D. C. M. PLATT: THE ANATOMY OF "AUTONOMY"*

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The concept of dependency, Platt asserts, is "scarcely sustainable" because its historical foundation is unconvincing. "Students of chronopolitics (history)," he implies, find unacceptable the notion that "development and expansion" of Western Europe's economy dominated and conditioned that of Latin America since the conquest. The fact that Dos Santos' definition of dependency denies the presence of autonomous development in Latin America is "critical." Economic autonomy, according to Platt, is the leitmotif of Latin America's evolution, certainly to the close of the nineteenth century, when there "finally awoke metropolitan interest in the neglected periphery."

The colonial era of three hundred years is summarily treated. The economies of colonial Spanish America were "inward-looking": production was primarily for local subsistence; mining and export of precious metals was "only an element" in them. So emphasis upon export-oriented economies is "anachronistic," a view Platt sees supported by Frank Safford on New Granada. Further, in the half-century after independence, Latin America "remained outside world markets to any significant degree" as Spanish America "retired over the edge of the periphery." Exceptions to this Latin American experience were Brazil, Cuba, and ("after the opening of the guano trade") Peru. To at least 1860, Latin America remained an insignificant trading partner of Great Britain compared to the United States; the level of imports of British manufactures in Mexico and the Central and South American republics "can hardly have scratched the surface of demand." Again Safford is

*The authors thank the editors for the opportunity to dissect Platt's "objections" and to clarify further Latin America's secular relationship to the Atlantic economy. The school of dependency houses students of many persuasions; we happen to have come to our view by "historical analysis" of Spain's eighteenth-century Atlantic empire and of nineteenth-century Latin America—to which we limit our focus in this rejoinder.

cited as "right in doubting the implications of economic dependency in New Granada after the breakaway from Spain."

These assertions about trade are then extended by analysis to international finance. Conceding the role of merchant banking by foreign firms, Platt minimizes their influence as necessary before the appearance of commercial banks, neither "sinister nor . . . necessarily the monopoly of foreigners." That Latin American governments in the 1820s had to borrow in the London market at relatively high rates (between double and triple that of the British government itself) is explained as "in line with the credit of other borrowers in a competitive market." Concluding that "Spanish America during the first half-century of political independence stood outside the currents of world trade and finance," Platt again charges dependency analysts with misinterpreting what happened later in the nineteenth century and extending this misapprehension to earlier periods of Latin American history.

The second part of Platt's argument follows logically from these premises and reflects preoccupation with Argentina as symbol of the "neglected periphery." Autonomy rather than pre-existing national and international patterns of economic relations determined Argentina's role in the last third of the nineteenth century. Improved transport was needed to provision the growing city of Buenos Aires while foreign promoters and investors sensed that "financial success must depend on the extent to which . . . railways might serve the needs of the Argentines themselves and of their capital city" rather than on potential profits from exports which had "slight impact on either promoters or investors." Argentina's "natural" evolution toward an export-oriented economy was, furthermore, only a matter of operating on the principles of comparative advantage. The arguments of dependency, informal imperialism, or colonial heritage are judged "unhistorical," a view supported by H. S. Ferns' observation that "It was so patently economically advantageous to do what Argentina did that it seems a waste of time and a profitless exercise to look for any other explanation of what happened."

Platt closes his critique of "dependency theory" by arguing—if one may rephrase affirmatively his rhetorical question—that at the close of the nineteenth century Latin America's economies "shape[d] themselves along lines determined domestically, in the tradition of the self-sufficiency enforced by isolation from world markets during the first half of the nineteenth century." There could be no alternative economic route but "to move in natural progression from the gradual replacement of imports to the complete satisfaction of the domestic market and . . . finally to the disposal of the surplus (if any) by export." The principal factor in Argentina and Mexico "as grain and beef producers was the supply of the home market," which supported the "whole structure of railways, of public utilities and of city modernization."

This rejoinder cannot take cognizance of all the misconceptions of Platt's critique. Before rebutting his major points, however, certain basic clarifications are in order.

First is Platt's peculiarly variable definition of Latin America. Brazil and Cuba are excluded as alien to his autonomy model from the beginning, and Peru after the 1840s. By this ingenious and inventive exclusion Platt deprives dependency analysts of their properly inclusive and generally accepted frame of reference while simultaneously he eliminates three important trading partners of Great Britain from 1820–1850. The dependency concept is then given "some" relevance to "some of the smaller Republics in the nineteenth century." And "quite apart from the 'banana Republics,' there were times . . . when dependency is sufficiently descriptive—the quinine boom in Colombia [why not the tobacco boom and the coffee economy not to mention gold mining which long served to sustain Colombia's import trade?], Bolivian tin, Amazonia rubber"—but why separate Brazil's brief rubber boom from its long coffee dependency? And finally, from the 1880s, Latin America is divided into "strong" and "weak economies" defined primarily in terms of exportables—measured in terms of Britain's "retained" imports. Where then is the autonomous Latin America?

