

# POSITIVISM ON THE MOVE: TRANSLATORS AND PUBLISHERS IN MEXICO AND ARGENTINA FROM 1850 TO 1950<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Historians have demonstrated that Auguste Comte's philosophy became an eclectic positivism after its introduction to Latin America. The factors that help explain this eclecticism include positivism's connections with the writings of Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and John Stuart Mill; the simultaneous circulation of print materials in their original language as well as their translations; and the emergence of an international publishing market in the late 19th century. This paper studies the flow of positivist ideas in Mexico and Argentina from the perspective of publishers and translators during a period when states were organizing their fundamental structures and education policies (1850–1950).

## Resumen

La historiografía sobre el tema ha mostrado que la introducción de la filosofía de Auguste Comte en Latinoamérica dio lugar a un positivismo profundamente heterogéneo. Su combinación con los escritos de Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin y John Stuart Mill, la circulación de impresos, tanto en lengua original como en traducción, y el desarrollo de un mercado editorial internacional a fines del siglo XIX son algunos de los factores que contribuyen a explicar dicha heterogeneidad. El presente trabajo estudia la circulación de las ideas positivistas en Argentina y en México desde la perspectiva de los editores y traductores activos entre 1850 y 1950, un periodo clave para la organización política de los nuevos Estados latinoamericanos y para la constitución de sus instituciones educativas.

**Key words:** Positivism. Translators. Publishers. Agency. History of translation.

**Palabras clave:** Positivismo. Traductores. Editores. Agentes. Historia de la traducción.

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## 1. Latin American Positivism: Argentina and Mexico

Auguste Comte (1798–1857), a central figure in 19th-century positivism, published the six volumes of his *Cours de philosophie positive* between 1830 and 1842. This work had a significant impact on the 19th-century philosophical contexts in Europe as well as in the recently-created states in Latin America. As stated by Zea, "positivism will act as a lifesaver when Latin America finds itself caught in the violent tempest unleashed in the wake of the region's political emancipation from Spain's colonial domination" (1980: xxvi); nonetheless, Latin American positivism must not be seen as an exact replica of European positivism. According to Ardao, whereas in Europe positivism evolved in a dynamic of "reciprocal influences," in Latin America the different manifestations of positivism followed parallel paths (1963: 516). Furthermore, while in Europe positivist ideas were a result of the institutionalization of sciences, in Latin America they helped engender a culture of scientific thinking. Moreover, 19th-century Latin American intellectuals combined Comtian ideas with Jeremy Bentham's (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill's (1806–1873) utilitarianism, as well as with Herbert Spencer's (1820–1903) and Charles Darwin's (1809–1882) evolutionism. They also frequently combined opposing schools of thought, such as Krausism<sup>2</sup> or the spiritualism of Victor Cousin (1792–1867).

In these pages, we focus our investigations into the circulation of positivist ideas on Argentina and Mexico in particular, given these two countries' status as major publishing centres in the region. Even though the Spanish language (a legacy of the colonial period) allowed for the simultaneous circulation of originals and translations without difficulty –thereby creating "a linguistic space and a space for international cultural exchanges" (Sorá, 2009:95) that defies ready delimitation– for methodological reasons we have decided to limit our research to these two countries. As Pura Fernández shows in her study of Castilian Spanish-language imprints in the 19th century, both countries were major markets for book exports from Belgium, Spain and France (1888: 174). Furthermore, the influence of positivist ideas on scientific and cultural productions and on the political and educational organization of Latin America during this period cannot be underestimated.

Our decision to limit our study to the period between 1850 and 1950 does not mean that the texts of Comte, Darwin, Mill and Spencer have since stopped being edited and distributed. We nevertheless believe that by setting these time limits, we will get a clearer picture of how positivism circulated in Latin America before the introduction of phenomenology and existentialism –two of the most influential schools of thought in the second half of the 20th century.

### 1.1 The "translation agents" of positivism

The historiography of Latin American positivism emphasizes some of the key "personalities" responsible for the introduction of positivist ideas to Latin America. Historical narratives emphasize the roles of pioneers or "precursors," portraying them as the leading figures in the

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<sup>2</sup> Spanish cultural movement based on the imported writings of idealist philosopher K. Ch. F. Krause (1781–1832), who made little impact in the field of philosophy in Germany. Its introduction to Spain by way of Julián Sanz del Río's (1814–1869) translations gave rise to the development of a practical philosophy and a pedagogical way of thinking (Sánchez-Ortíz de Urbina, 1966).

epic narratives of Latin American nations. These narratives rarely refer to how positivist ideas were disseminated or how they managed to attain institutional status in textbooks, educational policies, and intellectual debates. Our aim in this paper is to shed light on this process of institutionalization. To do this, we searched the collections in the national libraries of Argentina and Mexico for Spanish translations of works by Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, and John Stuart Mill. On the one hand, this search allowed us to engage in an archaeological mission that seeks to shed light on an area of historiography that remains understudied (Pym, 1998:5). On the other hand, the corpus of translated works we assembled let us gain an interpretive perspective that often remains obscured in national narratives, but that also has the potential to contribute both to the history of translation and to the historiography of Latin American positivism.

