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## Stages and Features of Philosophy in Latin America

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**Abstract.** The development of philosophy in Latin America has also constituted, as in other latitudes, a process of mental and counter-hegemonic emancipation, one that involves overcoming alienating mechanisms. It has not been a simple mimetic reproduction of European philosophy. Latin American thinkers have addressed specific problems of their respective historical contexts using universal epistemological instruments and, at the same time, have contributed valuable ideas to the universal culture. The main stages, features, and representatives of philosophy in Latin America are synthetically analyzed. The existence of philosophy in its original civilizations is questioned. The debates on the human condition of the Indigenous people in scholasticism stand out; the contributions of Enlightenment philosophy to the development of science, education, and the promotion of independence; the roles of spiritualism, eclecticism, and romanticism in the ideological debate between conservatism and liberalism; the reasons for the progressive character and specificity of *sui generis* positivism, different from the European one; anti-positivism, which promotes a better understanding of man and Latin American cultural identity; the irrationalism of phenomenology and existentialism; particularities of Marxist philosophy, analytic philosophy, Christian philosophy, liberation philosophy, postmodernist philosophy and decolonial philosophy. The general characteristics of philosophy in the development are specified, especially practical and counter-hegemonic humanism, as a substantial part of Western and universal culture. There are multiple proofs of Latin American philosophical richness that the research of philosophical historiography demonstrates. One of its essential features has been the practical humanism, the authenticity and counter-hegemonic character of the ideas of its leading representatives, which have become a substantial part of Western and universal culture.

**Keywords:** Latin American philosophy, practical humanism, authenticity, counter-hegemony

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## Этапы и особенности развития философии в Латинской Америке

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**Аннотация.** Развитие философии в Латинской Америке, как и в других странах, также представляет собой процесс ментальной эмансипации и борьбы с гегемонией, который предполагает преодоление механизмов отчуждения. Это не было простым подражательным воспроизведением европейской философии. Латиноамериканские мыслители обращались к специфическим проблемам своих исторических контекстов, используя универсальные эпистемологические инструменты, и в то же время внесли ценный вклад в развитие мировой культуры. Проведен синтетический анализ основных этапов, особенностей философии в Латинской Америке и ее представителей. Существование философии в ее самобытных цивилизациях ставится под сомнение. Особое внимание уделяется дискуссиям о человеческом статусе коренных народов в схоластике; вкладу философии Просвещения в развитие науки, образования и продвижение независимости; роли спиритуализма, эклектики и романтизма в идеологических дебатах между консерватизмом и либерализмом; причинам прогрессивного характера и специфики позитивизма *sui generis*, отличного от европейского; антипозитивизм, который способствует лучшему пониманию человека и латиноамериканской культурной идентичности; иррационализм феноменологии и экзистенциализма; особенности марксистской философии, аналитической философии, христианской философии, философии освобождения, философии постмодернизма и философии деколонизации. Определены общие характеристики философии в ее развитии, особенно практического и контргегемонистского гуманизма, как существенной части западной и универсальной культуры. Исследования философской историографии свидетельствуют о богатстве латиноамериканской философии. Одной из ее существенных черт является практический гуманизм, аутентичность и антигегемонистский характер идей ее ведущих представителей, которые стали существенной частью западной и общечеловеческой культуры.

**Ключевые слова:** латиноамериканская философия, практический гуманизм, аутентичность, контргегемония

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## **Introduction**

The development of philosophy in Latin America has also constituted, as in other latitudes, a mental and counter-hegemonic emancipation process of overcoming alienating mechanisms. It has not been a simple mimetic reproduction of European philosophy.

Since colonial times, there has been a permanent dialogue with thinkers from other cultures, among which the European culture stands out, but not exclusively with it [1. P. 34].

Latin American thinkers have employed universal epistemological frameworks to pose specific problems within their respective historical contexts and contribute valuable ideas to the broader cultural landscape.

Most of its most authentic representatives have been characterized by their practical humanism. Marx's use of this term in his early works presupposes an active commitment to defending certain human groups, including indigenous people, slaves, workers, and women. It differs from abstract humanism as it is not limited to simple philanthropic statements.

