

# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy



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APA NEWSLETTER ON

# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

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CARLOS ALBERTO SÁNCHEZ, EDITOR

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## FROM THE GUEST EDITORS

### *Engaging Latin American, Hispanic/ Latin@, and Chican@ Students in Philosophy*

Amy Reed-Sandoval and Carolina T. Arruda  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

The situation of Hispanic/Latin@ professional philosophers and philosophy students mirrors, in certain respects, the situation of other underrepresented gender, racial, and ethnic minorities in the field. Consider one indicator of this situation. By the American Philosophical Association's 2014 fiscal year report on its membership demographics, only 193 members self-identified as Hispanic/Latin@ out of a total membership of 9,180. The situation remained roughly the same for the fiscal year 2015, where only 225 APA members self-identified as Hispanic/Latin@ out of a total membership of 8,975.<sup>1</sup> Though it is not an exact comparison, these numbers stand in stark contrast to the National Science Foundation's 2014 report. The NSF estimates that the number of Hispanics or Latin@s who have received doctorates in any science or engineering field has doubled between 1994 and 2014, and "the proportion [of doctorates] awarded to Hispanics or Latinos has risen from 3.3% in 1994 to 6.5% in 2014."<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, the APA's numbers are based on self-reports, and there are likely to be many philosophers who are not regular members of the APA.<sup>3</sup> More important, the comparison between the APA's membership demographics in philosophy and the NSF's demographics of science and engineering doctorates awarded (which may or may not translate into a career in the professoriate) is, in very many senses, like comparing apples and oranges. Still, if these demographics even approximate the situation for Hispanics/Latin@s in professional philosophy broadly and roughly indicate that other fields are doing better in improving their diversity in these areas, these numbers paint a bleak picture of the situation of Hispanic and Latin@ philosophers. We suggest that this trend is likely to affect students pursuing philosophy degrees at all levels who self-identify as Hispanic/Latin@.

Still, there are a number of resources available to begin to ameliorate this disparity. There are numerous societies designed around promoting Latin American philosophy more broadly and providing mentoring opportunities for Hispanic and Latin@ students. These include the APA

Committee on Hispanics, the UPDirectory, local chapters of Minorities and Philosophy (MAP), the Society for Mexican American Philosophers, the American Association of Mexican Philosophers, the Caribbean Philosophical Association, and the Latina Feminism Roundtable, among others. Similarly, there are numerous summer institutes (e.g., PIKSI, the Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy) aimed at increasing the diversity in philosophy by providing mentoring and encouragement to undergraduate philosophy students from underrepresented backgrounds and preparing them for the process of applying to doctoral programs.

This special issue of the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy*, entitled "Engaging Latin American, Hispanic/Latin@, and Chican@ Students in Philosophy," is a response both to the significant underrepresentation of these groups in philosophy as well as to the inspiring aforementioned initiatives devoted to improving this situation. It features contributions from a variety of scholars who are addressing, in terms of their respective teaching, mentorship, and research, the underrepresentation of Latin Americans, Hispanics/Latin@s, and Chican@s in philosophy. Not only do these contributions approach the general issue of underrepresentation in diverse ways, they also offer concrete suggestions, resources, and sources of inspiration for confronting the problem. It is our hope that this special issue will be of interest to Latin American, Hispanic/Latin@, and Chican@ students in philosophy, and also to educators who wish to mentor and engage such students.

This issue is organized in terms of three thematic sections. The first section is devoted to the general question of mentorship. The first contribution to this section comes from Abraham Monteros and Eduardo Mendieta. Monteros, himself an undergraduate philosophy major at the University of Texas at El Paso, interviews Mendieta about various matters of concern to Latin American, Hispanic/Latin@, and Chican@ students who are considering pursuing a career in academic philosophy. Mendieta provides insightful answers to Monteros's questions about issues ranging from the current status of Latin American and Latin@ philosophy in the United States to concerns about how Latin American, Hispanic/Latin@, and Chican@ undergraduate students should best prepare themselves to move on to a Ph.D. in philosophy. This fascinating interview will be of interest to teachers and students of philosophy at all levels.

The second contribution to this section on mentorship, "Mentoring, Praxical Thinking, and World-Making: Reflecting on the Space of the Roundtable on Latina Feminism," is

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authored by Mariana Ortega. Ortega explores what she describes as “the importance of other ways of being-mentored and mentoring that are part of what I see as world-making, as the creation and preservation of spaces and embodied practices in which participants critically help each other in their journeys of learning, teaching, and understanding and thus resist dominant norms hinging on competition, distrust, and arrogance.”<sup>4</sup> Engaging the respective works of María Lugones and Paulo Freire, among others, Ortega develops a conception of “relational mentoring” by way of artful reflection on her years of work as organizer and director of the Roundtable on Latina Feminism. The Roundtable—which is itself an example of relational mentoring, as Ortega describes—has been held on an annual basis since 2006.

The second section of this special issue is multidisciplinary, featuring a dialogue between philosophy and the social sciences. In this regard, the contributions in this section represent an effort to address the underrepresentation of Latin American, Latin@/Hispanic, and Chican@ students in philosophy. The first article featured in this section is entitled “Implicit Bias & Latina/os in Philosophy” and authored by Alex Madva. It accomplishes two important tasks. First, it brings the social scientific research on implicit bias in education more broadly to bear on the specific (and understudied) question of Hispanics and Latino/as in philosophy. Second, Madva, in light of this summary of the social scientific research, suggests resources that philosophers are well-situated to use to counteract this bias both in the profession and in the classroom. Philosophers are well-situated both because they have thought critically about the nature of race and ethnic identity and because they have the conceptual resources to engage students in thinking about the complex nature of how Latina/o and Hispanic identity is (or should be) understood.

