its history, by certain thematic axes and enunciative positions marking many of its pivotal concerns: questions of the national and the continental, the rural and the urban, tradition versus modernity, memory and identity, subjects and citizenships, and, especially, the role of intellectuals and institutions in the formation of discourse as well as social, cultural, and political practices. These concerns all lead into five cognitive constellations: neocolonialism, modernity and modernization, the national question, the popular, and identities/alterities/ethnicities. From the 1820s—the period immediately following independence—well into the 1960s, Latin American

critical and political thought centered, directly or indirectly, on these constellations. Afterward, new critical parameters were constructed, giving rise to what we now call Latin American cultural studies.

The Latin American Critical Essay

The construct now called Latin America has always been marked by desire, perhaps even prior to the coining of this term in the nineteenth century.¹ In this context, desire must be understood doubly: as both a lack as well as a productive force arising as the result of, but also as the vehicle for, a discourse and a praxis that have felt hard-pressed to “invent” their “realities.” America has been created on the empty space of a map since its origins. It has been pegged with names whose function it was to reproduce the ideal mental image of the namers—names that inevitably clashed with the other entity already there, or beginning to take shape. Even today, the contours of this map are still being drawn, from within and without, by words attempting to name something that is always managing to escape ideological boundaries.

Latin America’s critical essay tradition has rested on this process of invention from Simón Rodríguez and Andrés Bello to the present. These “men of letters” had to “think” through each act, and clung to their “dreams of reason” throughout the nineteenth century. That metaphorical dream [of America] in which such men lumped together past, present, and future “authorized” them to decide what was suitable, desirable, and appropriate for the rest of the continent’s inhabitants.

The wars of independence end in the mid-1820s, with the exception of those in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Once a relative peace was achieved, since throughout that first century quarrels between different ethnic and social groups abounded, the new republics committed themselves to (re-)construction, everything from roads and farm fields to, especially, the manner in which future citizens should think and express themselves. The fixation on a proper language “of their own” not only made possible the formation of a new citizenry, but also permitted control over other subjects, still in need of discipline and education. Teachers and educators, like Rodríguez and Bello, become fundamental figures. The lettered ruling class placed great faith in the role that teachers/educators would play in elaborating the premises for the successful consolidation of the new states. Rodríguez became instrumental in the development of primary education, Bello in that of the university; both left the mark of their ideas on the usage of an Americanized Spanish language (in law, grammar, and society in general). The tradition of the critical essay, a

particularly Latin American form of expression, begins with these two educators and men of letters.²

Bello's often cited *silvas*, a poetic form from the Spanish Golden Age, *Alocución a la poesía* (1823) and *Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida* (1826), written in London, mark the beginning of a recurrent theme: the need to focus strictly on the American. It is, however, when writing from Chile that Bello develops a pedagogic program to be followed, especially in his articles on the manner in which to write and study history (1848), as well as in his *Discurso en el establecimiento de la Universidad de Chile* (1843). In the latter, the idea of the university as an enclave of "disinterested culture" or of "knowledge for knowledge's sake," which would later prevail, had no place. For Bello, very much in step with the beliefs of his age, "knowledge in its diverse disciplines, should be an instrument for the supervision of public life" (Ramos 1989, 40). Bello begins a timid reflection there on the boundaries between academic disciplines, which has nothing to do with our current conceptions. His polemic with José Victoriano Lastarria, for instance, has been catalogued by literary historiography as "literary," although at the time it was seen as cultural and, mostly, political. In his two later essays on history, Bello deepened such reflections and posited the value of the social sciences over philosophy. On the one hand, he argues, we have philosophers, politicians, and orators; on the other, historians, whose method is not speculation, but rather a "synthetic induction," or narrative, which allowed them to furnish antecedents and clarify facts. The need to construct/write national histories in order to find the "true" meaning of the national and to discover the differences between nations arises from this notion of Bello's.

Rodríguez, meanwhile, especially in his *Sociedades americanas en 1828*, coined the important phrase "Either we create or we err" (Rodríguez 1975, 343) in his pursuit of a new definition of the American. Both men promoted a "second" revolution, to which would be entrusted the happy outcome of the first one, initiated at the political level by the various liberators/heroes of independence. This new and more profound second revolution would not be led by the military, but rather by civilian men of letters, despite Bello's, Rodríguez's, and likewise Bolívar's lack of faith in their capabilities and maturity.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento capitalized on this lack in order to focus his attack on the unlettered *caudillos* (local political war leaders) from the continent's hinterlands. Sarmiento was president of Argentina from 1868 to 1874, but not before having been twice exiled to Chile, where he wrote and published in episodic installments the political pamphlet that has undoubtedly had the widest of continental renown, his *Civilización*

y barbarie. *Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845). In this text, Sarmiento achieves a most accurate and vivid representation of the hatreds between his country's two opposing political parties, the federal and the unitarian, each with its own model of government. According to Sarmiento, the only way for Argentina to stay on its predestined road to success was to rid itself of its greatest enemy, the dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas, who embodied the backwardness and ignorance of the hinterlands. Similarly, he held that there would be a place only for those who were willing to overcome past limitations and to focus on the development of Buenos Aires as the nation's hub.

With the publication of *Facundo*, the constant counterpoint between the amenities/abundance of the cities and the backwardness of rural life, between modernity and tradition, between Western and local values defines itself in Latin American writing. Likewise, the conscious admixture of various literary genres and types of writing also becomes normative with its publication. *Facundo* is a fundamental text in the attempted construction of a Latin American ideal based on the hope of synthesizing all contradictions; it is at once history, sociology, moral treatise, novel, biography, political pamphlet, and, above all, essay. A strictly American representation and expression begin to take shape, thanks precisely to this mix: that is, the unavoidable coexistence of the transcultural, the heterogeneous, and the hybrid not only in the society in which it is a lived experience, but also in the expression that attempts to represent it. Given his zeal for eliminating dichotomies undoubtedly at the heart of his text's take on civilization, which is in open opposition to barbarism, it is curious that Sarmiento leaves this hybrid text of mixed genres to express "reality" as his legacy. This tendency led him, toward the end of his life, to develop an explicitly racist theory in *Conflicto y armonía de razas en América* (1883), a sort of bible for later pragmatic utilitarianism.

According to Arturo Andrés Roig's important study, *Teoría y crítica del pensamiento latinoamericano*, the word civilization began to be used in the sense Sarmiento gives it toward the end of the eighteenth century as a reflection of a newly evident social problematic, "a matter that comes about in direct and intimate relation to the social antagonisms such as those generated in colonized and dependent countries. . . . The nineteenth-century conflict between the pre-bourgeoisies of the Río de la Plata, avidly pursuing the processes of modernization in a bid to hasten their entrance into the sphere of industrialized nations, and the peasants and the older artisan's guilds formed at the end of the eighteenth century is well known" (Roig 1981, 67–68). The need to overcome "the barbarous" will

be a theme repeated or inverted throughout Latin American history, as will the values of civilization and of “culture” along with very radical positivistic policies that find one of their highpoints in Juan Bautista Alberdi’s famous dictum: “To govern means to populate.” Man’s duty was to conquer the immense plains, fence them in, urbanize them, and force nature to conform to human designs.

In Sarmiento, then, we find the typical Latin American man of letters: at one and the same time politician, statesman, and writer. It would have been impossible at the outset of the republics for reflection and creation not to have been tied to governmental functions, a panorama that would change with the advent of *modernismo* as a literary (and cultural) movement at the end of that first century of republican life, a life then conceived of only within the parameters of modernity and modernization, but that fell under an intense system of unequal commercial and cultural exchange with its European and North American counterparts. The accelerated process of modernization, catalyzing the transformation of the political sphere and the progressive disappearance of entire social sectors, also brought about unprecedented socioeconomic development, especially in the Río de la Plata region.

The professionalism made possible by the development of the press and its respective correspondents’ posts allowed the turn-of-the-century writer, among other things, to finally become independent of his lettered function and count himself solely as an intellectual and/or a creator. In this respect, the figure of José Martí is emblematic. Martí not only continued to consolidate the long tradition of the critical essay, but also initiated with greater autonomy the so-called literary essay. Like Rubén Darío, Martí took the newspaper chronicle, that genre straddling literature and journalism, to its highest level of expression, creating a space for reflection on the hectic years at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth (see Rotker 1991). One of Martí’s most important contributions and a classic work of Latin American thought in its own right is his *Nuestra América* (1891), in which he posits a new “definition” of race, one of the terms most feared and most frequently appealed to in America. In this text Martí tells us that “there is no racial hatred because there are no races” (1980, 17). He did not mean to say by this that there were no whites, blacks, Indians, and *mestizos*, but rather that race did not exist in the biological sense of the word. Race existed from a rather different perspective: that of the oppressed, that of the slave. This is Martí’s response to Sarmiento, whom he undoubtedly engages in dialogue here. Martí was opposed to the positivistic biological conception of

race, and he would surely have also opposed José Enrique Rodó's vision, clearly more "cultural" than that of Sarmiento, but based equally on Latin racial pride.

Martí proposed a different concept of "ours": pride in being who and what (Latin)Americans are. Originality and authenticity are posited as values, according to which (Latin)Americans would no longer be forced to follow foreign models of government, for example, but had, instead, to create new and more adequate models, if need be, even making wine from bananas (in many ways reiterating Simón Rodríguez's motto: "Either we create or we err"). Martí puts forth the idea of Our America as a motive for continental political unity, and as the only possible avenue of defense against the new power to the north, that "seven league monster," the United States, against which not only Cuba, but the rest of (Latin)America must also defend itself.

Yet another fundamental text in Latin American critical thought, José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel* (1900), makes its appearance at the turn of the century. Framed within the context of the Spanish-American War (1898), the Spanish crown's last attempt at saving its few remaining colonies—Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines—Rodó's text, again a composite of genres—essay, speech, and parable—posits the need to defend the values of "Latinness" in light of neocolonial encroachment from the new northern power. As in the case of the previously mentioned texts, this essay looks toward the future and its most valued, designated reading audience consisted of young people from all Latin American nations.

Ever an avid devotee of science and technology—as the good "modern" he was—Rodó did not align himself with positivism; his response was more in keeping with a renovated idealism attempting to salvage aesthetic and individual values in danger of extinction from imperial capitalism and utilitarian mass society. Despite being a close follower of Ernest Renan, Rodó was in favor of certain democratic ideas; when he spoke of aristocracy, it was not on the basis of economic or social privileges, but rather on that of merit earned from honest work and the cultivation of uncorrupted values. He tried "to reconcile the most stabilizing principles of European tradition with the redefinition of the social order in order to assure the mechanisms for increasing, but regulated, participation by the masses" (Moraña 1982, 658).³ At the heart of his thought is a hidden desire for a society in which differences and heterogeneity could be overcome, thus creating a world in which Latin and *criollo* cultural values would prevail, including leisure in the classic sense of the term.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Latin American writers, artists, and intellectuals—of whom those just mentioned are paradigmatic

and influential examples—were also practical men (and in rare cases, women) who were deeply involved in political action, always concerned with their role in society. They explicitly portray themselves not only with the intent, but also the obligation to intervene in social and cultural life. Their preoccupations, intentions, and attitudes develop as an important antecedent in what will become the thematic constellations in which later Latin American critical thought can be organized.

Latin American Critical Thought

Once Latin America, with the advent of professional journalism, had fully entered the twentieth century, the formation of more articulated, cohesive blocs of reflection on certain themes and problems began. This is not to say that the figure of individual author—or thinker—lost its relevancy, but rather that intellectual work was now conceived of within a more precise framework, since writers and thinkers now took on a new professional consciousness.

The Arielist school, including such prominent figures as Alfonso Reyes, Mariano Picón Salas, and Pedro Henríquez Ureña, emerged in the first decades of the century. Henríquez Ureña contributes fundamentally to the division of Latin American literary studies into periods, while we owe to Reyes and Picón Salas a notable theoretical development of literary criticism in general.⁴ For the Arielists, American questions were associated with a tradition of their own, in keeping with a heroic past—in all cases as much indigenous as Spanish—but with a heavy dose of European values, along with a defense of certain ethical and aesthetic principles.

The problem of identities takes on new dimensions in the first half of the twentieth century: What repercussions does participation in a colonial—postcolonial or neocolonial—situation have on subjects and subjectivities, and what is to be done when such a situation is surmounted? What role do the ethnic groups who make up that desire called Latin America play? How should the local and the national, the capital cities and the heartland be connected with global metropolitan centers within a coherent development plan? The problem of how to understand the word culture—and the cultural—takes on extreme importance: How are the fuzzy boundaries between high, popular, and mass culture, and between oral and written culture to be managed? What role should the intellectual play in all of this? What should his or her commitment to the masses, to the media, and the market be? Finally, what should the relationship—and the role—of the intellectual be in diverse institutions; in

the case of academic reflection, what should one's position be with respect to so-called national literatures and cultures? Distinct schools and critical practices, such as *indigenismo*, *negritud*, *criollismo*, and regionalism, each accompanied by its literary, and in most cases, political expressions arise to answer these questions.

I am most interested here in concentrating on the discourse of *indigenismo*, not only as it occurs in fiction, but also in its theoretical proposals as such. The terrible "trinity of brutalization of indigenous peoples" was to be confronted and surmounted along various fronts: anarchist in the texts of Manuel González Prada and Marxist in those of José Carlos Mariátegui. In indigenist novels and discourse, the unholy trinity of the Catholic Church, the state, and the military (*el cura, el jefe civil y el caudillo*) constitutes the principal obstacle blocking indigenous peoples from development and guaranteeing their continued subaltern condition. In general terms, intellectuals were the ones to declare themselves defenders of the dispossessed, often proposing solutions that had little to do with the lived reality of those they claimed to represent. As Antonio Cornejo Polar has pointed out so well, "given its condition as a heterogeneous story, straddling two sharply divided sociocultural worlds . . . *indigenismo* reproduces the conflict unresolved in the very history of disintegrated and torn nations. In this sense, although it may seem paradoxical, the great truth of *indigenismo*, especially the indigenist novel, is not found in what it says, but rather in the real contradiction it produces discursively" (Cornejo Polar 1994, 206). This contradiction between "reality" and its discursivity is equally evident in the case of *gauchesca* literature (Josefina Ludmer has argued as much in a now classic 1988 text on the subject, *El género gauchesco. Un tratado sobre la patria*).