## **Philosophy in the Native Peoples of America?**

In the most consolidated pre-Columbian cultures, there were significant institutions and a preliminary structure of social classes encompassing economic, political, legal, educational, and religious aspects.

The most advanced thinkers reached the threshold of philosophical reflection through their anthropological reflections, as seen in Mexico with Netzacualcoyotl. Numerous researchers [2] recognize multiple philosophical expressions in these native peoples [3. P. 15]. Others consider that they only developed a cosmological and anthropological thought, but not a correctly philosophical one, according to what is accepted as such in the West [4]. They cultivated their forms of rationality [5. P. 42], the same as other ancient civilizations [6. P. 81].

The predominant naturalism conceived of man as organically articulated to everything that exists as an active and decisive being in the evolution of social processes. They distinguished their superior potentialities concerning nature, which had to be respected.

## **Latin American Scholasticism**

Theocentric and logicist scholasticism would be renewed in Latin America [7. P. 45]. It was not a simple copy of European ones. Bartolomé de las Casas, Alonso de la Veracruz, and Antón de Montesinos led the debate on the human condition of American aborigines. His practical humanism in protecting the Indigenous people stood out.

Dominican Thomism, Franciscan Scotism, and Jesuit Suarism predominated, subordinating philosophy to theology. They promoted disputes about divine grace, nominalism, realism, free will, the distinction between human and holy will, perfection, the relationship between the soul and the body, sin, and salvation, among other topics. They confronted Christianity and aboriginal religions [8. P. 42].

The Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz stood out in the logical [9] and astronomical debates. Heterodoxy is intrinsic to Latin American philosophy [10. P. 61].

### **The philosophy of the Enlightenment in Latin America**

Some freedoms allowed by Charles III's "enlightened despotism" at the end of the eighteenth century favored a certain "elective reformism" [11. P. 130] over modern philosophy.

The Latin American Enlightenment criticized scholasticism, superstitions, and the predominant obscurantism. It promoted scientific research and the reevaluation of pre-Columbian cultures [12. P. 89], and the questioning of African slavery. It contributed to promoting industry, as well as educational and cultural institutions, which favored bourgeois relations.

Epistemological debates centered on the method question between empiricism and rationalism, stimulating the theory of learned ignorance [13. P. 207–241]. Benito Díaz de Gamarra, Francisco Xavier Clavijero, and Francisco Xavier Alegre stood out in Mexico; José Agustín Caballero, Félix Varela, and José de Luz y Caballero in Cuba; José Félix De Restrepo and José Celestino Mutis in Colombia; Francisco Javier Espejo in Ecuador, Alfonso Briceño in Venezuela, Juan Manuel Fernández de Agüero, Juan Crisóstomo Lafinur, and Diego Alcorta in Argentina, and Feliciano Souza Nunes and Matias Aires in Brazil [14].

The thriving Renaissance spirit, which promoted ideas of profound practical humanist and counter-hegemonic content, was definitively felt in the eighteenth century, indicating the increasing authenticity that philosophical reflection would reach in Latin America.

The modern philosophies of equality, freedom, secularization, tolerance, and democracy, among others, shaped the leaders of independence: Simón Bolívar, José de San Martín, Bernardo O'Higgins, José María Morelos, and José Martí.

The pseudoscientific ideas of phrenology [15. P. 92–93], derived from the prestige achieved by biology, were disseminated, as were utilitarianism and ideology [16. P. 67]. The Venezuelan Simón Rodríguez and the Argentine Esteban Echeverría promoted utopian socialism.

Sensualism, empiricism, rationalism, and scientism were promoted from the beginning of the nineteenth century and linked to new scientific discoveries and technological advances.

The Enlightenment stimulated humanist ideas, some of which were linked to the demands of the popular sectors [17. P. 15] and laid the premises for currents of a materialist and scientific nature that later led to positivism.

### **Spiritualism and Eclecticism in Latin American Philosophy**

Eclecticism and spiritualism had just begun as refined manifestations of new forms of metaphysics and conservatism. Pessimism, obscurantism, and mysticism tried to re-establish the privileged place lost by scholasticism. Spiritualism represented a departure from the most advanced ideas of the Enlightenment.