The second featured article in this section, “Understanding Latino Masculinities in the Classroom,” is written by anthropologist Iván Sandoval-Cervantes. In this piece, Sandoval-Cervantes notes that Latin@ enrollment in colleges in the United States has increased in the last few years, but that this increase is colored by a “gender gap” between Latinas and Latinos. Engaging feminist masculinity studies, Sandoval-Cervantes seeks to provide resources for understanding the complexities of Latino masculinities in the classroom by drawing on resources from both anthropology and feminism. Such an understanding, he argues, is not only important due to the increasing number of Latinos who graduate college and who obtain postgraduate degrees, but also for the purpose of providing a more fine-grained analysis of the relationship among gender, violence, and masculinity such that it includes and provides the resources for analyzing the unique position of Latinos.

The third article in this section, “Philosophy for Children and the Legacy of Anti-Mexican Discrimination in El Paso Schools,” is co-authored by Yolanda Chávez Leyva and Amy Reed-Sandoval. The aims of this paper are twofold. First, Chávez Leyva and Reed-Sandoval seek to articulate historical forces that shape the work of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program that operates simultaneously in El

Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Second, by way of reflection on the pedagogical orientation of this program, they offer specific examples of ways in which Philosophy for Children teaching techniques can be adapted to serve the unique needs of Latin American, Latin@/Hispanic, and Chican@ children and youth. Chávez Leyva, a historian who studies childhood in Mexico-U.S. borderlands, unpacks the complicated histories of anti-Mexican discrimination in K–12 schools of the El Paso del Norte region. Reed-Sandoval, who directs the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program, explores the ways in which these historical forces shape—and ought to shape—the way that philosophy is taught at the K–12 level at the Mexico-U.S. border.

The final section of this issue is devoted to issues of diversity and representation in teaching and course design. In this section, James Maffie provides a valuable two-part contribution entitled “Teaching Aztec Philosophy: Discussion and Syllabus.” In the discussion component, Maffie reflects on the specific challenges and rewards of teaching Aztec/Mexica philosophy at the university level. Maffie explores with considerable nuance the ethics of teaching such philosophy, and he does so in a way that will surely be of interest to philosophers who are considering teaching such a course for the first time at the university level. In particular, Maffie discusses how teaching and “learning from” such a course might challenge, engage, inspire, and perhaps (at times) even alienate Chican@s, U.S. Latin@s, indigenous peoples of Mexico, and mestiz@s in Mexico, respectively. He argues that “it would appear [that] teaching and studying Aztec philosophy may be experienced as simultaneously decolonizing for Latin@s and Chican@s (vis-à-vis Europe and the USA) and while perpetuating of colonialism for indigenous peoples (vis-à-vis the *criollo*@ and *mestizo*@ elites who govern the nations of Latin America).”<sup>5</sup> Maffie also offers a sample syllabus for a course on Aztec/Mexica philosophy, providing a concrete representation of how one might take his more general insights about the merits of teaching a course in these areas and put them into practice.

All of these contributions address the underrepresentation of Latin American, Latin@/Hispanic, and Chican@ students in philosophy, and they do so in a variety of creative, often interdisciplinary, ways. We hope that the diversity of approaches taken by our contributors serves to inspire ongoing discussion and debate among students and teachers of philosophy about ways to ameliorate this important problem. We encourage our readers to survey the resources, references, insights, and sources of inspiration that our contributors have provided as part of a broad effort to better engage Latin American, Hispanic/Latin@, and Chican@ students in philosophy.

Finally, we teach philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso, where we have had the good fortune to be inspired by our colleague, UTEP Professor Emeritus of Philosophy Jack Haddox. Jack’s research and teaching represent a lifelong dedication to bringing Latin American philosophy to the English-speaking philosophical community. For this reason, we wish to dedicate the special issue to Jack, who devoted his long and distinguished career to doing

scholarly work on Latin American philosophy and mentoring Latin@ students in philosophy at the Mexico-U.S. border.

#### NOTES

1. American Philosophical Association, Membership Demographic Statistics, FY2014, FY2015. [https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/apaonline.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Data\\_on\\_Profession/Member\\_Demo\\_Chart\\_FY2015\\_Rev.pdf](https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/apaonline.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/Data_on_Profession/Member_Demo_Chart_FY2015_Rev.pdf)
2. National Science Foundation, Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2014. Related detailed data: tables 19, 22, 23, 24.
3. In fact, the APA notes, "While only a fraction of members have provided comprehensive demographic data—and thus the data cannot yet be interpreted as a representative sample of the membership or the profession—the data does begin to provide a picture of the APA membership in broad terms." (<http://www.apaonline.org/?demographics>)
4. Mariana Ortega, pages 6–8 of this issue.
5. James Maffie, "Teaching Aztec Philosophy: Discussion and Syllabus," pages 23–25 of this issue.

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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* is accepting contributions for the spring 2017 issue. Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on any topic related to Hispanic/Latino thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as reflections, book reviews, and interviews.

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All submissions should be limited to 5,000 words (twenty double-spaced pages) and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and *The Chicago Manual of Style* formatting. Please prepare articles for anonymous review. All articles submitted to the newsletter undergo anonymous review by members of the Committee on Hispanics.

#### BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews in any area of Hispanic/Latino philosophy, broadly construed, are welcome. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Book reviews may be short (500 words) or long (1,500 words). Electronic submissions are preferred.

#### DEADLINES

Deadline for spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15. Deadline for the fall issue is April 15. Authors should expect a decision by June 15.

Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Carlos Alberto Sánchez, at [carlos.sanchez@sjsu.edu](mailto:carlos.sanchez@sjsu.edu), or by post: Department of Philosophy, San Jose State University, One Washington Sq., San Jose, CA 95192-0096.

#### FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Newsletters* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added

later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an "em dash" (—) instead of a double hyphen (--). Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90. See Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

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## INTERVIEWS

### *Interview with Eduardo Mendieta*

By Abraham Monteros

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, EL PASO

#### ***As a Hispanic/Latina/o philosophy student, do we have an obligation to study Latin American philosophy?***

Philosophy is not an obligation, but a passion; it is not a profession, but a vocation. This means, then, that if you have been swept up by the passion for philosophizing, you must follow your thoughts where they may lead you. If you have committed yourself to the life of the mind, the path of the escape of all caves, then the only obligation you have is to be true to that calling. If that means doing epistemology, then that is where your steps will have to take you so that you can make a path there. If that means doing philosophy of mind, then that is where you have to forge your way. This question, in any event, is not unlike the question whether a woman philosopher is obliged to do feminist philosophy. I think our identities, whether they may be gendered, racialized, ethnicized, and so on, do impact how we do philosophy. Yet, what philosophy we practice does not follow necessarily from those identities. Still, we do have an obligation to lead the examined life.

#### ***Is there a growing academic space in the United States for Latin American philosophy?***

Absolutely! And for several reasons. *First*, the profession and the discipline are facing what my colleague and friend Linda Alcoff has called the "demographic challenge" that Latino/as present. The underrepresentation of Latino/as in the discipline is indeed a major issue, just as is the absence of African American, Asian American, and women representation in the discipline in general. However, the case of Latino/as is particularly glaring and distressful. If philosophy is to have a future within the liberal arts university of this next century, it has to transform itself into a vibrant and attractive alternative for Latino/as.

*Second*, there have been important shifts within the discipline itself having to do with the thawing of tensions in the so-called "continental-analytical" divide—a divide that I would say has been for a long time an anachronism, a relic of Cold War ideological battles—that has allowed for greater pluralism. This pluralism has translated into a greater receptivity to other traditions, agendas, and problems. For instance, we are seeing a growing interest in "American" philosophy as well as "African American" and

“Asian American” philosophy, as well as what has been “intercultural” philosophy.

*Third*, and I think this is a key factor in the “creation” of this space, we have a nascent movement of Latino/a philosophers who are developing a distinct “Latino/a” philosophy that has as one of its main questions what is and should be its relationship to Latin American philosophy, on the one hand, and to “American” philosophy, on the other. Latin American philosophy is a tradition that is older than “U.S.” philosophy—it goes back to the sixteenth century, and if we agree with Miguel Leon Portilla, even before that. Interest in Latin American philosophy over the last half a century has indeed increased, but it is evident that this interest has been driven and energized by a new generation of Latino/a philosophers whose philosophical and existential commitments have led them to undertake work that is only recently beginning to be valorized by the profession. Jorge Gracia and I have written on the factors that have led to this growing interest, and we both agree that personal commitment has been a key factor.

*Fourth*, and finally, I would say that recent developments within Latin American philosophy itself have caught the philosophical imagination and interest of Latino/as as well as non-Latino/as in the U.S. I think the work of Enrique Dussel, for instance, has been extremely important, because of its originality, depth, expanse, and systematicity, in energizing interest in Latin American philosophy. In any event, at this moment, to ignore Latin American philosophy would be a blatant sign of either racist chauvinism or naked Eurocentrism.

**What can philosophy students wanting to apply Latin American theories do in a predominately Eurocentric-Anglo American philosophical academic setting?**

I would say that they have to learn to be both ambidextrous and polyglots. They—and that meant us recently, and me some decades ago—have to learn those traditions well. We have to speak the *lingua franca* of the discipline as well as anyone else. Knowing pragmatism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, and deconstruction, or Kant, Herder, Hamman, Hegel, or Vico and Vattimo, or Wittgenstein and Searle and Austin, or Peirce, James, Dewey, or Bernstein and Rorty, but especially de Beauvoir, Irigaray, MacKinnon, Young, and Butler, along with Lugones, Schutte, Isasi-Diaz, and Alcoff, is indispensable to their ability to then be able to translate Mariategui, Fierro, Gaos, Zea, Villoro, Dussel, Castro-Gomez, into issues, problems, agendas, and counter-histories that the mainstream can understand, appreciate, learn from, and be invested in exploring. Their goal, our goal, should be to break out of all philosophical ghettos, but this requires that we teach each other the virtues of our philosophical inheritances.

**What advice do you offer a fellow Hispanic/Latina/o wanting to pursue a career in Latin American philosophy in the United States?**

First, and most importantly, there are the three Gs: Grades, GREs, and Grace. Make sure to have the best grades, get involved in your department, personalize your relationship

with your teachers, get to know them, and get them to know you. GREs are like our tail bones, relics from some prehistoric stage in the evolution of U.S. academy, and they certainly don’t measure what is relevant to philosophy—as if that could be measured—but many graduate programs live and swear by them. So make sure you study for the GRE and take it several times; at least you will raise your scores by getting familiar with its tricks. By grace, in contrast, I mean something different. I think you have to learn to be eloquent about why you want to pursue a Ph.D. in philosophy and convince admissions committees why they should give you a place in their program. Grace, however, also means what you give, what you bring to the table, what you have to offer in the way of different experiences and optics on what is worthy of philosophical consideration. That is all background work, of course.

Now, and secondly, when you are looking for a Ph.D. program, you have to look for programs that are committed to diversity, to pluralism, to changing the discipline, where you also may find excellent mentors. Unfortunately, there are not many of those programs yet. But many programs are being forced by the weight of reality to recognize that they have to learn to be more inclusive. In any event, the most important thing you can and should do is to reach out to faculty in programs where you think you’d like to study, and establish contact. You are your best advocate and PR person. At any rate, do not hesitate to send an email to a faculty member whom you may have heard at a conference, or read a paper by.