The works we found are listed in the library catalogues we consulted and so may or may not have been in circulation in Argentina and Mexico between 1850 and 1950, as they may have been added into the libraries' collections at a later date.<sup>3</sup> We were particularly interested in those titles whose place and date of publication matched our chosen research context. While we make no claims to have achieved an exhaustive listing, our research has enabled us to determine that the translations are a place of convergence for many editors and translators associated with publishing houses, printing presses, or cultural establishments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Spain, the United States, France, Mexico, Paraguay, and Portugal.

Hence, the particular relevance of the notion of “agents of translation” (Bandia; Milton, 2009), as it provides a reference to the “text producers, mediators that modify a text, or summarize, edit, revise and translate”, to the “patrons, organizers of literary gatherings, politicians and organizations that contribute to cultural and linguistic policy reforms,” just as is done by “magazines, journals and public institutions” (Bandia; Milton 2009: 1). Our study takes into account the contributions of many different mediating “agents:” polyglot literati, politicians or simple *amateurs* who do their part to promote positivist ideas. In most cases (although exceptions can obviously be found as well), these were privileged intellectuals who could read in other languages and had the opportunity to travel abroad. Many of them journeyed to Paris, attended Comte’s courses and established connections with his followers. Some of these intellectuals were Jorge Lagarrigue (1854–1894) in Chile, and Pedro Contreras Elizalde (1820–1875) and Gabino Barrera (1818–1881) in Mexico (González–Navarro, 1959: 119).

In some cases, the agents considered to be “precursors” were also translators. Their role was to emphasize the necessity of reading these texts and integrating them into the ongoing discussions in their respective countries. At other times, these agents drew inspiration from these readings and produced materials that ended up contributing to their nations’ “progress.” For example, Jorge Lagarrigue signed the translation of Comte’s *Principios de filosofía positiva*

<sup>3</sup> One of the challenges for collecting the data in each catalogue is that different libraries use different ways of recording information. For example, the translator’s name is not always shown. Just as in the case of a book’s editor or foreword author, the translator is frequently listed as a secondary author, which makes it difficult to figure out whether the “secondary author” translated, edited or wrote the foreword to the book. Likewise, most of the books omit to identify a translation’s source language, which makes it difficult to know if the translation comes directly from English or French or has been done through an intermediary language. Moreover, we frequently located duplicate records. This did not allow us to determine whether we were dealing with a revised edition or a reprint of one and same work. Periodicals—a particularly prolific press output during the period under analysis—had to be omitted from our study. We are well aware that literary magazines and other cultural publications played an important role as translations in the intellectual debates about positivism. Without a doubt, this is a lacuna that will have to be addressed some time. We can only mention a few examples here: In Argentina, Alfredo Ferreira (1863–1938) and Pedro Scalabrini (1848–1916) founded the monthly magazine *La Escuela Positiva*, which was published between 1895 and 1898; the Comité Positivista Argentino (founded in 1924), had its own journal, *El Positivismo*, which maintained close ties with the *Revue Positiviste Internationale*; in Mexico, *La Libertad* became a mouthpiece for positivism between 1878 and 1884 (Beller, Méndez and Ramírez, 1973:40). *La Revista Positiva*—published between 1900 and 1914 gave voice to Mexican positivists, in particular to Agustín Aragón (1870–1954). It also published many other translations, not limited to positivist philosophers. Finally, we can mention the *Revista Filosófica* (1883–1884), in the pages of which José María Vigil (1829–1909) criticized positivism (articles published in it, “except those by Vigil himself, were translated from French or English” [Beller, Méndez and Ramírez, 1973:156]); the magazine was inspired by the *Revue des Deux Mondes* and by the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, of which it translated several passages.

(Santiago, *Imprenta del Mercurio*, 1875) and, together with his brothers Luis and Juan Enrique, became deeply involved in the dissemination of Comtism through the *Sociedad de la Ilustración*.

Besides using the concept of “agents of translation,” we have also felt the need to go beyond the source text/target text dichotomy, which limits, perhaps all too much, the scope of investigations into translation history. We have thus been able to confirm that when studying the importing of ideas and construction of literatures, we must consider other practices of linguistic mediation: oral or written, unabridged or partial, direct or indirect. Translation is a fertile ground for hybridization; through translations the translated merges with what is not translated, literary genres transform so that other forms of expression can take place, and authors become translators and vice-versa.

Publishers are part and parcel of the study of linguistic mediation practices and should therefore also be considered as “translation agents” whose interventions play a critical role in updating cultural repertoires, which in turn closely relate to cultural planning and the construction of “collective entities” (Even-Zohar, 2002: 45). Their intervention thus articulates “three logics: the economic, the political and the cultural” that “rule cultural exchanges in proportions and combinations that vary according to time and space” (Sapiro, 2008b: 21).

Before discussing how these three logics intertwine in these “agents of translation” interventions, it is important to describe the cultural dynamic and the readings that motivate the adoption of positivist ideas; it is a contextualization exercise that will allow us to better understand the nature of Argentine and Mexican positivisms.