Second, Platt ascribes to the so-called "dependency theorists" an assumption that continuity meant "smooth transition" between colonial and postcolonial realities. Transition it was, but *which* historians call a long destructive war for independence and its equally traumatic aftermath a smooth transition? The relation between continuity and change, whether rapid and violent or slow and evolutionary, is found in the propensity of certain pre-existing structures or relationships to emerge as constants under new conditions. The dependence of Latin America's neocolonial elites on exportables to maintain societies of essentially European imprint was such a structure.

Third is Platt's attribution of conspiracy theory to dependency analysts. Here we can only observe that the dependency concept, by providing explanation in terms of enduring institutions and relationships from which behavioral patterns derive, rejects causality in terms of "machinations," "sinister activities," "development planned in River Plate House," etc., along with a posteriori attitudes "deploring" failure to follow "alternative" patterns. These motes in Platt's eye seem to reflect the over-sensitivity of a critic who seeks to award to his autonomy theory the exclusive virtue of "natural" self-evidence and "common sense." British pragmatism, however, despite its conceptual poverty, has not been inconsistent with the pursuit of long-range policy implemented by short-term plan and, when necessary, ad hoc plot. Britain's Iberian and Ibero-American policy between 1790 and 1824, for example, illustrates the skill with which English statesmen (as well as their continental rivals) used both plan and plot, war and peace, to defend and extend mercantile and manufacturing interests. The principles of free trade draped the midwife of national sovereignty in Latin America—and they were printed on British cottons.

Beyond these examples of conceptual confusion, however, lies the fundamental weakness of Platt's basic argument: his concept of autonomy. Here there is no evidence that he has analyzed the internal and external structure of Latin America's regional economies either in the colonial period or later. And omitting such an analysis, he confuses "domestic demand and production" with "autonomous economic development."

In all economies, past as well as present, domestic requirements of food, housing, clothing, implements, and transportation figure large in rough calculation of gross national product. Yet this cannot eliminate the critical role in colonial areas of those economic sectors and social strata directly but also indirectly linked to the international "context." For colonial Latin America, in some cases the export link was both direct and visible, e.g., sugar plantations in coastal areas; in others, the large estate appeared to supply a purely internal market when, in fact, it either played an essential role in maintaining and servicing the export sector or was indirectly linked to it in provisioning the urban centers closely related to the colony's export function.

Iberian colonialism in America had many facets, but its core was the organization and maintenance of economies profitable to the overseas metropolises and—what is often overlooked—through them to the key economies of northwestern Europe: Holland, England, and France. Major elements of this interlinked colonial, submetropolitan and metropolitan system materialized with the creation of the silver mining complexes of Peru and Mexico—not to mention the sugar plantation complex of Brazil's Northeast—in the sixteenth century. Fluctuations of silver production and export in colonial Spanish America from about 1570 culminating in the extraordinary expansion of the half-century preceding the wars of independence should not obscure the persistent underlying structures. Spanish America's precious metals flowed from its mines out of its ports across the Atlantic directly to Spain for re-export to western Europe, or indirectly to West Europeans in the Caribbean or operating through Brazil in the Rio de la Plata. Western Europe, not Spain (or Portugal) constituted the core of the international system; Spain's dependence upon what Adam Smith called the "improving" countries of Europe was only thinly disguised by a policy best described as "pseudo-mercantilism."

In the eighteenth century the Spanish (and now the Portuguese) mining complexes remained dynamic centers of the colonial economies; but clearly the "pull" or demand of West European economies for new as well as old commodities—sugar, dyestuffs, hides—supplemented and reinforced the centuries-old pattern of mineral exports to pay for imported manufactures, luxuries and foodstuffs. Eighteenth-century modifications drew Argentina, Venezuela, and Cuba into the international economy. In Argentina's case there began reorientation of the River Plate from supplying cattle, horses, and mules to the Peruvian mining complex to hide exports to Western Europe and jerked beef shipments to Brazil and Cuba while European manufactures and African slaves continued to be funnelled in and silver out. At the peak of colonial output of metals, both Spanish and British trade statistics—despite all caveats—point to the basic trade patterns which political independence would reveal more clearly.[1]

Such a "model" of the colonial system, simplifying and exaggerating structural elements, is not intended to neglect the existence of relatively autonomous regional economies—from those virtually outside a market economy to those only tangentially involved in the principal exchange economy. To state that they were at most ancillary and at least irrelevant to the key structures of the Iberian colonial world is not to deny their existence within its context.