**What advice would you offer students who are not sure what they want to do after earning their undergraduate degree in philosophy?**

Majoring in philosophy is like answering Pascal’s wager, and the benefits are even better, I would say. Whether you major in philosophy, or do a double major, is not as important as the fact that you will be acquiring some of the most important skills that will allow you to continue to grow intellectually, professionally, and, above all, spiritually. I could quote data about how philosophy majors do better over the lifespan of a career, both economically and psychically. It certainly opens many doors. Many professions seek out philosophers because they have a unique set of skills that allows them to be highly motivated, good speakers, writers, and, above all, critical thinkers. The fact is that we live in a new economy and society, in which knowledge production has become one of the primary modes of production. This means that professions are invented as quickly as they become obsolete. Studying philosophy allows you to acquire the kind of skills that enable you to remake yourself as a producer of knowledge in our information society.

But, to be honest, I am myself not persuaded by this type of argumentation. If you are having doubts about pursuing philosophy, then it is probably best you don’t go for it. Doing philosophy can be very exciting and rewarding, but it also requires that you spend a lot of time alone, reading, thinking, writing. You may be lucky to find kindred souls along the path you may be forging, but you will also find people who will challenge you, bring you down on the mat,

so to say; and there will be those who will make you doubt whether you got what it takes; or who, alternatively, may be wowed by your insights and confirm your talents. As I said, philosophy is a passion, a vocation, a calling, and that is not something one is cajoled into by the force of arguments.

***Hispanics/Latina/os are an underrepresented group in philosophy. Do you believe that more should be done to recruit more minorities into philosophy?***

Absolutely! Without question. As I already remarked earlier, I think we have a major problem in the profession with the very glaring absence of people of color, whether they be African American, Asian American, Latino/as, or Native Americans.

I think the profession is suffering from a perverted version of affirmative action, namely, an affirmative action for white males. Everything in the discipline and profession is designed to reward and attract those assets that white males are lavished in by their lives of privilege and easy access. Programs and faculty hide their implicit bias against minorities behind the shields of GREs, grades, school pedigree, and fit. Over the last decade and a half, I fought many a battle in admissions committees on behalf of some Latino/a or African American applicant that I lost to the not-so-invisible quantifiers of white and male entitlement.

Philosophy as a profession feels a lot like an old- and all-boys club, and that makes me cringe. But the fact is that this will not change until my colleagues cease to disavow their responsibility with the alibi of dubious bureaucratic benchmarks and quantifiers. They, we, have to cease to conceal our responsibility for the perpetuation of an unhealthy situation with the invisibility cloak that allows us to conceal our culpability for perpetuating a system that so evidently rewards white male privilege to the detriment of other forms of talent, originality, insight, and passion.

***Recently in the news there have been stories of racism and a growing anti-immigrant sentiment in Western Europe and the United States. Do you believe that this growing sentiment hinders or helps Latin American philosophy in the United States and Western Europe?***

This is a very important question, and I would want to approach it with great caution. Anti-immigrant sentiment in the U.S. is not new, and it certainly has not abated despite decades of immigrants' efforts to educate the majority that they are neither a threat nor a liability, but an asset and the source of the vitality of U.S. society. European anti-immigrant feeling, policies, policing, and bordering closing is also not a new thing, notwithstanding decades of the European Union, and half a century of the United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights.

The recent terrorist attacks in Paris, and earlier in Madrid, London, and New York, have been and will be used to fuel the flames of xenophobia and anti-immigrant animus. Terrorism is terrible and inexcusable, but it is the weapon of the weak in an age of "shock and awe," drone executions, and war without casualties for the U.S. and the West. Giving reasons is neither exculpation nor justification but a way

to make sense of how it is that we got ourselves into the dehumanizing situation we got ourselves into. But this is a circuitous way to say that I don't think that the human suffering and tragedy we have been undergoing and witnessing should be turned into a justification for reading and studying Latin American philosophy. I would abhor an argument that says that given the present situation we have greater justification to study Latin American philosophy. No theodicy is a justification for philosophy. Philosophy, on the contrary, is what should cure us of the will to want to find justifications for the violence that we so easily, but also sometimes so desperately, inflict on each other. Philosophy is the will to submit to the peace of persuasion and the refusal of the violence of submission, subjugation, elimination, and extermination. So, I hope we turn to Latin American philosophy in order to think peace and not to offer warrants or justifications for the violence of the powerless and the devastation of the powerful.

***In the years you have been in philosophy, what progress have you seen in the manner in which Latin American philosophy is perceived?***

I would say that I have been very fortunate to see a lot of progress in the way in which Latin American philosophy is perceived within the discipline and profession. This is corroborated by the work Gracia, Schutte, Saenz, Oliver, and Alcoff have done over the last two decades, but also because of a younger generation, which I have seen flourish, succeed, take up the baton, and run farther than I imagined we could. I think the patriarchs and matriarchs—as I called them in a text I wrote for a conference Alejandro Vallega organized at the University of Oregon—laid down some solid foundations, and we are beginning to see the fruits of their hard work. We have now a generation of Latino/a Ph.D.'s whose dissertations have either focused on Latin American philosophy or have used Latin American philosophers as their main interlocutors.

I think we also have seen the support and encouragement of non-Latino/a philosophers grow. I tend to be an optimist, so I think I see the glass half full, with the other half yet to be filled with more achievements. The fact is that compared to when I began my studies in philosophy, the present situation is really promising. For instance, now we have departments advertising for positions with either AOS or AOC in Latin American philosophy. I simply don't remember that being the case ten or twenty years ago. The fact that you are interviewing me is proof of the great advancement we have made vis-à-vis the reception of Latin American philosophy in the U.S. I should thank you not only for your wonderful questions, but also for being the face of the generation some of us worked so hard to make sure was part of the changing profile of the profession.



