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AMERICANISM AND LATINITY IN LATIN AMERICA

INCREASING INTERDEPENDENCE AND DECREASING SEPARATENESS

What in reality, in its relationship with other parts of the world, is that part of America usually called Latin? On the socio-cultural level, in what way does it form a homogeneous sociological complex permitting it to be considered entirely Latin—quite apart from its geographical unity—and, at the same time, part of an American whole within whose sociological framework its Latinity continues to evolve in time and space?

These are the questions which concern scholars who have set as their task the problem of characterizing and interpret-

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ing that part of America called Latin. The present issue of *Diogenes* contains many valuable clarifications with regard to this problem, written by some of the most competent specialists in various fields, each of whom has studied the problem in its perspectives and according to various criteria of analysis and interpretation. Taking account of the fact that the world situation, in each of its fluctuating phases, almost always ends up by exercising a decisive effect on various other particular situations (Pierre Chaunu), the Latin American relationship with such a world situation has varied according to a number of other predominant factors functioning within the situations in which it finds itself. Nevertheless, the Latin or Iberian factor has generally and most constantly predominated, although modified in certain details and in successive periods, by other dominating influences: English, French, Yankee. Today, as in the past, Latin American development has not ceased to feel the effects of the fundamental interdependence, both physical and ecological, existing between it and Anglo-Saxon America.

The geographical Americanism of both these sectors as well as the feeling of solidarity deriving from the fact that generally speaking the development of both has been effectuated in the same American psycho-social environment, that is, a climate of tension, inquietude, and hence likely to promulgate a similar kind of evolution even if certain aspects are, it goes without saying, different. Furthermore, this American psycho-social climate of which we speak here must not be confused with the specific sense of economic time or daily time: so different between Anglo-Saxon Americans and Latin Americans.

We refer here to that tension characteristic of the American psycho-social climate in general, and not always pressing from within upon the outside: in certain cases, the tension comes from outside influences. This is a fact which has struck European sociologists who have visited Latin America, among them Guglielmo Ferrero, and who have observed that the conservative, routine—one might even say, forces of inertia—ordinarily tend to be represented by groups already established who have become sociologically American; while the forces of renewal or change, emanate from recent immigrants, foreigners, newcomers, for whom, in a great many cases, the American space

means a free field for innovating or renovating enterprises. One might even say that the tension so characteristic of the American social climate in all parts of the Americas is largely the result of the clash between these two tendencies. While a great number, or at least a good proportion of the Americans already rooted in America and already having become traditionally Americans are paradoxically those who cling to conservative ideas, feelings and habits, the Europeans, the Africans, and more recently the Japanese, to the degree that they are foreigners and newcomers, constitute the source of new ideas, new feelings, new habits. This fact can be as easily demonstrated in Anglo-Saxon America as well as Latin America, manifesting itself in various fields: politics, economics, religion, education, technology, art and literature.

This leads us to a paradoxical conclusion—namely, the fact that the characteristic social climate of American countries might be defined as a climate in which the tension favorable to rapid development, a spirit of enterprise and revival depends on the constant presence of non-American elements: that is to say, in English-speaking America on non-Anglo-Saxons; just as in so-called Latin America on non-Iberian elements. It is these newcomers to America who have revivified the creative and renewing spirit of Americanism among Americans already rooted.

However, up to what point will this phenomena continue to make itself felt in American life and culture, and will it preserve that specifically American physiognomy, in view of the fact that during the course of the last decades these non-American elements within this life and culture have become much less numerous? (A reservation must be made, however, as far as Brazil is concerned, where the Japanese have to a certain degree replaced the Italians, Germans and Poles, playing the same role as new, stimulating forces which those other groups played among the Brazilians at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.)