Articulated in liberalism, romanticism advocated for freedom, individuality, Latin American cultural identity, and patriotism. Linked to literary expressions, he found sympathizers in Juan Bautista Alberdi in Argentina, Francisco Bilbao in Chile, and Ricardo Palma in Peru.

Krausism's influence was significant in Argentina, Uruguay, and Mexico, particularly in the field of philosophy of law. It was welcomed by the Puerto Rican Eugenio María de Hostos [18] and José Martí, although both were not trapped by his influence or positivism [19. P. 173–201]. In Cuba, Hegel had some promoters, including Rafael Montoro and José del Perojo, whom Kant influenced.

Catholic philosophy gained strength as “Catholic liberalism” or “social Christianity.” It would prepare the ground for the revitalization of fideism and irrationalism to oppose positivism or any expression of materialism or rationalism.

### **Positivism suigeneris**

Positivism was the philosophy that held the most tremendous significance in Latin America from the second half of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century. It also had an impact on scientific, educational, political, legal, artistic, and even religious life.

One of his greatest merits was to confront the speculative and idealistic currents that had taken off.

Among its prominent representatives are the Cuban Enrique José Varona, the Argentine José Ingenieros, and the Mexican Justo Sierra. It was an optimistic philosophy, full of confidence in man, in the creative capacity of his thought, in culture, in science, in progress and industrial development; an ally of liberalism and defender of bourgeois democracy. These ideas were very progressive in Latin America [20. P. 13–232] in the struggles between the retrograde oligarchies and the nascent national bourgeoisie.

The formulation of this ideology was developed under the presuppositions of the emergence of pre-monopoly capitalism in the nineteenth century, and for this reason, when the monopolies of the imperialist stage emerged, liberal ideas were frustrated.

Latin American positivism was *sui generis* in that it did not identify itself with the thesis on the possible weakening of philosophy and practically its dissolution with the rise of the particular sciences. At all times, the Latin American positivists had a high esteem for philosophical knowledge, which is why they based the methodological character and general conception of the world that always accompanies philosophy in permanent correspondence with the development of the particular sciences, without this meaning an attack on their object of reflection.

Positivist philosophy in Latin America confronted the remnants of scholasticism, as well as the new forms adopted by idealism, including eclecticism, Krausism, and neo-Thomism. This anti-metaphysical stance hindered him from understanding the values of both classical German philosophy and Marxism, especially in terms of the dialectical approach, which did not differentiate him from other speculative philosophy.

Latin American positivism did not mean simply adapting a European philosophy to these latitudes [21. P. 23]. Still, creative incorporation and reception with profound original, dissimilar, and renewing elements, which constituted a specific way of overcoming said philosophy in the context of this continent, as a concrete expression of the development of the struggle between materialism and philosophical idealism.

The Latin American positivists did not escape the reductionist approach [22], which means social Darwinism; however, they did not always share the racist theses that derive from such conceptions. In cases where they identified with some of them, they saw in education and other civil institutions the possibility of bridging the differences between various human groups.

Positivist philosophy was an authentic manifestation of the Latin American thought and cultural environment of its time.

### **Antipositivism in Latin America**

The twentieth century in Latin America began with an antipositivist reaction. Its main representatives were the Mexicans José Vasconcelos and Antonio Caso, the Dominican Pedro Henríquez Ureña, the Uruguayans José Enrique Rodó and Carlos Vaz Ferreira, the Argentine Alejandro Korn, the Peruvian Alejandro Deústua, and the Chilean Enrique Molina. They considered themselves neo-idealists, vitalists, and historicists, managing a new approach to cultivating humanism and philosophy.

They criticized the anthropological reflection of positivism as insufficient, although they recognized its contributions to Latin American culture. They rejected his hyperbolization of scientific knowledge in the valuation of human life. As heir to rationalism and empiricism, he had extrapolated man's logical and epistemological potentialities to the detriment of an integral understanding of human life, which presupposes axiological, irrational, emotional, volitional, and

passionate elements. For this reason, irrationalism gained strength in the same way as religious philosophy, like neo-Thomism.