## 1.2 The “heterodox” readings

Although Angenot's recent re-evaluation of the thesis of the two stages of the Comtian program concludes that it is actually a unitary system tightly related to the “grand narratives” [*les grands récits*] of the 19th century (2006:16), the distinction between orthodox and heterodox readings is paramount for the Argentine and Mexican positivisms. The reception of Comte's work evolved –in Europe as well as in Latin America– to differentiate between orthodox and heterodox readings (Subercaseaux, 2004). The “heterodox” interpretation comes from a selective reading that accepts the thesis that Comte put forward in the first part of his work, the *Cours de philosophie positiviste* (1830–1842). However, heterodox readings were less willing to accept Comte's position as it was stated in the *Catéchisme positiviste ou Sommaire exposition de la religion universelle* (1852). As a matter of fact, “the religion of humanity” gave many originally enthusiastic supporters of positivism pause for thought, among them Émile Littré, Comte's disciple, and John Stuart Mill, his English interlocutor. The Argentine and Mexican positivisms were clearly on the “heterodox” side of the readings. In other words, representatives of both countries accepted only the positivism of the early Comte and omitted “the religion of humanity.” Moreover, positivist intellectuals in Mexico and in Argentina tended to combine positivism with liberalism and with Spencer's and Darwin's evolutionism.

Pedro Scalabrini (1828–1916), the author of *Materialismo, Darwinismo, Positivismo. Diferencias y Semejanzas* (1888) is considered the “true introducer of Comtism to Argentina” (Dozo, 1971: 167); however, it is important to point out that this introduction benefited from the naturalist readings that already circulated among Argentine intellectuals from previous generations. For instance, *Civilización y barbarie. Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga. Aspecto físico, costumbres y hábitos de la República de Argentina* (1845) by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811–1888) and *El génesis de nuestra raza* (1862) by José Manuel Estrada both represent milestones for the integration of the early Comte into Argentine positivism. In other words, Argentine positivists were more interested in developing the sciences than in Comte's political project. If the year 1889 can be considered the pinnacle of positivism in Argentina, it is important to remember that Darwin's writings were already popular in Argentina before Comte's writings first made their appearance. Hence, in 1877, when *El Origen de las especies por medio de la selección natural o la conservación de las razas favorecidas en la lucha por la existencia* (translated by Enrique Godínez, and published in Madrid by José del Perojo) was published, the *Sociedad Científica Argentina* appointed Darwin its third honorary member. A

month after his death in 1882, the *Círculo Médico Argentino* paid tribute to Darwin by appointing Sarmiento to deliver a celebratory speech in praise of the English naturalist (Jalif de Bertranou, 2009).

For Argentine positivists, Comte and Spencer represented an opportunity to apply Darwin's evolutionism to the social and political arenas. Comte's three stages (theological, metaphysical and positive) along with Spencerian organicism fuelled a conception of history that viewed progress as its principal engine. Sarmiento thus asserted, "I readily concur with what Spencer has to say because we are on the same path" (Jalif de Bertranou, 2009:77), this "same path" being, above all else, education. This meant that for Argentine positivists the adoption of positivism would lead to "mental emancipation" (Zea, 1980), and the first step to get there was the creation of the University of Buenos Aires in 1821. This was a historic event, marking the start of a secularization process that had largely been initiated by the French Enlightenment.

Mexican positivists also had education on their minds. According to Beller, Méndez and Ramírez, "as early as the 18th century, the material foundations were already in place for a secular education that would be free from religious influence and for the creation of schools focused on technical–scientific instruction" (1973: 34). And just as in the Argentine example, Mexican positivists' adoption of scientific positions was first inspired by the French Enlightenment (Beller, Méndez, and Ramírez, 1973: 121).

As in Argentina, Mexican positivists were liberal–minded and distrusted orthodox readings. This is perhaps why in this context "positivism as a philosophical conception, has not been more than a combination of different tendencies, even contradictory ones" (Beller, Méndez, and Ramírez, 1973: 103). Gabino Barreda, for example, who is considered a "precursor" of positivism, never identified as "orthodox". It is a well–established fact in the historiography of Mexican positivism that Barreda rewrote the Comtian motto "Order, progress and love" as "Order, progress and liberty" to gain the support of the Mexican liberal intellectuals and politicians. This is thus a paradigmatic example of the kinds of negotiations positivists had to engage in so they were able to introduce Comtian ideologies in Mexico (Zea, 1980). Afterwards, Barreda's disciples would slowly abandon Comtism to make way for the integration of John Stuart Mill's and Herbert Spencer's ideas.

Between Comte's death (1857) and the creation of the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (1867), "many transcendental works appeared: Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Claude Bernard's *Introduction à l'étude de la médecine expérimentale*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and the first volumes of Herbert Spencer's *System* (Beller; Méndez, and Ramírez, 1973: 127). Even though the Spanish translations of these works would have to wait several more years to appear in print, their circulation among positivist readers at the end of the 19th century rang in a major change leading to the adoption of Spencer's thesis and John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism (*Ibid.* 45). Therefore, it is only logical, that at the beginning of the 20th century, when Horacio Barreda defended the positivism originally introduced in Mexico by his father, he did not do so in the name of the Comtian system, but rather embraced the "eclectic" method of reasoning. The creation of the Asociación Metodófila on 4 February 1877 sanctioned this selective view of the positivist system, assimilating it to the "scientific method" (Beller, Méndez & Ramírez, 1973: 129)

## 2. Publishers and translators

The circulation of printed materials in Latin America during the 19th century was intrinsically linked to colonial centres' publishing markets and at the same time subjected to the battles waged by publishers on both sides of the Atlantic for shares in the Spanish–language book market. As Pura Fernández stated, as early as the 1850s, more than a quarter of all books published in France were exported to Latin America (1988: 174). Booksellers, printers, writers, and intellectuals all played key roles in this publishing market, which did not function independently of literary and cultural planning movements. According to Fernández:

Improved and less expensive transportation and postal services, urban growth and government–implemented literacy programs, as well as decreasing production costs, intensified commercial and

political relationships between Europe and America, including the internationalization of publishing markets, further encouraged by a loosening of regulations governing publishers (*Ibid.*:166)

The experiences of France and Spain, in particular, in the international book-selling market saw them wage battles for shares in the new Latin American republics' publishing markets. Furthermore, during the second half of the 19th century, French publishers and booksellers made a concerted effort to conquer the Latin American book market. The Garnier brothers, for example, soon managed to gain a monopoly in the textbook market in the new Latin American countries (*Ibid.*).