With regard to this problem—namely the dwindling of these non-American elements—we must take note of the appearance of a new tendency in the life and culture of Latin America: the role played during a certain period by elements

of the non-Iberian population coming from Europe and other parts of the world. These elements, eager to rise socially as well as economically, found a larger field of action open to them in Latin America than in their countries of origin. Today, this role is being played by native-born elements; half-castes, proletarians, rural folk, who as a result of modern means of communication have been awakened from a sort of social hibernation, and have begun to feel desires to better themselves and have become aware of rights which up to now were only rarely recognized by the ruling classes in Latin America. For an entire century, namely since the political independence of these peoples, formerly subject to Spain or Portugal, those ruling classes had paid much more attention to the immigrants just coming in from the outside than to the proletarians and country people belonging to their own ethnic group and their own culture, an Indo-Iberian or Afro-Iberian culture. However, let us remember that among a great many of these proletarians and field workers, Indian or African, cultural traits are found which are more pronounced than in the ruling groups who have themselves preserved essentially European habits and manners, even when these habits and manners have been in certain cases altered by Amerindian, African or Oriental influences. Since the birth of Latin America, these influences have considerably modified the Latinity of an America of Iberian or French culture to the point of making the term "Latin America" something so imprecise that certain purists anxious to employ the word "Latinity" only in its strict sense, refuse to recognize as Latin all the countries today classified as such, applying this appelation only to Uruguay and, at most, Argentina.

Obviously this distinction rests on very fragile foundations, especially when one considers that among the elements making up Argentine culture there are the "gauchos" who are partly Amerindian in origin, and that in Uruguay as in Argentina, the African element is present among the population as in the culture. Despite that, and notwithstanding these influences and the presence of non-Latin ethnic and cultural elements coming from Europe and the Orient to Latin-American nations and societies, some of us feel that the term Latin-America can be applied without objection to the complex which it usually indi-

cates: in other words the totality of all the American peoples and cultures. Within the social climate of tension in which each of these populations and cultures continues developing in its own way, there is also something common to all, in terms of which their specific aspects meet in the generality. This is what we do not hesitate to consider as the sociological expression of this Latinity which in Europe characterizes certain behavior patterns, values and cultural traits generally considered Latin: whether Iberian, Italian, or French. For the sociologist, there are undeniable analogies of behavior and culture between a Brazilian *caboclo* shaped by a Portuguese-Catholic milieu and a Mexican, shaped by an Hispano-Catholic environment. These analogies might be considered growing out of their common Latinity, insofar as both derive for the most part from a Latin—Portuguese or Spanish—interpretation of Christianity applied to an entire set of human attitudes toward nature and society. Furthermore, this interpretation of Christianity adapts itself much more flexibly than the Anglo-Saxon approach to American situations, which in their many aspects, are almost identical in various American countries of Latin impress characterized by French, and especially Spanish and Portuguese elements.

It is precisely this social malleability of Christianity as it has been transported to America by Latin Europeans which has made possible among the rural populations of several Latin American countries the growth of a proletariat and class of agricultural workers who for a long time—that is, long for Latin America—amidst the rural environment in which they live, amidst their poverty and deprived conditions, have been combining values and modes of Latin life with values and modes of Amerindian and sometimes Afro-Amerindian life. From the social and cultural point of view, this has established a certain distance between them and the groups dominating the economic and political life of their countries. This distance explains why today in certain Latin American countries these elements of the population which find themselves thus separated in social time and space from the dominant elements, to the degree that they begin to affirm themselves as people engaged henceforth in a socio-economic rise within the national societies in which their role up to now has been more

passive than active; and begin to present themselves as forces of change within these very societies and the cultures which characterize them. This process of revival begins to develop in a way which makes us think to some degree of other movements whose initiators were non-Latin immigrants coming from Europe or Japan into the neo-Latin societies, wherein their activity sometimes manifested itself in a revolutionary way.

The proletariat and peasants could carry out this revolutionary activity—an activity which did not develop in bloody revolutions in the case concerning us here—in contemporary Latin-American societies from the moment when they became (as is already happening and has happened here and there) the living and active elements within the various national groups to which they had only belonged, up to then, virtually as foreigners. The socio-economic rise of these people within these societies, which are not losing on that account the essential traits to which they owe their relatively Latin physiognomy, results in a re-invigoration of the residues of Amerindian or African cultures of origin, and, at the same time, raising a much greater number of people belonging by blood to the same origins: Amerindians, Africans, half-castes, to leading political, economic, religious, and cultural positions, with one or the other of these two races predominating. We see here a process whereby these elements gain status—a process similar to the rise in status—so characteristic of the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th—of those immigrants of non-Iberian origin who similarly assert themselves within Latin-American populations and cultures—whether they be themselves Latin, like the Italians and French, or non-Latins like the Germans, Poles and Japanese. To certain observers it might seem at first that these German, Japanese or Polish immigrants were going to seriously alter the Latinity of Latin-American cultures in which they constitute factors of change and transformation. But nothing of this kind has happened or is about to happen. Although many of these immigrants came from agrarian conservative European stock, once in America, finding themselves confronted with the inertia, malnutrition and poverty reigning over a great part of the Latin American countryside, they transformed themselves