The antipositivists were confronted with the exaggerated biologism implied by conceiving human relations as not very differentiated from those of the animal world. Without disqualifying the advances of the natural sciences, particularly evolutionary theories, this new generation would avoid conflicts with the Church and religion, as had been frequent during the era of anticlerical positivism.

The proclaimed *sciences of the spirit* (social sciences) were intended to debut to demonstrate the inadequacy of logicism and positivist empiricism. The axiological concern would open new paths in the eternal philosophical search for a possible human nature. The aesthetic ferment of human praxis would be taken to privileged planes to demonstrate the qualitative superiority of human beings over inferiors.

The insistence on the specific circumstantiality of human action presupposed the promotion of historicism as a method of analysis of social development that differed from any a priori construction from which dialectics was not excluded in such a critique.

Their concern for the self, the endogenous, and the historical context in philosophical analysis, together with the counter-hegemonic ideological components that animated this new philosophical generation, led them to a severe critique of any form of cultural xenophilia that implied underestimation of the creative capacities of Latin American peoples. This new generation is incorrectly considered the “founders of Latin American philosophy” [23. P. 32]. This presupposes ignoring the philosophical dignity of all the above.

The confrontation with *Nordomania*<sup>1</sup> led to a considerable impulse to the adequate valuation of the national, popular, and Latin American, to the vindication of Bolívar’s project of integration of these countries, and to the appreciation of Martí’s proposals to stimulate the knowledge of Latin American cultural manifestations to promote the struggle for the conquest of the dignity of their peoples.

This element would emerge differently in the first antipositivist generation and the one that continued that work. The intellectual work of the Spanish émigré José Gaos and the Mexican Leopoldo Zea stands out, as they constituted a driving force behind the study of Latin American philosophical thought.

The positivist generation was unconcerned if its philosophical activity had Latin American roots. In some ways, they contributed to elevating the culture of this region, as their concern for the socioeconomic and cultural problems of their respective countries was evident. However, the antipositivist generation was more concerned with vindicating national and regional philosophical heritage values.

The antipositivist generation can be attributed to a more professional attitude [24] and a dedication to philosophical activity. It is not surprising that the twentieth

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<sup>1</sup> A term used by Rodó to refer to the exaggerated fondness of some Latin Americans for the culture of the countries of the North, especially Europe and North America.

century has given birth to new philosophers of importance, who, like others of previous times, impress researchers with the theoretical flight of their ideas and their degree of originality and authenticity.

### **Marxist Philosophy in Latin America**

Among the most relevant philosophical traditions of the Latin American twentieth century is the Marxist one. Its precursors did not give special place to questions of an epistemological, ontological, or methodological nature, although they were sometimes forced to do so. They were more concerned with studying the specific problems of each country and at each time and with formulating alternatives for social development that they considered appropriate for that region and time [25].

The transfer to the Latin American intellectual sphere of some of the controversies that had been taking place since the 1940s and 1950s within the so-called "Western Marxism" – as opposed to Marxism-Leninism emanating from the Soviet bloc – on some philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic issues, increasingly shook the environment in which Marxism would develop in Latin America.

The rise of the critical philosophical positions of Marxism to varying degrees, sometimes to try to permeate it as Sartrean existentialism and other times to replace it as neo-positivist philosophy, analytic philosophy, neo-Thomism, etc., led to Marxism being placed to a greater extent at the center of intellectual debate [26] and expressing itself in various ways, as in the case of its interpretation as *a philosophy of praxis* developed by the outstanding Spanish-Mexican Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez.

Unlike most other philosophies, Marxism has been characterized by more effectively articulating the country or region's political, economic, social, and scientific practices in which it develops. Latin America is no exception to this rule [27. P. 97].

Although creativity and the contributing elements that enrich this theory do not always prevail because simplifying and dogmatic interpretations may have had a specific weight at times, reflection on them, when they have been genuinely critical on the part of the authentic representatives of Marxism, has contributed to their theoretical enrichment [28]. In this regard, Latin America is no exception either.