In emphasizing "subsistence" and in calling the mining sector "only an element" in an otherwise autonomous economy, Platt fails to comprehend the pivotal role of silver in economies structured from the beginning upon the exchange of precious metals for imported commodities which allowed colonial—as well as peninsular—elites to pursue a life-style and status to which they remained committed. Despite the limited proportion of the population involved in mining and refining precious metals, the impact of silver upon Spanish colonial economies and upon their immediate metropolis was vastly different from that of such export commodities as sugar. For silver, by its intrinsic characteristics—high value, low volume, immunity to deterioration, transportability and convertibility into ornament or specie, and its consequent universal exchangeability—affected far more profoundly the Spanish world than the developing world of Europe or the economies of Asia. And the trauma that accompanied the separation of Spain and its major colonies was in many ways an index of the extraordinary silver addiction that both had long experienced.

Obvious problems in the analysis of the first fifty years of national sovereignty in Latin America stem from the fundamental instability and transitional character of the period. Following the destruction of the wars against Iberian rule came the destruction that accompanied internal and international conflict as ex-viceroyalties fissioned, new regional formations were tried and failed, and territorial boundaries were arranged or rearranged. Meanwhile, within the new territorial units reconstruction was delayed by the struggle of former viceroyal subregions for autonomy against hegemonic tendencies of the former colonial capitals, the new nations' primate cities pursuing colonial patterns of monopolizing distribution, concentrating revenue and expenditure, public works and general (if few) services. New polities suffered from bureaucratic discontinuities, inefficiency, and corruption often fueled by foreign merchants in search of privilege and preference. Only Great Britain was capable of lending to newly formed governments (which it did very briefly), while the economies of western Europe were themselves recovering from decades of warfare and coping with the power of Europe's first industrial nation.

National accounts of foreign trade, at least until the last decades of the nineteenth century, are usually unreliable or simply nonexistent in Latin America. Fortunately, there exist the United Kingdom's Annual Reports of Revenue, Population and Commerce (Porter's Tables) covering the years 1801–52; these provide data on volume, real (current) value, origin and destination. However, while they form the most reliable index of Latin America's economic activity and the most visible link to the international economy, the volume of trade with Great Britain can be misleading since Britain's role as supplier of manufactures is obscured by that of intermediaries such as Jamaica in re-exports to former Spanish colonies, Brazil in handling re-exports to Argentina, Chile in re-exports to Mexico's west coast ports,[2] or the U.S. in forwarding goods to both Cuba and Mexico. Further, the sudden appearance in Britain's annual trade statistics of Latin American destinations where formerly such goods seemed destined only for Spain, Portugal or "Southern Europe" could suggest to the unwary investigator new, suddenly opening markets rather than further proof that the Iberian metropolises had been mere costly intermediaries in a pseudo-colonial pact.[3]

The fact that British trade statistics omitted silver imports may explain but does not justify Platt's failure to perceive the critical function of mining before independence and its continuing importance in the decades immediately following.[4] Yet it is clear that Mexico, for example, for at least twenty-five years after 1825, paid for imports from its principal supplier, Great Britain, with a gradually rising export of silver—admittedly below the peak years before 1810.[5] In turn, the composition of imports continued the pre-1810 pattern of cotton, woolen, and silk textiles and clothing. Comparable statements could be made with reference to the foreign trade of other ex-colonial areas whose imports were based on the mining of precious metals.

Further, British statistical materials suggest conclusions differing from those of Platt regarding the significance of Latin America's imports of British manufactures compared with those of Britain's other major trading partner in the hemisphere, the United States. If we look at Latin America as a whole, i.e., aggregating the declared value of exports to "Central and South America including Brazil" and those listed under "Foreign West Indies" (mainly Cuba and St. Thomas) in the period 1820–50, Latin America ranks close to the U.S. as importer of British goods.[6] "The upward trend is fairly steady," conclude Gayer, Rostow, and Schwartz in summarizing trade (1817–48) with Central and South America, "except for the abnormal peak in 1825."[7] To this conclusion must be added the consideration that since by far the largest single category of Latin America's imports were textiles whose unit price fell by approximately one-third with the progress of the industry, Latin America absorbed a rising volume of British cotton goods, much of it directed to low-income consumers.[8] This performance is all the more remarkable in view of political instability and slow population growth in the area compared with that of the U.S. One may hardly consider Latin America "over the edge of the periphery."

