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THE TWO AMERICAN CULTURES:

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COEXISTENCE, COMPETITION, OR COOPERATION?

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I had very much hoped to come to you this afternoon in a constructive, if not an optimistic, spirit, to present to you a dispassionate, balanced picture of the inter-American situation as it bears upon our theme, to talk about obstacles to effective inter-American dialogue and to suggest ways in which those obstacles might be, if not surmounted, at least recognized and dealt with sensibly. The tenor of what I had hoped to say was to have been reassuring, positive. If the prospects for an easy transition in Latin America from "traditionalism" to "modernity"--to use the currently accepted terminology--were not bright, at least the transition could be made less painful through enlightened awareness on the parts of us North Americans of the full dimensions of the developmental challenge in the area and the revision of our attitudes, behavior, and policies to take account of those dimensions. I had expected to conclude, of course, on the strongly affirmative note that is appropriate to occasions like this one.

I regret that I have been unable to prepare that kind of talk. My mood is one of deep pessimism, manifested alternately in a spirit of rage and a spirit of despair. Moods change, of course, and I had hoped that before the date of this conference my mood would have changed sufficiently for me to prepare the kind of talk I have described. But moods do not take orders from our wills--or at least my moods do not--and the 27th of January has arrived. I shall give you a pessimistic address.

Let me begin with a quotation: "I am a man: nothing human can be strange to me," said the Latin comic writer. And I would say rather, 'no man can be strange to me.' I am a man, no other man can I regard as strange. Because the adjective human is as suspicious to me as its abstract substantive humanity. Neither the human, nor humanity, neither the simple adjective, nor the substantified adjective, but rather the concrete noun: the man. The man of flesh and bone, he who is born, suffers, and dies--above all, dies--he who eats, and drinks, and plays, and sleeps, and thinks, and lives, the man whom we see and to whom we listen, the true man.

"Because there is another thing that is also called man, the subject of not a few more or less scientific digressions. And that is the featherless biped of the legend, the political animal of Aristotle, the social contractor of Rousseau, the economic man of the Manchesterians, the homo sapiens of Linnaeus, or, if one prefers, the vertical mammal. That is to say, a non-man."

Those are the opening words of Unamuno's On the Tragic Sense of Life, familiar to many of us here. Are they relevant to our theme? Are we not talking about "The Two American Cultures?" And with a theme so vast, one that obliges us to rise to giddy levels of abstraction, how can we preoccupy ourselves with man, the individual man of flesh and bone? Are we not obliged to deal with cultural syndromes, cultural change, cultural interaction? Do not these conceptions adequately embrace the man of whom Unamuno speaks? How can we handle this topic--or, for that matter, any social or political or economic topic--without abstracting away from the person?

Moreover, our whole tradition of law, of representative democracy, of the economy in its free and planned aspects, depend upon our transcending the person and the intimately personal. And, in another dimension so does science, which is precisely the systematic effort to get beyond the discrete, the idiosyncratic, the individual to general theory, theory applicable, to be sure--if it is good theory--to the concrete case, but as a scientific theory interested in the concrete case only as a manifestation of a more general phenomenon or force. Social science, striving to emulate to the degree its subject matter permits the pure and natural sciences, has accepted the same kinds of criteria: the quest is after probabilistic laws, meaning that data that cannot be statistically manipulated are of only dubious scientific value. The social scientist in an effort to pattern himself after his brothers in the other sciences, tries rigorously to divide himself into man as scientist and man as citizen; he makes a sharp distinction between fact and value, between theory and practice. Somewhere man--Unamuno's man--gets lost in the interstices of the scientists' activity. But who can doubt that the sciences, both the social and the other, have contributed in measurable ways to man's welfare?

Nevertheless, I find myself driven back, willy-nilly, to Unamuno and his man of flesh and bone, the persons of this world, you, me, all of us. And when I look at the men of this hemisphere, I see human tragedy almost everywhere. Therein lies my second reason for calling your attention to Unamuno and the title of his book.