Latin America has generated on the philosophical level creative personalities of Marxism of international recognition, such as in Argentina José Aricó and Juan Carlos Portantiero; in Peru, José Carlos Mariátegui; in Mexico, Eli de Gortari and Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez; in Venezuela, Ludovico Silva; in Ecuador, Bolívar Echeverría; in Cuba, Zayra Rodríguez, and Fernando Martínez, etc.

The Latin American history of the twentieth century can be written from any ideological perspective, either attacking Marxism or identifying with it [29], but never ignoring its practical and counter-hegemonic humanist intellectual significance, primarily philosophical, for this region and much less the political



effect of the activity of those who have been active in organizations of this nature or have independently carried out their political and cultural work inspired by their assumptions.

### **Phenomenology and existentialism**

The antipositivist reaction conditioned the environment for the reception of phenomenology and existentialism. The arrival of numerous Spanish republican philosophers who emigrated to America also favored the spread of these currents. The theme of the determination of the Latin American Being occupied the attention of Latin American philosophers from these phenomenological perspectives, but with their criteria, it was aimed at revitalizing Latin American philosophical life [30].

The critique of the objectification of values occupied the attention of Carlos Astrada in Argentina, who began in existentialism but finally turned to Marxism. Philosophical anthropology, as a field of study on the person from a phenomenological perspective, was cultivated by Francisco Romero and Miguel Ángel Virasoro, who devoted special attention to the theme of freedom. Eugenio Puciarelli researched the crisis of reason and the issues of time, language, and the essence of science.

In Bolivia, Guillermo Francovich analyzed the theme of values [31] and the history of philosophy in that country and Brazil. Manfredo Kempf Mercado also dealt with axiology. In Chile, Félix Schwartzman worked on the theme of freedom. In Peru, Alberto Wagner de Reyna, influenced by Catholic existentialism, studied the themes of death and freedom. Francisco Miró Quesada is considered to have best-explained phenomenology in Spanish, although he later devoted himself to analytical philosophy, focusing on issues of logic and hermeneutics. Augusto Salazar Bondy cultivated axiology.

In Brazil, Miguel Reale analyzed the notions of intentionality and the world of life. Vicente Ferreira da Silva studied the essence of humanism and freedom from existentialism. In Colombia, Julio Enrique Blanco analyzed Husserl's ideas and the demiurges of history; Rafael Carrillo tried to overcome legal axiology by analyzing liberty as a right of preference; Danilo Cruz Vélez, attempted a metaphysical foundation of culture and human existence; Daniel Herrera Restrepo analyzed the philosophy of history and the functions of the philosopher; Guillermo Hoyos Vásquez analyzed the relationship between the teleology of history and consciousness in Husserl and Carlos Bernardo Gutiérrez oriented towards hermeneutics.

In Venezuela, Juan David García Bacca sparked interest in existentialist philosophy and the philosophy of science; Ernesto Mayz Vallenilla dedicated himself to the philosophy of science and technology from a phenomenological perspective. In Mexico, Antonio Caso stands out with his analyses of essences and values; Eduardo García Máynez on logic and values; José Gaos promoted

phenomenological research and studies on philosophy in Latin America; Eduardo Nicol on life situations, historicism, and existentialism; Emilio Uranga on the being of the Mexican and the logic of philosophy as a personal confession and Luis Villoro, on indigenism, power, and values.

In Cuba, Jorge Mañach analyzed the topics of utilitarianism, culture, and philosophy of life; Humberto Piñera Yera examined existentialism and values; and Rafael García Bárcena analyzed the values and philosophy of the structures. In Puerto Rico, Monelisa Pérez Marchand, drawing from existentialism, has analyzed the relationship between philosophy and literature; Elena Lugo has explored personalism and axiology; and Carlos Ramos Mattei has examined values. In the Dominican Republic, Andrés Avelino stands out in the essence and existence of being, and Edikson Minaya in hermeneutics and the phenomenology of everyday life.

The above references demonstrate that phenomenology and existentialism have attracted adherents in Latin America who are skilled in applying these methods to understand the region's respective social, political, and cultural realities. In which they have developed their academic work [32].