Important as was Latin America as consumer of British exports of manufactures, Platt's position on the role of Latin America in Britain's foreign trade obscures the real issue. In the first place, while the U.S. absorbed an increasing value and volume of British goods, it proceeded to develop autonomously, notably in the field of industrial diversification, in textiles and metallurgy, unlike Latin America. Second, to Britain, Latin America was one of many trading areas; but to Latin America, Britain was the most important of all trading partners. Put another way, the impact of British goods upon each of the economies of Latin America was critical in their growth, as is clear in the case of Mexico and Argentina which Platt makes the centerpiece of his argument for autonomy.

It is Argentina which offers an example of how adaptation to domestic inter-regional conflict and the transformation of capitalism abroad failed to produce autonomy. In the two decades, 1810–30, the northwestern provinces lost Bolivian markets and access to silver while the Litoral cattle ranching economy was disrupted by civil and international conflict. Thereafter, ranching relocated west and south of Buenos Aires to become the source of the port's foreign trade and contacts. After 1830 Buenos Aires expanded trade with the major purchaser of its hide exports and the principal supplier of its imports, Britain.[9] It was British entrepreneurs who improved the quality and increased the size of sheep flocks and raw wool exports to Britain for domestic consumption and reexport.[10] Between 1830 and 1850, Argentina's *grupo ganadero* consolidated the port's hegemony over the provinces and expanded its multiple contacts with Britain. When Rosas—the cattlemen's representative—fled to exile, he went aboard a British vessel to retirement near Southampton. It is no exaggeration to say that British trade and shipping—important in the two decades before 1810—played a decisive role in Argentina's reorganization and growth thereafter.

Turning to Platt's other major example of autonomy and discontinuity, Mexico, one discerns again, in the decades between 1821 and 1856, economic patterns rooted in the colonial period. Between 1825 and 1849, silver coinage rose from a five-year annual average of 9.2 to 15.6 million pesos, while registered silver (and gold) exports oscillated between 7.4 and 10.7 million; only war with the U.S. and its effect upon production interrupted the slowly rising trend of silver exports.[11] Viewed as a percentage of total exports, silver constituted 79 percent for the period 1821–28; the next year for which we have data, 1856, showed a percentage of 92.[12] If the role of silver in Mexico's exports repeated a colonial pattern, so did its imports in which British yard goods and clothing averaged 69 percent over the years 1821–28 and, in 1856, 60 percent. Given the quality of this merchandise, there is little doubt that it was sold to low-income Mexicans and there is evidence to view such imports as the major factor in the containment of the Mexican artisan and fledgling industrial cotton manufacture.[13] One need hardly note that Great Britain throughout these decades was Mexico's principal trading partner.[14]

The case of Colombia offers no greater substantiation of Platt's autonomous growth concept. In citing Frank Safford's work on nineteenth-century Colombia he does the author a distinct disservice in quoting him out of context and apparently without consulting his original contributions, which elaborate the experience of Central Colombia in considerable detail.[15] But even in his rejoinder to Bergquist, cited by Platt, Safford emphasizes that "the question is not whether economic dependency existed but its meaning." Safford's criticism of the "dependency matrix" is directed to its historical oversimplifications. Stressing his primary concern with the manner in which "values mediate between structures and social actions" he concluded that in the middle years of the nineteenth century, "Colombia's economic growth depended on changed circumstances, over which Colombia had little control," i.e., the appearance of a viable and enduring export, coffee.[16]

Platt's insistence on the long isolation of Latin America from the Atlantic economy permits him to initiate his analysis of the last quarter of the nineteenth century by asking, "What . . . finally brought Latin America into contact with the world economy?" His ingenious reply is that "production for export . . . [developed] out of production primarily intended for Latin America's domestic market" which was responsible for "the whole structure of railways, of public utilities, and of city modernization" as well as "for the first stages in the introduction of foreign capital. . . ." To buttress his position, Platt relies heavily on Argentina's development after 1850 and particularly on the role of the railroad. Ignoring the voluminous literature on Argentine economic history of the nineteenth century—e.g., the works of Burgin, Giberti, and more recently Halperin Donghi, Gallo and Cortés Conde, Scobie[17]—he leans instead upon Ferns and an article by Paul Goodwin. Here it is sufficient to show how his handling of Goodwin's article exemplifies a proclivity to misconstrue sources in order to substantiate the notion of economic autonomy and the primacy of the domestic market.