In the early 20th century, because Spanish publishers found themselves excluded from the growing Latin American market, which was then controlled by French publishers Garnier, Bouret, Baudry, and Colin, they reacted against what they considered a policy of cultural colonization characterized by low quality and bad taste. In a letter to Menéndez Pelayo, Juan Valera states that:

Publishing books in Castilian for Latin American readers, on a large scale and with common sense [...], would contribute to the splendour and diffusion of our literature and would destroy and bury forever in oblivion the bad and rude editions that come out of Paris publishing houses, which are riddled with horrible, awful errata, and are consequences of a sordid desire for profit, incompatible with decent literary and typographical taste. (*apud.* Fernández, 1998: 182).

As a matter of fact, at the end of the 19th century, Spanish publishers' discourse showed an inclination to hold up the Spanish language as a banner in the struggle “against the proliferation of German and French books in Spanish all over Latin America” (Larraz Elorriaga, 2011: 131), something that was considered a “dishonour to Spain and even an attack on the existing cultural integrity in the former colonies” (*Ibid.*:131). Moreover, as pointed out by Gutiérrez Rodilla, following a lacklustre output of translations in the wake of widespread censorship during the Spanish Inquisition in the 16th and 17th centuries, Spanish scientific translations rebounded in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially from the French, which was then used as an intermediate source language for many indirect translations from works originally written in “German, Italian, Portuguese, Greek or Latin” because of “translators' familiarity with the Gallic tongue” (2009: 246). In a way, the positivist translations in circulation at the end of the 19th century were an extension of this scientific translation practice. Since European as well as Latin American publishers experienced significant growth during the period under study, it may be useful to analyze their activities separately as we shall do it in the next two sections.

### 2.1. *European books in Latin America*

The bibliographical databases we consulted indicate the presence of publications from French and Spanish publishing houses, which sought to market their publications to a wider readership on the one hand but also to more a specialized, restricted readership composed of publishers and intellectuals committed to cultural movements. Garnier Frères and Espasa Calpe, for example, exported a wide array of original and translated titles to the new Latin American republics. Far from being the only booksellers and/or publishers to transcend the European market, their numerous collections (*Biblioteca selecta para niños*, *Biblioteca selecta para la juventud*, *Biblioteca de los novelistas*, *Biblioteca de Autores célebres*, etc.) took advantage of more flexible laws that allowed them to flood the Latin American book market.

The two-volume *Diccionario Enciclopédico de la lengua castellana* published by Garnier in 1895 is a collective project worth mentioning. Targeting the Latin American market, it combined the contributions of numerous Spanish-speaking experts living in the French capital at the time (Fernández, 1999). These contributors to the *Diccionario* adapted and translated many written materials for inclusion in the encyclopaedia. Among them was Nicolás Estévez Murphy (1838–1914). A federalist and republican military officer, he was appointed governor of Madrid after the proclamation of the Republic in 1873, as well as a former minister of Pi and Margall. Following the restoration of the monarchy, Estévez went into exile in Portugal at

first, and then in Cuba, the USA, Mexico and Paris. His career as author and translator is closely connected to the Garnier publishing house, for which he regularly translated for approximately 30 years as a member of the erudite group that oversaw the *Diccionario Enciclopédico*. Many of his philosophical translations were published late or posthumously, such as Comte's *Catecismo positivista: Exposición sumaria de la religión universal* (Garnier, 1913 y 1920). Additionally, he translated a fascinating miscellany of military affairs, philosophy, geography, history, and children's literature. Besides Comte, he also translated other philosophical works for the same publishing house, such as Seneca (*Obras escogidas*, 1914), Cicero (*Obras escogidas*, 1914), Aristotle (*La Política*, 1920) and Montesquieu (*Del espíritu de las leyes*, 1921).

Charles Bouret, another French publisher with international operations, joined forces with Garnier to distribute Spanish-language books and textbooks on a large scale. Bouret together with Jules Rosa (Librería de Rosa y Bouret) started publishing books around 1820. When Bouret died, the publishing house changed its name to Viuda de Bouret (Fernández 1998: 175–176) and subsequently established operations in Mexico City. Probably favoured by the French intervention of 1862, this publishing house dominated the Mexican book market for many years (*Ibid.*: 174). In 1897, it published Mill's *Resumen sintético del sistema de lógica* in Paris (reprinted in Mexico in 1925). The book was signed by the Mexican positivist Ezequiel Adeodato Chávez Lavista (1868–1946) and contained some of his “additional notes.” Bouret also published Herbert Spencer's *Resumen sintético de los principios de moral* (Paris, 1898), a work that was later reprinted in México (1905, 1910 & 1922). We must not forget that the author of this translation–annotation is considered, along with Gabino Barreda and Justo Sierra, one of the intellectuals with the most prolific contributions to the dissemination of positivism in Mexico (Díaz Zermeno, 1999). Nevertheless, in his work as a commentator he went beyond providing a mere “introduction” to the works of Mill and Spencer for the Spanish-speaking world. Eduardo Zamacois y Quintana (1876–1971)<sup>4</sup> preceded him as a disseminator of positivist ideas in Spanish, with his translation of Spencer's “The Classification of Sciences”, published in 1889 in the *Biblioteca Económica Filosófica* (founded by Antonio Zozaya & Jou, [1859–1943]).