## ARTICLES

### *Mentoring, Praxical Thinking, and World-Making: Reflecting on the Space of the Roundtable on Latina Feminism*

Mariana Ortega

JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

“Visualize, remember,” says María Lugones, “and sense a map that has been drawn by power in its many guises and directions and where there is a spot for you. . . . Your spot lies at the intersection of all the spatial venues where you may, must, or cannot live or move.”<sup>1</sup> In this short reflection I would like to make us think of each of our spots in the geographies and intersections of power. Thinking of my location on the map permeated by power, thinking about your own location, could also allow for a possibility of understanding new roads to resistance and humanization, new roads to a pedagogy of praxical thinking, a pedagogy that does not concentrate on knowledge acquisition but that aims at looking at the relationship between knowledge and power relations between me and others, and at opening up possibilities for relational mentoring, a mentoring that goes beyond hierarchical positionings in which there is a knower with all the information, expertise, and experience and a not-knower whose cabinet of consciousness needs to be filled with the expert’s advice and with countless pieces of information. I ultimately want to gesture at the importance of other ways of being-mentored and mentoring that are part of what I see as world-making, as the creation and preservation of spaces and embodied practices in which participants critically help each other in their journeys of learning, teaching, and understanding and thus resist dominant norms hinging on competition, distrust, and arrogance. Little did I know that when I started the Roundtable on Latina Feminism in 2006, I would learn to learn from others and to *act with* others in a mutual quest for community and for understanding the richness and diversity of Latina feminisms.

Many have traveled and studied the road that power has made—Fanon, Memmi, Foucault—but here I wish to mention briefly two thinkers who despite their differences share a commitment to a pedagogy of praxical thinking that opens up not only possibilities of resistance to oppression but also possibilities of active learning and relational mentoring—Paulo Freire and María Lugones.<sup>2</sup> While, famously, Freire offers a pedagogy of the oppressed, a liberatory praxis that takes into account that the oppressed exist in a dialectical relationship to the oppressor and that seeks the end of the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy and the humanization of all, Lugones offers an account of active subjectivity resistant to dichotomies and univocal expressions through praxical thinking. In dialogue, both offer the possibility of moving beyond false encounters and false generousities or merely putting bandages in the bloody cuts but keeping the knives that slash. Both also call forth an important kind of witnessing—a daring and loving witnessing, as Freire says, and a faithful witnessing as Lugones calls it. Whether it is daring, loving, or faithful, the witnessing called forth

by Freire and Lugones demands that we dig the ground where we stand in this complex map that power has made and that we look at the relationship between knowledge, pedagogy, and power relations between ourselves and others.

The difference between Freire’s and Lugones’s understanding of the matrices of power as they describe self and other is both powerful and illuminating. Consider Freire’s dichotomy between the oppressor and oppressed. His commitment to a Marxist understanding of the social highlights the Hegelian master/slave confrontation. Human beings fall into one of the two warring classes, despite the fact that some oppressors might experience a true conversion, a rebirth, and attain true solidarity with the plight of the oppressed. Ultimately, if a pedagogy of liberation based on problem-solving and co-intentional education is successful, if it becomes “revolutionary futurity,” then it will lead to the recognition of the humanity and subjectivity of all.<sup>3</sup> Viewed through the lenses of Lugones’s praxical thinking, Freire’s analysis seems incomplete, even too idealistic. Lugones redraws the famous master/slave dialectic. Power is not sliced in two. The space of power is one where subjects are now understood within the logic of oppressing/being oppressing ↔ resisting; subjects are within intermeshed oppressions and thus can be oppressor, oppressing, and resisting.<sup>4</sup> In that map which Lugones sees as drawn by power we, in fact, may have more than one spot and each spot may grant us different possibilities towards liberation, resistance, oppression, ignorance, knowledge, humanization, dehumanization.

In Freire’s analysis, the riddle of subjectivity (and of history) is solved when the oppressed reads her situation and participates in her own humanization and in so doing humanizes the oppressor. Freire never says that this is easy, and he considers criticisms of his view in his *Pedagogy of Hope*.<sup>5</sup> But he is committed to the logic of a history that is engined by the dialectic and in search of an ultimate synthesis. Lugones, however, takes the subject on a pilgrimage, to complex movements that lead to liminal spaces where institutional and structural binds (or limit-situations, as Freire would say) are challenged and new possibilities of resistance emerge. Yet, like Lugones, Freire does not give up the possibility of disarming the insidiousness of false generosity, a generosity that is all pervasive—you see it in the numerous claims to multiculturalism in the Mexican or Chinese night in your community, the meals to the poor served at your church, even in the halls of wonderfully liberal institutions with their departments that are committed to diversity and feminism—all the while community members, church volunteers, liberal professors do absolutely nothing to resist the structures that solidify unfair treatment of those who are marginalized. Despite his overly dichotomous view, Freire doesn’t lose sight of the target, and while we have more sophisticated analyses that now point to the intersectionality of race, sex, and gender, we should not forget the importance of class in the comings and goings of power. Most importantly, we shouldn’t forget Freire’s and Lugones’s call for us to witness, not in the sense that I can be there at the moment of an event, as the racist insults the so-called “other,” and remain passive, silent. Daring

and loving witness, according to Freire, is an essential part of a dialogical theory of action, and it involves consistency between words and actions, boldness to confront the risks of existing, radicalization, courage to love, and faith in people.<sup>6</sup> To witness is to *act with* others. Ultimately, Freire and Lugones see this witnessing as an integral part of praxis that for Lugones involves “a thoughtful search for connection” and that for him involves “critical reflection.”<sup>7</sup>