In profound human terms what is unfolding in this hemisphere is tragic in the Greek sense. Forces are at work, influences are at play, over which individuals as individuals have little or no control and that seem to be leading us on irresistibly, inevitably toward a humanly appalling future. Tragedy, of course, is intrinsic to the human condition, as anyone of Iberian background knows. But the tragedy implicit in the processes of social change now underway in our hemisphere is of an immensity that we can scarcely comprehend. In Latin America one would have to go back to the Conquest and think of the shattering impact of the Spanish upon established Indian civilizations to find an appropriate parallel for the emerging impact of technology and modernization upon Latin America today. In the United States--where tragedy is not a congenial concept, it being alien to our consciously held national ethos--tragedy has its roots in hubris: our very success is corrupting, dooming us. In the words of Aeschylus: "For when arrogance blooms it bears the fruit of doomed infatuation, whence it reaps a harvest rich in tears. God stands ready to punish overweening pride; he calls men to a heavy reckoning."

And the destinies of us North Americans and our Latin American brethren are fatefully interlocked. For as we rush onward toward an uncertain destiny--altogether inadequately denoted by President Johnson in his State of the Union speech as "new and better shores"--we are an agency of impending Latin American human calamity.

I am shocked to hear myself saying such words. They are hyperbolic are they not? And what place does hyperbole have in reasoned discourse? Moreover, what credence is to be placed in voices of doom, which have been heard at every place and in every time? Man survives; more than survives, he improves. Such at least is the prevailing North American view--and, one immediately adds, the prevailing Soviet view also. But I think that on this occasion hyperbole may be appropriate, a little doom-saying may be useful. Their purpose is the one so powerfully expressed by Oliver Cromwell: "My brethren, by the bowels of Christ I beseech you, bethink you that you may be mistaken."

Let us get into our theme.

Little purpose would be served at this gathering by simply repeating the standard rundown of elements that perturb inter-American relations. Those of us who are together here are already fully familiar with them: that the United States is rich and powerful while the Latin Americans are poor and weak; that the United States is supremely successful as a nation, and so regards itself, while the Latin Americans are conscious of having failed to keep pace either with us or with the European world with which they feel a cultural affinity and with which they compare themselves; that the United States affects Latin America monumentally, consciously and unconsciously, deliberately and non-deliberately. What is required of us is a somewhat more probing analysis than we have ordinarily undertaken of what we North Americans are, of what the Latin Americans are, and of how we are importantly responsible for the traumatic phase through which Latin America is now passing. There is no intention here to assess praise or blame, to allocate pity or scorn. What we are witnessing is the unfolding of a drama in which there are neither heroes nor villains. There are only suffering human beings.

I depart from three fundamental premises. The first is that North American and Latin American cultures are so radically different that any expectation of really effective understanding, communication, and cooperation between the two parts of the hemisphere is probably illusory. The second is that the United States may be playing fully as much a disruptive as a constructive role in Latin America. The third is that technology and modernization are quite as likely to pull Latin American societies still further apart, to rend them still more severely, as they are to bring those societies toward more significant national community. These propositions are patent nonsense to anyone who thinks of welfare in material terms, who thinks development is to be measured by an expanding gross national product, who believes that man is one among three or four factors of production, who calculates in precise statistical ways the comparative costs and benefits of investments in manpower education and training. These propositions are nonsense, in short, to anyone who accepts current philosophies about what the nature and measurement of development are. They are true--or at least I believe they are true--only at Unamuno's

level. They are true only at the level where persons breathe, move, and have their being.

For good and ill the United States is at large in the world, a veritable force of nature. Through deployment of military and economic power, through public and private export of skills and goods, through massive diffusion of North American standards, values, patterns, judgments, the United States is affecting societies everywhere. If the British gained their empire in a fit of absent-mindedness, we of this country have been unsettling the world in a fit of explosive national energy unparalleled in world history and ramified along almost every significant dimension: military, political, economic, social, cultural.