into bearers of new ideas, dynamic agents of progress with the result that the presence and activity of these people, far from constituting a threat, are usually beneficial for these Latin American populations an cultures. The danger, it is true, would be for these immigrants to induce populations already rooted in the country to cast aside all the norms and constants which constitute the armature of their existence. Now, in many cases, these norms and constants are very precious in order to assure the consolidation of Latin American populations into stable societies. On the other hand, they are susceptible, when subjected to challenges compatible with their development, of becoming modern, if not as a whole, as is the case in the great urban zones of Buenos Aires, Mexico, São Paulo and almost all of Uruguay, at least in large part, as has happened in various regions of Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Columbia, Venezuela, etc... And this has occurred without the loss of the sense of traditional values with which they are connected and whereby the stability of these populations into national groups is assured.

Latin America is familiar with, and sometimes in a dramatic way, these conflicts between tradition and modernization which have tested the populations of other parts of the globe. Some of these struggles have arisen out of the presence of neo-European elements or the intrusion of techniques brutally new to Latin American milieux almost religiously attached to traditions of life and culture going back to the colonial period and preserved from that time on in an almost pure state. These elements of the population, having resided in this state of cultural, and to a certain degree, ethnic purity, have shown themselves in the past and are showing themselves today capable, under favorable conditions, of rising up against other elements of the national or regional groups to which they belong, re-invigorating in the face of imperialist and denationalizing influences, those traits which are essential to the Latinity and independence of these countries. This phenomenon might mark the beginning of the socio-economic rise of rural elements forming part of some Latin American regional populations, which after having remained for long years in an archaic social condition relative to other elements of these populations, are

showing themselves capable of acting on those elements, forcing them to effect almost revolutionary changes in the social structure, in their economic organization, even in their literature and art, as well as their social philosophy and social sciences.

If there were not this socio-economic vitality stirring the proletarian and peasant elements of the population, a vitality which can be observed during the last decades in certain Latin American countries, manifesting itself in the simultaneous rise of sons of European and Japanese immigrants on the one hand, and by descendents of Amerindians and Blacks, on the other, we would not see, as we do today, a renaissance of literature and art, as well as new developments in social philosophy and the social sciences in these countries. These new developments are explained by the importance now attached to subjects and types left hitherto almost in the shadow. Among these types, let us mention the Amerindian, the Black, the half-caste, the son of the immigrant. These are the subjects and characters who have begun to be dealth with anew in the scourse of these last decades, with ever-growing care to improve the role which these people play within national and regional entities to which up to now, they have belonged in a marginal rather than effective way. For example, in recent Brazilian literature, we have had the emergence of almost heroic figures, one might say, like Antônio Conseilheiro who has depicted Euclides da Cunha in *Os Sertões*; *Negrinho do Pastoreio* a story by Simões Lopes Neto; *Gaetaninho* (son of a poor Italian immigrant) by Antônio de Alcântara Machado; *Moleque Ricardo* by José Lins do Rêgo; the black Christ of *Auto da Compadecida,* by Ariano Suassuna; the Gabriel of a recent novel by Jorge Amado.