The dissemination of positivism in Spain occurred slightly later due to the lingering influence of Krausism. Soriana Nieto states that, “it wasn't until the 1870s that José del Perojo and his contemporaries managed to kindle interest in positivist philosophy” (2009: 252).

Unlike Garnier and Bouret, whose objectives were obviously commercial, other publishing projects, such as José del Perojo's translations and Zozaya's *Biblioteca Económica Filosófica* (Lafarga y Pegenaute, 2009: 1190–1191), *La España Moderna* (1889–1914), and *Revista de Occidente* were targeted at a more educated public. Perojo was a philosopher, translator, and author of a many books on philosophy, politics, science, and morals; a committed republican, he, just like many other Spaniards, was forced into exile following the Spanish civil war when Franco assumed power. His translations *Catecismo positivista o Sumaria exposición de la religión universal en trece diálogos sistemáticos entre una mujer y un sacerdote de la Humanidad*, by Comte (Manuel Minuesa, 1886 and reprinted in 1889), and *El Utilitarismo* by Mill (Dirección y Administración, 1891) were published in the *Biblioteca* series.

*La España Moderna* (1889–1914), a publishing house journal founded by José Lázaro Galdeano (1862–1947) also aimed at a specialized audience. Its main purpose was to restore the “depauperate cultural world in today's Spain” (Asún, 1981–82: 140). The reason that some of its translators were also among the most respected Krausists at the time was because “Lázaro tried to find people most likely to understand source texts that made use of scientific codes” (Asún, 1981–82: 152). One of these was Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936), Galdeano's protégé, who translated 17 works by Spencer. Adolfo Posada (1860–1944) and Leopoldo Palacios Morini (1876–1952) also translated this same author for the same publishing house. *De las leyes generales, La moral, El organismo social, El progreso. Su ley y su causa y Ética de las prisiones*, all translations of works by Spencer, were published in 1895. Darwin's work *El viaje de un naturalista alrededor del mundo* translated by Luis Domenech followed in 1899. Comte's *Principios de filosofía positiva* (the first two lessons of the *Cours*) were also published by the

<sup>4</sup>Zamacois was born in Cuba of Spanish parents; he studied in Paris and Madrid and died in Argentina; he wrote realist, naturalist and erotic novels and was associated with the generation of 98 (cf. Archivo Histórico Nacional).

same publisher. In her study on the history of La España Moderna, Raquel Asún states that “an earlier translation [of *Principios de filosofía positiva*] from 1886–87 also exists; it was published by the Biblioteca filosófica [sic]. The version by La España Moderna attempted a more rigorous terminological approach” (1981–82: 164). It could be the translation published in Zozaya’s Biblioteca Económica Filosófica. Mill’s *Estudios sobre la religión*, translated by Luis Terán were published in 1906. However, around 1895, the number of published books declined, and by 1896 La España Moderna “had become a publishing house specializing in scientific books”, with a very elitist tone (Asún, 1981–82: 147–48).

The dissemination of philosophical texts by the Revista de Occidente, founded in 1923 by José Ortega and Gasset (1883–1955) –first as a periodical and then as a publishing house– is of great importance. Revista de Occidente published Comte’s *Discurso sobre el espíritu positivo: orden y progreso*, which was then translated by Julián Marías (1914–2005), in Madrid in 1934.

However, this should not lead to the conclusion that Spain did not have large distribution and publishing operations that could match those maintained by Garnier and Bouret. One such sizeable operation was Espasa (part of Grupo Editorial Planeta today), founded by José Espasa Anguera in Barcelona during the second half of the 19th century. Even though it did not strictly targeted a specialist readership, it apparently recruited its translators among the ranks of writers and intellectuals at the time. Concerning the translation of positivist works, Antonio de Zulueta y Escolano (1885–1871) had his translation of the *Origin of Species* published by Espasa in 1921. It was based on the sixth edition of Darwin’s text and is still considered as one of the best Spanish translations of this seminal work. Zulueta “was one of the pioneers of genetic studies in Spain and curator at the Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Madrid” (Santoyo, 2009: 286).

In 1926 Espasa merged with Calpe (of La Papelera Española) and established representations in Latin America, in particular in Buenos Aires. Each individual booklet of the Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europea–Americana, also known as Enciclopedia Espasa (published from 1908 onward), demonstrates the great scope of this publishing project: between 1908 and 1930, a total of 72 volumes of the encyclopaedia appeared. This is one of the reasons why Espasa Calpe –just like Garnier– ranked as one of the major publishing houses engaged in large-scale book sales and exports at the time. However, this was not the publisher’s original objective. In 1921, Calpe (Madrid) published John Stuart Mill’s *Autobiografía*, translated by Juan Uña Gómez (1838–1909); it was republished by Espasa Calpe Argentina in 1939 and 1945 for a specialized target readership. Its translator, Juan Uña, held a B.A in philosophy and had completed his education in the Escuela de Diplomática. He was a pedagogue and a follower of Krausism during the first Spanish Republic (1868–1874), the director of Enseñanza Pública and a political figure. He established the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, and edited the magazine La Enseñanza. Progressive and socially minded, he opened two schools for poor children. His work as a translator also included a Spanish version of Kant’s *Metaphysics*.