It is not, of course, our primary purpose to be disruptive; very much to the contrary. We ourselves are inclined to think that our influence, by and large, has been benign and constructive. Our intent, in any event, is to be helpful, our premise being that what is good for the United States is good for the world--and vice versa. If occasionally we feel ourselves obliged to employ brute or concealed force, we justify our behavior as Hamlet justified his harsh words to his mother: we are cruel only to be kind. To the extent that our activity is comprehended within a conscious, coherent design--most of it is not, for what emanates from us is so manifold as almost altogether to escape meaningful coordination and control--but, to the extent that a design exists, it is directed toward protecting the weak peoples of the world against overt and insidious dangers (primarily against what we regard as the truly disruptive force, the communist powers,) promoting peaceful change of a meliorative kind, keeping open the world's options, pointing the way toward a brighter future for mankind.

In few other areas of the world have the effects of this extraordinary eruption of diversified power been more unsettling than in Latin America. To assert, as some Latin Americans have been known to do, that the United States is responsible for Latin America's present ills, is unwarranted; to assert, however, that the United States, by the manifestations of its presence there and by the power it radiates from North America, is contributing mightily to current Latin American unrest, is undoubtedly true. What is involved here is something far more portentous than the standard, ideologically motivated charges of North American imperialism, North American alliances with reactionary and conservative Latin American elements. What is involved are such matters as the influence of the United States upon what enters the minds of Latin Americans through the popular press, television, radio, the cinema. What is involved are the effects in Latin America of the introduction of North American modes of industrial organization and technique. What is involved are the consequences of the work of our foundations and universities, our teachers and researchers, our voluntary associations, our churches. What is intruding upon Latin America, what is disruptive, is the North American style, the North American culture. And North American culture clashes with Latin American culture.

Culture clash is of course the very stuff of world history, as the Latin Americans themselves must be the first to recognize from their awareness of the lasting effects of the collision between Christianity and Islam on the Iberian Peninsula and the similarly lasting effects of the collision between Iberians and Indians in the New World. But culture clash, while its very long-term consequences may be beneficial--at least, they tend to be so interpreted by the dominant party in the encounter--, are always psychologically painful, if not to those of the intruding culture, certainly to those of the society upon which the intrusion is exercised. Moreover, in the specific Latin American case, it is precisely because Latin American culture has not yet harmoniously assimilated the consequences of its two earlier cultural traumas that the region's present situation is so precarious as it experiences the North American impact. Were Latin American societies today strong national communities with integrated, coherent national cultures, the colossal, multifaceted thrust from North America would pose a challenge, not a threat. Mexico, one of the very few Latin American countries that has come to terms with its past, that has developed a "national idea," illustrates this. Mexico has the degree of national self-confidence, the degree of institutional and structural resilience, to make possible its acceptance of "technology" and "modernization" on what it takes to be its own terms and without sacrifice of its national integrity.

Most Latin American societies, however, lack national coherence, a meaningful "national idea," cultural definition. Unable to find significant consensus about what they as societies have been, are, and want to become, they are today in a situation in which they are incapable of either effectively resisting pressures for change excited by North American influences or adequately accommodating those pressures within existing institutions. What we see in the region, therefore, is increasingly widespread restlessness, gradual crumbling of the traditional order, painful and frequently inept efforts to conceive and construct a new order. At the personal level what we see is anxiety, frustration, fear, uncertainty, doubt, insecurity, suspicion--the whole catalogue of symptoms of spiritual and psychological distress. Have we not always seen that in Latin America? We have. But the situation is much graver today than in earlier times.

Can the United States, which so effectively if often unconsciously has worked to undermine the old Latin American order, usefully assist in the process of building a new one? Before we rush to answer that question with the resounding yes that is in the hearts of all of us to give, let us explore a little more carefully the two cultures that are interacting in this hemisphere.

I have said enough to indicate my own discomfort with a concept as broad as "culture", if the use of it leads us to overlook that our real concern is with persons. I confess that I am particularly unhappy with the notion of "two American cultures." If what is meant by the expression is the North American and the Latin American cultures, then I simply cannot accept it--for there is simply no sense in talking about a single Latin American culture. My concern is less with the bizarre inappropriateness of bracketing, say, Haiti and Argentina within one culture--I should have thought that Haiti and

Argentina had about as much in common as do Afghanistan and Australia. My concern is rather with the inappropriateness of suggesting that the peasant in the Colombian Chocó shares a common culture with the MIT-trained economist in the President's office in Bogotá. Indeed, I should at a minimum break almost every Latin American culture into at least three fairly sharply definable cultures: that of the great number of persons in almost all countries who are not yet properly incorporated into the national community; that of the traditional-nationals; and that of the group of men we are coming to call "modern." While it is an easier matter to speak of a single North American culture, the recent colloquy between Eartha Kitt and Mrs. Johnson should alert us to the hazards of speaking so--if alerting is needed in this winter of our discontents.