González Prada, a combatant in the War of the Pacific (1879–1883), notes the painful loss of Peruvian territory to Chile at the signing of the Treaty of Ancón, ending the war, and harshly analyzes the reasons for such a disaster. In his famous *Discurso en el Politeama* (1888) he maintains: "The brutal hand of Chile tore apart our flesh and ground our bones; but the real winners, our enemy's weapons, were our own ignorance and our spirit of servitude" (González Prada 1982, 44–45). These remarks will be complemented in one of his most important, and lamentably unfinished, essays, *Nuestros Indios* (1904). Here, in line with Martí, he argues that the Indians do not represent a biological race, but a social class, dependent on their economic status. In this essay he coins one of his most celebrated and repeated phrases: "To him who would say school, answer him back school and bread. The question of the Indian is economic, it is social, rather than pedagogical" (González Prada 1982, 182). González Prada,

decidedly preoccupied with the question of education, devoted some effort to the study of language and the establishment of a new system of orthography, just as had Bello and Rodríguez.

Mariátegui, founder of Peru's Socialist Party, published in 1928 what can clearly be designated as a fundamental twentieth-century Latin American text, setting the tone for what would later become a sociopolitical essayistic tradition. His *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* both advances and departs from González Prada's anarchist premises. The latter had maintained that the problem of the Indian was an economic one; Mariátegui takes that premise to its ultimate consequences. His readings on Peru's defeat in the same war in which González Prada had fought shaped many of his opinions on postwar Peru. What most concerned him, however, was the elimination of the feudal state and the servility prevalent in his country: "Peru must choose between the *gamonal* [traditional landowner who acted as a feudal lord] and the Indian. This is its dilemma. There is no third way" (Mariátegui 1976, 176).

Siete ensayos begins with a reflection on the colony and the republic, what both meant from the perspective of their economic evolution and the degree to which their social stratification and their cultural values still influenced the present of Latin American countries. The essays then take up the problem of the Indian and that of land, the process of public education, the role of religion, and the positions taken on regionalism and centralism. His final essay is an analysis of Peruvian literature. Such themes have been touched on again and again by those seeking an adequate approach to the problem of Latin America; Mariátegui's decided relevance, in the context of this introduction, is the unity he achieved between reflection and political practice. His reflection always attempts to ignore conceptual limitations, allowing him to attribute due importance to both the discussion of *indigenismo* and the avant-garde, for example, thus tying together what had been until then two irreconcilable extremes. In his third and perhaps most important essay, "The Problem of Land," Mariátegui revises "written history," that is, how the problem of the Indian had been thought of and written about, in an open examination/questioning of the "lettered city." For Mariátegui, political participation was a necessary prerequisite for any theoretical position. From that point of view, his entire, admittedly Marxist, body of reflection regarding the problem of the Indian had no intent but that of the final achievement of their true social, economic, and political vindications (as he understood them at the time, and with the contradictions we might now find in them).

Other important figures and groups, all attempting to answer the

questions posed earlier in this introduction, appeared throughout the first thirty years of the twentieth century. The Mexican author José Vasconcelos developed an almost delirious defense of the virtues of a future mestizo American *Cosmic Race* (1925), which would be increasingly superior to the rest of the world's previous cultures. It would unnecessarily lengthen this introduction to analyze the work of such important thinkers as Leopoldo Zea, Augusto Salazar Bondy, Silvio Romero, Rosario Castellanos, or Gilberto Freire, just to mention a few. I have chosen to concentrate here on those figures who, in my view, are not only the most representative, but also the most pertinent. Any genealogy must necessarily penetrate personal, affective, and disciplinary networks, to which we ascribe as much by filiation as by affiliation; it would be impossible to account for all of them, and thus, one must choose. What I do hope is clear in this brief survey of earlier Latin American critical thought, with the attendant implication of political stance in the textual selections, is its importance in the formation of current critical thought.

One of the most important and most strictly Latin American contributions to the study of culture and anthropology emerging during this period is the theory of transculturation. Fernando Ortiz first coined the term in his text, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y del azúcar* (1940), another classic work of Latin American thought. This text, like Sarmiento's *Facundo*, also engages in a dialogue with various forms of expression, a sort of cross between anthropological treatise and prose poem, but an impressive musical counterpoint as well. Ortiz establishes the need to find a new word to better account for the strictly American process of the mixing and exchange of habits and cultures. He proposes a neologism, transculturation, since the word, acculturation, then used in cultural anthropology, did not meet his requirements. Acculturation implies a one-way process in which the "barbarian" is always being "civilized," while the new term, transculturation, demonstrates the manner in which coexisting cultures and cultures in conflict simultaneously both gain and lose through contact. He takes as his base a medieval Spanish text, *Libro de buen amor*, the remarkable counterpoint from Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita that features an allegorical battle between Don Carnal ("Sir Flesh," carnival) and Doña Cuaresma ("Lady Lent"), and imagines a similar battle between tobacco and sugar, that is a musical duel in which the struggle and cultural conflict between the two is made explicit. Each product represents a particular moment in the conquest and represents, respectively, African or European culture. "In the production of tobacco intelligence predominates; we have already said that tobacco is liberal, if not

revolutionary. In sugar production force prevails; it is well-known that sugar is conservative, if not absolutist” (F. Ortiz 1978, 56). What is most important in Ortiz’s work is the demonstration of the extent to which transculturation affects each and every instance of Cuban—and by extension Latin American—culture: its economy, institutions, jurisprudence, ethics, religion, art, language, psychology, and even its sexuality. The true history of Cuba is thus found in the intricate history of its transculturations, most especially in the violent uprooting of African peoples from their originating cultures.

The Climate of the 1960s

The second half of the twentieth century, marked by leftist struggles, especially after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (1959), brings about the cementing of the first truly Latin American social theories. Perhaps their most interesting theoretical aspects consist of re-dimensioning the notions of superstructure and infrastructure, and interconnecting them via the most important theoretical contributions of the day. Such interconnections encompass both structural and sociological dimensions, but adapted, for the first time, in an indisputably “original” manner, molded to the particular needs of Latin American cultures and societies.

On one hand, there was a need to go beyond the limitations of Arielism and to demonstrate the falsity of its universalistic, and to an extent, essentialist, ideals. There was also a need to separate concrete political moments that moved them closer to or farther away from metropolitan centers of power. In his book *Calibán: apuntes sobre la cultura en Nuestra América*, Fernández Retamar inverts the reading of Ariel: if for Rodó the United States is Caliban and Spanish America is Ariel, we have fallen into a grave error. It is only by assuming that we are Caliban—the one who learns his oppressor’s language and makes it his own, avenges his mistreatment at his master’s hands, and surpasses his master’s achievements—can we feel proud of who we are and leave the situation of dependence in which we have always been trapped. This colonial situation is one on which Latin American thinkers reflect time and again. Such reflections are present not only in the work of Fernández Retamar, but also in that of Puerto Rican author José Luis González’s *El país de cuatro pisos* (1979), or in the important tradition of Latin American Marxist thought, especially the forgers of dependency theory, Celso Furtado, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Enzo Faletto, among others. Another avenue of such reflections belongs to liberation theology, especially in the works of

Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff. Both dependency theory and liberation theology, two strands of a particularly Latin American phenomenon, deeply influence Latin American thought.

Dependency theory, which traces its beginnings to the mid-1960s, has as perhaps its most interesting aspect the mix of both Latin American theories (those of Mariátegui, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara) and European ones (those of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, particularly). Since that time, dependency theory has been further worked out and “appropriated,” that is, both made our own and adjusted to our realities. It has undergone a re-dimensioning of its Marxist notions as well, but the vital question of identity remains as one of the theory’s core elements. Its principal representatives set forth the need to defend an endogenous scientific and technological development, where national interests prevail over imperial capitalism.

Cardoso’s and Faletto’s principal objective is an explanation of economic processes as social and political ones, framed within the modernizing stage of Latin American countries, with their attendant particularities and peculiarities extending beyond the global study of development. Methodologically, they are interested in accentuating “the analysis of the specific conditions of the Latin American situation and the type of social integration of classes and groups as the principal conditioners of the developmental process” (Cardoso and Faletto 1978, 17). The notion of “development” is thus understood as the product of interaction between and among diverse groups and social classes all with their own manner of interrelating. Groups or classes are thus marked by distinct values and interests tied in across oppositions, conciliations, or improvements determined by the socioeconomic system in which they are inserted. The fundamental theoretical problem consists of “determining the modes the structures of domination adopt, because through them one comes to understand the dynamic of class relations” (Cardoso and Faletto 1978, 19). This notion of social processes as embedded in systemic structures is a fundamental tool in dependency analysis. The incorporation and re-definition of the concepts of centrality and periphery, as well as colonial and national formations is also of prime importance to their discussion. The idea of dependence thus “alludes directly to the conditions of existence and the functioning of the economic and political systems, demonstrating the ties between the two, on both an internal and external plane” (Cardoso and Faletto 1978, 24).

On the other end of the spectrum, liberation theology arises as a result of both the ideological and theoretical crises of diverse Christian revolutionary groups who actively participated in Latin American political

struggles during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Such groups sought certain explanations, justifications, and continuity of events in which they were participants, in keeping with premises fundamental to Catholic dogma and practices, although not strictly limited to them. The contradictions between religious theory and practice led some participants to a definitive separation from the church and others to a partial one. For still others, political struggle can and should be established within the institution, as well as through political parties and lay organizations, such as Acción Católica and the Christian Democratic parties. For the most radical, it was necessary to subject biblical faith to its greatest test: to discover from within it its true relation to political practice, as well as its relation to the historic process of liberation and spiritual salvation. In this confrontation, the radical factions concluded that “there is no contradiction between historical materialism and the biblical concept of history that would impede Christians from taking up the political task of the struggle to construct socialism in its complete dimension” (Silva Gotay 1986, 121–22). As a result, such Christians began to participate actively in Latin American revolutionary processes. Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, in their widely circulated manual *Como fazer teologia da libertação* (1986), take as their point of departure the incisive question “how to be Christians in a world full of human misery?” (9). The levels of poverty and hunger to which the dispossessed of the Third World are subjected oblige the Boffs to respond with sacred ire in the face of social sin, that is, indifference to human suffering. They are further obligated to initiate a series of active measures to counteract indifference and work toward overcoming human suffering. In this manner, liberation theology establishes as its primary task the bodily and spiritual liberation of the oppressed, as well as the defense of “any and all of the oppressed: the poor, the subjugated, the discriminated [against].” Thus liberation theology struggles against racial, ethnic, and sexual oppression, as well as against economic exploitation and political repression (Boff and Boff 1986, 39).

The Forerunners

As mentioned earlier, the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America were a very intense period in terms of political, economic, social, and cultural change; these changes would seem to take on even more drastic and problematic dimensions at the beginning of this twenty-first century. Attempts at revolution inspired by the model of the Cuban Revolution, particularly during the 1960s, spread throughout the continent, at the same time as did military dictatorships and conservative regimes. This did not

hinder certain democratizing attempts at national conciliation in some countries, such as Venezuela, which was then in the midst of an unprecedented economic boom. An extremely intense cultural and ideological exchange was also achieved, thanks in great part to the waves of immigration produced by unstable regional economic and political conditions, especially in the Southern Cone. In metropolitan centers, such as Mexico City and Caracas, where many of the most prominent intellectuals from regions with little prior exposure to continental exchange were forced to emigrate, an environment of important theoretical and conceptual exchange was in formation. The need for a unified Latin America, as a function of certain political and cultural interests, allowed for the consolidation of new intellectual projects that until then had been unwanted or unimagined. The five intellectuals grouped together in part 1, "Forerunners," respond to this ideal of a unified Latin America. Their discursive and methodological proposals entered into a frank dialogue that allowed the elaboration of new thematic constellations established with greater affinity for the times and its problems—without having to reject older ones outright.

On the one hand, we find Antonio Candido's sociocritical proposal, Darcy Ribeiro's geocultural anthropology, and Roberto Fernández Retamar's "calibanism"; on the other, the theories of transculturation, further developed by Angel Rama, and heterogeneity, by Antonio Cornejo Polar. The first part of this anthology's textual selections is by these five intellectuals, all direct precursors of much of what is practiced today and of what has been in the making for the past fifty years.

The works of both Brazilian authors is an obligatory reference for any Latin American or Latin Americanist cultural reflection. Antonio Candido's contributions encompass the whole of literary studies, especially his incorporation of a clearly leftist anthropological and sociological perspective into the revision of national and occidental values. Since he was a full-time academic, it became the task of his many students to put his novel manner of incorporating social, economic, and political categories into literary criticism, as well as his analysis of both "high culture" and "popular literature" into practice. Candido's readings of Brazilian literature still hold relevance, most notably because he incorporates them into the discussion of Latin American literature and culture as a whole, something rarely done before him. "Literature and Underdevelopment," the article selected for this anthology, springs from this preoccupation of his. Originally published in French in 1970, the article analyzes the problems in vogue at the moment: the role of the intellectual, the cities, the regions, and the problem of methodological models. He also revises

strictly literary nomenclature (romanticism, regionalism, modernism) and distinguishes between Portuguese and Spanish usage of the same terms. One of his most important contributions is his reading of the contours and limits of what we could call “imitation,” and its unquestionable sidekick, underdevelopment. Candido concludes—as do the rest of the authors in this section—by affirming the fact that we do imitate, just as everyone else does, but we also make our own additions and leave our particular marks, not only on literary texts but on the whole of cultural production.

Thus, Candido highlights the aesthetic and formal dimension of literature, without separating it from its social and ideological functions. In this way he works out the concept of (literary) “system” at the heart of his thinking: his interest is in emphasizing any works linked by common denominators that establish the pattern of a culture’s dominant features (a pattern that literature unequivocally helps to construct).