### **Analytic Philosophy in Latin America**

From the 1940s onwards, Latin American philosophical life experienced accelerated growth, resulting in a proliferation of schools with various tendencies, especially after the Second World War. Phenomenology and existentialism experienced a relative boom linked to the increased humanistic and axiological concern.

Until that moment, the strong antipositivist tendency had prevailed and began to weaken. There is a certain tendency to recover the image of scientific philosophy in the style of analytics. Some Latin Americans at that time, such as the Argentine Mario Bunge and Francisco Miro Quesada, among others, were oriented along these neopositivist paths, although they later criticized them.

Thus, some followers of the logical positivism promoted by the Vienna Circle appeared, who would gain greater strength from the sixties, with significant cultivators such as the Mexicans Luis Villoro and Fernando Salmerón; the Brazilian Newton da Costa; the Argentines Eduardo Rabossi and Osvaldo Guariglia; the Mexicans Enrique Villanueva, León Olive, etc.

New forms of reductionism emerged, which, rather than reducing everything to the biological world, as was the case with old positivism, now appear to be attempts at exaggerated logicism and to dissolve philosophy exclusively into the language of science. This is the period in which semiotics develops, and with it, semantics, pragmatics, syntactic, and the so-called linguistic or semantic positivism forms appear.

With the introduction of analytics, a series of changes took place in the whole of Latin American philosophical life [33] because it was based on the assumption

that it was not so much interested in reality as in what was logically and scientifically expressed about reality. Of course, this attitude implies serious consequences for political and social praxis.

According to this criterion, the philosopher does not necessarily have to consider an analysis of the world but what philosophers express about it and particularly the rigor of the categorial and epistemological apparatus that they use, in a word, the language of science and philosophy. These theses originate in Anglo-Saxon empiricism and the subjectivism accompanying it.

The most common features of analytic philosophy are: 1) the concern for language and the clarification of the meaning of language; 2) the interest in logic and its use in philosophical discourse; 3) a very positive attitude towards science; and 4) the premonition that non-empirical propositions of a non-syntactic type are problematic. According to his criteria, everything is directed to try to build a language of the sciences that is as consistent as possible, as articulated as possible, to a logic of demonstration, of argumentation, which serves for the philosopher to advance and establish himself on solid foundations.

Analytic philosophers have also contributed in some way to the development of science and logic and have developed a type of philosophy that can be of great use in certain aspects for the professional enrichment of the theoretical rigor of philosophical and scientific argumentation. However, with their excessive concern for the language of science, they have forgotten that philosophy cannot be nourished simply by abstract concepts, but that these must be instruments for the understanding of the concrete totality that serves to understand better the world in which we live and try to transform it into something better.

Some analytic philosophers have recognized the disastrous consequences that an attitude of axiological neutrality and distancing from reality entails by avoiding its identification with the social and political circumstances in which philosophy is engendered. In recent years, a particular concern has arisen in ethics and political philosophy regarding certain contemporary social issues.

### **Christian philosophy and the philosophy of liberation**

In the last century, Latin American philosophical production was considerably enriched by the emergence of multiple expressions and tendencies representing diverse epistemological and ideological orientations.

Christian philosophy was revived in certain private universities and confessional institutions. Metaphysics retook flight in specific academic spaces. In Colombia, it has been supported by Rafael Carrasquilla and Miguel Antonio Caro, in Peru, Víctor Andrés Belaunde and Alberto Wagner de Reyna; in Mexico, Antonio Gómez Robledo, José Manuel Gallegos Rocafull and Mauricio Beuchot, – who has developed new proposals for hermeneutics – [34] and in Argentina by Mamerto Esquiú and Octavio Derisi.

As an attempt to overcome materialism and idealism, as well as capitalism and socialism in a third-party stance [35. P. 58], the philosophy of liberation emerged in Argentina at the beginning of the seventies.

Its antecedents are to be found in the authenticity of the movement for the study of Latin American philosophical ideas promoted by Leopoldo Zea. Other sources are found in Peruvian Augusto Salazar Bondy, for his theory of domination, and Argentinian Arturo Andrés Roig [36], as well as liberation theology [37. P. 123], with Juan Carlos Scannone [38], who linked philosophy and religiosity to popular wisdom.

