Rhetoric of Latinamericanism

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This dissertation is to describe the ideology that is to be called "Latinamericanism". We consider it as a discourse which has its own origin and proper process of formation. Our best effort concerns analyzing them and pointing out the problematics they contain.

Chapter 1 Misfortune on Rubén Darío •••Rhetoric of Latinamericanism

Rubén Darío is a poet who conquered the highest prestige amongst those who launched into a big poetry stream of modernismo (modernism) that came into fashion in almost all the Spanish speaking countries around the turn of the century. We set out reporting a sort of misfortune bred by his own piece of poetry. That poem, namely, "A Roosevelt"("To Roosevelt") (1905) is in general taken as an expression of arielismo (Arielism), current of thought inspired by Ariel (1900) of Uruguayan critic José Enrique Rodó. This anti-US, pan-Latin American thought can be renamed as Latinamericanism by historicizing.

Latinamericanism is an ideology, based upon the idea of race in 19th century, extolling America of Latin against America of Anglo-Saxon (USA). It goes parallel with nationalism as discourse, in a sense that it aims to create a Latin American Nation as counterpart of US Nation. This discourse, originated in Colombian writer José María Torres Caicedo (around 1860's), found its nuclear of USA as enemy with José Martí (Cuban journalist-poet) when the first Pan-American Congress was hold (1889), and began to spread with Ariel.

After historicizing it, we analyze two of the important texts, and draw a conclusion that this is a discourse completed by Darío, and one which has in itself acknowledgement of defeat. Latinamericanism is a discourse that goes victorious in
literal phase and defeated in political one.

Chapter 2  Prodigal Sun in Perplexity --Modernist Moral and Latinamericanism

Here, we qualify the modernist moral as Bohemian one. By Bohemian moral we mean an identity politics that Bohemians practiced identifying themselves in relation, covert and / or overt, with a bourgeois consumption, characteristic behavior in the era of mass consumption society realized in the late 19th century.

Proven this point, we figure out Dario's attitude, through reading of "El triunfo de Calibán" ("The Triumph of Caliban"), text that marks his turning point in his changing position from non-political poet into the radical Latinamericanist("Arielist"). Holding his modernist-Bohemian moral on his mind, in front of a new economic system that is finance, he stays in a complete perplexity. And from that standpoint, he refuses with vehemence the economic system totally unfamiliar to him. Latinamericanism, hence, is a discourse which opts for defeat, here again, staying far behind the economical growth.

Chapter 3 Streetlamp, Suspension Bridge and Iron Tower --José Martí, and His Production of the Notion of Culture

Latinamericanism is a discourse that also extols the Latin American culture in opposition with hugeness of the United States (its enormous power in political and economic phase). In the third chapter we describe how the notion of culture has been taking shape. In José Martí’s journalistic works, we find the notion produced as something lost (immediate past) or something that here isn’t (distant hometown). In New York, i.e. in the very heart of enemy, being enchanted by the technology and mass culture, he imagined Latin America (as he called "Nuestra América" "Our America") and its sublime culture. And dispatched it for readers in Latin American countries.

After giving birth to the notion of culture, Martí tried all he could for passing it down to children by publishing magazine. In his notion of culture, nevertheless, among the achievement of technology and notion of history, he also involved the gender role and euro-central vision of history.
Chapter 4  Destination of Hope --From Martí to Rodó

In this chapter we treat two of the texts that we have frequently referred as the most important, namely, Martí's "Nuestra América" and Rodó's Ariel.

First of all, we point out that the former was published in a crucial crossroad of two parallel lines which are nationalism and Latinamericanism. "Nuestra América" has, being a typical expression of Latinamericanism, affinity with nationalism then taking shape of indigenismo affirmed by contemporary Mexican intellectuals in opposition with official indigenismo oriented by Porfirio Díaz. And in fact, Martí's argument that it is important to know the reality of indigenous people would be taken over by indigenista nationalists in 20th century. On the other hand, as for ambiguity in "Nuestra América", text in which making a constellation of ambiguous metaphors Martí talks about a hope, Latinamericanist should take them over.

It is in Rodó's Ariel that we find the biggest inheritance from Martí, and from Dario. Rodó seems to be just a transmitter after our historicization. The only merit of him is to have written down the way how to take over the hope.

Chapter 5 Virgil in Mexico / Mexico by Way of Virgil --Position of Alfonso Reyes

When we put our eyes on the peculiarity of Rodó as such, we will be aware of that the activities of so called arielistas are exactly what Rodó designated. We made sure of it in those of Mexican younger generation called intellectuals of Ateneo de la Juventud. But what they said was taking turn in different direction. We see in Alfonso Reyes' "Discurso por Virgilio" ("Discourse on Virgil") which direction was he going to take.

This essay is based upon a discourse imparted in 1930 on behalf of an event in / by which the official nationalism intended to approach Latinamericanism. In the essay, Reyes criticizes the politicality of that intention in very particular way that can be called historicism. His gesture, coming from this peculiar standpoint, is now ideological and meta-ideological, at the same time. We may call such a singular essay as his a self-de-constructive one.
Chapter 6 Créolité, Criollismo, Latinamericanism—Carpenterian Practice

In the last chapter we consider case of Alejo Carpentier, Cuban novelist, who is of younger generation than that of Reyes. We may be able to put his practice in the diametrically opposite pole to Reyes. For, in comparison with Reyes, who, as we saw above, substantiated and relativicized at the same time the Latinamericanism, Carpentier, within the stereotyped Latinamericanism, seeks its possibility practicing a fairly interesting description.

His description focuses on the notion of criollo, which stands for the mixture of races, heterology of cultures ... and so forth. And we see in it the similarity with the notion of créole, recently relevalent. Starting from examination of similarity and difference between the notion of créole and that of Latinamericanism in general, we come to conclusion that Carpenterian description of culture is much more thorough than any other latinamericanists' mere statement of ideology. What we feel disappointed is the strictly limited rim wherein the writer finds the fertileness of criollo, mixture of cultures. This limitation, we think, is nothing but nature of ideology that is Latinamericanism.