Essayist, anthropologist, and sociologist, Darcy Ribeiro became one of the greatest defenders of indigenous peoples over the course of his long and checkered academic and political career. An undoubted precursor of postcolonial studies in Latin America, he set forth a theoretical proposal for the studying of what he called the civilizational processes that have mapped the history of all cultures. Ribeiro questioned the very concept of cultural autonomy, since there is an inevitable conjunction in any given ethnic expansion due to the economic, social, and ideological planes that are always involved in such processes. He identifies, as a result, four different categories among non-European peoples according to their historical and geocultural formation: Witness, New, Transplanted, and Emerging Peoples. Each of them “does not represent necessary stages in the evolutionary process, but only the conditions under which it operates” (see Ribeiro in “Forerunners”). The idea of a truly American revolution, establishing the existence of ills brought in by the civilizing process, especially as they relate to racial differences, would be—according to him—the unavoidable condition for surmounting the neocolonial situation. In order to achieve this end, Latin Americans must confront, once and for all, not only the problems generated by the European invasion, but by their own mistakes, in particular the killing rage that is still visited upon indigenous peoples and masked by unfair laws and protectionist practices.

As for Roberto Fernández Retamar, we have already mentioned his questioning of Arielism and the national liberal projects it represented. But we must also remember the particular circumstances behind the publication of his text. Due to the numerous international criticisms

brought out after the Cuban government's handling of the "Padilla case," the importance of creating a manifesto outlining the revolutionary cultural project of the Cuban Revolution was clear. Fernández Retamar insists on the need to undo or overcome the perturbing inferiority complexes that have always accompanied readings on American cultural history. As a key figure in the Cuban government's cultural ensemble, he expounds on the need for literature and art, as well as the study of both, to be tied to revolutionary struggle. His indignation at the question opening his famous *Calibán* (1971), on whether or not a Latin American culture exists, can only be explained in a colonial context. That is, he states, the very formulation of such a question can only occur if we are immersed in a colonial condition; only under those conditions could any possible doubt concerning our own existence arise.

Although Fernando Ortiz coined the term *transculturation*, Angel Rama elaborates on it and takes it in a different direction. For Rama, inscribed in modern lettered discourse, the neologism serves to introduce a new reading of Latin American cultures, in which the relationship between modernity and tradition is more openly problematized, in which the mythical critical model is surmounted and in which the author sides with the counter-hegemonic potential of regional, local cultures.

In his *Transculturation narrativa en América Latina* (1982), Rama redraws the cultural map, from colonial times on, in order to outline the domination to which diverse cultural and literary systems of diverse regions have been subjected. He centers his study of Latin American literatures and cultures on three fundamental notions: originality, representativeness, and independence. According to Rama, "Literary works do not fall outside the realm of culture, but are, rather, its culmination, and to the extent that Latin American cultures are centuries-old and multitudinous inventions, they make of the writer a producer who works with the works of countless others" (see Rama in "Forerunners").

Rama's differences with Ortiz have to do with the manner in which the process of *transculturation* should be understood, especially when applied to literary works. He disputes Ortiz's "geometric" vision, which does not account for many factors traversing the *transculturation* process (e.g., those that exert a great deal of force, although not directly), and gives an impressive example. "The European *transculturation* impact between the two world wars did not include Marxism in its repertoire, but was, nonetheless, chosen by numerous university groups all over America" (see Rama in "Forerunners"). The selective capacity is not only applied to the foreign culture, but principally to one's own (contrary

to what, in Rama's estimation, Ortiz establishes), "the site of massive destructions and losses. . . . There would be, of course, losses, selections, rediscoveries and incorporations. These four operations are concomitant and all are resolved within the overall restructuring of the cultural system, which is the highest creative function achieved in the transculturating process. Utensils, norms, objects, beliefs, customs only exist in a living and dynamic articulation, designed by the culture's functional structure" (ibid.). Rama goes on to explain how the transculturating process functions on the basis of three operations: language, literature, and worldview. These operations have always been pointed out by Latin American thinkers, both old and new, and have found their greatest representative in the figure of the Peruvian writer José María Arguedas.⁵

Antonio Cornejo Polar begins his elaborations on another of the notions most in vogue in current literary and cultural studies with Arguedas's texts as his object of study: heterogeneity, and with it, the relation between oral and written language. Cornejo proposes the resignification of the symbolic content of theoretical discourse in a departure from strictly ethnic and racial approaches in order to denounce the hidden forces behind certain approaches whose appearances belie true sociocultural exchanges. Such is the case in the notion of transculturation, which in truth, according to Cornejo, masks the category of *mestizaje* to the extent that syncretism is reinforced by the concept, omitting many cases in which conflict prevails.⁶ Cornejo's reflection on heterogeneity reaches its high point in his latest book, *Escribir en el aire. Ensayo sobre la heterogeneidad socio-cultural en las culturas andinas* (1994), in which he outlines a panorama that begins strictly in colonial times with the "dialogue" between the Inca Atahualpa and Father Vicente Valverde in Cajamarca on the afternoon of Saturday, 16 November 1532, and ends with the most current discussions on subalternity and postcolonialism. Cornejo's own discussion of the issues hinges on three problems: discourse (toward which he proposes telling/writing the story of synchrony), subject (breaking down the image of the romantic/modern I, now turned into a complex, disperse, and multiple subject), and representation. His intention is to make evident the "symbolic war that corresponds to the ethno-social one between the indigenous and the *criollo* [offspring of Spanish nobility born in the colonies] worlds" (Montaldo 2000, 397). Cornejo also disjoints the colonial condition, which consists "precisely in denying the colonized his/her identity as a subject, in fragmenting/cutting into pieces all ties, and imposing others that disrupt and take/tear him/her apart" (Cornejo Polar 1994, 27).

By Way of a Pre-Epilogue . . .

The authors and texts mentioned in the previous section mark the direct beginning of theoretical reflection on the statutes of what will become Latin American cultural studies. Each of the authors approaches his object of study from a perspective that attempts not only to account for his place in the intellectual arena, but also to establish a direct dialogue with his Latin American interlocutors. The critical work of these authors takes shape from the need to question their own culture, and above all, to take academic reflection to an openly political plane (by political I don't mean solely militant participation in a given party, although this is the case for some). Each author partakes of the desire to construct a better future, to the extent that all understand that this reflection on what we have been, what we are, and what we wish to be cannot have a happy ending as long as the modalities of our own condition are not understood and confronted with honesty.

Finally, it is necessary to highlight a profound difference between what has customarily been done in the field of Latin American critical thought and what is currently being done in Latin American cultural studies. On the one hand, earlier scholars sided with and opted for the integrating capacity of national arts and literatures (as in the case of Mariátegui, whose final essay out of the seven is devoted precisely to literature). These authors also counted heavily on the strong presence of the aesthetic and strictly valiative dimensions of their cultural artifacts. One of the harshest criticisms of Latin American cultural studies has been its abandonment of that dimension, and its often arbitrary mix of methodologies and perspectives. On the other hand, current cultural scholars attempt to question literature and art precisely as part of the apparatuses of power. This is fundamental, since it is exactly here where the change in direction toward a different manner of thinking about and from Latin America occurs. If the borders between knowledges and disciplines were never altogether precise, today the argument against any such precision is open; not only are subjectivities articulated/operated simultaneously on various planes and at various depths, so are all instances of knowledge, experience, and even language. In these postmodern times, not only have master narratives lost their validity, but so have all those "natural," "historic," and/or "social" truths that allowed discourses—and their subjects—to be found in a precise context with definable, reachable limits and characteristics.

Another important difference, this time between cultural studies (from the English-speaking world) and Latin American cultural studies,

is that the former usually take as their point of departure “contemporary culture,” while this is not so in the case of the latter. There are, however, avenues of research that deal with the latest issues: the media, mass culture, the problems of globalization, consumption, civil society, and post-modernity. In fact, while many Latin American cultural studies scholars, such as Néstor García Canclini, Jesús Martín-Barbero, and George Yúdice, deal precisely with these topics, there is also a very fertile and active contingent of scholars devoted to earlier times, the first half of the twentieth century and all of the nineteenth, and even strictly colonial times. It is precisely the very long tradition of the critical essay in Latin America that has forced many to turn their gaze to the past, to revise the ways in which we have thought about ourselves in order to find answers—or greater problematizations—for the times we now live in.

Many of the characteristics and concerns of this field called Latin American cultural studies in effect constitute a fracture, or breach in continuity, especially when one refers to a transnational vision of the exercise of the disciplines devoted to the study of Latin America. The same is also true when one refers to a rereading of what is understood by aesthetics and a conceptualization reaching beyond rigid national parameters.

In Latin America the themes, practices, and institutions of knowledge have all been equally heterogeneous and conflictive. The Latin American cultural thinkers, represented here by Rodríguez, Bello, Sarmiento, Martí, Rodó, Henríquez Ureña, Picón Salas, Reyes, González Prada, Mariátegui, Ortiz, Cardoso, Boff, Candido, Ribeiro, Fernández Retamar, Rama, and Cornejo Polar, constitute, in a strict sense, the foremost precursors of Latin American cultural studies.

Translated by Christine McIntyre

Notes

1. Panamanian thinker Ricaute Soler holds that it would be more appropriate to use the term *Latin America* from the end of the nineteenth century on, when resistance was organized around a new world power: the United States. If we are concerned with struggles for independence, we are better off referring to *Spanish America*; in other words, the Spanish colonies in their struggle against the Spanish crown, with the notable exceptions of Cuba and Puerto Rico, which precisely define this change (Soler 1975). This is a key distinction, because the first term, *Latin America*, can include Brazil and the Caribbean, not just the Spanish-speaking areas. Conditions under North American hegemony clearly differ from those of more properly colonial times. I am not referring, then, to the etymology of these words, but rather to their conceptual and methodological possibilities.

2. Regarding *el buen decir* (a proper language) and the formation of its subjects, we cannot overlook the important contribution of Julio Ramos in his *Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina. Literatura y política en el siglo XIX* (1989). This text, along with Angel Rama's *La ciudad letrada* (1984a) and José Luis Romero's *Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas* (1976), constitutes a crucial moment in the prelude to what we have called Latin American cultural studies.
3. For two interesting yet divergent readings questioning the traditional vision of Arielismo, see Ardao 1977 and González Echevarría 1985.
4. Rafael Gutiérrez Girardot is probably the critic who has most exhaustively and completely treated the texts of both authors, Pedro Henríquez Ureña y Alfonso Reyes (1994). See also Mariaca Iturri (1993, 23–26).
5. Among the many discussions of the term *transculturation*, see Antonio Benítez Rojo, *La isla que se repite: El Caribe y la perspectiva postmoderna* (1989), and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992b).
6. With respect to the debate between the terms *transculturation* and *heterogeneity*, see Schmidt (1995) and Trigo (1997).

ANTONIO CANDIDO

Literature and Underdevelopment

Antonio Candido was born in Brazil in 1918. A literary and cultural critic, he is also an emeritus professor at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas in São Paulo, Brazil. His main titles include *Formação da literatura brasileira* (1969), *Literatura e sociedade* (1985), and *O discurso e a cidade* (1993).

Mário Vieira de Mello, one of the few writers to approach the problem of the relations between underdevelopment and culture, makes a distinction for the Brazilian case that is also valid for all of Latin America. He says that there has been a marked alteration of perspectives; until the 1930s the idea of “the new country,” still unable to realize itself, but attributing to itself great possibilities of future progress, predominated among us. With no essential modification in the distance that separates us from the rich countries, what predominates now is the notion of an “underdeveloped country.” The first perspective accentuated potential strength and, therefore, a still unrealized greatness. The second pointed out the present poverty, the atrophy; what was lacking, not what was abundant (Vieira de Mello 1963, 3–17).

The consequences Mário Vieira de Mello drew from this distinction do not seem valid to me, but taken by itself it is correct and helps us to understand certain fundamental aspects of literary creation in Latin America. In fact, the idea of a new country produces in literature some fundamental attitudes, derived from surprise, from the interest in the exotic, from a certain respect for the grandiose, and from a hopeful sense of possibilities. The idea that America constituted a privileged place was expressed in utopian projections that functioned in the physiognomy of conquest and colonization; and Pedro Henríquez Ureña reminds us that the first document about our continent, Columbus’s letter, inaugurated the tone of seduction and exaltation that would be communicated to pos-

terity. In the seventeenth century, mixing pragmatism and prophesy, Antônio Vieira recommended the transfer of the Portuguese monarchy, fated to realize the highest ends of history as the seat of the Fifth Empire, to Brazil. Later, when the contradictions of colonial status led the dominant strata to a political separation from the mother countries, there emerged the complementary idea that America had been predestined to be the country of liberty, and thus to consummate the destiny of Western man.

This state of euphoria was inherited by Latin American intellectuals, who transformed it into both instruments of national affirmation and an ideological justification. Literature became the language of celebration and tender affection, favored by Romanticism, with support from hyperbole and the transformation of exoticism into a state of the soul. Our sky was bluer, our flowers more luxuriant, our countryside more inspiring than that of other places, as in a Brazilian poem that, from this point of view, is valuable as a paradigm: the "Song of Exile," by Gonçalves Dias, who could stand for any of his Latin American contemporaries from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego.

The idea of *country* was closely linked to that of *nature* and in part drew its justification from it. Both were conducive to a literature that compensated for material backwardness and the weakness of institutions by an overvaluation of regional features, making exoticism a reason for social optimism. In the *Santos Vega*, of the Argentine Rafael Obligado, on the verge of the twentieth century, the nativist exaltation is projected onto a patriotism properly speaking, and the poet implicitly distinguishes *country* (institutional) and *land* (natural), nevertheless linking them in the same gesture of identification:

La convicción de que es mía
 La patria de Echeverría,
 La tierra de Santos Vega
 [The conviction of what is mine
 The country of Echeverría
 The land of Santos Vega].

Country for the thinker, *land* for the singer. One of the assumptions, explicit or latent, of Latin American literature was this mutual contamination, generally euphoric, of land and country, the grandeur of the second being considered as a kind of unfolding of the strength of the first. Our literatures are nourished in the "divine promises of hope," to cite a famous verse by the Brazilian romantic poet Castro Alves.

But, the other side of the coin, the discouraged visions shared the

same order of associations, as if the weakness or the disorganization of institutions constituted an inconceivable paradox in the face of the grandiose natural conditions ("In America everything is great, only man is small").