Paul Goodwin's article, cited in note 39, is interpreted as proof of the minimal role of export considerations among the motives behind the creation of the Central Argentine Railway begun in 1863 to link Rosario with Cordoba. Yet Goodwin sees that railway as contributing to a "process of development and transition" which began at the end of the colonial period and "was stimulated by the introduction of new exports with high growth rates." It was the cart road rather than the railroad, he argues, which "contributed to Argentina's eventual transformation into an export-oriented country. . . . By 1850 it became increasingly clear to Buenos Aires merchants that the maintenance of their profits from the export of produce demanded a more efficient and economical form of land transportation. . . . Between 1854, when Rosario was opened to foreign trade, and 1863, the year the Central Argentine Railway drove its first spikes, the town blossomed bidding 'fair to compete successfully for a portion of the foreign commerce with Buenos Aires'. . . ." It is clear from Goodwin's remarks about Rosario as well as from Scobie's analysis of Buenos Aires' growth that railroads were undertaken to enhance their export potential.[18] But even were we to imagine that Argentine railways were first laid to supply Buenos Aires consumers with hides, wool, meat, and wheat, will Platt also maintain that the English built the São Paulo-Santos railroad to provision Paulistas or the Veracruz-Mexico City line to supply that capital with—pulque?

Thus, excluding major areas of Latin America, relegating others to a nebulous "sometimes" dependency, disregarding or misinterpreting the economic history of yet others (Venezuela, Chile, Colombia), and above all overlooking mining in colonial and postcolonial Spanish America while ignoring the social and political complexities of the Iberian empires in their internal and external relationships, Platt ideates an autonomy that can only appear fanciful to the scholar seeking to understand the history of this part of the world.

Yet, strangely, it is not primarily the facts that are in dispute in the present controversy. A reading of Platt's previous publications on British foreign policy and trade reveals surprising agreement on the character of British commercial hegemony in nineteenth-century Latin America: after enjoying a "profitable trade with colonial Latin America . . . through Spain and Portugal, or . . . by contraband . . . the end of the Spanish Empire brought new business to British traders and manufacturers," but following a brief euphoric peak, inhospitable conditions brought slow, vacillating growth until "a second honeymoon" in the '60s and '70s, "when demand now existed for the primary produce of the Republics" and "capital, attracted by the new market opportunities flowed into Latin American railways, portworks, utilities and processing plants, opening the way for a vastly enlarged market of British manufactured goods."[19] Aside from divergence on the timing and degree of British penetration, this summary coincides substantially with the "textbook version of the British connection with Latin America" which Platt—oddly—calls a "position . . . entirely different in nearly every respect."[20] Whence, then, the dramatic discrepancy on the "critical" issue, autonomy? Why the shift in Platt's analysis from a Latin America which was "one of the most important outlets for British trade and investment throughout the nineteenth century" (1968)[21] to a Latin America "over the edge of the periphery" (1979) until the last quarter of the nineteenth century?

The answer emerges from a review of Platt's role as historian of nineteenth-century British trade policy and particularly from his early rejection of Hobson's critique of British imperialism. On the ground that "Hobson and his successors were in fact looking at financial diplomacy from the point of view of the journalist or of the gleaner of casual information,"[22] Platt undertook the little explored field of "the relationship between finance, trade, and politics in the conduct of British foreign policy" in order to extirpate from the historiography of Britain's "century of . . . leadership in world trade and finance" the notion of economic imperialism made current by Hobson. The task was made all the more imperative by the rapid contagion of the Gallagher-Robinson thesis of the imperialism of free trade in describing Britain's relation to noncolonial peripheral areas. An Oxford thesis (1962), three books (1968, 1971, 1972) and several articles resulted from this effort, much of it devoted to Latin America.

Platt's basic thesis is clear: national security and free trade alone guided British policy during the middle half of the century and were only gradually and partially superseded by "fair trade" and protection as British "paramountcy" declined toward the end of the century.[23] "Economic imperialism is a political rather than an historical label [since] political polemicists know what they want to say long before they have the evidence to support it," he wrote in 1968 to answer "the charge of economic imperialism in the Western Hemisphere."[24] There could be no "informal dependence" in Latin America because it was "a-political," apparently meaning that unlike such areas as China it did not oppose foreign economic penetration—not strange considering that foreign trade had been the raison d'être of Spanish America since the conquest.[25] Significantly, at this time Platt still considered Latin America of far more than tangential interest to Great Britain—after all, he had made "British Capital, Commerce and Diplomacy in Latin America" the subject of his Oxford thesis.