Another far-reaching Spanish publishing project was conducted by Francisco Sempere at the publishing house he founded and named after himself (later renamed *Prometeo*). It republished some of Spencer’s works in Spanish, such as *El individuo contra el Estado* (translated by Gómez Pinilla, 1884), *Las ceremonias de la vida* (translated by G. Sánchez, 1911) and *El Progreso* (translated by Eugenio López, 1911). Sempere also published Darwin’s *La expresión de las emociones en los hombres y en los animales*, translated by Eusebio Heras (n.d.), a version of *El origen de las especies* (translated by A. López White, 1903), and another of *Mi viaje alrededor del mundo*, translated by Constantino Piquer (n.d.). Even if they were considered quite deficient, Sempere’s translations sought to disseminate contemporary European revolutionary ideas. As stated in a letter from the bookseller to Unamuno, his books also circulated in the Americas (Pérez de la Dehesa, 1969), particularly in Argentina, where, through the series Biblioteca Blanca, “political militants and illustrious workers” had access to “the most important works of universal literature, of cutting-edge and social thought”, as individual volumes were priced at a modest 30 cents (Romero, 1990: 45).

Juan Bautista Bergua (1892–1991), who inherited his father’s (Juan Bergua López) book-selling business, and who in 1927 established the Librería–Editorial Bergua (now Ediciones Ibéricas), shared the same dissemination objectives. Particularly relevant to our study is its *Biblioteca de Bolsillo* collection, which produced “books that can literally be carried about in



your pocket, read whenever you are free, and that let you build a cultured library for very little money” (*Nuestro Origen*, Ediciones Ibéricas, 2007). His passion for books and languages goes hand in hand with the context of the Spanish Republic, ensuring that his projects during these years were highly successful. In addition to his publishing activities, Bergua translated approximately 50 classic titles (including *el Corán*, *la Iliada y la Odisea*), as well as Plato’s complete works (all annotated and including introductions). Among the evolutionary texts he published in his pocket series, we should mention the two volumes of *El Origen del Hombre y la selección en relación al sexo*, translated by M.J. Barroso–Bonzón in 1933. In the foreword’s concluding remarks, the translator explains the significance of the work and laments how little Spaniards appear to know about Darwin:

We proudly publish the first complete edition available in our language, including the addenda, which, although included in English–language editions of the work, were until now completely unknown in our country. We are also very proud that we did not have to omit any sections of text or any etchings in order to conform to the inexpensive, compact size of the pocket library edition, which now also features, EL ORIGEN DEL HOMBRE (Darwin, 1966: 14).

It is now time to analyze the publishing milieus in Latin America, more particularly in Argentina and Mexico. Despite the unavoidable presence of European books in the region’s publishing milieus, production and distribution patterns underwent significant changes. Although the Real Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos was established in 1780 and the printing press arrived in Mexico in 1539 (shortly after the foundation of the Real y Pontificia Universidad), it was only in the 19th century that the development of a “local” publishing industry can be observed. At first it was just booksellers and then also publishers who began filling the needs that went unmet by European publishing houses and so became involved in the distribution of printed materials, pamphlets, and books.

## 2.2. Latin American books: Argentina and México

Between 1850 and 1950 the production and circulation of printed materials experienced major changes. Especially in the first half of the 20th century we can observe the development of a “local” industry made up of sellers and printers that gradually became publishers, offering various kinds of periodicals, such as magazines and pamphlets, or books.

During the interwar years, especially in Argentina, we can observe an increase in “ambitious publishing projects” that capitalize on the effects of the literacy–enhancement policies implemented at the beginning of the century (Romero, 1990: 46). These policies resulted in a much larger readership that editors and booksellers were keen to capture. Whereas this “larger readership materialized at a time that also saw attempts to define the intellectual and specialized world of writing professionals, their inner sanctums, magazines and their own particular modes of consecration” (Romero 1990: 46), it was also necessary to satisfy the demand for popular literary and scientific texts in order to “place certain works into the hands of the people” (Romero, 1990:47). Positivist translations correspond to the second intention. Published mostly in the 20th century, they shared the following characteristics with literary translations: “they focused less on the incorporation of the new than on the democratization of book consumption and how to increase the reading public” (Willson, 2004: 47).

It was in this spirit that Pedro García, an immigrant from a family of booksellers, established the El Ateneo bookstore in 1912. Its catalogue, one of the most influential in the country, included textbooks and literary works, as well as science, law and arts titles and children’s literature. A 1928 advertisement featured in *La Nación*, an Argentine newspaper, reads as follows: Anyone in need of a book –whether scientific or literary– is sure to find it for the lowest price in our store. We give credit and deliver throughout the country: ask to see a catalogue on the subjects that interest you.

The Clásicos Inolvidables was a particularly successful collection that offered philosophical texts (Plato, Sophocles) and literature (Shakespeare) in translation. During the Spanish Civil War and following Franco’s rise to power, many editors unable to publish their books in Spain

had to resort to Clásicos Inolvidables –as did authors, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, Victoria Ocampo, and Leopoldo Marechal.