Now, given this causal link of "beautiful land—great country," it is not difficult to see the repercussions a consciousness of underdevelopment could produce in a change of perspective that made evident the reality of the poor lands, the archaic technologies, the astonishing misery of the people, the paralyzing lack of culture. The resulting vision is pessimistic with respect to the present and problematic with respect to the future, and the only remnant of the previous phase's millenarianism, perhaps, might be the confidence with which it is acknowledged that the removal of imperialism could bring, in itself, an explosion of progress. But, in general, it is no longer a matter of a passive point of view. Deprived of euphoria, the point of view is combative, and this leads to a decision to struggle, since the trauma of consciousness caused by the confirmation of how great the backwardness is catastrophic, and invites political reformulations. The preceding gigantism, based on a hyperbolic view of nature, then appears in its true essence—as an ideological construction transformed into a compensatory illusion. From this comes the disposition to combat that is diffused through the continent, the idea of underdevelopment becoming a propulsive force, which gives a new stamp to the political obligation of our intellectuals.

The consciousness of underdevelopment followed the Second World War and was manifested clearly from the 1950s on. But there had been, since the 1930s, a change in orientation, which could be taken as a thermometer, given its generality and persistence, above all in regionalist fiction. It then abandoned pleasantness and curiosity, anticipating or perceiving what had been disguised in the picturesque enchantment or ornamental chivalry with which rustic man had previously been approached. It is not false to say that, from this point of view, the novel acquired a demystifying force that preceded the coming-to-awareness of economists and politicians.

In this essay, I will speak, alternatively or comparatively, of the literary characteristics of the mild phase of backwardness, corresponding to the ideology of the "new country": and of the phase of catastrophic consciousness of backwardness, corresponding to the notion of "underdeveloped country." The two are intimately meshed with one another, and we see the lines of the present in both the immediate and remote past. With respect to method, it would be possible to study the conditions of the diffusion of, or of the production of, literary works. Without forget-

ting the first focus, I prefer to emphasize the second by means of which, though we leave aside statistical rigor, we come close, in compensation, to the specific interests of literary criticism.

IF WE THINK of the material conditions of literature's existence, the basic fact, perhaps, is illiteracy, which in the countries of advanced pre-Columbian culture is aggravated by the still present linguistic plurality, with diverse languages seeking their place in the sun. In fact, illiteracy is linked to the manifestations of cultural weakness: lack of the means of communication and diffusion (publishers, libraries, magazines, newspapers); the nonexistence, dispersion, and weakness of publics disposed to literature, due to the small number of real readers (many fewer than the already small number of literates); the impossibility, for writers, of specializing in their literary jobs, generally therefore realized as marginal, or even amateur, tasks; the lack of resistance or discrimination in the face of external influences and pressures. The picture of this weakness is completed by such economic and political factors as insufficient levels of remuneration and the financial anarchy of governments, coupled with inept or criminally disinterested educational policies. Except in the contiguous meridional countries that form "white America" (in the European phrase), there would have to be a revolution to alter the predominant condition of illiteracy, as occurred slowly and incompletely in Mexico and rapidly in Cuba.

These features are not combined mechanically, nor always in the same way, there being diverse possibilities of dissociation and grouping among them. Illiteracy is not always a sufficient explanation of the weakness in other sectors, although it is the basic feature of underdevelopment in the cultural area. Peru, to cite an example, is less badly situated than various other countries with respect to the index of schooling, but it presents the same backwardness with respect to the diffusion of culture. In another sector, the publishing boom of the 1940s in Mexico and Argentina showed that the lack of books was not uniquely a consequence of the reduced number of readers and of lower buying power, since all of Latin America, including the Portuguese-speaking part, absorbed significant numbers of its publications. Perhaps we can conclude that the bad publishing habits and the lack of communication further accentuated the inertia of the public; and that there was an unsatisfied capacity for absorption.

This last example reminds us that the problem of publics presents distinctive features in Latin America, since it is the only group of underdeveloped countries whose people speak European languages (with the ex-

ception, already noted, of the indigenous groups) and have their origins in countries that today still have underdeveloped areas themselves (Spain and Portugal). In these ancient mother countries literature was, and continues to be, a good of restricted consumption, in comparison with the fully developed countries, where publics can be classified according to the kind of reading they do, such a classification permitting comparisons with the stratification of the entire society. But, as much in Spain and Portugal as in our own countries of Latin America, there is a basic negative condition, the number of literates, that is, those who could eventually constitute the readers of works. This circumstance brings the Latin American countries nearer to the actual conditions of their mother countries than are, in relation to theirs, the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia, which speak different languages than those of the colonizers and confront the grave problem of choosing the language in which to display literary creation. African writers in European languages (French, like Léopold Senghor, or English, like Chinua Achebe) are doubly separated from their potential publics; and are tied either to metropolitan publics, distant in every sense, or to an incredibly reduced local public.

This is said to show that the possibilities of communication for the Latin American writer are greater, compared to the rest of the Third World, despite the present situation, which reduces greatly his eventual public. Nevertheless, we can imagine that the Latin American writer is condemned always to be what he has been: a producer of cultural goods for minorities, though in this case that does not signify groups of high aesthetic quality, but simply the few groups disposed to read. But let us not forget that modern audio-visual resources might change our processes of creation and our means of communication, so that when the great masses finally acquire education, who knows but what they will look outside the book to satisfy their needs for fiction and poetry.

Put another way: in the majority of our countries large masses, immersed in a folkloric stage of oral communication, are still beyond the reach of erudite literature. Once literate and absorbed by the process of urbanization, they come under the dominion of radio, television, and comic strips, constituting the foundation of a mass culture. Literacy would then not increase the number of readers of literature, as conceived here, proportionally, but would fling the literate, together with the illiterate, directly from the phase of folklore into this kind of urban folklore that is massified culture. During the Christianization of the continent the colonial missionaries wrote documents and poetry in the indigenous language or the vernacular in order to make the principles of religion and

of the metropolitan civilization accessible to those being indoctrinated by means of consecrated literary forms, equivalent to those destined for the cultivated man of the times. In our time, a contrary process rapidly converts rural man to urban society, by means of communicative resources that even include subliminal inculcation, imposing on him dubious values quite different from those the cultivated man seeks in art and in literature.

This problem is one of the gravest in the underdeveloped countries, by virtue of the massive pressure of what could be called the cultural know-how and the very materials already elaborated for massified culture coming from the developed countries. By such means, these countries can not only diffuse their values in the normal fashion, but also act abnormally through them to orient, according to their political interests, the opinions and the sensibility—the political interests—of underdeveloped populations. It is *normal*, for example, that the image of the cowboy hero of the Western is diffused because, independent of judgments of value, it is one of the features of North American culture incorporated into the average sensibility of the contemporary world. In countries with a large Japanese immigration such as Peru and above all Brazil, there is diffused in a similarly *normal* manner the image of the samurai, especially by means of the cinema. But it is *abnormal* that such images serve as the vehicle for inculcating in the publics of the underdeveloped countries attitudes and ideas that identify them with the political and economic interests of the countries in which those images were made. When we realize that the majority of the animated cartoons and comic strips have a North American copyright, and that a large proportion of detective and adventure fiction comes from the same source, or is copied from it, it is easy to evaluate the negative effect it could eventually have, as an *abnormal* diffusion among a defenseless public.

In this respect it is convenient to point out that in erudite literature the problem of influences (as we will see later) can have either a good aesthetic effect or a deplorable one; but only in exceptional cases does it have any influence on the ethical or political behavior of the masses, since it reaches a restricted number of restricted publics. Even so, in a massified civilization, where nonliterary, preliterate, or subliterate media, such as those cited, predominate, such restricted and differentiated publics tend to unify themselves to the point of being confounded with the mass, which receives the influence on an immense scale. And, what is more, this occurs by means of vehicles whose aesthetic element is reduced to a minimum, thus rendering them capable of being confounded with ethi-

cal or political designs that, in the limiting case, penetrate the entire population.

Seeing that we are a "continent under intervention," an extreme vigilance is proper for Latin American literature, in order not to be taken in by the instruments and values of mass culture, which seduce so many contemporary artists and theorists. It is not a case of joining the "apocalypitics," but rather of alerting the "integrated"—to use Umberto Eco's expressive distinction. Certain modern experiences are fruitful from the point of view of the spirit of the vanguard and the connection of art and literature to the rhythm of the time, as in concretism and other currents. But it costs nothing to remember what can occur when they are manipulated politically by the wrong side in a mass society. In fact, even though they present at the time a hermetic and restrictive aspect, the principles in which they are based, having as resources an expressive sonority, graphical elements, and syntagmatic combinations of great suggestive power, can eventually become much more penetrating than traditional literary forms, functioning as nonliterary instruments, but more penetrating for just this reason of reaching massified publics. And there is no point, for the literary expression of Latin America, in moving from the aristocratic segregation of the era of oligarchies to the directed manipulation of the masses in an era of propaganda and total imperialism.

ILLITERACY AND CULTURAL debility influence more than the exterior aspects just mentioned. For the critic, their action in the consciousness of the writer and in the very nature of his work is more interesting.

In the time of what I called the mild consciousness of backwardness, the writer shared the *enlightened* ideology, according to which schooling automatically brought all the benefits that permitted the humanization of man and the progress of society. At first, schooling was recommended only for the citizens, the minority from which were recruited those who shared economic and political advantages; later, for all the people, seen dimly, vaguely, and from afar, less as a reality than as a liberal conception. Emperor Dom Pedro II said that he would have preferred to be a teacher, which denoted an attitude equivalent to the famous point of view of Sarmiento, according to which the predominance of civilization over barbarism had as a presupposition a latent urbanization based in schooling. In the continental vocation of Andrés Bello it is impossible to distinguish the political vision from the pedagogic project; and in the more recent group, Ateneo, of Caracas, the resistance to tyranny of Juan Vicente Gómez was inseparable from the desire to diffuse enlightened ideas and

to create a literature full of myths of redemptive education—all projected in the figure of Rómulo Gallegos, who ended up as the first president of a nascent republic.

A curious case is that of a thinker like Manuel Bonfim, who published in 1905 a book of great interest, *A América Latina*. Unjustly forgotten (perhaps because it based itself on outmoded biological analogies, perhaps because of the troublesome radicalism of its positions), it analyzes our backwardness as a function of the prolongation of colonial status, embodied in the persistence of oligarchies and in foreign imperialism. In the end, when everything leads to a theory of the transformation of social structures as a necessary condition, a disappointing weakening of the argument occurs, and he ends by preaching schooling as a panacea. In such cases, we touch the core of the illusion of the *enlightened*, an ideology of the phase of hopeful consciousness of backwardness that, significantly, does little to bring what is hoped for to realization.

It is not surprising, then, that the idea already referred to, according to which the new continent was destined to be the country of liberty, has undergone a curious adaptation: it would be destined, equally, to be the country of the book. This is what we read in a rhetorical poem in which Castro Alves says that, while Gutenberg invented the printing press, Columbus found the ideal place for that revolutionary technique:

Quando no tosco estaleiro
Da Alemanha o velho obreiro
A ave da imprensa gerou,
O Genovês salta os mares,
Busca um ninho entre os palmares
E a pátria da imprensa achou
[While in the rough workshop
Of Germany the old worker
Begot the bird of printing,
The Genoese leaped over the seas,
Seeking a home among the palms
and discovered the *country of printing* (the italics are the poet's)].

This poem, written in the 1860s by a young man burning with liberalism, is called, expressively, “O livro e a América,” displaying the ideological position I refer to.

Thanks to this ideology, these intellectuals constructed an equally deformed vision of their own position, confronted by a dominant lack of culture. Lamenting the ignorance of the people and wishing it would disappear so that the country might automatically rise to its destined

heights, they excluded themselves from the context and thought of themselves as a group apart, really “floating,” in a more complete sense than that of Alfred Weber. They floated, with or without consciousness of guilt, above the lack of culture and the backwardness, certain that it could not contaminate them, or affect the quality of what they did. Since the environment could only give them limited shelter, and since their values were rooted in Europe, it was to Europe that they projected themselves, taking it unconsciously as a point of reference and a scale of values, and considering themselves the equals of the best there.

But in truth the general lack of culture produced, and produces, a much more penetrating debility, which interferes with all culture and with the quality of the works themselves. Seen from today, the situation of yesterday seems different from the illusion that reigned then, since today we can analyze it more objectively, due to the action of time and to our own efforts at unmasking.

The question will become clearer as we take up foreign influences. In order to understand them best, it is convenient to focus, in the light of these reflections on backwardness and underdevelopment, on the problem of cultural dependency. This is, so to speak, a natural fact, given our situation as peoples who are colonized, or descendants of colonizers, or who have suffered the imposition of their civilization, but a complicated fact, with positive and negative aspects.

This cultural penury caused writers to turn necessarily toward the patterns of the mother countries and of Europe in general, creating a group that was in a way aristocratic in relation to the uneducated man. In fact, to the degree that a sufficient local public did not exist, people wrote as if their ideal public was in Europe and thus often dissociated themselves from their own land. This gave birth to works that authors and readers considered highly refined, because they assimilated the forms and values of European fashion. Except that, for lack of local points of reference, they often could go no farther than exercises of mere cultural alienation, which were not justified by the excellence of their realization—and that is what occurred in what there is of the bazaar and of affectation in the so-called “modernism” of the Spanish language, and its Brazilian equivalents, Parnassianism and symbolism.¹ Clearly, there is much that is sound in Rubén Darío, as in Herrera y Reissig, Bilac, and Cruz e Sousa. But there are also many false jewels unmasked by time, much contraband that gave them an air of competitors for some international prize for beautiful writing. The refinement of the *decadents* was provincial, showing the mistaken perspective that predominates when the elite, with no base in an uncultivated people, has no way of confronting itself critically

and supposes that the relative distance that separates them translates of itself into a position of absolute height. "I am the last Greek!"—so shouted theatrically in 1924 in the Brazilian Academy the enormously affected Coelho Neto, a kind of laborious local D'Annunzio, protesting against the vanguardism of the modernists, who eventually broke the aristocratic pose in art and literature.

Let us recall another aspect of alienated aristocratism, which at the time seemed an appreciable refinement: the use of foreign languages in the production of works.