And if Mexico has impressed the world as a center of Latin American culture, it is for no other reason than this: that its Amerindian population and the survival of its American Indian cultures have been given importance. By so doing, Mexico created a culture which far from being exclusively American—meaning by that term, indigenously American—shows the characteristic traits of a Latin culture in its general form. Sociologically, let us take this to mean forms permitting it to attribute value to materials and patterns which are specifically Amerindian. Such is the origin of the art of Rivera and

Orozco and modern Mexican architecture, with their expressive combinations of patterns and materials treated in this spirit: there are also those typical combinations which we find in Chávez' music, and in Brazil, the music of Villa-Lobos; and further from us, Cuzco painting in Peru: so Latin and so American at the same time in its happiest expressions. From the anthropological point of view, this is what the study by Dr. Alfonso Caso stresses in this same issue of *Diogenes.*

With reference to that which in Latin-American cultures arises either from native America or Latinity, a most interesting question poses itself and is treated here in the articles on the one hand by Professor Marcel Bataillon, undisputed master of Spanish and Spanish American studies ("The Pizarrist Rebellion, the Birth of Spanish America") and on the other by José Durand ("Garcilaso between the World of the Incas and that of Renaissance Concepts"). The question concerns the cultural cross-breeding that occurred when half-breed children were born of an Iberian father and an American Indian mother from the same social strata, as was the case of the Inca Gacilaso's parents, and when these children were capable, from the point of view of Latinity, of rivaling on a social and cultural level the whites who came from Europe to America, or those who were of European origin on the side of both parents. These individuals possessed, in addition to their Latinity, characteristics attributable to their having roots through their American ancestors in American soil; it was the half-breeds who imparted to cross-breeding the dignity of being the forerunner of a nation, a dignity that in Brazil, even more perhaps than in Spanish America, was transmitted to the half-breeds who were likewise born of European fathers and American Indian mothers but whose mothers came from a different social and cultural milieu. Though it may be true that the American Indian women who entered into unions with Portuguese and Spaniards in Brazil were not all daughters of chieftains who could be likened to princesses, it was true that many of them were given noble rank or raised to attain the social level of white women, because they were daughters of American Indians who had fought together with the Iberians against the French and Dutch invaders of Brazil in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The

most courageous of these American Indian warriors—those obviously who had adopted the Catholic religion—were acclaimed as heroes and elevated in some cases to the rank of captains of the militia at the service of the King of Portugal. At the time the rank of captain or sergeant was nearly equivalent to a title of nobility. In the Brazilian Northeast, the American Indian Felipe Camarao, the hero of the wars waged by the Catholics against the Dutch heretics, was promoted to the rank of *fidalgo del Rei* (King's nobleman or knight).

It might be useful to add that for the American Indians, who were more or less Latinized or Iberianized, as well as for the half-breeds who were part of one or the other culture and who had been promoted socially to a rank equal to the Iberians—since both crowns were united at this time, Brazil was a colony of Spain as well as Portugal—, these armed conflicts against non-Iberian invaders were waged on the one hand in defense of Latin values, such as Catholicism, and on the other in defense of American soil. It was thus a question then of safeguarding the whole of pre-national values, partly Latin and partly American. These values were already in themselves a result of cultural cross-breeding and had been assimilated in large part by the half-breeds; thus they were not possessed alone by the Latin Europeans who ruled over the American Indians and half-breeds. Hence, a few of us, Brazilian authors who devote ourselves to the study of Brazilian reality, do not believe, as Professor Bataillon appears to, that there are true links of a psycho-social nature between the half-breed Brazilian populations, whether their ancestors were non-European of American Indian or of African origin, and the populations of the former colonial countries of Africa and Asia.

We regret in passing that Mr. Lewis Hanke, a professor at Columbia University, did not contribute to this issue of *Diogenes*, since he is the one who today understands most about "indigenous" thought, or even American thought, from the point of view of a Latin Christian, as it is expressed by Las Casas. He could have added to the remarkable study by Professor Bataillon certain observations from the sociological point of view on the relations between the half-breeds and the Creoles of Spanish America. Such observations could illuminate certain as yet little-

known aspects of the process of cross-breeding in the Spanish part of America, where this process took a different form from what one finds in the Portuguese part; in the same way that the situation in the Portuguese possessions evolved in a different fashion than in the French possessions.

However, Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, in his penetrating article *Cepa de la Literatura rioplatense* (Origins of Argentine Literature) also appearing in this issue, clearly shows that an entire series of great writers from abroad—among others Alberti, Echeverria, Sarmiento, among those mentioned by Martínez Estrada or Juan Agustín Garcia, rendered Argentine letters illustrious in the past without interpreting any of those elements—gaucho, Amerindian or Negro—lying at the roots of every Latin American culture, whatever it might be, and constituting thereby an absolute condition of authenticity for these cultures. Thus by going to his roots the author of *Martin Fierro* created an authentic work. The same thing is true for more or less recent Latin American painting: as in Uruguay, the work of Figari, now somewhat forgotten; and in our own day, in Brazil, the paintings of a Lula Cardoso Ayres or of a Francisco Brennand.