I revisit Freire and Lugones as I think of the spaces that we need to create in order to learn together, to learn from each other how to be better thinkers, scholars, teachers, learners, and coalitional partners. As we revisit the spot or spots that we all stand on in the complex spatiality of power, as professors, educators, lawyers, artists, workers, let us critically, praxically reflect how my, your, position negates, affirms, solidifies, uproots that of others, and perhaps then we can be ready to learn from each other and make new worlds. It was from feeling a sense of entrapment and a feeling of distress and invisibility within spaces in regular academic conferences that I felt the need to open up a different type of space, a space in which we could critically but respectfully could learn from others and discuss a topic that I had not been trained in but that I was eager to learn—that I needed to learn—Latina feminisms. My hope was that it would be a very different space, a space in which we would, first of all, listen to all the presentations and have critical discussion, but not the type of interaction that I continually saw in big conferences—what I can describe as I-know-more-than-you-and-I-will-ask-you-a-hard-question-just-to-show-you—the arrogant posturing typical of overly pretensions, yet insecure academics who ultimately lack that courage to love and to act with others, the courage that both Freire and Lugones call forth if we are to engage in praxical thinking and to witness faithfully. I cannot speak for participants as they have experienced the space of the roundtable, many of them having participated in many meetings since 2006. You can read the words of some of them as they collaborated in what for me was a very moving piece about their experiences of the space.<sup>8</sup> I remain thankful for all that participants have taught me and for all their important work of Latina feminism. I never imagined just how important the space and the relations it has engendered would become for my well-being, for my survival. My experience has been one in which I have felt that new worlds have opened in the roundtable in the sense that we have sometimes precariously, sometimes strongly, vividly, and movingly, managed to enact praxical thinking in our discussions and engagement.

A mutual, relational mentoring has taken place in the space of the roundtable, a relational mentoring in which graduate students (and sometimes undergraduate students), junior, and senior scholars are encouraged to learn from each other. It has not always been easy. If we remember the maps of powers and our places in those maps, we can easily occupy the territory of the oppressor and the aggressor. This is inevitable. Yet, even such moments can create possibilities of critical reflection and dialogue. The question is whether we can check ourselves and remember the spots in that map of power and we consider the ways in which our practices repeat the standard norms of engagement in academic meetings or we are ready to disrupt them, re-make them,

re-think them, or even dispose of them. Are we going to speak at others, undermine others’ ideas, disregard their intellectual contributions, reify the names of those who are already famous, endlessly repeat those names, silence the young scholar, silence the women, break someone’s will, argue to win, argue to prove, argue to conquer—or are we going to practice openness to learn from others, even as they are starting, ending, or being in the middle of their intellectual journeys in academia, even when they are not intellectuals? Are we capable of remembering that as Latin@s, we have already experienced the arrogance of those who do not deem us as truly belonging in their circles. We are well aware of how it feels to be made invisible, to be undermined and relegated to the margins, to be accused of not choosing “appropriate” academic topics, to be labeled not good enough, to have our writing not be recognized. Are we willing to do the same to others? The courage to love is so needed here—the courage to know that we do not always know better, the courage to listen, to give thanks as our own ideas are not merely our own but are the result of our learning, dialoguing, and acting with others (books have “mentored” me—and teachers, colleagues, students, and so many others I meet), the courage to work together and not in competition or for our own gain. There are so many Latin@s that have not had the chances and opportunities that we have had; ours, then, is a great challenge and responsibility. If current structures do not allow for dialogue that involves critical thinking or complex communication, as Freire and Lugones call for, then those structures must be changed, new spaces must be created, new worlds must be made.

NOTES

1. María Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 8.
2. As I reflect on the space and praxis of the Roundtable on Latina Feminism, I am immediately taken to the teachings of Paulo Freire and those of María Lugones. I think of Freire because my first reading of the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* transformed the way in which I thought about being a teacher and being a student and led me to rethink the different ways in which classrooms and other spaces can become spaces for critical, engaged, and respectful dialogue and mentoring. I think of Lugones because her critique of the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy is of the utmost importance for rethinking and reconfiguring standard understandings of power relations. Rather than providing an in-depth explanation of their views, here I mention both of these thinkers in light of the way they have contributed to my understanding of the creation of “critical spaces” in which possibilities are opened for dialogical learning and relational mentoring. For an important collection that focuses specifically on pedagogical practices within the context of Chicanas and Latinas, see Dolores Delgado Bernal, C. Alejandra Elenes, Francisca E. Godinez, and Sofia Villenas, *Chicano/Latina Education in Everyday Life: Feminista Perspectives on Pedagogy and Epistemology* (New York: SUNY Press, 2006).
3. Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 64–65.
4. Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 11.
5. Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 2003), 84 and 88–90.
6. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 70–73, 158.
7. See Lugones, *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes*, 37; and Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 48. For a discussion in the context of education that considers feminist philosophy, including the work of Lugones, and that recognizes the importance of Freire but also



the problems with his view, including his lack of attunement to gender issues, see Barbara Thayer-Bacon, "Radical Democratic Communities Always-in-the-Making," in *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 20, no. 1 (2001): 5–25.

8. See C. Paccacerqua, A. Pitts, E. Ruiz, S. Rivera-Berruz, and N. Cisneros, "In the Flesh and Word: Latina Feminist Philosophers' Collective Labor," *Hypatia* 31, no. 2 (2016): 313–18.