Certain extreme examples were involuntarily saturated with the most paradoxical humorousness, as in the case of a belated Romantic of the lowest rank, Pires de Almeida, who published, as late as the beginning of this [the twentieth] century, in French, a nativist play, probably composed some decades earlier: *La fête des crânes, drame de mœurs indiennes en trois actes et douze tableaux*.² But this practice is really significant when it is linked to authors and works of real quality, such as those of Cláudio Manuel da Costa, who left a large and excellent body of work in Italian. Or Joaquim Nabuco, a typical example of the cosmopolitan oligarchy of liberal sentiment in the second half of the nineteenth century, who wrote autobiographical passages and a book of reflections in French—but above all a play whose conventional alexandrines debated the problems of conscience of an Alsatian after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870! A variety of minor symbolists (and also one of the most important, Alphonse de Guimaraens) wrote all of their work, or at least a part thereof, in the same language. The Peruvian Francisco García Calderón wrote, in French, a book that had value as an attempt at an integrated vision of the Latin American countries. The Chilean Vicente Huidobro wrote part of his work and of his theory in French. The Brazilian Sérgio Milliet published his first poetic work in French. And I am certain that we could find innumerable examples of the same thing, in every country of Latin America, from the vulgar official and academic work of pedants to productions of quality.

All this did not happen without some ambivalence, since the elites, on the one hand, imitated the good and bad of European models; but, on the other hand and sometimes simultaneously, they displayed the most intransigent spiritual independence, in an oscillating movement between reality and a utopia of an ideological stamp. And thus we see that illiteracy and refinement, cosmopolitanism and regionalism, could all have roots that mingled in the soil of the lack of culture and the effort to overcome it.

More serious influences of cultural weakness on literary production are the facts of backwardness, anachronism, degradation, and the confusion of values.

All literature presents aspects of backwardness that are normal in their way, it being possible to say that the media of production of a given moment are already tributary to the past, while the vanguard prepares the future. Beyond this there is an official subliterature, marginal and provincial, generally expressed through the academies. But what demands attention in Latin America is the way aesthetically anachronistic works were considered valid; or the way secondary works were welcomed by the best critical opinion and lasted for more than a generation—while either should soon have been put in its proper place, as something valueless or the evidence of a harmless survival. We cite only the strange case of the poem *Tabaré*, by Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, an attempt at a national Uruguayan epic at the end of the nineteenth century, taken seriously by critical opinion despite having been conceived and executed according to the most obsolete patterns.

At other times the backwardness is not shocking, simply signifying a cultural tardiness. This is what occurred with naturalism in the novel, which arrived a little late and has prolonged itself until now with no essential break in continuity, though modifying its modalities. The fact of our being countries that in the greater part still have problems of adjustment and struggle with the environment, as well as problems linked to racial diversity, prolonged the naturalist preoccupation with physical and biological factors. In such cases the weight of the local reality produces a kind of legitimation of this delayed influence, which acquires a creative meaning. So, when naturalism was already only a survival of an outdated genre in Europe, among us it could still be an ingredient of legitimate literary formulas, such as the social novel of the 1930s and 1940s.

Other cases are frankly disastrous: those of cultural provincialism, which leads to a loss of a sense of measure, the result of which is to evaluate works of no value at all by the standards applied in Europe to works of quality. This leads, further, to phenomena of true cultural degradation, causing spurious work to pass, in the sense in which a counterfeit bank-note passes, due to the weakness of publics and the absence of a sense of values in both publics and writers. We see here the routinization of influences already dubious in themselves, such as Oscar Wilde, D'Annunzio, and even Anatole France, in the books of our own Elísio de Carvalho and Afrânio Peixoto in the first quarter of this century. Or, bordering on the grotesque, the veritable profanation of Nietzsche by Vargas Villa,

whose vogue in all of Latin America reached milieus that in principle should have been immune, on a scale that astonishes us and makes us smile. The profundity of the semicultured created these and other mistakes.

A PROBLEM THAT touches on the topics of this essay and is worth being discussed in light of the dependence caused by cultural backwardness is that of influences of various types, good and bad, inevitable and unnecessary.

Our Latin American literatures, like those of North America, are basically branches of the literature of a mother country. And if we give up the sensitivities of national pride, we see that, despite the autonomy gained from those mother countries, these literatures are still partly reflections. In the case of the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, the process of autonomy consisted, in good part, of transferring the dependency, in such a way that, beginning in the nineteenth century, other European literatures, not those of the metropole, and above all French, became the model; this had also occurred in the intensely Frenchified mother countries. These days it is necessary to take into account North American literature which became a new focus of attraction.

This is what could be called the inevitable influence, sociologically linked to our dependency, since the colonization itself and the at times brutally forced transfer of cultures. As the respected Juan Valera said at the end of the nineteenth century: "From both sides of the Atlantic, I see and admit it, in the people of the Spanish language, our dependence on the French, and, to a certain point, I believe it ineluctable; but I neither diminish the merit of the science and poetry of France so that we can shake off its yoke, nor want us, that we may become independent, to isolate ourselves and not accept the proper influence that civilized peoples must exert on one another. What I maintain is that our admiration must not be blind, nor our imitation uncritical, and that it is fitting that we take what we take with discernment and prudence" (1905, 9-10).

We must therefore confront our placental link to European literatures calmly, since it is not an option, but a quasi-natural fact. We never created original frameworks of expression, nor basic expressive techniques; we never created such things as romanticism, on the level of tendencies, or the psychological novel, on the level of genres, or indirect free style, on that of writing. And while we have achieved original results on the level of expressive realization, we implicitly recognize the dependency, so much so that we never see the diverse nativisms disputing the use of imported forms, since that would be like opposing the use of the European

languages we speak. What these nativisms required was the choice of new themes, of different sentiments. Carried to an extreme, nativism (which at this level is always ridiculous, though sociologically understandable) would have implied rejecting the sonnet, the realistic story, and free associative verse.

The simple fact of the question never having been raised reveals that, at the deepest levels of creative elaboration (those that involve the choice of expressive instruments), we always recognize our inevitable dependence as natural. Besides, seen thus, it is no longer dependency, but a way of participating in a cultural universe to which we belong, which crosses the boundaries of nations and continents, allowing the exchange of experiences and the circulation of values. And when we in turn influence the Europeans through the works we do (not through the thematic suggestions our continent presents to them to elaborate in their own forms of exoticism), at such moments what we give back are not inventions but a refining of received instruments. This occurred with Rubén Darío in relation to “modernism” (in the Spanish sense); with Jorge Amado, José Lins do Rego, Graciliano Ramos in relation to Portuguese neorealism.

Spanish-American “modernism” is considered by many as a kind of rite of passage, marking a literary coming of age through the capacity for original contribution. But, if we correct our perspectives and define the fields, we see that this is more true as a psychosocial fact than as an aesthetic reality. It is evident that Darío, and eventually the entire movement, for the first time reversing the current and carrying the influence of America to Spain, represented a rupture in the literary sovereignty Spain had exercised. But the fact is that such a thing is not accomplished with original expressive resources, but rather by adapting French processes and attitudes. What the Spaniards received was the influence of France, already filtered and translated by the Latin Americans, who in this way substituted themselves as cultural mediators.

This in no way diminishes the value of the “modernists” nor the meaning of their accomplishment, based on a deep awareness of literature as art, not document, and an at times exceptional capacity for poetic realization. But it permits the interpretation of Spanish “modernism” according to the line developed here, that is, as a historically important episode in the process of creative fertilization of dependency—which is a peculiar way in which our countries are original. The corresponding Brazilian movement was not innovative at the level of general aesthetic forms either, but it was less deceptive because, by calling its two large branches “Parnassianism” and “symbolism,” it made clear the French fountain from which they all drank.

A fundamental stage in overcoming dependency is the capacity to produce works of the first order, influenced by previous national examples, not by immediate foreign models. This signifies the establishment of what could be called, a little mechanically, an internal causality, which makes borrowings from other cultures more fruitful. Brazilian modernism derived in large part from European vanguard movements. But the poets of the succeeding generation, in the 1930s and 1940s, derived immediately from the modernists—as is the case with what is the fruit of these influences in Carlos Drummond de Andrade or Murilo Mendes. These, in turn, were the inspiration of João Cabral de Melo Neto, even though he also owes much to Paul Valéry, and then to the Spaniards who were his contemporaries. Nevertheless, these high-flying poets were not influential outside their own countries, and much less in the countries from which the original suggestions came.

This being the case, it is possible to say that Jorge Luis Borges represents the first case of incontestable original influence, exercised fully and recognized in the source countries, through a new mode of conceiving of writing. Machado de Assis, whose originality was no less from this point of view, and much greater as a vision of man, could have opened new directions at the end of the nineteenth century for the source countries. But he was lost in the sands of an unknown language, in a country then completely unimportant.

It is for this reason that our own affirmations of nationalism and of cultural independence are inspired by European formulations, an example being the case of Brazilian romanticism, defined in Paris by a group of youths who were there and who founded in 1836 the magazine *Niterói*, symbolic landmark of the movement. And we know that today contact between Latin American writers is made above all in Europe and in the United States, which, in addition, encourage, more than we do, the consciousness of our intellectual affinity.³

The case of the vanguards of the 1920s is interesting, because it marked an extraordinary liberation of expressive means and prepared us to alter sensitively the treatment of themes proposed to the writer's consciousness. As a matter of fact, these vanguards have been, throughout Latin America, elements of autonomy and self-affirmation; but what did they consist of, examined in the light of our theme? Huidobro established "creationism" in Paris, inspired by the French and the Italians; he wrote his poems in French and made his position public in French, in magazines like *L'Esprit Nouveau*. Argentine ultraism and Brazilian modernism are directly descended from these same sources. And none of this

prevented such currents from being innovative, nor those who propelled it from being, *par excellence*, the founders of the new literature: Huidobro, Borges, Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, and others.

We know, then, that we are part of a broader culture, in which we participate as a cultural variant. And that, contrary to what our grandparents sometimes ingenuously supposed, it is an illusion to speak of the suppression of contacts and influences, simply because, the law of the world now being interrelation and interaction, the utopias of isolationist originality no longer survive as a patriotic attitude that was understandable when the young nations were being born, a time that called for a provincial and umbilical position.

In the present phase, that of the consciousness of underdevelopment, the question presents itself, therefore, in a more nuanced way. Could there be a paradox here? Indeed, the more the free man who thinks is imbued with the tragic reality of underdevelopment, the more he is imbued with revolutionary aspirations—that is, with the desire to reject the political and economic yoke of imperialism and to promote in every country the modification of the internal structures that nourish the situation of underdevelopment. Nevertheless, he confronts the problem of influences more objectively, considering them as normal linkages on the level of culture.

The paradox is only apparent, since in fact it is a symptom of a maturity that was impossible in the closed and oligarchic world of jingoistic nationalisms. So much so that the recognition of linkage is associated with the beginning of the capacity to innovate at the level of expression, and to fight at the level of economic and political development. Conversely, the traditional affirmation of originality, with a sense of elementary particularism, led and leads, first, to the picturesque and, second, to cultural servility, two diseases of growth, perhaps inevitable, but nevertheless alienating.

Beginning with the aesthetic movements of the 1920s; the intense aesthetic-social consciousness of the 1930s and 1940s; the crisis of economic development and of technical experimentalism of recent years—we began to see that dependency was a step on the road to a cultural interdependency (if it is possible to use this expression, which has recently acquired such disagreeable meanings in the political and diplomatic vocabulary, without misunderstanding). This not only will give writers in Latin America an awareness of their unity in diversity, but will favor works of a mature and original tone, which will slowly be assimilated by other peoples, including those of the metropolitan and imperialist coun-

tries. The road of reflection on underdevelopment leads, in the field of culture, to transnational integration, since what was imitation increasingly turns into reciprocal assimilation.

One example among many: in the work of Mario Vargas Llosa there appears, extraordinarily refined, the tradition of the interior monologue, which, Proust's and Joyce's, is also that of Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf, of Döblin and of Faulkner. Perhaps certain modalities preferred by Vargas Llosa are due to Faulkner, but in every case he has deepened them and made them more fruitful, to the point of making them into something of his own. An admirable example maybe found in *La ciudad y los perros*: the monologue of the non-identified character leaves the reader perplexed, since it intersects with the voice of the third person narrator and with the monologue of other named characters, thus being capable of being confused with them; and, in the end, when this character reveals himself as Jaguar, it illuminates the structure of the book retrospectively, like a fuse, requiring us to rethink everything we had established about the characters. This seems like a concretization of an image Proust uses to suggest his own technique (the Japanese figure revealing himself in the water of the bowl): but it signifies something very different, on a different plane of reality. Here, the novelist of the underdeveloped country received ingredients that came to him as a cultural loan from the countries from which we are accustomed to receive literary formulas. But he adapted them profoundly to his intention, compounding from them a peculiar formula, in order to represent problems of his own country. This is neither imitation nor mechanical reproduction. It is participation in resources that have become common through the state of dependency, contributing to turn it into an interdependency.

Awareness of these facts seems integrated into the way of seeing of Latin American writers; and one of the most original, Julio Cortázar, writes interesting things on the new appearance local fidelity and world mobility present, in an interview in *Life* (vol. 33, no. 7). And, with respect to foreign influences on recent writers, Emir Rodríguez Monegal assumes, in an article in *Tri-Quarterly* (no. 13-14), an attitude that could with justification be called a critical justification of assimilation. Nevertheless, opposing points of view, linked to a certain localism appropriate to the "gentle phase of backwardness," still survive. For those who defend them, such facts as we have mentioned here are manifestations of a lack of individuality or of cultural alienation, as can be seen in an article in the Venezuelan magazine *Zona Franca* (no. 51), where Manuel Pedro González makes clear that, in his view, the true Latin American writer would be one who not only lives in his land, but who also uses its charac-

teristic themes and expresses, without any exterior aesthetic dependency, its peculiar features.

It seems, nevertheless, that one of the positive features of the era of the consciousness of underdevelopment is the overcoming of the attitude of apprehension, which leads to indiscriminate acceptance or the illusion of the originality of work and the charm of local themes. Whoever fights against real obstacles is more balanced and recognizes the fallacy of fictitious obstacles. In Cuba, that admirable vanguard of the Americas in the fight against underdevelopment and its causes, is there artificiality or flight in the surrealist suffusion of Alejo Carpentier, or in his complex transnational vision, including the thematic point of view, as it appears in *Siglo de las luces*? Is there alienation in the bold experiments of Guillermo Cabrera Infante or José Lezama Lima? In Brazil, the recent concrete poetry movement adopts inspirations of Ezra Pound and aesthetic principles of Max Bense and other Europeans; but it produces a redefinition of the national past, reading ignored poets, such as Joaquim de Sousa Andrade, a precursor lost among the Romantics of the nineteenth century, in a new way, or illuminating the stylistic revolution of the great modernists, Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade.