This leads us to the problem of the "characterization of these plastic expressions" dealt with in another article by Damián Carlos Bayón, also included in this Latin American issue of *Diogenes*. According to Bayón there was no basic incompatibility "between the conception of the form which the conquistadores brought with them, and that of the natives". Consequently, in the particularly important realm of plastic values, those values introduced into the Americas by the Latin conquerors—in this case Iberian—did not clash against a radical hostility on the part of Amerindian values. This is explained by the fact that the values brought from Iberian Europe by the Spaniards and Portugese, offered symbolic and irrational characteristics different from values of a rational type of other Latins such as the French and Italians, who from this particular point of view are more direct inheritors of the Greco-Roman tradition. As for rational values in general, let us add this to Bayón's article: the French were closer than the Spaniards and Portuguese to those people of Northern Europe who were going to

come into contact on their part with non-European populations and cultures, and they were affected earlier by the Industrial Revolution, by the beginning of the rise of the bourgeoisie and the importance which Biblical culture held among them. Ever since the Industrial Revolution and the almost simultaneous religious revolution accompanying it and generally called the Reform, Biblical culture held a high place among these Northerners: that it to say instruction acquired by reading the book and the notion of chronometric, economic, commercial time. This sense of Time would eventually be identified with money: "*Time is money.*"

An architecture such as that which the Spaniards and Portuguese brought to America, that is, irrational rather than rational, and in accord with this general artistic tendency, tending to lay stress on symbols accessible at once to the illiterate and the literate, must naturally be led to express in terms of the art of construction those esthetic as well as mystical tendencies existing among the Ameridians and Blacks. The Negroes had already been transported from Africa from the 16th century on, having been taken to those areas which were originally most involved in progress, in other words, mining and farm regions. A fact which is not unimportant and which Bayón has emphasized in his essay is that a great many Latin American architects, at the time when so many churches, convents and palaces were being built, were natives or half-castes, like Legarda and Caspicara, in Equador during the 18th century, and Aleijadinho in Brazil. (We are not cencerned here with Cuzco architecture.) All these edifices reveal non-European, one might even say, tropical sources of inspiration, without their lacking, however, a certain sense of measure—*at the limit of tension*, as Bayón says—a manifesting itself also in the use of color, sometimes voluptuous but with discretion, and which seems to characterize good Latin American plastic art, showing how unjust are those accusations leveled against artists from the tropics as unbridled in their exuberance.

Similarly, musical and choreographic expressions and patterns of play produced by Latin American culture—or let us say, cultures—can help us bring to the fore those characteristics of what might be considered the supra-national *ethos* or Latin

American style in these cultures, and not only Brazilian, Paraguayan, Mexican, Dominican, Haitian or Bolivian styles. It is to be deplored however that the subject has not yet been treated in a systematic way by specialists in anthropology and cultural sociology set up as a team—for only a team of researchers could control all the scattered materials—a team which would attack this problem on a continental scale, applying and developing the methods which Kroeber initiated.

It is equally to be regretted that, with the same criteria and identical or similar methods, the various forms of culinary art proper to Latin American culture—or cultures—has not yet been analysed or interpreted. It would appear unquestionably possible that already there are certain characteristic traits of a super-national order, that is Latin American. There is a relationship between certain Mexican delicacies and others in Paraguay, Brazil and Cuba, as there is a relationship between Brazilian music and dances and those of Venezuela, Haiti and Puerto Rico. These are, it would seem, related results of interpenetrations between Latin and American learned and popular, Catholic and animist, European and Amerindian or Afro-Amerindian values which have developed in an analogous fashion in various parts of Latin America. This evolution developed in these American countries within societies where existence went on in the Latin way, according to a certain style of collective living and a certain psychol-social sense of time. A style of living and a time-sense in sharp contrast with those in effect in that part of America inhabited by the Anglo-Saxons, who on their part, have given other forms to the relationship between Europeans and non-Europeans, civilized and primitive people, Christians and pagans. Most of these Anglo-Saxons were bourgeois still not very sure of their socio-economic status, and Protestants not always sure of their religious orthodoxy—an orthodoxy more of a Hebraic (ethnocentric) than Christian (christocentric). Sociologically, the behavior of Iberian Americans was more christocentric than ethnocentric from the fact that, far from considering themselves in America as a chosen people or superior race as did the Anglo-Saxons—rigid, systematic, let us say, Hebraic according to the Old Testament—, they acted as bearers and propagators of