## *Implicit Bias and Latina/os in Philosophy*

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Can research on implicit bias shed light on issues related to teaching Latina/os in philosophy? Yes, with caveats. In particular, no one will be surprised to learn that implicit bias against (and among) Latina/os and Latin Americans is severely understudied. While Latina/os make up the largest minority group in the United States, recent estimates suggest that there is more than *six times* as much research on stereotyping and prejudice against African-Americans as there is against Latina/os.<sup>1</sup> I speculate about some causes and remedies for this disparity below, but my primary aims in this essay are different. First, I attempt to stitch together the general literature regarding anti-Latina/o bias with the general literature regarding bias in education in order to convey some of the basic challenges that bias likely poses to Latina/o students. Second, I consider whether Latin American philosophy might itself serve a bias-reducing function. Specifically, I sketch—in tentative and promissory terms—how the traditional “problem” of group identity explored in Latina/o and Latin American thought might function as part of the “solution” to the stereotypes and prejudices that have helped to sustain an exclusionary atmosphere in Anglo-American philosophy. Given the dearth of literature on the situation of Latina/os in philosophy, my claims here will build on findings about the situations of minorities in education more broadly.

### **ANTI-LATINA/O BIAS: WHAT DO WE KNOW AND WHY DON'T WE KNOW MORE?**

The limited existing research tends to suggest that Latina/os face many of the same prejudices as African-Americans in criminal justice, education, healthcare, and so on. The well-known “shooter bias” exhibited against blacks also exists, to some extent, against Latinos: in a video game setting, police officers are quicker to shoot Latinos than whites and Asians.<sup>2</sup> Mock jurors are more likely to think a criminal defendant is guilty and aggressive if he is Latino than if he is white.<sup>3</sup> Bias against Latino defendants is even more pronounced when they are undocumented immigrants—although white participants (in this case, undergraduates in Southern California) tend to deny that the defendant’s immigration status has affected their judgment.<sup>4</sup> The pervasive tendency for individuals to disavow prejudice on an explicit level led researchers in the 1980s and '90s to develop more indirect measures, which could detect attitudes that individuals were unwilling or unable to self-report. On the most popular indirect measure, the Implicit Association Test (IAT), undergraduates have more difficulty associating Hispanic names (like “Juanita” and “Miguel”)

than non-Hispanic names (“Nicole” and “Robert”) with words related to intelligence (“brainy”).<sup>5</sup> And while very few clinical doctors openly admit to being prejudiced against Latina/os, one Denver-based study found that roughly two-thirds of participating clinicians demonstrated anti-Latino bias on the IAT.<sup>6</sup> Clinicians’ implicit biases, in turn, predict the quality of their interactions with patients, their treatment decisions, and patients’ health outcomes.<sup>7</sup> However, the overwhelming majority of studies tying implicit (and explicit) bias to “real-world” outcomes has focused on anti-black bias, so the extent to which this research can illuminate the ongoing discrimination faced by Latina/os remains unknown. Many of the relevant impediments to doing better research are structural, for example, the lack of sufficient funding for in-depth, longitudinal, field-based research, and the underrepresentation of Latina/os in the sciences.<sup>8</sup>

I suspect that the “black/white binary”—the tendency to implicitly model all forms of ethnic, racial, and cultural discrimination on the attitudes and actions of white Americans toward African Americans—also plays a role in stifling more wide-ranging and innovative research on biases against and among Latina/os.<sup>9</sup> Researchers who investigate biases against Latina/os at all have tended to design experiments specifically to test whether anti-Latina/o biases are similar to known anti-black biases. That is, researchers hypothesize similarity and then—lo and behold!—tend to find it. After a handful of studies uncovering similarities were published, I suspect a tendency emerged to assume that knowledge about anti-black bias could generally be transferred over, *mutatis mutandis*, to anti-Latina/o bias.

This is clearly a mistake. Excessive focus on white-against-black bias has obscured the diverse and distinctive challenges faced by Latina/os (and by members of other disadvantaged or stigmatized groups), and this seems to be as true in implicit bias research as it is in other domains. One obvious difference between anti-black and anti-Latina/o biases revolves around associations with immigration. Latina/os are more likely than African Americans to be immigrants or children of immigrants, to have close family and friendship ties to immigrants, to maintain relationships across borders, and so on. They are, accordingly, more likely to be assumed to be immigrants, to be “exoticized,” and to be perceived as unable or unwilling to adopt dominant American (white) norms. (Anti-immigrant biases toward Latina/os will also be importantly different from anti-immigrant biases toward Asian and European immigrants.<sup>10</sup>)

As an illustration of this fact, many people continue to underestimate the profound effects that anti-Latino bias *per se* can have, for example, on immigration policy and political discourse. Consider how pundits have attempted to downplay the role of anti-Latino (and anti-Muslim) prejudice *per se* in explaining the current popularity of Donald Trump.<sup>11</sup> Many attribute the popularity of Trump’s anti-immigrant messages to economic factors, as if Trump is “channeling” preexisting economic anxiety into bigotry. It may also be, however, that Trump is channeling preexisting bigotry into economic anxiety, much as he once channeled

racism into nativism by questioning Obama's citizenship.<sup>12</sup> One study found that support for broadly restrictionist U.S. immigration policy was *not* predicted by individuals' partisan affiliations or economic circumstances (having a low-skilled job, being anxious about one's financial status, or living in high-unemployment areas).<sup>13</sup> Instead, general opposition to immigration seemed to stem primarily from anti-Latina/o biases, such as endorsements of stigmatizing stereotypes, denials that Latina/o immigrants have contributed to society, and preferences not to live near Latinas/os or have Latina/o in-laws. Such findings make salient the extent to which anti-Latina/o prejudice is a self-standing problem, not merely an offshoot of anxiety about immigrants taking jobs and suppressing wages.