TAKEN AS A derivation of backwardness and the lack of economic development, dependency has other aspects that have their repercussions in literature. Recall again the phenomenon of ambivalence, translated into impulses of copying and rejection, apparently contradictory when viewed alone, but which can be seen as complementary when confronted from this angle.

Backwardness stimulates the servile copying of everything the fashion of the advanced countries sometimes offers, as well as seducing writers with migration, an interior migration, which corrals the individual in silence and in isolation. Backwardness, nevertheless, the other side of the coin, suggests what is most specific in the local reality, insinuating a regionalism that, appearing to be an affirmation of the national identity, can in truth be an unsuspected way of offering the European sensibility the exoticism it desires, as an amusement. In this way, it becomes an acute form of dependency within independence. In the present perspective, it seems that the two tendencies are mutual, born of the same situation of retardation or underdevelopment.

In its crudest aspect, the servile imitation of styles, themes, attitudes, and literary usages, it has a comical or embarrassing air of provincialism, having been the compensatory aristocratism of a colonial country. In Brazil this reaches an extreme, with the Academia de Letras, copied from

the French, installed in a building that is a reproduction of the Petit Trianon in Versailles (and the Petit Trianon is, in all seriousness, what the institution is called), with forty members who call themselves *Immortals* and, further like their French models, wear embroidered uniforms, cocked hats, and swords . . . But the functional equivalent of that academy for all of Latin America might often be, in the guise of an innovative rebellion, the imitated Bohemias of Greenwich Village or Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

Perhaps no less crude, on the other hand, are certain forms of nativism and literary regionalism, which reduce human problems to their picturesque element, making the passion and suffering of rural people, or of the populations of *color*, the equivalent of papayas or pineapples. This attitude may not only be the same as the first, but combine with it to furnish the urban European (or artificially Europeanized) reader the quasi-touristic reality it would please him to see in America. Without recognizing it, the most sincere nativism risks becoming an ideological manifestation of the same cultural colonialism that its practitioners would reject on the plane of clear reason, and that displays a situation of underdevelopment and consequent dependency.

Nevertheless, in light of the focus of this essay, it would be a mistake to utter, as is fashionable, an indiscriminate anathema against regionalist fiction, at least before making some distinctions that allow us to see it, on the level of judgments of reality, as a consequence of the effect of economic and social conditions on the choice of themes.⁴ The areas of underdevelopment and the problems of underdevelopment (or backwardness) invade the field of consciousness and the sensibility of the writer, proposing suggestions, setting themselves up as topics impossible to avoid, becoming positive or negative stimuli to creation.

In French or English literature there have occasionally been great novels whose subject is rural, such as those of Thomas Hardy; but it is clear that this is a matter of an external framework, in which the problems are the same as those of urban novels. In the main, the different modalities of regionalism are in themselves a secondary and generally provincial form, among much richer forms that occupy a higher level. Nevertheless, in such underdeveloped countries as Greece, or those that still have major underdeveloped areas, like Italy or Spain, regionalism can be a valid manifestation, capable of producing works of quality, such as those of Giovanni Verga at the end of the nineteenth century, or of Federico García Lorca, Elio Vittorini, or Nikos Kazantzakis in our time.

For this reason, in Latin America regionalism was and still is a stimulating force in literature. In the phase of “new country” consciousness,

corresponding to the situation of backwardness, it gives a place, above all, to the decoratively picturesque and functions as a discovery, a recognition of the reality of the country and its incorporation into the themes of literature. In the phase of the consciousness of underdevelopment, it functions as a premonition and then as a consciousness of crisis, motivating the documentary and, with a feeling of urgency, political engagement.

In both stages, there occurs a kind of selection of thematic areas, an attraction for certain remote regions, in which the groups marked by underdevelopment are localized. They can, without doubt, constitute a negative seduction for the urban writer, through a picturesqueness with dubious consequences; but, beyond this, they generally coincide with areas of social problems, which is significant and important in literatures as engaged as those of Latin America.

An example is the Amazonian region, which attracted such Brazilian novelists and storytellers as José Veríssimo and Inglês de Sousa, from the beginnings of naturalism, in the 1870s and 1880s, in a fully picturesque phase; it furnished the material for *La vorágine*, by José Eustasio Rivera, a half century later, situated between the picturesque and the denunciation (more patriotic than social); and it became an important element in *La casa verde* of Vargas Llosa, in the modern phase of high technical consciousness, in which exoticism and denunciation are latent in relation to the human impact that is displayed, in the construction of style, with the immanence of universal works.

It is not necessary to enumerate all the other literary areas that correspond to the panorama of backwardness and underdevelopment—such as the Andean *altiplano* or the Brazilian *sertão*. Or, also, the situations and places of the Cuban, Venezuelan, or the Brazilian Negro, in the poems of Nicolás Guillén and Jorge de Lima, in *Ecué Yamba-Ô* of Alejo Carpentier, *Pobre negro* of Rómulo Gallegos, or the *Jubiabá* of Jorge Amado. Or, still further, the man of the plains—*llano*, *pampa*, *caatinga*—the object of a tenacious compensatory idealization that comes from such Romantics as José de Alencar in the 1870s, which occurred largely among the peoples of the Río de la Plata, Uruguayans like Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Carlos Reyes, or Javier de Viana, and Argentines, from the telluric José Hernández to the stylized Ricardo Güiraldes, which tends to the allegorical in Gallegos, in Venezuela, and reaches, in Brazil, in the full phase of pre-consciousness of underdevelopment, an elevated expression in *Vidas secas* of Graciliano Ramos, without the vertigo of distance, without tournaments or duels, without rodeos or cattle roundups, without the centaurs that marks the others.

Regionalism was a necessary step, which made literature, above all the novel and the story, focus on local reality. At times it was an opportunity for fine literary expression, although the majority of its products have dated. But from a certain angle, perhaps, it cannot be said that it is finished; many of those who today attack it, at bottom practice it. The economic reality of underdevelopment maintains the regional dimension as a living object, despite the urban dimension's ever-increasing importance. It is enough to remember that some of the best writers find substance for books that are universally significant in it: José María Arguedas, Gabriel García Márquez, Augusto Roa Bastos, João Guimarães Rosa. Only in countries where the culture of big cities has absolute dominion, such as Argentina and Uruguay, has regional literature become a total anachronism.

For this reason, it is necessary to redefine the problem critically, seeing that it is not exhausted by the fact that, today, no one any longer considers regionalism a privileged form of national literary expression; among other reasons because, as was said, it can be especially alienating. But it is appropriate to think about its transformations, keeping in mind that the same basic reality has been prolonged under diverse names and concepts. In fact, in the euphoric phase of consciousness of the new country, characterized by the idea of backwardness, we had picturesque regionalism, which in various countries was inculcated as the literary truth. This modality was long ago left behind, or survives, if at all, at a subliterate level. Its fullest and most tenacious manifestation in the golden phase was perhaps the gauchoism of the countries of the Río de la Plata, while the most spurious form was certainly the sentimental Brazilian *sertanejismo* [from *sertão* = backlands] of the beginning of the twentieth century. And it is what has irremediably compromised certain more recent works, such as those of Rivera and Gallegos.

In the phase of preconsciousness of underdevelopment, through the 1930s and 1940s, we had problematic regionalism, which called itself the "social novel," "indigenism," "novel of the northeast [of Brazil]," depending on the countries and, though not exclusively regional, in good part it was. It interests us more for having been a precursor of the consciousness of underdevelopment—it being fair to record that, much earlier, writers like Alcides Arguedas and Mariano Azuela were already guided by a more realistic sense of the conditions of life, as well as of the problems of unprotected groups.

Among those who then proposed, with analytic vigor and at times in artistic forms of good quality, the demystification of reality are Miguel Angel Asturias, Jorge Icaza, Ciro Alegría, José Lins Rego, and others. All

of them, in at least some part of their work, created a kind of social novel that was still related to the universe of regionalism, including what was negative in it, such as a sentimental picturesqueness, or kitsch; these remnants of regionalism amounted at times to a schematic and banal humanitarianism, which could compromise what they wrote.

What characterizes them, still, is the overcoming of patriotic optimism and the adoption of a kind of pessimism different from what was present in naturalist fiction. While that fiction focused on the poor man as a refractory element in the march of progress, these uncovered the situation in its complexity, turning against the dominant classes and seeing in the degradation of man a consequence of economic plunder, not of his individual fate. The paternalism of *Doña Bárbara* (which is a kind of apotheosis of the good master) suddenly seems archaic, in the face of the traces of George Grosz we observe in Icaza or the early Jorge Amado, in whose books what remains of the picturesque and exotic is dissolved by social unmasking—making it a presentiment of the passage from the “consciousness of the new country” to the “consciousness of the underdeveloped country,” with the political consequences that introduces.

Even though many of these writers are characterized by spontaneous and irregular language, the weight of social consciousness acts in their styles as a positive factor, making room for the search for interesting solutions to problems of the representation of inequality and injustice. Without speaking of the consummate master Asturias is in some of his books, even a facile writer like Icaza owes his durability less to his indignant denunciations or to the exaggeration with which he characterizes the exploiters than to some stylistic resources he found to express misery. In *Huasipungo* it is a certain diminutive use of words, of the rhythm of weeping in speech, of the reduction to the level of the animal that, taken together, embody a kind of diminution of man, his reduction to elementary functions, which is associated with the linguistic stuttering to symbolize privation. In *Vidas secas*, Graciliano Ramos carries his customary verbal self-restraint to the maximum, elaborating an expression reduced to the ellipsis, to the monosyllable, to the minimum syntagmas, to express the human suffocation of the cowhand confined to minimum levels of survival.

The Brazilian case is perhaps peculiar, since here the initial regionalism, which began with Romanticism, earlier than in the other countries, never produced works considered first class, even by contemporaries, having been a secondary, when not frankly subliterate, tendency in prose and in verse. The best products of Brazilian fiction were always urban, most often stripped of any element of the picturesque; its major represen-

tative, Machado de Assis, showed since the 1880s the fragility of descriptivism and of local color, which he banished from his extraordinarily refined books. It was only beginning more or less around 1930, in a second phase that we are trying to characterize, that regionalist tendencies, already sublimated and transfigured by social realism, attained the level of significant works, while in other countries, above all Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, they were already being put to one side.

Overcoming these modalities, as well as the attacks they suffer from critics, is a demonstration of maturity. For this reason, many authors would reject as a blemish the name of "regionalist," which in fact no longer has meaning. But this does not prevent the regional dimension from continuing to be present in many works of major importance, though without any feeling of an imperative tendency, or of any requirement of a dubious national consciousness.

What we see now, from this point of view, is a blooming world of the novel marked by technical refinement, thanks to which regions are transfigured and their human contours subverted, causing formerly picturesque features to be shed and to acquire universality.

Discarding sentimentalism and rhetoric; nourished by nonrealist elements, such as the absurd, the magic of situations, or by antinaturalist techniques, such as the interior monologue, the simultaneous vision, the synthesis, the ellipsis—the novel nevertheless explores what used to be the very substance of nativism, of exoticism, and of social documentary. This would lead to proposing the distinguishing of a third phase, which could be (thinking of surrealism, or superrealism) called *superregionalist*. It corresponds to a consciousness distressed by underdevelopment and explodes the type of naturalism based on reference to an empirical vision of the world, a naturalism that was the aesthetic tendency peculiar to an epoch in which the bourgeois mentality triumphed and that was in harmony with the consolidation of our literatures.

To this superregionalism belongs, in Brazil, the revolutionary work of Guimarães Rosa, solidly planted in what could be called the universality of the region. And the fact that we have gone beyond the picturesque and the documentary does not make the presence of the region any less alive in works such as those of Juan Rulfo—whether in the fragmentary and obsessive reality of *Llano en llamas*, or in the fantasmal sobriety of *Pedro Páramo*. For this reason it is necessary to nuance drastic judgments that are basically fair, like those of Alejo Carpentier in the preface to *El reino de este mundo*, where he writes that our nativist novel is a kind of official high school literature that no longer finds readers in its places of origin. Carpentier's observation is true without doubt, if we think of the first phase

of our attempt at classification; it is true up to a certain point, if we think of the second phase; but it is not true at all if we remind ourselves that the third phase carries a certain dose of regional ingredients, due to the very fact of underdevelopment. As was said, such ingredients constitute a stylized realization of dramatic conditions peculiar to it, intervening in the selection of themes and of topics, as well as in the very elaboration of the language.

Criticism will no longer require, as previously it would have, explicitly or implicitly, that Cortázar sing the life of Juan Moreyra, or that Clarice Lispector use the vocabulary of the Brazilian backland. But it will, equally, not fail to recognize that, writing with refinement and going beyond academic naturalism, Guimarães Rosa, Juan Rulfo, Vargas Llosa practice in their works, in the whole and in their parts, as much as Cortázar or Clarice Lispector in the universe of urban values, a new species of literature, which still is connected in a transfiguring way to the very material of what was once nativism.

Notes

1. In Latin American literature in Spanish, the reaction against romanticism at the end of the nineteenth century is called modernism. In Brazilian literature, the vanguard literary movement of the 1920s is called modernism. To distinguish the two, I use quotation marks in referring to the Spanish case.

2. I owe this citation to Decio de Almeida Prado.

3. The situation today is different and, besides, was already changing when I wrote this essay (1969). In this change the role of Cuba was decisive, promoting intensely in its territory the meeting of Latin American artists, scientists, writers, and intellectuals, who could thus meet and exchange experiences without the mediation of the imperialist countries.

4. I use the term *regionalism* here in the manner of Brazilian criticism, which extends it to all the fiction linked to the description of regions and of rural customs since Romanticism; and not in the manner of most of modern Spanish-American criticism, which generally restricts it to the era more or less between 1920 and 1950.