Curiously, although Africa and Asia had been the subject of most of the debate on nineteenth-century informal imperialism, Latin America provided a "natural" arena for the exponents of informal imperialism as propounded by Gallagher and Robinson. Britain's stance of respect for national sovereignty, nonintervention, free trade and laissez-faire had evolved in no small measure from England's commercial and political relations with the Iberian nations and their colonial possessions in America between 1700 and 1820. British aspirations for direct and unfettered trade with Iberian America, pursued with consummate diplomacy during the Napoleonic wars and the struggles for Latin America's independence precipitated by them, were realized in the ambience of post-Napoleonic power relationships through the doctrines of national sovereignty, nonintervention, and free trade. Political and economic disorganization which followed independence further validated these policies. Pressures could be applied to the new, weak governments that Platt defines as "a-political." Claims of over-aggressive British traders and disappointed speculators could be eschewed by the mediation of foreign service career officials concerned with "haute politique" and consular agents handling such mundane tasks as debt-collection.[26] Any judicious threat or application of force could be justified under international law. Finally, free trade and nonintervention were peculiarly compatible with British relations with the United States as important economic partner but early rival in Latin America. Thus, for Platt, Latin America provided a clear refutation of the political implications of informal imperialism. But he had yet to deal with its economic implications.

By 1972, however, in a revision of his dissertation under the title, *Latin America and British Trade, 1806–1914*, the idea of Latin America's economic autonomy is briefly counterposed to the concept of neocolonialism under British hegemony presented by the Steins.[27] The following year a new critique of Gallagher and Robinson expanded on the insignificance of Latin America in British trade and on continuity of isolation and autonomy. He thereby denied a "third assumption" of imperialism of free trade, "the subordination of primary producers, as suppliers of foodstuffs and raw materials to Britain in her chosen role as 'Workshop of the World.'"[28] The apparent logic is clear: no trade, autonomy; autonomy plus trade, no dependence—hence, no informal imperialism, political or economic. Thus Platt moved from emphasis on a presumed abstention from "active government intervention" to emphasis on Latin America's presumed autonomy, a shift necessitated by the evident vacuity of his earlier definition of economic imperialism and of Latin America as "a-political."

Yet, after remodelling his thesis to answer Gallagher and Robinson,[29] Platt now must confront the dependency analysts who have given informal imperialism a new dimension. In presenting a view from the periphery, they have focused not on "chrono-politics" but on "chrono"-economics and even on "chrono"-sociology. Their subject is the internal and external aspects of structural inequality, subordination, and exploitation implicit in the exchange between developed and underdeveloped capitalist nations. Their emphasis is not on bilateral relationships but upon constraints imposed by an international market over a long period of time. It is far more difficult for Platt to combat *colonialism* of free trade than imperialism of free trade. Where dependency analysts postulate persistent asymmetrical participation in the world market, Platt postulates the impersonal and equitable function of the international economy. He is thus led to his present absurd assertion of Latin America's economic autonomy in the mid-Victorian years and to project it both backward and forward. In this sense he emerges as the current paladin of imperialism refurbished. The difficulties of his position may explain the hubris of his present critique, the resort to neologisms such as "structuration," the characterization of dependency analysts as fomenters of "confusionism," and the invocation of conspiracy.

Polemic among historians is warranted if it leads to clarification through further research. In this instance, quantification no doubt will be one element on the agenda. Also needed will be rigorous yet imaginative analysis to pursue critical elements of the hegemony and subordination of imperialism formal and informal: the secular persistence of racism in Europe and America, faith in the "natural" law of the international division of labor under capitalism coupled with acceptance of Latin America's technological passivity, the myriad ways in which Latin America's elites have consciously and unconsciously learned, cultivated, and expanded collaboration with external forces to the detriment of Latin America's masses—in brief, the superhighways, local routes, and footpaths of dependence.