Enrique Dussel became one of its fundamental representatives [39], along with Dina Picotti, Mario Casalla, and Carlos Cullen. Horacio Cerutti has been one of its sharpest critics.

It is characterized by proposing the investigation of Latin American thought and culture as a means to explore the identity and cultural integration of these peoples [40].

Most liberation philosophers insist on the need to establish a higher project of a more humane society. In this sense, they consider that savage capitalism has already demonstrated its inability to achieve it, so the elaboration of new social variants is required. His analyses will impact the economic and sociological level of dependency theory.

Despite the diversity of classifications that can be applied to the different subgroups or tendencies that comprise this current and their distinguishing elements, there are some common elements regarding the search for social alternatives among Latin American peoples. The primary concern is that the model of dependent capitalism imposed on Latin American countries does not guarantee genuine opportunities for development and dignity for the people of these lands. This means that they agree that the current socioeconomic and political order must be substantially modified. Although not everyone is pleased to admit that a properly socialist model should replace it, they do recognize greater possibilities in a society in which social control and regulation of the distribution of wealth prevail, favoring the poorest popular sectors.

Its counter-hegemonic practical humanism and authenticity are revealed in its defense of the human conditions of the indigenous population, as well as women and other marginalized and discriminated sectors [41]. It constitutes one of the expressions of the continuity of the best humanist and desalinating tradition that has characterized Latin American thought throughout its history.

### **Postmodernist and Decolonial Philosophies**

Postmodernist philosophy had some cultivators in Latin America at the end of the twentieth century but declined at the beginning of the twenty-first century. He was characterized by doubting the autonomy of reason, excessive trust in science, and the notion that history unfolds in a linear and progressive process, as well as

the paradigms of equality, fraternity, liberty, and democracy [42]. Some of its representatives were Mauricio González, Arturo Palafox, and Hortensia Cuellar. A critical overcoming of the modernity-postmodernity of capitalism through a transition to transmodernity and the overcoming of Westernness has been proposed by Enrique Dussel and Yamandú Acosta [43. P. 88].

Decolonial philosophy considers colonialism-shaped mentalities characterized by an excessive cult of rationality, a concept proposed by Western culture. These mentalities are characterized by ignoring the epistemic proposals of others, who are considered marginal or peripheral to the dominant discourse.

In elaborating epistemological proposals that confront the dominant Eurocentrism in the social sciences, Aníbal Quijano has stood out as someone for whom a "coloniality of power" occurred during these centuries.

Santiago Castro-Gómez, Arturo Escobar, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Dora Fried, Catherine Walsch, Edgar Lander, Walter Mignolo, Eduardo Mendieta, and Ramon Grosfoguel have critically questioned the paradigm of domination, not only politically and economically but also epistemologically.

They propose the need to indiscipline the social sciences [44. P. 17] for which the greatest challenge of the social sciences is no longer to distance themselves from the other *epistemes* to guarantee greater objectivity of knowledge but to approach them, for which they assure that the subordination of thinking and knowledge, however, it is not resolved by integrating the "other" into the dominant epistemology.

The decolonial discourse openly declares itself counter-hegemonic and critical of the epistemological and cultural proposals generated by Western thinkers, whom it considers, in one way or another, epigones of the old and new forms of colonial and neocolonial domination based on racist assumptions and Eurocentric interpretations of social development, especially since the advent of modernity.

Based on these assumptions, he proposes an "epistemology of the South," which, despite the validity of some of his proposals and regardless of the valuable ideological stance of confronting the new imperial powers in the political, economic, scientific-technological, communicative spheres, etc., entails the danger of confronting Eurocentrism from another ethnocentric or socio-centric externalism, even if it is declared that it is not their intention.

This criterion has led to the development of theories on specific features of a "philosophy of the South" or "thinking from the South". No one should doubt that socio-cultural, geographical, and even climatic factors in some way condition the different perspectives on the reality of men and women from other latitudes. This fact is reflected in literature, the arts, religiosity, customs, ethical, political, legal, and philosophical criteria, among others, but reaching the criterion that the rationality sustaining scientific knowledge also depends fundamentally on such perspectives is questionable.