Latin civilization, represented basically by Roman—or Latin—Catholicism interpreted in their way by these Iberian people, more dramatically by the Spaniards and more lyrically by the Portuguese. But in the one case as in the other, these interpretations made use of a Latin catholicism which, in its popular expressions, festivals, folklore, was to be transmitted by the Spaniards and Portuguese to the Amerindians and Blacks throughout the American continent by means of symbols rather than books, and also by means of anniversaries celebrated on a great many saint's days, during the course of which leisure time was recognized as sacred time, sanctified as it were, and thereby superior to working-time. Now, working-time alone was recognized as valuable, holy, and agreeable to God by Anglo-Saxon Protestants, colonizers of the American lands, who laid down their law to the Red Skins and also, in certain areas, to the Blacks brought in from Africa to work the plantations. An appreciable difference of attitude and behavior between Latin Americans and Anglo Americans would seem to have resulted from this fact. Over the course of centuries, this difference has made the former people archaic in comparison with the latter; on the other hand it tends today to place the Latin Americans, compared with the exaggeratedly activist Anglo-Saxons, in the position of virtual masters in the art of occupying leisure time with festivals, folklore, and esthetic pleasures. Leisure, so much depreciated by the Calvinist ethic, which glorifies working-time alone, is, on the contrary, given importance by the Hispano-Catholic ethic which exalts liturgical time, the time of festivals and play. In over-industrialized countries, automation is going to provide far more free time than that which is necessary for economic activities connected with the ideals of progress and programs of development and material well-being. Thus, from this particular point of view, we find ourselves facing a paradox: in some aspects, Latin America is suddenly becoming ultra-modern; while that part of America where English is spoken tends to remain archaic in its attitudes and habits created over three centuries of progress on the basis of an economic sense of time: money-time.

There is another particular area in which it is equally possible that Latin America should come to be considered ultra-

modern in its attitudes and behavior: I refer to that process of evaluating attitudes and traditional values, which is continuing in certain regions, a process which corrects the modernist excesses of some people who are economically developed, just as it corrects the immoderately excessive desires for modernization, involving the sacrifice of everything else, shown by so-called under-developed populations. Among Latin Americans this attitude is due in part to catholicism, which values traditions and secular rites; the catholicism wich builds churches and inspires sacred arts capable of resisting the onslaught of time, arts which thanks to their symbolism are appreciated and admired as much by illiterates as by cultured people. Thus the Latin American usually remains attached to his learned as well as popular traditions. Even the Communists who are now better advised, are correcting the absolute modernism, anti-traditionalism and *anti-saudosism* of their predecessors, and are trying to revive traditions among the populations not only of the so-called under-developed countries, but also Oriental countries like Japan, in order that they might develop without conforming precisely to Western models and in harmony with their own regional traditions, whenever these traditions might be considered "valuable," "useful," forming a part of what the English call "the usable past." Never more than today, in the Orient, in Africa, in the United States, even in Europe has this somewhat pragmatic conception of tradition been more current; and this sense of tradition has for a long time been characteristic of Latin American culture where it has markedly influenced the arts and all sorts of creative activities combining traditional values with new modern values. The results may be considered the most expressive art works and creative activities of Latin American culture—from Cuzco's painting to Villa-Lobos' music; from the use of plants in Mexico, Peru, and other Latin American countries, traditionally employed by the Ameridians for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes, and subsequently given scientific blessing by the Spaniards; to the paintings by the Mexican Diego Rivera and the ceramics of the Brazilian Francisco Brennand in which experimental daring is combined with the constants of popular art.