In 1942, it published Darwin's *Viaje de un naturalista alrededor del mundo*, translated by J. Hubert. The cover indicates that it is a "complete edition, expanded to include more than 120 contemporary illustrations; selected and arranged by Joaquín Gil". Joaquín Gil Guiñón, who had started publishing in the 1930s in Barcelona, left his brother in charge of his publishing house and emigrated to Buenos Aires before the outbreak of the Civil War. The titles in his collection, *Obras Maestras*, began circulating in Barcelona in 1944, under the double imprint Joaquín Gil–Editorial Iberia. Darwin's *Viaje* starts with a long quote by the author, followed by an index of etchings and a text by Joaquín Gil entitled "Presentación de la edición argentina". The emphasis on the fact that this volume is especially adapted for the Argentine market makes more sense if we mention that the same work was previously published in Madrid (1933). Hence this note from the publisher: "we have included in this Argentine edition the first antique etchings that show the mores in Buenos Aires in the first third of the last century (Darwin, 1966:19). The presentation follows in these terms:

We trust that this edition, the first in the Castilian tongue, which is illustrated in a profusion of interesting and valuable etchings, will find wide acceptance among Argentinian and continental readers alike. We believe we have done a fine job selecting the etchings to illustrate this book as well as the presentation of the overview of the work as it appears in these pages (Darwin, 1966:19).

Spencer was widely translated and edited in Argentina because, as we saw earlier, positivist readings there tended to follow a heterodox model based on a combination of Comte's, Darwin's and Spencer's early works. Spencer's *Clasificación de las ciencias* was published by Anaconda publishing house (Buenos Aires, n.d.), the successor of the Minerva publishing house, founded by Santiago and Leonardo Glusberg in 1924 (Gasió, 2008: 48). It is quite likely that the *Clasificación de las ciencias* published by Anaconda is a reprint of the Eduardo Zamacois and Quintana version (Madrid, 1889) published in Zozaya's Biblioteca Económica Filosófica.

Among the most important cultural dissemination projects in Argentina during the interwar period, we must also mention Juan Carlos Torrendell's (1895–1961) publishing house, Tor, founded in 1916. "Until it ceased operations in 1971, this Tor produced about 10,000 book titles and 2000 magazines of diverse genres" (Abraham, 2012:14). Until the 1930s, it published essays and young authors such as Jorge Luis Borges. Tor sold books and booklets that allowed for regular readings at a reasonable price. After some time, Tor broadened the range of genres it published to include editions of cheap classics, science fiction, and other modestly-priced genres. Of special interest to us is the Nueva Biblioteca Filosófica, which provided the public with cheaply priced works by famous authors. For example, *El espíritu positivo* (n.d.), a small-format booklet whose cover (orange background with the classical portrait of Comte) showed the price (30 cents) printed onto a small round label and announced "Appears every Wednesday. Brought to you by Tor". Spencer's *Creación y evolución* was also published in this collection in 1941, using this same format and presentation.

The dissemination of positivist texts in Mexico was slightly different. Whereas in Argentina the job of publishing and disseminating positivist works was done by independent publishers, because of the role of positivism in the Mexican educational system and in the definition of an official ideology, positivist works were frequently disseminated by governmental institutions. This was the case of Herbert Spencer's *Los antiguos mexicanos* (1896) and *El Antiguo Yucatán* (1898), translated by Daniel and Genaro García (1867–1920) and published by the Oficina Tipográfica de la Secretaría de Fomento (nowadays Secretaría de Economía). Both works were extracted from *Descriptive Sociology*, a 17 volume ethnographic and historical study by Spencer. *El antiguo Yucatán*, in particular, refers to the part that this includes about the Yucatan peninsula. In the foreword, the translators dedicated *El Antiguo Yucatán* to the then president Porfirio Díaz and explained the following:

In the foreword to our translation of *Los Antiguos Mexicanos*, we brought to the attention of the reader that the English text has mistranslated and, in some cases, adulterated whole excerpts taken from our first historians. The same applies to *El Antiguo Yucatán* and we would like to add that although, in our translation of *Los antiguos mexicanos*, we respected as far as possible the form of these excerpts in the original English text and we aimed at seizing their true meaning in correspondence to the original texts, in the case of this translation, we decided instead to transcribe literally from the authorized sources in order to avoid any imprecisions in our work (Daniel and Genaro García, 1898: 7).

In other words, in *Los antiguos mexicanos*, Daniel and Genaro García decided to correct the mistakes found in Spencer's work and attributed them to the fact that the author did not know Spanish, as "Spencer himself says in a letter addressed to us" (*Ibid.*). Thus we know that the translators are in contact with the author, and we can safely assume that they obtained from him the authorization to make the selection and modifications from *Descriptive Sociology* to publish it as *El antiguo Yucatán*. As a recognized bibliophile and scholar of Mexican history, Genaro García added an appendix to his translation that reflected his vast knowledge of historiographical sources, which he deemed necessary in order to "correct" the deficiencies of Spencer's work. Among the numerous works listed in the appendix are Clavijero's *La historia antigua de México*, Cortés' *Cartas de Relación* and Fray Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*. Therefore these translations of Spencer's works can be considered as a re-appropriation task based on a nationalist discourse.