DARCY RIBEIRO

Excerpts from *The Americas and Civilization*

Darcy Ribeiro was born in Brazil in 1922 and died in 1997. An anthropologist and statesman, he was in charge of the agrarian reform in João Goulart's government (1963–1964). His main titles include *O processo civilizatório. Etapas da evolução sociocultural* (1968), *Las Américas y la civilización. Proceso de formación y causas del desarrollo desigual de los pueblos americanos* (1969), and *El dilema de América Latina. Estructuras de poder y fuerzas insurgentes* (1971).

Evolutionary Acceleration and Historical Incorporation

The study of the ethnic formation of the American peoples and their current problems of development demands that we first analyze the great historicocultural sequences in which they began—the technological revolutions and the civilizational processes, which correspond to the principal movements of human evolution.

We regard technological revolutions as prodigious innovations. New physical means for acting on nature and the use of new sources of energy, once attained by society, raise it to a higher stage in the evolutionary process. This occurs because the society's productive capacity expands, with consequent enlargement and changes in the distribution and composition of the population; because previous forms of social stratification are rearranged; and because the ideological contents of culture are redefined. There is also a parallel increase in the society's power to dominate and exploit the peoples within its range who have not experienced the same technological progress.

Every technological revolution spreads via successive civilizational processes that promote ethnic transfigurations of the peoples affected, remodeling them by fusion of races, confluence of culture, and economic integration to incorporate them into new ethnic conformations and into new historicocultural configurations.

The civilizational processes operate in one of two opposing ways, depending on whether the affected peoples become active instruments or passive recipients of the civilizational expansion. The first way is evolutionary acceleration, which occurs in the case of those societies that, autonomously dominating the new technology, progress socially, preserving their ethnocultural profile and, sometimes, expanding it to other peoples in the form of macroethnic groups. The second way, that of historical incorporation, occurs among peoples subjugated by societies with a more highly developed technology, thus losing their autonomy and in danger of having their culture traumatized and their ethnic profile denaturalized.

From the sixteenth century on, there have been two technological revolutions responsible for setting in motion four successive civilizational processes. The Mercantile Revolution, in an initial salvationistic-mercantile impulse, activated the Iberian peoples and the Russians and drove the former to overseas conquests and the latter to continental expansion over Eurasia. In a second impulse, more maturely capitalistic, the Mercantile Revolution, after breaking down feudal stagnation in certain areas of Europe, drove the Dutch, English, and French to overseas colonial expansion. There followed the Industrial Revolution, which, beginning in the eighteenth century, rearranged the world under the aegis of the pioneer industrial nations through two civilizational processes: imperialistic expansion and socialism.

At the same time that these successive processes commenced, the societies affected by them, either actively or passively, took shape as unequal components of different sociocultural formations, according to whether they experienced an evolutionary acceleration or a historical incorporation. So it is that, in consequence of the salvationistic-mercantile expansion, the salvationistic-mercantile empires were modeled by evolutionary acceleration and their slavistic-colonial contexts, by historical incorporation. Later, in consequence of the second civilizational process, the capitalistic mercantile formations were crystallized by acceleration and their slavistic colonial, trading colonial, and immigrant colonial dependencies, by incorporation. Finally, as the fruit of the first civilizational process initiated by the Industrial Revolution, the imperialistic industrial formations emerged through acceleration and their neocolonial counterpart, by incorporation; immediately afterward, as the result of a second civilizational process, the socialistic revolutionary, socialistic evolutionary, and nationalistic modernizing formations appeared, generated as evolutionary accelerations, although with different capacities for progress.

Historical incorporation operates by means of the domination and enslavement of alien peoples, followed by the socioeconomic structuring of the nuclei into which the dominated contingents congregate, in order to install new forms of production or exploit former productive activities. The fundamental objective of this structuring is to bind the new nuclei to the expansionist society as a part of its productive system and as an object of the intentional diffusion of its cultural tradition.

In the first stage of this process the purposeful decimation of parcels of the attacked population and the deculturation of the enslaved contingents are common. In the second stage a certain cultural creativity occurs, which permits shaping, with elements taken both from the master culture and from the subjugated, a body of common understandings, indispensable to successful coexistence and work orientation. Ethnic protocells combine fragments of the two patrimonies within the framework of domination. In a third stage these protocells enculturate persons torn from their original societies, including the native population, those transferred as slaves, and, further, the very agents of domination, and the descendants of all of them.

These new cultural cells tend to mature as protoethnic groups and to crystallize as the national identity of the area's population. In a more advanced stage of the process, the protoethnos struggles for independence in order to rise from its status as a spurious cultural variant and an exotic, subordinate component of the colonialist society to that of an autonomous society served by an authentic culture.

This restoration and emancipation are won only through a process of extreme conflict in which cultural as well as social and economic factors are conjoined. It is guided by a persistent effort at political self-affirmation on the part of the protoethnos, which hopes to win autonomy. That goal attained, a national ethnos makes itself evident—or, in other terms, the group identifies itself as a human community different from all others, with its own state and government, within which framework it lives out its destiny.

When these national ethnic groups enter in their turn into expansion into vast areas, perhaps colonizing other peoples toward whom they play a dominant role, it is possible to speak of a macroethnos. However, once a certain level of ethnoimperial expansion has been attained over a dominion, the enculturative effects and the spread of the technoscientific resources on which the domination is based tend to mature the subjugated ethnic entities, giving them the capacity for autonomous life. Thus once again the satellite turns against the ruling center, breaking the bonds of domination.

The result is autonomous national ethnic groups in interaction with one another and susceptible to the impact of new technological revolutions. These national ethnic groups display a series of discrepancies and uniformities that are highly significant in understanding their subsequent life. They vary in two basic lines: (1) according to their degree of sophistication of the productive technology and the broader or more limited prospect of development thus opened to them; (2) according to the nature of the ethnic remodeling they may have experienced and that shaped them into different historicocultural configurations, that is, into different groups that, over and above specific ethnic differences, display uniformities stemming from their parallel development. In the case of the European civilizational processes, these configurations contrast and approximate peoples according to the basic profile of European or Europeanized societies.

Classic examples of civilizational processes responsible for the rise of different historicocultural configurations are to be found in the expansion of irrigation civilizations, of such thalassocracies as the Phoenician and the Carthaginian, and of the Greek and Roman slavistic-mercantile empires, all of them responsible for the transfiguration and remodeling of innumerable peoples. More recent examples are the Islamic and Ottoman expansion and, above all, the European expansion itself, both in its Iberian salvationistic-mercantile cycle and in its capitalistic-mercantile and imperialistic-industrial cycles thereafter.

Within this perspective, studies of acculturation gain a new dimension. Instead of being limited to the results of the conjunction between autonomous cultural entities, they focus on the process whereby ethnic groups are formed in the course of imperial expansion. This process can be studied wherever the colonialist agencies of expanding societies, served by a more advanced technology and by a higher culture, act on alien sociocultural contexts. Such agencies reflect the high culture only in its instrumental, normative, and ideological aspects, which are indispensable to economic exploitation, political domination, ethnic expansion, and cultural diffusion. They generally act on more backward populations that are profoundly different culturally, socially, and, at times, racially from the dominant society. In the course of subjugation, the colonialist agencies also incorporate cultural elements from the dominated people, principally the local subsistence techniques. But essentially the new nuclei take shape as variants of the expansionist national society, whose language and culture are imposed on them. A new culture is formed, tending on the one hand to perpetuate itself as a spurious culture of a dominated society, but on the other to attend to its specific needs

for survival and growth and in this way to structure itself as an autonomous ethnos.

Clearly this is not a question of autonomous cultural entities influencing each other, as in the classic studies of acculturation. What we find here is the unilateral domination of the society in expansion and the cultural asynchronism or dephasing between the colonialists and the contexts in which they implant themselves. Only in the case of interaction at the tribal level can one speak of acculturation as a process in which the respective patrimonies allow a free choice of the traits to be adopted, autonomous control of these traits, and their full integration into the old context.

The very concept of cultural autonomy requires redefinition, because one can speak of independence only in certain circumstances when it is a matter of societies affected as agents or patients in the course of civilizational processes. Neither a colonialist agency situated outside its society nor the population on which it acts constitutes an entity served by really autonomous cultures; each depends on the other and both compose, together with the metropolitan ruling center, an interdependent whole. It is hardly possible to talk of autonomy as control of one's own fate in the case of entities practicing domination, and even they, as a general thing, are part of broad sociocultural constellations whose components only partially preserve their independence. In the conjunctions resulting from ethnic expansion, there is a marked difference between the dominating entity's power to impose its tradition and the dominated subject's power to resist ethnic and cultural denaturing.

We use the term *deculturation* to designate the process operating in situations where human contingents, torn from their society (and consequently from their cultural context) through enslavement or mass removal, and hired as unskilled labor for alien enterprises, find themselves obliged to learn new ways. In these cases the emphasis is on eradicating the original culture and on the traumas that result, rather than on cultural interaction. Deculturation, in this instance, is nearly always prerequisite to the process of enculturation. Enculturation crystallizes a new body of understanding between dominators and dominated that makes social coexistence and economic exploitation viable. It expands when the socialization of the new generations of the nascent society and the assimilation of the immigrants are brought about by incorporation into the body of customs, beliefs, and values of the ethnic protocell.

Finally, we use the concept of *assimilation* to signify the processes of integration of the European into the neo-American societies whose lin-

guistic and cultural similarities—in regard to their worldview and work experiences—do not justify employing the concepts of acculturation and deculturation. Obviously, it is assumed that this participation will be limited at first and that it may be completed in one or two generations, when the immigrant descendant is an undifferentiated member of the national ethnos. As such ethnic entities admit variable forms and degrees of participation—deriving, for example, from socialization in different cultural areas or from more or less recent immigration—these differences in degree of assimilation may assume the character of different expressions of self-identification with the national ethnos.

Another concept that we have had to reformulate is that of *genuine culture* and *spurious culture*, inspired by Edward Sapir (1924) but here used in the sense of cultures more integrated internally and more autonomous in the command of their development (authentic) in opposition to traumatized cultures corresponding to dominated societies dependent on alien decisions. The members of such societies tend toward cultural alienation or, rather, toward internalization of the dominator's view of the world and themselves (spurious).

These contrasting cultural profiles are the natural and necessary results of the civilizational process itself, which, in cases of evolutionary acceleration, preserves and strengthens cultural authenticity and, in cases of historical incorporation, frustrates the preservation of the original ethos or of its redefinition—on its own terms—of the innovations coming from the colonialist entity. The destruction of the original ethos causes, irremediably, a breakdown in cultural integration, which falls below minimum levels of internal congruence, passing into alienation through feeding on undigested ideas not pertinent to its own experience but only to the efforts at self-justification of the colonial power.

The Genuine and the Spurious

In the process of European expansion millions of men originally differentiated in language and culture, each looking at the world with his own view and governing his life by his peculiar body of customs and values, were drafted into a single economic system and uniform mode of living. The multiple faces of humanity were drastically impoverished, not integrated in a new, more advanced standard, but divested of the authority of their way of life and plunged into spurious forms of culture. Subjected to the same processes of deculturation and drafted into identical systems of production under stereotyped forms of domination, all the affected peo-

ples became culturally impoverished, falling into incompressible conditions of wretchedness and dehumanization, which came to be the common denominator of the extra-European man.

Nevertheless, simultaneously a new basic human, common to all, gradually gained vigor, elevating and generalizing himself. The divergent aspirations of the multiplicity of differentiated peoples—each lost in an effort more aesthetic than efficacious to shape the human according to its ideals—joined together to incorporate all humanity in a single corpus of ideas shared in its essential characteristics by all peoples. One and the same view of the world, the same technology, the same methods of organizing society, and, above all, the same essential goals of abundance, leisure, freedom, education fulfilled the basic requisite for construction of a human civilization, no longer only European, nor even Western, nor yet merely Christian.

Every human contingent caught up in the overall system became simultaneously more uniform with the others and more divergent from the European model. Within the new uniformity ethnic variants much less differentiated than the earlier ones, but sufficiently marked to remain individual, were prominent. Each, as it became capable of insight and of proposing suitable plans for reorganizing society, progressively became capable also of looking at the European with a fresh view. At that moment they began to mature as national ethnic groups, breaking with the remote past and with their subjugation to the Europeans.

Since then the colonial context has turned on the former ruling center to inquire, not into the veracity of its truths nor into the justice of its ideals nor into the perfection of its models of beauty, but into the capacity of the overall social, political, and economic system to realize for all men these aspirations of prosperity, knowledge, justice, and beauty. The professed but never executed designs were laid bare. The conviction spread that the proclaimed object was associated with the profits being extracted, that the beauty and the truth being worshipped were lures to servile engagement, destined to create and maintain a world divided between wealth and misery.

This reductive process can be exemplified by analyzing what happened to the American peoples during their four centuries of association with agents of European civilization. The American peoples saw their societies made over from the foundations, their ethnic constitution altered, and their cultures debased by the loss of autonomy in the control of the transformations to which they were subjected. They were thus transmuted from a multiplicity of autonomous peoples with genuine tradi-

tions into a few spurious societies of alienated cultures, explicable in the uniformity of their new mode of being only by the dominating action exercised on them by an external force and will.

Both the survivors of the old American civilizations and the new societies generated as subproducts of the tropical trading posts resulted from European projects that sought to plunder accumulated riches or to exploit new veins of precious minerals or to produce sugar or tobacco, but, in all cases, to accumulate money. It was only incidentally, and nearly always unexpected and undesired by promoters of the colonial undertaking, that the constitution of new societies resulted from their effort. Only in the case of the colonies of settlers was there any intention of creating a new human nucleus, a decision sufficiently explicit and implemented to condition the spontaneous undertaking to the exigencies of that objective. Even in these cases, however, the new formations grew spurious like the rest, because they too resulted from alien projects and designs.

It is only through long-enduring covert effort in the least explicit spheres of life that these colonized societies have been reconstituting themselves as peoples. On these recondite levels their self-construction was practiced, as ethnic entities became differentiated from their parent populations, freed from the conditions imposed by colonial degradation, and as nationalities decided to gain control of their own destinies. This effort was being made not only far from the areas subject to control of the ruling authority but also against its operation, which was zealously dedicated to maintaining and strengthening the external bond and subjugation.