Of course it is obvious that in order to be utilizable, tra-

ditions must be selected and even transformed by those who are living as contemporaries, and not according to a fetishistic attachment to these enchantments. Love for traditions must know how to discriminate the true values which they may contain, from worthless archaicism. That is what one often observes happening in Latin America with certain traditions like the *chimarrão* (the pipe for drinking *maté*), a usage which in its pure form requires that this most American beverage be taken in a not very hygienic way, making use of a single vessel serving several people. Or, for example, the *siesta* which, if kept within reasonable bounds, could be a salutary habit in the tropical regions of Latin America, rather than a practice growing out of simple indolence or harmful laziness. Or again, old fashioned Hispano-Arab windows for dwellings with lattices instead of being provided with glass in the English manner.

We limit ourselves to these three examples among many others that might be listed, in order to show how for many Latin Americans today, the development of their half-European, half non-European civilization loses nothing in adapting itself to traditions reflecting the mixed character of this civilization. Thus, for example, in matters of clothing, the especially brave innovators living in tropical parts of Latin America don't hesitate to recommend going back to Oriental and African traditions, as has also occurred with regard to futurist, and hence post-modern architecture. It is simply a question of replacing masculine trousers, which as everyone knows are anti-hygienic in warm climates, with the tunic and loin-cloth. Such suggestions might still seem shocking, given the conventions regulating the wearing of clothing in terms of sex, trousers being masculine and skirts feminine. But such conventions are only the product of Western civilization, and if this new style were adapted by some of the new generation who would thus be bravely playing a pioneering role, it might very well happen that by combining traditionalism with ultra-modernism in matters of clothing, Latin America would make its contribution toward the well-being of populations established in other parts of the world. For those people who also dwell under equally tropical climates are equally victims in their manner of dress of European conventions which have been superimposed on Oriental traditions, and which,

in this domain, are healthier, more sanitary, better adapted to the environment and almost always more esthetic than European usages. The same observations apply to footwear: they apply to sports and games; they apply to recreation in general. In all sorts of areas one may very well observe during the next decades a Latino-Americanization of European usages, a transformation inspired by Oriental and African traditions which various groups of Latin-American peoples keep as a kind of cultural reservoir alongside Amerindian values.

In fact, from the very start of the existence of these peoples as Latin Americans, it happened that within their very cultures, alongside the European values imposed as civilized by European imperialism on the non-European groups called to live with them, there were other ways of life, non-European, which were disapproved and sometimes even rejected by the rulers. But these traditions have been in some way kept sheltered away as secondary traditions, waiting for some future epoch in order to reappear alongside European values and affirm their superiority over certain of them—as is occurring now. Their superiority is due to their better adaptation to the environment, their authentically American character, and also to qualities which render them at the same time closer to Latin values and yet more capable than purely Latin values of resisting Anglo-Saxon values, which often exercise a denaturing rather than modernizing influence on non-European cultures. In other words, those Latin American values which are Amerindian, Oriental and African in origin rather than European, show themselves able to respond to American living conditions, and more particularly, the American tropics, better than European-derived values, some of which have been preserved in a pure or almost pure state in Latin America. Obviously, these traditions—conventionally inferior in status—are now no longer exclusively associated with values deriving from plebeians, rustics, proletarians, servants. The fact is that they are given importance by—at the same time as they lend importance to (a phenomenon typical of Latin America today) the proletariat, the peasants and descendants of slaves. And it is not only a question of re-evaluating the races to which these people belong, races which have already been especially honored in view of the presence of Amerindian and even African blood

in the ancient noble families of Latin America, but also to a re-evaluation of certain Amerindian and African cultural traits.

Many of these traits, let me repeat, have been unduly connected with what was considered the contemptible condition of people inferior from a socio-economic point of view, traits manifested for the most part among people of Amerindian, Oriental or African origin.