Who are we North Americans? Presumably we know ourselves well--at least every other North American in this room is as well-qualified as I to speak to this question--so I shall run through just a handful of our characteristics that to me appear to be particularly significant in our encounter with Latin America. And the first, the most important thing to be said about us as a people, as a culture, is that we are very self-consciously, deliberately, and proudly a nation. By far the greater part of us in this country feel strongly that we are participating members of our national community, and membership in that community is both meaningful and precious to us. Our history has been a history of conscious nation-building and nation-maintaining around a core of surprisingly specific and quite well articulated ideas. Those ideas, which to this day undergird our national consensus, inspired our predecessors as they worked this superbly endowed North American continent; they have inspired generations of us. The result has been--at least in our own eyes--stunning national success, a success that has engendered in us a marked sense of privileged destiny, national mission, and special responsibility. (Parenthetically, it has to be acknowledged that foreign observers do not always reach the same judgment. One jaundiced commentator, quoted by Claude Levi-Strauss, is reported to have said: "The United States is the only country of the world to have passed directly from barbarism to decadence without experiencing civilization.")

We tamed our continent, and we forged ourselves as a people. The two processes are intimately related, for our exhilarating experience in dominating, manipulating, exploiting, bending to our wills our natural environment conditioned our values as a people. But I would stress even more the vast effort we put into "Americanizing" ourselves, instilling in ourselves "the American idea," "the American way of life." We used every instrument of inculcation, every engine of assimilation: the public schools, the churches, the political parties, the big city political machines, the labor market. The Americanization of our children began as soon as they could comprehend; the process of assimilation of our huge numbers of immigrants was carried out massively, rapidly, often enough brutally. E pluribus unum applied not only to our federal structure; it applied also to the way we handled the challenge of "Americanization." DeTocqueville's perceptive eye detected a sameness about us, and he rightly singled out "equality" as our dominant value with its concomitant danger of the tyranny of the majority. Our South, whose traditions and structure were only awkwardly compatible

compatible with those of the increasingly dominant North, was coerced at frightful human cost into formal acceptance of "the American way." Only our Negroes, American Indians, Orientals, and--in the southwest--Mexican-Americans were excluded from this process. There were historical reasons for this; but, as we all know, there was also a large element of racism in us. A person who was "different" was to be regarded with suspicion; and if the difference extended to skin color, he was probably an inferior specimen of God's work if indeed the product of God at all.

We, at least those of us who were white, always felt ourselves to be a free people, free to move about within our expansive frontiers, free also to think, to expound. That latter freedom, however, while real enough, was exercised by almost all of us within rather narrow limits: it simply did not occur to us to think "unthinkable thoughts," for the consensus with regard to the evident superiority of "the American way" was overwhelming.

"The American way" evidently gets no full explication here. It was of course egalitarian. It was also individualistic in that the masterless man, the autonomous person, was its basic and only intrinsically valuable component. It was pluralistic in that it took as a premise that the autonomous person would in the rational pursuit of his own self-interest enter into cooperative and productive relationships with his fellows for the building and support of appropriate institutions and associations. It was buoyantly optimistic, singularly receptive to innovation at the margin, adaptive, flexible, pragmatic, not much given to the long-view, very little given to the pondering of ultimate questions. It assumed the near-inevitability of progress, it prized horizontal and vertical mobility. It was materialistic in taking as the measure of success the extent of domination over and consumption of things. It was heavily infused with the notion that work was virtuous, idleness sin. It had an almost limitless appetite for the bathetic and the maudlin; it had little appreciation for the truly tragic.

