

Columbia University
in the City of New York

FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

November 19, 1920.

Mr. Enrique Molina,
Concepción, Chile,

Dear friend Molina:

My cordial thanks are due you for the copy of your excellent "Por las dos Américas", in which you record so graphically and interestingly your impressions of your voyage to and through the United States. The work proves how admirably fitted a scholar of your competence and powers of vision is to make notes and reflections that are altogether superior to the random observations and impressions of even a Bryce. At a later time I hope to comment on the book in other respects, but for the moment at least I shall say frankly that I appreciate your presenting me with the book all the more because you give me some pretty hard raps. That after all is the duty of a friend who conceals nothing from his friend. Moreover I am ready to stand the punishment if I deserve it. But the point is--do I deserve it?

Had you been other than a friend of mine, I would have made no reply to your characterization of "Psicología de los latino-americanos segun el profesor W.R. Shepherd". Few Americans, and still fewer Latin-Americans, have read the original essay. Such Americans as have commented on it said to me that they doubted whether Latin Americans liked to have any opinions that they might see fit to express about Latin-American psychology translated into English, even for circulation among the members of a very limited circle. Some of the Latin Americans, on the other hand, as soon as they realized that I was not setting forth my opinions at all, but merely those uttered by writers of their own stock, declared that the opinions as presented put the case too mildly; others maintained that they were substantially correct, with due allowance for exaggeration, while still others asserted that the traits described by the Latin-American writers were altogether false.

Had you been wholly fair with me, at the outset you would have stressed the matter contained in certain statements of mine on pages 269-270 of the original article, and have stated also categorically that (1) the article upon which you descant was simply a brief treatise addressed to a few people of a studious turn of mind who see the "Journal of Race Development" and who are unable to read Spanish and Portuguese, and who yet are interested in knowing what Latin-American writers say about their own people; (2) the article does not convey my own personal opinions on the psychology of the Latin-American, but those of Latin-American authors, except in the sense that such opinions were somewhat softened in expression; (3) where I personally express opinions at variance with the "exaggerations" as you term them--very properly--it is not that I am falling into contradictions of myself, but that I am demurring against the excessiveness with which the Latin-American writers themselves clothe their utterances; (4) throughout I was mindful of the old adage--"si se habla bien de Inglaterra, es inglés, ó de Francia, es francés; pero si se habla mal de España, es español"; --incidentally, the Spanish

word which I have translated by "unmorality" is "amoralidad", and not "inmoralidad", as you put it, which is a very different thing; (5) I am an earnest and sincere friend of Latin Americans, as proved by my books and articles, many of which, including "Latin America" have been translated by Spanish-Americans into Spanish, by my numerous public addresses and by my official participation in activities aimed at the promotion of kindness of sentiment between the respective exponents of the two types of civilization in the New World, and (6) I am an "enemigo acérrimo" of an imperialism on the part of the United States which has anything to do with the Hispanic nations.

In response to your assertion "que el historiador debe hacer la crítica de las fuentes que utiliza, valorizarlas y rectificarlas con investigaciones más completas", I would say that such unquestionably would be the duty of the historian who might be setting forth his own impressions, but not that of the writer who merely is conveying in condensed form into English the viewpoints of writers in Spanish. Here also, I would remark in passing, how strange it is that all such Latin-American writers, and French authors as well, whose works have been brought to my attention, take much the same attitude. ~~xxxxxx~~ If, therefore, you know of works by Latin-Americans on Latin-American psychology in comparison with that of Americans, or other peoples outside of the Hispanic countries, who diametrically oppose and refute the opinions of Colmo, Burge, Argüedas, García Calderón and Ugarte, for example, and will give me their names and the titles of their works, you will do me an inestimable service.

If you want to know what I personally feel toward Latin Americans --in addition to your information derived from personal contact with me in the passing years--and quite apart from a condensed translation of what Latin-Americans have to say on the subject of Latin-American psychology, you will find it in the enclosed. Please return the one that appears in typewritten form.

Sincerely yours,

William R. Shepherd