

Abstract

This thesis focuses on the transformation of European tradition in the multicultural Hispanic America, as reflected in the essays of Alfonso Reyes and Pedro Henríquez Ureña. The first part is devoted to the theory of essay. It analyzes utopia as a way of thinking, not a literary genre and gives an overview of the life of artists and their collaboration in Ateneo de la Juventud. The second part deals with selected essays. Different topics are divided into three areas. The first area deals with the specific way of the Spanish colonization of the Americas and concerns the attitude, which the newly created states adopted to that heritage. The second area focuses on the interconnection between the Hispanoamerican culture and the European tradition; influence, transformation and new forms, which European culture receives in Hispanic America; questions related to European cultural heritage (imitate or create?); creating a distinctive culture; universalism and cultural synthesis. The third area is directed into the future. It highlights the importance of culture where the greatest sense of belonging among the countries is felt and stresses the demand to restore humanities in education. Finally, it demonstrates the maturity of American culture, which is not a mere imitator of Europe, but enriches the Occidental culture by new and original features. America wants to continue building the future on utopia, but from now on stops to be just an object of the European imagination and newly become a creator of its own utopias.