NOTES

1. For the importance of Spanish re-exports of European goods to the American colonies, especially textiles, see *Resumen de la balanza del comercio exterior de España en 1792* (Madrid, 1803) and *Balanza de comercio de España con los dominios de SM en America en el año de 1792* (Madrid, 1805). Growth of British exports of woolen and cotton textiles to Spanish possessions in and around the Caribbean, 1785–1800, can be discerned in the spurt in exports to the British West Indies registered in E. B. Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade Statistics, 1697–1808* (Oxford, 1960), p. 67. Moreover, British textiles also flowed to the Spanish colonies as U.S. re-exports to that area. For example, the percentage of domestic exports in total U.S. exports to Spanish America dropped sharply (1803–1808) from 64 to 15 percent and it is reasonable to presume re-exports consisted largely of British textiles. See the suggestive article by J. H. Coatsworth, "American Trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 24 (Apr. 1967):243–66. The relative position of Spanish imports to re-exports of European manufactures is suggested by Woodbine Parish, *Buenos Ayres and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata . . .* (London, 1839), appendix 11.
2. Parish reported, for example, that over the period 1829–37 "a considerable portion of the articles sent to Chile are intended for the supply of the West coast of Mexico." *Buenos Ayres*, p. 415.
3. See references to Spanish balances of trade, note 1.
4. "Of the [silver and gold coin and bullion] importations no Account can be rendered from this Department, the articles in question being by Law being exempted from Entry inwards at the Custom-house." Great Britain. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1854 (xxxix), p. 439. Similarly, in the eighteenth century "anyone who pleased might import coin and bullion without making any return of the transaction, and hence no record was kept of the gold and silver brought in." T. S. Ashton, in Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade Statistics*, p. 7. One must recall that the English East India Company's annual deficit on merchandise balance with China, until British merchants pushed opium into that country, was covered by "[Spanish] American silver currency originally brought to China by the East India Company." See Frederic E. Wakeman's contribution in D. Twitchett and J. K. Fairbanks, eds., *Cambridge History of China* 10 (1978), p. 164.
5. See note 11.

6. In the following table, "Foreign West Indies" are considered a Latin American destination since Cuba and Puerto Rico were the principal importers. Latin America received 86.5 percent of the value of U.S. imports of British domestic exports, 1820–49 —by no means insignificant.

British Domestic Exports by Destination, 1820–1848 (£000,000)

	Central & South Am. Brazil	Foreign W. Indies	Total	U.S.	(Platt) Brazil & Spanish Am.
1820–29	42.8	9.4	52.2	57.9	
1830–39	49.0	11.5	60.5	79.2	43.4 (1831–39)
1840–49	49.6	10.7	60.3	63.3	51.5
Total			173.0	200.4	

Sources: A. D. Gayer, W. W. Rostow, and A. J. Schwartz, *The Growth and Fluctuation of the British Economy, 1790–1850*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1953), 1:182, 215, 251, 282, 314; D. C. M. Platt, "Further Objections to an 'Imperialism of Free Trade,'" *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 36 (Feb., 1973):91, appendix. Platt's "Spanish America" includes Buenos Aires, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Montevideo, Peru, and Venezuela.

7. Gayer et al., *British Economy* 2:783.

8. *United Kingdom Cotton (Piece) Goods Exports to Principal Destinations, Selected Years (000,000 yds.)*

	1820		1830		1840		1850		1860	
	Yds.	%	Yds.	%	Yds.	%	Yds.	%	Yds.	%
America* (except U.S.)	56.0	22.3	140.8	31.6	278.6	35.2	360.4	26.5	527.1	19.7
U.S.	23.8	9.4	49.3	11.6	32.1	4.0	104.2	7.6	226.8	8.4
Europe	127.7	50.9	137.4	30.9	200.4	25.3	222.1	16.3	200.5	7.4
Total	250.9	100	444.6	100	790.6	100	1358.2	100	2676.2	100

Source: Thomas Ellison, *The Cotton Trade of Great Britain* [1886] (New York, 1968), pp. 63–64.

*Most so destined, one may assume, went to Latin America.

9. Britain's trade with Argentina is suggested by the following:

Trade of the Rio de la Plata with Great Britain, 1831–40: 5 Year Average Annual Volume or Value

	Exports		Imports	
Years	Hides (no.)	Wool (lbs.)	Cottons (Yds.)	Woolens (£s)
1831–35	107.664	462.340	14.006.422	111.813
1849–53	270.308	2.674.341	31.549.624	281.985

Source: Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1842 (xxxix), p. 375; 1854–55 (Lii).

10. Commenting on the extraordinary upsurge in Argentine wool exports, 1830–37, Parish credited the "intelligent foreigners [who] introduce and cultivate a better breed. . . . Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Harratt are the individuals to whom Buenos Ayres is principally indebted for this new source of wealth" (*Buenos Ayres*, pp. 358–59). According to Frank Safford, British residents in New Granada had a similarly innovating effect in promoting tobacco and coffee for export. "Commerce and Enterprise in Central Colombia, 1821–1870" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1965), pp. 187–200, 300.
11. There is a steady rise in Mexican silver coinage and a fluctuating level of precious metals exports over the period 1825–49. The export level, 1845–49, was depressed by the U.S. war with Mexico.