Success followed upon success--the American way was seemingly invincible. Domestically, without sacrifice of the freedoms we prized, our standard of living soared to levels never before achieved by man. Internationally we assumed a posture of generally benign tolerance of those peoples less favored than we. Twice we intervened in World Wars to "save" the values of western civilization; twice since 1950 we have intervened in Asian conflicts to "save" the future in that region. And throughout our recent history our industrial and other economic power has been growing, our cultural influence has been expanding, our techniques, devices, methods and patterns have been exported and picked up around the globe. The influence of the Soviet Union has been modest indeed compared with ours; the influence of the Red Chinese infinitesimal. The North American "national style" is the standard with which all peoples have to contend, either to emulate it or to resist it.

And yet here at home, and quite suddenly, we find the American way showing deficiencies. We might almost say that the American idea is in danger of being killed by its own success. Increasingly the problems posed by cybernation and automation are upon us, the product

of industrial and technical advance. Increasingly our young people, accustomed to affluence, are uninspired by the motivational spur of growing material possessions and consumption. Increasingly our ever more intricate and interdependent patterns of production and distribution impose upon us the need for ever larger firms, ever greater governmental regulation and control, ever greater bureaucratization and anonymity of personal function. The American Dream has been realized to an extent its early formulators could not have imagined; but it may become a nightmare unless we engage ourselves in some serious reevaluation, some serious rethinking of premises and goals, some re-ordering of priorities. We shall have to revolutionize our distributive mechanisms, for example, in order to assure those at the margins of our affluence a decent participation in American life. We shall have to rethink our work ethic to adjust to an economic situation in which cybernation and automation will have taken away meaningful employment opportunities for millions of us. In short, we confront a revolutionary challenge of a kind radically new for us and for mankind. Our problem is that of learning to live justly, meaningfully with abundance.

How remote is that problem from the problems that face the Latin Americans! And how radically different is our culture from theirs! What do we have to offer them? What are the bases of effective interaction between us and them? We are in the process of exporting to them production techniques, organizational devices, behavior patterns, institutional structures that depended for their successful operation in our own society upon values and conditions that soon must be superseded here and that are only precariously established in Latin America.

Earlier I suggested that any Latin American culture today had to be viewed as comprising at least three sub-cultures: one that can be called pre-national in Kalman Silvert's expression; one that is traditional-national; and one that is modern-national. Until recently only the first two of these existed, and neither of them was easily comprehensible by North Americans. The pre-national element, the majority in most countries, could a few years ago have been the subject of Edwin Markham's poem, "The Man with the Hoe:"

"Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face
And on his back the burden of the world."

It is the sight of this man, whether we find him in the countryside or in the slums of the city, that wrenches the heart, that causes the upsurge of rage. It is the sight of him that drives men like Father Camilo Torres to the route of violence. This man himself, of course, is not on the route of violence--and if history is at all a safe guide, he is unlikely to take it. Men at the margin, at the absolutely critical margin, do not take gratuitous risks: "better the devil we know than the devil we don't know." But this man is stirring now, raising his head, looking about, questioning, not certain of who he is or what he can expect from an environment that is changing in unpredictable ways. What can we say about his culture, the subject of so many anthropological monographs? What it is important to say about

it is that that culture is fundamentally different from the culture of other Latin American groups--although there are symbiotic elements between it and that of the others--and that it is profoundly distinct from the culture of the Peace Corps volunteer or the agronomist from the mid-western university brings with him. The world remains broad and alien, in many cases even broader and more alien than the world of his father.

Let me quote from a succeeding stanza of Markham's poem which seems to be directed to the second of our sub-cultures, the traditional-national:

"O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
Is this the handiwork you give to God?
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quencht?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream..."

The traditional-national does not conceive his role as that of agent of redemption. His values are the product in large part of 450 years of use and abuse of men with hoes. This traditional-national still occupies most seats in national congresses, still plays most roles in commerce and the professions, still dominates the land, still confines his activity on behalf of the disfortunated to rhetoric and charity. He does not communicate effectively with the men with hoes because he does not see them as men--his world and their world are often enough physically separate, always psychologically separate. He is disturbed now, though, for change is in the air, and change is always threatening. The institutions and values of which he is the inheritor and which guide his beliefs and actions, seem less adequate, less enduring, today than they did yesterday.