In spite of all these drawbacks the weaving of the new authentic socio-cultural configuration is always continuing, as a natural and necessary reaction, within the spurious. Every step forward demands immense efforts, because everything is combining to keep it unauthentic. On the economic side, dependence on foreign trade, which coordinates the greater part of activities, is assigning nearly the entire labor force to export production. In the social orbit, the stratification is crowned by its ruling stratum, which, being at once oligarchic cupola of the new society and part of the dominant class of the colonial system, acts to maintain dependence on the metropolis, the mother country. On the ideological plane, a vast apparatus of regulating and indoctrinating institutions is being carved out, coercing all according to the religious, philosophical, and political values justifying European colonialism and ethnocultural alienation. These systems of ideological coercion become stronger through introjecting into the people, and into the elite of the subjugated

society, a view of the world and of themselves serving to maintain European domination. It is this incorporation of the awareness of "the other" within oneself that determined the spurious character of the nascent cultures, impregnated in all their dimensions with exogenous values.

Besides the techniques for exploitation of gold or of sugar production, besides the installation of railroads or telegraphs, Europe exported to the peoples covered by her network of domination her whole cargo of concepts, preconceptions, and idiosyncrasies about herself and the world and even the colonial peoples themselves. The latter, not only impoverished by the plundering of their wealth and of the products of their work under the colonial regime, were also degraded when they assumed as a self-image the European view, which described them as racially inferior because they were black, indigenous, or *mestizo* and condemned to backwardness as a fatality stemming from their innate laziness, lack of ambition, tendency to lasciviousness, and so on.

Lacking control on the political and economic plane, by virtue of colonial statute, these peoples likewise lacked autonomy in the control of their cultural creativity. Any possibility of digesting and integrating into their own cultural context the innovations imposed on them was frustrated, therefore, irremediably breaking down integration between the sphere of awareness and the world of reality. In these circumstances, as they fed on undigested alien ideas not corresponding to their own experience but to the European efforts to justify rapine and to base colonial domination on moral grounds, their dependence and their alienation expanded.

Even the most enlightened strata among extra-European peoples learned to view themselves and their fellow men as a subhumanity destined to a subaltern role. Only the immigrant colonies, which carried the European racial marks through the world and settled in the climates and regions most like those of the country of origin, were not alienated by these forms of moral domination. On the contrary, they actually took pride, like the Europeans, in their whiteness, their climate, their religion, their language, also explaining by these characteristics the successes finally achieved.

For the cultures built on the old American civilizations and for those emerged from diverse environments and composed of brown or black people, these forms of alienation reinforced the backwardness from which only now is there a beginning of emancipation. In these cases the nascent culture, as far as the national ethos is concerned, was shaped by (1) the compulsory deculturation of the tribal ethnocentric concepts of the Indian and the Negro and, (2) the construction of a new concep-

tion of themselves as intrinsically inferior and therefore incapable of progress.

This spurious self-image, elaborated in the effort to find their place in the world, to explain their own experience, and to attribute to themselves a destiny, is a patchwork quilt of bits taken from their old traditions and from European beliefs, as best they could perceive them from their viewpoint as slaves or dependents.

On the plane of the national ethos this ideology explains backwardness and poverty in terms of the inclemency of the tropical climate, the inferiority of the dark races, the degradation of half-breed peoples. In the religious sphere it shapes syncretist cults in which African and native beliefs are mingled with Christianity, resulting in a variant further from the European Christian currents than any of its most combated heresies. These cults were, nevertheless, fully satisfactory for consoling man for the misery of this earthly fate and, moreover, for maintaining the system, allegorically justifying white-European domination and inducing the multitudes to a passive and resigned attitude.

On the societal plane the new ethos induces conformist attitudes toward social stratification, which explain the nobility of the whites and the subordination of the dark, or the wealth of the rich and the poverty of the poor, as natural and necessary. In the field of family organization it contraposes two family standards: (1) the dominant class, invested with all the sacraments of legitimacy and continuity, and (2) the mass strata, degraded in successive matings to anarchic matriarchal forms. In this spurious spiritual universe the very values that give meaning to life, motivating each individual to struggle for ends prescribed as socially desirable, are elaborated as justifications of rapine and idleness on the part of the oligarchic strata and as prescriptions of humility and toil for the poor.

On the racial plane the colonialist ethos is a justification of racial hierarchization, introjecting a mystified consciousness of their subjugation into the Indian, the Negro, and the *mestizo*. By it the destiny of the subordinate strata is explained through its racial characteristics and not because of the exploitation of which they are victims. In this manner the colonialist not only rules but dignifies himself at the same time he subjugates the Negro, the Indian, and their mixed breeds and debases their ethnic self-images. Besides being depersonalized—because converted into mere material requisite for the existence of the dominating stratum—the subaltern strata are alienated in the depths of their consciousness by the association of “dark” with dirtiness and “white” with cleanliness. Even the white contingents that fall into poverty, confusing themselves

with other strata by their mode of living, capitalize on the “nobility” of their color. The Negro and the Indian who gained their freedom, ascending to the status of workers, continue to bear within themselves this alienated consciousness, which operates insidiously, making it impossible for them to perceive the real character of the social relations that make them inferior. While this alienating ethos prevails, the Indian, the Negro, and the various mixed breeds cannot evade these postures, which compel them to behave socially in accordance with expectations that describe them as necessarily crude and inferior and to wish to “whiten” themselves, whether through the resigned conduct of one who knows his place in society or by selective crossing with Caucasoids in order to produce offspring of “cleaner blood.”

For the peoples caught in the nets of European expansion these conceptions shaped the burden of the spiritual heritage of Western and Christian civilization. Acting like distorting lenses, they made it impossible for the nascent cultures to create an authentic image of the world and of themselves, and this blinded them to the most palpable realities.

Despite their evident adaptation to the American climate, the colonial elites longed for the European climate, displaying their detestation of the “stifling” heat. Notwithstanding their evident predilection for the dark-skinned woman, they longed for the whiteness of the European female, in response to the ideal of feminine beauty that had been inculcated in them.

The intellectuals of the colonial peoples, immersed in such alienation, could operate only with these concepts and idiosyncrasies to explain the backwardness of their peoples as compared with the white-European capacity for progress. They got so entangled in weaving the web of these causes of misery and ignorance that they never perceived the greatest, most significant evidence set before their eyes, the European spoliation to which they had always been yoked, itself more explicative of their way of life and their destiny than any of the supposed defects that occupied them so much.

The break with this alienation by the dark peoples of America was initiated only after centuries of pioneer efforts to unmask the intrigue. Only in our own times is the crossbred national human accepted as such—critically appreciative of his own formative process, and having regained a cultural authenticity that is commencing to make of the national ethos, in all spheres, a reflection of the real image and concrete experiences of each people and a motivator of its effort to confront the backwardness and want to which they have been condemned for centuries.

The new ethos of the extra-European peoples, founded on their own

bodies of values, is gradually restoring to them the sense of their own dignity and, at the same time, the capacity to integrate all their populations into cohesive, genuine national societies. Compared with the ethos of some archaic societies that collapsed before the attack of small bands, the new formations are different in their bold self-affirmation and their capacity for defense and aggression. To perceive that difference it is enough to compare the episodes of the Spanish sixteenth-century conquest, or those of the English, Dutch, and French appropriations in Africa and Asia three centuries later, with the struggles for American peoples' independence, the struggles for freedom of the Algerians, the Congolese, the Angolans, the Mau-Mau, and especially the Vietnamese of our days, who are facing the armies of world powers and defeating them.

The emergence of that new ethos is the most conclusive symptom of the closing of the European civilizational cycle. Precisely as has happened with Roman civilization and with so many others that operated for centuries as centers of expansion over wide contexts docile to their aggressions, Western civilization is seeing the peoples of these very contexts—by dint of their ethnic maturation and the adoption of techniques and values from the expansionist civilization—turn on them. This revolution is not destructive to the former ruling center, but libertarian rebellions of subjugated peoples resuming their ethnic image, proud of it, and defining their own roles in history.

In 1819 Bolívar inquired into the role of the Latin American peoples in the dawning new civilization, comparing the Hispano-American world with the European in these terms:

When she freed herself from the Spanish monarchy, America was like the Roman Empire when that enormous mass fell dispersed in the ancient world. Each dismembering in that time formed an independent nation, in accordance with its situation or its interests. With the difference, however, that those members re-established once again their first associations. We do not even retain the vestige of what we formerly were; we are not Europeans, we are not indigenes; we are a species midway between the aboriginals and the Spaniards. Americans by birth, Europeans by right, we find ourselves in the conflict of disputing with the natives the titles of possession, and against the opposition of the invaders the right to support ourselves in the country where we were born; thus our case is all the more extraordinary and complicated. (Bolívar's Angostura speech, 15 February 1819)

This inquiry well depicts the perplexity of the neo-American who, becoming the active subject of historical action, asks: What are we among

the world's peoples, we who are neither Europe nor the West nor the original America?

Like the peoples of extra-European context, the Europeans emerging from the Roman domination were no longer what they had been. Centuries of occupation and acculturation had transformed them culturally, ethnically, and linguistically. France is a Roman cultural enterprise, as are the Iberian peoples, all having resulted from the subjugation of tribal peoples to the consul, the merchant, and the soldier of Rome, but also from the later barbarian invasions. The Germanic and Slavic tribes most resistant to Romanization were equally impelled by the Romans' civilizational process and changed themselves during that process.

The coercive power of European civilization over its area of expansion in the Americas, however, was much superior to that of the Romans. In all Europe non-Latin languages and cultures survived, and even within Latinized areas ethnic pockets subsist to attest the viability of resistance to Romanization. In the Americas, excepting the high indigenous civilizations and the island of isolation that Paraguay became—and these Europe could not completely assimilate—all was molded into the European linguistic-cultural pattern. Thus, the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the English spoken in the Americas are more homogeneous and undifferentiated than the speech of the Iberian Peninsula and of the British Isles. This linguistic-cultural-ethnic uniformity can only be explained as the result of a much more intensive and continued civilizational process, capable of assimilating and fusing together the most disparate contingents.

The post-Roman macroethnos of the Iberian peoples, which had already endured the centuries-long domination of Moors and blacks, becoming African both racially and culturally, faced a new ordeal in America. Confronted with millions of natives and other millions of blacks, it was transfigured anew, becoming darker and more acculturated, enriching its biological and cultural patrimony, but imposing its language and its fundamental cultural image on the new ethnic entities to which it would give birth. This was the achievement of some two hundred thousand Europeans who came to the Americas during the sixteenth century and conquered millions of Indians and Negroes, fusing them into a new cultural complex that draws its uniformity principally from the Iberian cement with which it was amalgamated.

Today's Latin Americans are the offshoot of two thousand years of Latinity, melted together with Mongol and Negroid populations, tempered with the heritage of many cultural patrimonies, and crystallized under the pressure of slavery and the Iberian salvationistic expansion. That is,

they are a culturally old civilization thrust on new ethnic entities. The old patrimony is expressed socially in their worst aspects: the consular and alienated posture of the dominant classes, the *caudillo* habits of command and taste for personal power, the profound social discrimination between rich and poor, which separates men more than the color of their skins, the lordly customs, such as enjoyment of leisure, the cult of courtesy between patricians, scorn of work, the conformity and resignation of the poor with their poverty. The new is expressed in the assertive energy emerging from the oppressed strata, at last awakened to the unsanctified, eradicable nature of the misery in which they have always lived; in the increasingly enlightened and proud assumption of the crossbreed ethnic image; in the equating of the causes of backwardness and want, and in rebellion against the existing order.

The impact between these two conceptions of life and society is Latin American social revolution on the march—a revolution that will one day restore to the dark-skinned peoples of America the creative impetus lost centuries ago when their Iberian intruders were slow in integrating themselves into industrial civilization, thus entering into decadence, a revolution that will signify the entrance of the Latin Americans into the world as peoples who have a specific contribution to make to civilization. This contribution will be based, essentially, on their ethnic configuration and on its potentialities, which will make them more human because they have incorporated more of man's racial and cultural facets; more generous, because they remain open to all influences and have been inspired in a panracial integrationist ideology; more progressive, because their future depends on the development of knowledge and technology; more optimistic, because, emerging from exploitation and penury, they know that tomorrow will be better than today; freer because they do not base their national projects for progress on the exploitation of other peoples.

National Ethnic Typology

The extra-European peoples of the modern world can be classified in four great historicocultural configurations. Each of them comprises highly differentiated populations sufficiently homogeneous in their basic characteristics and in the developmental problems facing them to be legitimately treated as different categories. They are the "Witness Peoples," the "New Peoples," the "Transplanted Peoples," and the "Emerging Peoples."

The Witness Peoples are the modern representatives of old original

civilizations conquered in the European expansion. The New Peoples are represented by the American peoples formed in these last centuries as a subproduct of the European expansion through the fusion and acculturation of indigenous, black, and European populations. The Transplanted Peoples are the implanted European populations with their original ethnic profile, language, and culture preserved. Emerging Peoples are the new nations of Africa and Asia whose populations ascend from a tribal level or from the status of mere colonial trading posts to that of national ethnic groups.

These categories are founded on two premises: (1) the peoples composing them are what they are today in consequence of the European mercantile expansion and the reorganization of the world by industrially based civilization; (2) these peoples, formerly racially, socially, and culturally different, have a hybrid cultural inventory. They offer sufficient biological uniformity to warrant treatment as distinct configurations explicative of their mode of being.

These configurations must not be taken as independent sociocultural entities, because they lack a minimum of integration to give them internal order and permit them to act as autonomous units; nor should they be confused with econosocial formations,¹ because they do not represent necessary stages in the evolutionary process, but only conditions under which it operates. The positively acting entities are the particular societies and cultures composing them, and particularly the national states into which they are divided. These constitute the operative units, both for economic interaction and for social and political order, and also the real national ethnic frames within which the destiny of the peoples is fulfilled.

The sociocultural formations are categories of another type—such as mercantile capitalism and slavistic colonialism—equally meaningful but different from those here described.

It must be emphasized, even so, that the proposed historicocultural configurations constitute congruent categories of peoples, based on the parallelism of their historical process of national ethnic formation and on the uniformity of their social characteristics and the problems facing them. In terms of these broad configurations of peoples—rather than of the nationalities, or the respective racial compositions, or climatic, religious, and other differentiating factors—each extra-European people of the modern world can be explained. How did it develop in its current form? Why has it undergone such differentiated historical processes of socioeconomic development? What factors in each case have acted to ac-