Years	*Silver Coined 5-Year Annual Averages (mill. ps)*	*Silver/Gold Exports 5-Year Annual Averages (mill. ps)*
1825–29	9.2	8.7
1830–34	11.3	10.7
1835–39	11.5	7.4
1840–44	12.4	9.7
1845–49	15.6	7.7

Sources: A. Soetbeer, *Edelmetall-produktion und werthverhältniss zwischen gold und silver . . .* (Gotha, 1874), p. 55; M. Lerdo de Tejada, *Comercio exterior de México desde la conquista hasta hoy* (1853) (México: Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior, 1967), documento no. 52.

12. Ines Herrera Canales, *El comercio exterior de México, 1821–1875* (México, 1977), p. 60.
13. That Latin America's lower classes had long been a prime market for British cottons is clear from contemporary mercantile records as well as recent research. Cf. Herrera Canales, *Comercio*, pp. 26, 34, 113 and Safford, "Commerce and Enterprise," pp. 191, 240.
14. Laura Randall, *A Comparative Economic History of Latin America, 1500–1914. I. Mexico* (Ann Arbor, 1977), p. 237.
15. In addition to Safford's "Commerce and Enterprise," see his *The Idea of the Practical: Colombia's Struggle to Form a Technical Elite* (Austin, 1976) and his "Trade (1810–1940)," in Helen Delpar, ed., *Encyclopedia of Latin America* (New York, 1974), pp. 589–92.
16. "On Paradigms and the Pursuit of the Practical: A Response," LARR 13, no. 2 (1978):253–55.
17. For example, R. M. Ortiz, *Historia económica de la Argentina, 1850–1930*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1955); M. Burgin, *Economic Aspects of Argentine Federalism* (Cambridge, 1947); H. Giberti, *Historia económica de la ganadería argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1954); T. Halperin Donghi, "La expansión ganadera en la campana de Buenos Aires," *Desarrollo económico* 3 (1963):57ff, and his *Historia Argentina. De la revolución de independencia a la confederación rosista* (Buenos Aires, 1972); J. Fodor y Arturo O'Connell, "La Argentina y la economía atlántica en la primera mitad del siglo xix," *Desarrollo económico* 13 (1973):3ff; E. Gallo and R. Cortés Conde, *Historia argentina. La república conservadora* (Buenos Aires, 1972); J. R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires. Plaza to Suburb, 1870–1910* (New York, 1974). On railroads, A. Bunge, *Ferrocarriles argentinos. Contribución al estudio del patrimonio nacional* (Buenos Aires, 1918); R. M. Ortiz, *El ferrocarril en la economía argentina*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires, 1956); H. J. Cuccorese, *Historia de los ferrocarriles en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1969).
18. Paul B. Goodwin, Jr., "The Central Argentine Railway and the Economic Development of Argentina, 1854–1881," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, no. 4 (1977): 618–19. As Scobie has put it, "The building of railroads responded largely to the

potential for carrying hides, wool and grains. . . . In 1862, for example, a group of British residents in Buenos Aires formed the Southern Railroad to serve the sheep- and cattle-growing zones." British investors were obviously thinking of exports. *Buenos Aires*, p. 92.
19. D. C. M. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade, 1806–1914* (London, 1972).
20. "After independence, an irresistible flood of British goods. . . . Local industries were 'destroyed,' and British traders and manufacturers consolidated a . . . monopoly over a significant import trade . . . the years of Britain's 'hegemony' of the 'imperialism of Free Trade'." Platt, *Latin American and British Trade*, p. 312.
21. D. C. M. Platt, *Finance, Trade and Politics in British Foreign Policy, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 1968), p. 308.
22. Ibid., pp. 76–77.
23. Ibid., pp. 83–84.
24. Ibid., pp. 76, 308.
25. Ibid., p. 312.
26. Ibid., p. 41. On the same page Platt, ironically, perceived that while "the rule was no 'official' or 'authoritative' intervention . . . 'good offices' of British diplomatists . . . must have been difficult indeed to distinguish from unqualified diplomatic intervention."
27. Platt, *Latin America and British Trade*, pp. 3–4.
28. "Further Objections to an 'Imperialism of Free Trade,'" *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 36 (1968): 87 and *passim*.
29. It is an irony of Britain's imperial fate that Ronald Robinson, co-author of the concept of the imperialism of free trade to describe Britain's mid-Victorian hegemony in Latin America and elsewhere—and prime target of Platt's efforts to disprove that concept—could write in 1972 that the "collaborative mechanism . . . worked constructively so that these colonies [South Africa and Latin America] eventually 'took off'" and by mid-twentieth century "the collaborative system had done its work; for the white ex-colonies—the United States and Latin America [!], together with the British 'dominions'—had become expansive in their own right in pursuit of their own 'manifest destiny.'" R. Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in W. R. Louis, ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York, 1976), p. 136.