In terms relevant to modernization and technology, this man is not only an anachronism, he is an obstacle. He has his immensely attractive qualities, but they are not characteristics that make him a constructive nation-builder. He carries within him something unique in this world, a transmuted Iberian cultural strain. Iberian culture, for all that it is not static and not precisely definable, is sui generis, not western European, even less North American. In those aspects of it that interest us here, Iberian culture as perpetuated in the Latin American environment is incompatible with the North American culture that supported our own forefathers.

All of us who have read Iberian and Latin American history know how this distinctive culture evolved syncretically out of interaction between Christian and Moorish elements on the Iberian Peninsula during more than 600 years. The culture has elements of true greatness, true nobility. Its appreciation for the tragic, the contingent, the fortuitous in man's affairs; its recognition that man is only precariously placed on this earth; its enhanced awareness of the worth of the person, particularly one's own person; its emphasis upon dignity pride, style; its prizing of the hazaña, the great feat, the enterprise upon which one willingly, recklessly risks all in pursuit of nothing

more substantial than glory--these are values in whose absence mankind would be the poorer. And yet these are not values that conduce to effective and efficient political systems, coherent economic development, wholesome social dispensations. Particularly in Latin America, where this cultural syndrome was imposed on a human base of Negro slavery and Indian servitude and tied to a most unfortunate landholding and landuse system, the consequences have been altogether deplorable. Moreover, while we legitimately stress the positive aspects of the Iberian-Latin American character, it has its negative side too; suspiciousness, envy, the notion that life is a zero-sum game where one man's gain necessarily must entail another man's loss.

Can it be said that we North Americans communicate effectively with Latin America's traditional-nationals? For certain purposes and at certain levels, it is evident that we do. We have been dealing with them for generations in world councils; we have been dealing with them commercially; we have read their books and they have read ours. But is there real understanding between them and us? Scales of priorities between the two cultures are incompatible--much of what we prize they despise, and conversely. Do I put the matter too strongly, too dichotomously? Probably. The purpose, though, is only to highlight the superficiality of most of our associations with these Latin Americans.

It is within this cultural group that the greatest conscious resistance to modernization and technology is to be found; and this group will not surrender its perquisites and power willingly--nor, I suspect, is it capable of transforming itself. Why should it? Would we, we North Americans, behave in ways different from the way it behaves were we to find ourselves in its position? Perhaps. Although the only remotely comparable situation we have confronted, namely, the full incorporation of our Negro population, is being accomplished only over our strenuous resistance.

There is finally the small but growing minority of those whom we are coming to call "modern men." Again note must be taken of the breakdown of communication between groups in Latin American societies, "modern men"--those who have absorbed North American modes and models or who are working hard to devise more appropriate Latin American variants of those modes and models--are out of effective touch with both the other elements I have been talking about. They sit in government planning offices and plan; but the implementation of the plans, which is the presumed task of the traditional-nationals, does not take place. They devise means for the redemption of the marginal ones --as Father Roger Vekemans refers to the least favored group; but they have no effective means of establishing living rapport with those marginal ones. They are, many of them, tremendously impressive human beings: dedicated, self-sacrificing, capable, well-trained, imaginative, bold. But their task is almost an impossible one. Frustrated, some of them are tempted toward the technocratic-authoritarian route of social change; but this route also brings its frustrations, given the inadequately articulated structure of most Latin American societies.

We North Americans communicate easily with these "modern men," and many of us deal directly with no other kinds. We may deceive ourselves into thinking that we are in touch with the real Latin

America when we are in touch with them. We should recognize, as they most assuredly do, that they are not representative of their fellow Latin Americans; we should also be aware that the cultural environments within which they work have very little in common with North American environments.

Conflict and suffering are intrinsic parts of the whole process of Latin America's contemporary transformation. The traditional-nationals are not prepared to let most of the society's population into the national community; the modern men are under constant attack and harassment from left and right; the pace of change is excruciatingly slow, and because of inadequate institutions, lack of consensus, and absence of guidelines, development itself is erratic, uneven, disjointed, and disappointing. There is not, nor can there be, a steady surge toward determinate national goals or even in determinate national directions.

