PROLOGUE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Critique of Latin American Reason was written in Germany in the summer of 1995 and published the following year in Barcelona by Puvill. The contract stipulated that the book consist of a single edition that would exhaust its print run over the next couple of years. Since then, many people asked me to arrange for the book to be republished, but I wasn't sure I wanted to for a number of reasons. When I returned to Colombia in 1998, I lost interest in the topic of Latin American philosophy and began to work on issues related to postcolonial theory and cultural studies. I didn't see any need to republish a text written several years ago and at theoretical and personal junctures that I no longer felt were my own. This is not to mention the distance I had since taken from the avant-garde language I used in the book.

However, a couple of years ago I began to realize that my genealogical works on the history of Colombia covered some of the same themes already addressed in Latin American philosophy and that it might not be a bad idea to consider publishing a new edition of the book. The idea was fully embraced by the director of the Instituto Pensar and by Universidad Javeriana Press, and I began to work on the project in January of this year. In any event, as I began to reread these old lines, I felt the uncontrollable urge to "correct" my own arguments and eventually to rewrite the book entirely. It is not an easy thing to reissue a fifteen-year-old text. One feels the sensation of being estranged from oneself, of an almost

instinctive rejection of the way things were said back then—things that today we would say in other ways.

I finally arrived at a sort of compromise: I would leave the structure of the book intact, as it appeared in its original version, and preserve its postmodern language. I would limit myself to correcting basic issues of style and spelling and introducing some citations and notes, but I also revised a few arguments that simply could not be left as they were written. This was the case particularly in chapters 5 and 6 as well as in some sections of chapter 4. I also wanted to include in this new edition a text written in 1999 that, although it is in a different tone, complements some of the arguments presented in the original six chapters of the book. Last, I decided to include as an appendix an extensive interview from 2011 in which I discuss in depth some of the topics that led me to write the book.

In the prologue to the 1996 edition I explained that the first time I heard of a "critique of Latin American reason" was when I was a philosophy student at the Universidad Santo Tomás de Bogotá in the early 1980s. It was Daniel Herrera Restrepo who, arguing from the perspective of phenomenology, stated that it was necessary to determine what constitutes the "specificity of reason" in Latin America without undermining the "universal" character that philosophy should have. What must be clarified, according to Herrera, is how the concept of reason can be "expanded" through a phenomenological analysis that demonstrates the peculiarities of our "lifeworld." The philosophical task of a critique of Latin American reason would therefore be "to elaborate the categories proper to this reason, understanding by categories those principles that make our being and our world intelligible and which at the same time express the ultimate constituents of that being and that world" (Herrera, "El futuro de la filosofía en Colombia" 457). Even so, the program formulated by Herrera was critiqued in the same era by Roberto Salazar Ramos, a member of the Bogotá Group, who, via Foucault, reformulates it as follows: the romantic project of a "phenomenology of Latin American reason" should be abandoned and replaced by an alternative project, that of an "archaeology of Latin American reason." It was no longer a matter of conceptualizing the "deep structures" in the world of an authentically Latin American life, but rather of demonstrating the practices and apparatuses through which a series of discourses on Latin America and the Latin American has been constructed (Salazar Ramos, "Los grandes

metarrelatos en la interpretación de la historia latinoamericana" 92). The critique of Latin American reason thus becomes an archaeology of Latin Americanism.

My purpose in the book was therefore to follow that path indicated by Roberto Salazar Ramos's work. Using Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods, I critically examined the family of discourses that made it possible to create an entity called "Latin America," endowed with an ethos and a cultural identity that supposedly distinguish it from modern European rationality. In this sense, the book bears a certain similarity to Edward Said's famous *Orientalism*. In the same way that the Palestinian theorist examines the way in which knowledges like Egyptology and linguistics produce a colonial image of the Orient, I was also interested in the way in which a particular knowledge—philosophy—constructs a colonial image of Latin America, with one noticeable difference: while Said sketches out his genealogy of orientalism with an eye toward exogenous practices (constructed and based in imperial metropoles), I wanted to delineate the genealogy of Latin Americanism through endogenous practices. I was no longer interested in "external colonialism," that is to say, the way Europeans have represented the inhabitants of their colonies, but rather the way in which Latin American intellectuals themselves have represented life on this continent through a kind of "colonial gesture": exoticism. I'm referring here to the postulation of Latin America as "the other of modernity."

Like Said with regard to Orientalism, I believe that Latin Americanism does not consist only of inoffensive discourses whose circulation is limited to intellectual elites, but that it is also a political praxis whose consequences the book analyzes through a consideration of two registers in particular: nationalism and populism. It seems that Latin Americanism has always been the perfect fit for those political proposals that focus on the demand for the "proper," the identification of the will of the people with justice and morality, the tendency to blame imperialism for all our ills, the portrayal of the caudillo as the leader of the masses, etc.—political tendencies we hoped were left behind in the era when the book was written that have tragically returned to Latin America in recent years. Perhaps this is also a good reason for it to be republished.

The new edition of this book coincides with a renewal of my interest in the tradition of "Latin American philosophy" that I so vehemently

criticized fifteen years ago. This does not signify a reversal of my criticisms, but rather a clarification of them, separating them from the postmodern language that it was necessary to take up at that time and place. My impression is that the members of the Bogotá Group did not distinguish clearly enough between the two traditions of Latin American philosophy that developed in the last century: historicism and liberationism.[1] Historicism, which can be traced back to José Ortega y Gasset through the influence of José Gaos in Mexico in the 1940s, leads finally to the project of the "history of ideas" disseminated by Leopoldo Zea between the 1950s and 1970s. Liberationism, in contrast, is a current that emerged alongside Marxism in the 1960s with the critical writings of Augusto Salazar Bondy and which found in Argentina its point of convergence with the writings of Enrique Dussel, Juan Carlos Scannone, Mario Casalla, Oswaldo Ardiles, Horacio Cerutti, and others. Of course, there were intersections between the two traditions (the "Declaration of Morelia" and the famous debate between Zea and Salazar Bondy), but the Bogotá Group tended to subsume the two under a single label: "Latin American philosophy of liberation."

My work during these last several years has consisted of clearly separating these two lines and trying to connect the tradition of historicism with the archaeological and genealogical thought of Michel Foucault, which of course presupposes a profound rearticulation of the history of ideas. Looking at things in retrospect, I would say that the movement from a "history of ideas" to a "localized history of practices" as an expression of critical thought in Colombia is the line of work I have followed in my two books *La hybris del punto cero* (The hubris of the zero point [2005]) and *Tejidos oníricos* (Oneiric constitutions [2009]), and it is also the perspective of the research group I am currently part of, Philosophical Histories and Historiographies in Colombia.

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