The translation *Los más curiosos animales de América* by Darwin, published in 1944, is perhaps a second example of this phenomenon. Although we have been unable to find any information about the publishing house in which it appeared in a series named Cuadernos de Cultura, it is not unlikely that this is a reprint of Constantino Piquer's translation *Mi viaje alrededor del mundo*, published by the publishing house Prometeo in around 1900.

It is important to note that this bibliographical survey, especially as far as Darwin's works in Spanish are concerned, is rather fragmentary. Clearly, these references do not exhaust the extant studies about Darwin's translated works, in part because as Santoyo has stated, it is "quite probable that no single scientific work, at least not in the 19th century, attained such a depth of diffusion in Spain as *El origen de las especies*" (Santoyo, 2009: 286). For further information, readers can refer to the *Bibliografía Crítica Ilustrada de las Obras de Darwin en España* (1857–2008) published by Gómez Blanco and Josa Llorca in 2009, to celebrate the bicentennial of Darwin's birth.

Finally, we must mention Comte's *Primeros Ensayos*, translated by Francisco Giner de los Ríos (1839–1915) and published posthumously by the Fondo de Cultura Económica in 1942. John Stuart Mill's *Principios de economía política, con algunas de sus aplicaciones a la filosofía social*, translated by Teodoro Ortíz in 1943 and reprinted in 1951 were also published by Fondo de Cultura Económica. This publishing house was founded by Daniel Cosío Villegas (1898–1976) in 1934 to respond to the need for translated texts in the recently established Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. In the late 1930s, a group of Spanish intellectuals, including Giner de los Ríos, joined the publishing and translation activities of the Fondo and contributed greatly to consolidating the editorial series (in the fields of sociology and economics or with series like Breviarios or Biblioteca Mexicana, etc.) (Díaz Arciniega, 1996). Since one of the objectives of the Fondo was to publish translations, we must not be surprised that it is precisely there that translation became a profession in Mexico. Hence, the publishing practices of Fondo de Cultura Económica combined a project of cultural planning aimed at consolidating higher education with rigorous translation standards.

### 3. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to study the circulation of positivist ideas in Argentina and Mexico from 1850 to 1950. The delimitation of this spatial–temporal context certainly leaves some areas underexplored. An analysis of these areas should not only be a worthy but also a necessary task. The contribution of this bibliographical approach provides to the discipline of

translation studies is dual. On the one hand, this research considers publishing practices as an object of study of the discipline. More precisely, the role played by the Latin American publishers we have studied in this paper demonstrates that a more complex view of the dissemination of positivist ideas needs to consider not only the translator's ideological agendas, but also their insertion in complex socio-cultural processes that involve the creation of new cultural repertoires. This is not to say that the translator's role is unimportant, but that translation practices do not always respond to an intellectual or political agenda. When considering intellectuals, publishers and translators as agents of translation, we set out to recover the complexity of the dissemination of positivism and look at our object of study not only from the perspective of these agents, but also from that of the international publishing market. It is an open invitation to rethink the thesis according to which the translators of positivism were also its precursors and introducers.

We have been able to observe that cultural institutions, publishing houses, patrons and their *protégés* contributed equally in the processes of cultural production. Taking into account the social trajectories of translators and publishers, our purpose has also been to show what may lie concealed beneath a merely biographical account. That is to say, we have aimed at shedding light on the explicative factors embedded on the network of socio-cultural circumstances, relations, conflicts, negotiations, and contingencies that sociologically constitute any translation enterprise.

On the other hand, we thought it was necessary to enlarge the scope of our study to include publishers and booksellers, because frequently, when univocally relating Latin American positivism to its European sources, the complexity of the former can go unnoticed. Hence, we agree with Woodward when he states that “ideological schools are never as exact in practice, as they may appear to the scholar in theory, nor is their influence confined to direct, measurable, factors” (1971: x). In other words, when showing that Argentine and Mexican positivisms were constructed based on selective readings which combined Comte's, Darwin's, Spencer's, and Mill's works, we wanted to emphasize the lack of correspondence between “original” and “translation”, as well as the need for adopting theoretical perspectives that may help us re-create the complexity of the dissemination of ideas.

Both the originals and the translations circulated simultaneously in the context studied, and this led us to reconsider the thesis that equates the translation of a work with its introduction into a receiving context. As we have seen in the Argentine and Mexican contexts, the circulation of positivism, both original and translated, was determined greatly by an inter-discourse that preceded the readings of those who were involved in its translation and dissemination and by the Latin American political and cultural context. In other words, for the purposes of their construction, Argentine and Mexican positivisms did not wait for the ideas on which they are based to be available in Spanish. Furthermore, these positivisms, *per se*, were the result of selective translations and of rewritings produced within the urgent need of national organization. The positivist ideas *lato* and *stricto sensu* were part of the cultural planning endeavours of politicians, intellectuals, booksellers, printers, writers and translators. These publishing practices are closely linked to the social and cultural projects that give rise to aim at creating a bibliographical repertoire.

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## BIONOTES / NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

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Nayelli Castro obtuvo un doctorado en Estudios de Traducción en la Universidad de Ottawa en 2012. Se interesa, entre otros temas, por la historia y la sociología de la traducción. En su tesis doctoral, *Regards sociologiques sur la traduction philosophique, Mexique (1940–1970)*, estudia la traducción de filosofía al español desde una perspectiva sociológica. Actualmente realiza una estancia postdoctoral en El Colegio de México.

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