## Current features of philosophy in Latin America

The research of philosophical historiography demonstrates multiple proofs of Latin American philosophical richness. One of its essential features has been the practical humanism, authenticity, and counter-hegemonic character of the ideas of its leading representatives, which have become a substantial part of Western and universal culture.

What makes a thinker or an idea part of the history of Latin American philosophy is, in the first place, the theoretical rigor of its intellectual production. Only in the second place is the condition of being produced in some way articulated to the Latin American cultural heritage, not for the simple fact that its author is a native of these lands – since sometimes they are immigrants who enrich Latin American culture – but because it corresponds to the level of epistemological, axiological and ideological demands of the Latin American context in which it is generated.

Most Latin American thinkers who have assumed philosophical ideas from Europe or other regions have done so without prejudice, that is, without too much caution about the possibility of being accused of being mimetic. When they have found an idea of value, they have made it their own and have defended it with the same zeal as its author. They have cared more about the usefulness and epistemological validity of any idea than the stamp of provenance of its manufacture.

Until not long ago, it was relatively easy to classify Latin American philosophers as positivists, Marxists, phenomenologists, Thomists, existentialists, and analytics, among others. Then, every one of these modalities, among others, has had their expression here in most cases in a *sui generis* way since they have not been mere copiers of finished formulas. However, they have assumed these currents more as methods of reflection than as finished systems – at present the issue of classifications is not so simple.

It has become increasingly common not only the usual evolution in thinkers who, upon learning of new, more finished philosophical elaborations, make them their own and abandon some previous ones but also a less sectarian attitude and, therefore, less hostile to the value of ideas coming from other traditions of thought than those subscribed to.

The spirit of tolerance, at least in the Latin American philosophical world, has been gaining ground in recent times, announcing the possibility of the completion of modernity. However, unfortunately, there are still some impregnable chapels isolated from certain philosophical positions that evade dialogue other than with their mirror. Fortunately, such attitudes are the exception rather than the rule.

A brief characterization of the current situation of Latin American philosophy has to take into account the professionalism of the majority of philosophy executives, which is expressed in their training as graduates in this specialty or postgraduate studies, doctorates, mastery of foreign languages, fundamentally

modern, and good command of computerized bibliographic search and communication tools.

It is also necessary to note the pluralism of currents and positions within each, leading to the idea of the end of philosophical empires. It is no longer so easy for philosophy to acquire expressions of marked predominance over others as scholasticism, rationalism, positivism, phenomenology, Marxism, or irrationalism could do at other times.

It is more common to find the frequent interweaving of positions in which the positions are sometimes confused, without necessarily meaning eclectic positions, but in *elective* truth, as those Latin American enlightenments maintained, concerning the different truths contained in heterogeneous philosophies.

The openness to philosophical dialogue has allowed a Thomist, a Marxist, an analyst, and others to respectfully debate in philosophy congresses [45] and, more importantly, to arrive at criteria of common agreement while maintaining their respective cosmovisionary, epistemological, methodological, and ideological visions. Numerous conference reports and other collective publications demonstrate this spirit of collective construction overcoming philosophical sectarianism.

Philosophical life has multiplied its existence in the birth of numerous faculties of philosophy, congresses, books by groups of authors [46], magazines, newspapers, even their cultural pages, and other publications on the Internet etc. Furthermore, although instrumental and pragmatic rationalism tries to distort the profession due to its limited utilitarian character, on the other hand, there are tendencies to revitalize the work of philosophers as *think tanks* and ideologues of parties, governments, institutions of civil society, etc., of great ideological utility to design alternatives in this globalized world, in which the validity of neoliberal proposals is at stake.

In times when the knowledge society is assumed to prevail, subordination to computerized networks, and when threatening demographic and ecological conflicts arise, as well as alternative proposals that indicate that in the socioeconomic and political order, another world is possible, philosophy in Latin America seems to be beginning another challenging moment in its development.

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