There is, therefore, a correlation between the present socio-economic rise of Latin American social classes who, for a long time—a long time, be it said, for Latin America—remained "inferior," and another sociologically important phenomenon: namely the regaining of status of those cultural elements connected with these classes and with their socio-economic condition as "inferiors." And that is the point that we consider most important to be stressed in these pages. It is a matter of re-evaluation taking place within the Latin American socio-cultural structure, which is sufficiently plastic and flexible to permit this transformation to take place without de-Latinizing or de-Americanizing that society in any of its essential characteristics. This is explained by the fact that Latin American societies—taking full account of all the faults of an ethnic order which renders their classification as christocentric societies debatable—are, and have always been, from a sociological point of view, christocentric and not, socially and culturally speaking, ethnocentric. Therein seems to lie the deepest difference separating them from other European societies—Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, Belgian, and even French—in the Americas and elsewhere. All these have been ethnocentric rather than christocentric in their socio-cultural aspects, although all of them have pretended to be Christian civilizations and were used for the purpose of converting and instructing non-European civilizations, an activity which (except on the part of the Belgians) was carried on also among those American peoples called Latin.

This difference, which we have pointed out here, explains the fact that among the mixed populations of Latin America—mixed of Europeans and non-Europeans—mixed forms of culture have developed, noticeably with regard to Christianity. This is especially true for Christian art. Examples of this kind are the sculpture of Aleijadinho in Brazil as well as Cuzco

painting and various works of Mexican art. In other fields there are also instances of symbioses and interpenetrations which must not be underestimated. Often these are made possible by Christianity, a Christianity which instead of remaining totally closed to non-European values, has known how to admit these values; in a number of cases, including medical, therapeutic and hygienic traditions.

As a result of these interpenetrations, the Latin American complex of peoples and cultures find themselves marked by a unity, not always apparent, but coexisting with a variety which is almost always much more obvious inasmuch as it presents more picturesque aspects. Up to a certain point, the fact that this complex presents itself in an entirely different fashion from other similar complexes of populations and cultures in the Orient and in Africa, is due to these interpenetrations. In the Orient and Africa, the imperialist European presence did not succeed in any way in endowing those peoples and cultures with an equally dynamic basis of sociologically Christian values comparable to that which is found in Latin America. Nor, furthermore, did imperialism inculcate European techniques on them in the same way as in Latin American countries, where, developing according to their own style among populations partly half-caste, partly European, Amerindian, or African and nevertheless, inclined to allow themselves to be influenced by very different ways of life and social relations (different even in the Argentine, Chile and Uruguay) from those of Europeans—all this ended up in creating new types of relations between human groups and new attitudes of man in the face of nature, and vis-à-vis Space and Time, attitudes which may henceforth be considered specifically Latin American. Such is the outcome of this combination of the Amerindian cultural heritage with that of African Blacks and European Latins. And therein we find a Latinity created by the radiation of Latin Christianity, rather than by any sort of awareness prevailing over religion, namely, the sense of belonging to a race that could be defined as Latin. Brought to America by the Spaniards, Portuguese and French, this Christianity was not only made up of beliefs; it impregnated attitudes, customs, social rites, ever independently of its religious practices. The earliest activity of the Spaniards in America have been

studied with profound competence by Professor Marcel Bataillon.

It is not very likely that the sociological definition of Latin America will be formulated in the future in ethnic terms, which up to now could not outweigh cultural terms. Nor is it very likely that we will rest content with terminology like the Latins of Europe and the Amerindians of America. In fact, the Latinity and Americanism of Latin America tends to define itself increasingly in terms at once cultural and ecological, constituting one of the points wherein its development differs from that of the America shaped by Anglo-Saxons. A definition which would comprehend the Latinity as well as the Americanism of Latin America must include, it seems to us, the totality of this complex, all the manifestations of its *ethos*, its culture, its social conscience, together with political behavior and the kind of economic activity which it implies, styles regulating collective life, as well as literary, artistic, and philosophic expressions, social sciences, insofar as these latter reflect a specific life-experience.

We believe we are speaking for all those, Europeans and Americans, who are collaborating in this special issue of *Diogenes*, when we say that none of us find the key which would permit us to interpret the Latin American *ethos* and cultures in a rigoriously pure Latinism (European), any more than we find it in an equally pure American indigenism. Taken in such an absolute way, neither one nor the other can ever explain the Latin American past, its development and ideals. In order to grasp them in their essential characteristics, this past and this development must be considered, we repeat, in the totality of their interpenetrations, although we must admit the existence of sociological islands where the exception rules: European or indigenous or even Negro sociological islands, connected however, with this continent which forms a whole that must be characterized as Latin-American.