How does the United States fit to this picture. I have already indicated that I believe really close cooperation between us and them to be so difficult as to be impossible. That case can be made without reference to the historical record which has caused residues of deep anxiety and suspicion toward us among many Latin Americans; it can be made without reference to the shrill cries of the communists or professional anti-Americans.

Realistically considered, the prospect is for less rather than more cooperation in the future than in the past. We should have no difficulty in understanding why this is so. In the first place, Latin Americans are coming rapidly to realize the limited relevance of our experience, our attitudes, our exportable knowledge to their own situation. Secondly, "modernization" in Latin America means not only industrialization and urbanization, not only increased and improved production and distribution, it means independence. And independence in Latin America today has only one referent: independence from the United States. Political and economic independence, to be sure, but also cultural independence. As a Latin American friend expressed it to me: "Ni con ni contra sino sin los Estados Unidos. Neither with nor against but without the United States."

And is that position not thoroughly comprehensible? Do we need to be reminded that what we North Americans have altogether lacked in our dealings with Latin Americans is anything approaching a feeling of equality or humility? ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ We, whether representing our government, or our world of business, our university community, our churches, our voluntary associations--for all that our purpose is solely to "do good"--have moved around Latin America with an air of conscious or unconscious superiority, either benignly paternalistic or arrogantly assertive.

In the academic worlds of Mexico, Chile, Argentina, increasingly in Peru and Colombia, one detects a murmur of protest on the part of scholars against working with North American collaborators. My guess is that the good ladies of the League of Women Voters who for so many years have worked so valiantly trying to teach Latin American women the virtues and skills of democratic organization and government are

going to encounter greater and greater difficulty in gaining access to Latin America during the years ahead. My firm belief is that North American trade union organizations will soon be struggling to maintain a Latin American foothold, their purchase on Latin American labor largely forfeited. I think the role of North American churchmen--whether Catholic or Protestant--is going to diminish rapidly. All of this strikes me as being wholesome.

Let us be altogether honest with ourselves: there has been something psychologically degrading to the Latin Americans in the way we have customarily interacted with them, whether in the cultural sphere or any other. Even if all that we had conveyed to them of our wisdom through our preaching, chastising, cajoling had been useful and relevant--and we know, of course, that much of it has not been--the relationship has been intrinsically an unhealthy one.

Coexistence rather than cooperation, therefore, is the likely pattern in the future. That does not mean, naturally, that United States influence in Latin America will rapidly and significantly diminish. First, that influence cannot diminish so long as Latin American newspapers are overwhelmingly dependent upon our wire services; so long as The Reader's Digest, Time, Good Housekeeping are journals of mass circulation in the region; so long as the United States sets the styles in consumption goods, so long as production and marketing techniques developed in the United States maintain their appeal. But the tone of the relationship will change.

As for us in the United States, can we be wise enough, relaxed enough, to back away from Latin America, increasingly to let them ask their own questions, define their own problems, formulate their own programs, make their own decisions and mistakes? That Latin America can use our technical and financial resources is not in question; of course it can. I am not persuaded, however, that the Latin Americans need--or even particularly want--our patronizing concern, our unwonted interference in areas where our ignorance is exceeded only by our assurance. We are told that when Senator Robert Kennedy visited Mexico City, he saw on a wall the slogan, "Dollars sí, Yanquis no." There is a great deal to be said for that proposition.

Much more suffering, turmoil, tragedy lie ahead for Latin America. I do not see how that projection can be avoided. There are few grounds for optimism that massive unrest, painful social frictions, some violent conflict, will not characterize the region during the years ahead as its societies seek their national definitions, their national identities. The real challenge in Latin America was put poignantly a couple of years ago by a Latin American bishop. "The problem of Latin America," he said, "is not to have more but to be more."

What is Latin America to be? That is their challenge, not ours. But is not the bishop speaking to us also? Is not our problem also precisely that to which the bishop pointed? Let us look, then, to the beam in our own eye. ~~with some~~