In fact, xenophobia and hostility to immigration are also common in the Latina/o community. Texas undergraduates of Mexican descent tend to agree that "illegal immigration" is a "growing problem" that contributes to "the decline of society."<sup>14</sup> Researchers speculate that these individuals may "resent the ongoing tide of illegal entry to the country and view illegal immigration as undermining the legitimacy of those who have gained citizenship and upward mobility."<sup>15</sup> In this vein, numerous studies demonstrate *intragroup* biases among Hispanic individuals. These biases seem to occur primarily along two dimensions: country of origin and skin color. Related to the former, foreign-born Latina/o youth often report experiencing discrimination from U.S.-born Latinas/os.<sup>16</sup> Related to the latter, Hispanic undergraduates in both Seattle, Washington, and Santiago, Chile, implicitly favored "Blancos" over "Morenos."<sup>17</sup> This implicit "colorism" was found even among self-identified Morenos, although to a somewhat lesser extent than among Blancos.<sup>18</sup> Skin-tone preferences tend to be considered more socially acceptable in Chile, and participants there were more likely to explicitly acknowledge a preference for light skin. Participants in Seattle, however, tended to report no skin-tone preferences,<sup>19</sup> again demonstrating how these indirect measures can tap into preferences that participants are unwilling to acknowledge openly—perhaps because such preferences are inconsistent with their reflective egalitarian commitments, and perhaps because they simply don't want to *appear* non-egalitarian. These forms of implicit colorism likely have political ramifications. Light-skinned Latinas/os tend to perceive more "commonality" with whites than with other minority groups.<sup>20</sup> Intragroup bias and discrimination is particularly disheartening because it suppresses the kind of group solidarity necessary for mobilizing collective political action.<sup>21</sup>

Such findings serve as reminders that Latinas/os are an incredibly diverse group in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, history, and familial and cultural traditions, values, and styles. Anti-Latina/o biases will surely vary depending on these more particular aspects of social identity and context. It is extremely likely, for example, that non-Hispanics share Hispanics' implicit skin-tone preferences, and an IAT using photos of Hispanic faces may reveal significantly different biases depending on the extent to which the faces tend to have stereotypically Eurocentric, Afrocentric, or indigenous features, or stereotypically masculine versus feminine features.<sup>22</sup> Existing measures of anti-Latina/o bias, which

tend to use names and faces, can be complemented with measures using other signifiers of Latina/o identities—such as accent, clothing, and food—in order to uncover the diversity and distinctiveness of anti-Latina/o biases. For example, undergraduates (in this case, in Western Pennsylvania) tend to perceive speakers with Spanish accents as less competent and knowledgeable, especially when the speaker is a woman or the listener is a man.<sup>23</sup> I would also predict that anti-Latina/o biases will take on different shapes depending on occupation and social role. The stereotypes of Hispanic maids, pool boys, drug dealers, farmhands, guerilla fighters, abuelitas, etc., each occupy distinctive positions in the American collective imagination, and the sorts of discriminatory treatment individuals will experience in particular contexts could vary tremendously depending on whether they are perceived to resemble one or another of these stereotypes.

The natures and varieties of anti-Latina/o biases remain an open question. In fact, I believe that Latin American and Latina/o academic thought and philosophy could provide a rich resource for directing scientists' attention toward the particularities of Latina/o experiences of prejudice and discrimination. I return to this point below, but consider this another call for greater cross-talk between the humanities and social sciences. I also feel compelled to note that, while more research on these topics is needed, a further problem is that the research that *is* being done is not sufficiently well-known or publicized. One need only scroll through recent issues of the *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* to find a plethora of valuable research on issues related to bias, as well as education and mentoring. Yet a gap persists between these findings and our ears. We need better, more consistent mechanisms for broadcasting ongoing empirical developments. Perhaps the APA could devote a blog or podcast to discussing exciting new research, stressing its relevance to philosophy and philosophers.

What are the implications of research on anti-Latina/o bias for philosophy? Just as many pundits may underestimate the full effects that anti-Latina/o biases *per se* can play in politics, philosophers may underestimate the role that biases, perhaps of a subtle and unintentional nature, can play in the marginalization of Latin American philosophy, and the exclusion and alienation of Latina/o philosophy students. Contrast two narratives we might tell about these exclusions.<sup>24</sup> The first might seem, on an individual level at least, relatively innocuous: a given philosopher was not exposed to Latin American philosophy in his education, and as a result does not seriously engage with it in his professional career. Stories like this insinuate that the marginalization of Latin American philosophy is first and foremost a structural problem. If only Latin American philosophy were taught more widely and regularly, then more people would be exposed to it, recognize its value, pursue it further, and so on. Moreover, such a change would surely attract more Latinas/os to philosophy.

But consider a different narrative: a given philosopher (call him Tobias) does not introduce himself to Latin American philosophy because, well, he prefers not to, and his preference is caused, in part, by implicit biases that Hispanics are not "brainy" and have not made valuable

contributions to society. (Tobias thinks that success in philosophy depends much more on having an innately penetrating intellect than it does on hard work or acquired skills.<sup>25</sup>) Tobias' biases make it the case that when he does encounter Latin American philosophy and philosophers, he is unimpressed. For example, he finds that philosophy professors and students with Spanish accents somehow don't sound as incisive and knowledgeable as those with French, German, or Oxbridge accents. (He may be relatively unaware of the impact of these biases on his judgments, or he may be aware but unwilling to acknowledge it—to others or to himself.) Tobias is, moreover, inevitably able to confabulate alternative reasons, which ostensibly have nothing to do with anti-Latino bias, to justify his impressions and preferences.<sup>26</sup> In light of all this, Tobias thinks that it is not a priority to add Latin American philosophy to his department's curriculum, to hire Latina/o faculty, and so on. A few of his colleagues share these views, and when they discuss these issues in formal or informal settings, they form an echo chamber of mutual validation (a "shared reality"<sup>27</sup>). Thereafter, the confidence exuded by Tobias and his likeminded colleagues about these matters helps to persuade those colleagues who had been undecided or lacked strong opinions, and together they form a bloc in the department just large enough to sway decisions about which areas to hire in, which courses to add to the curriculum, and so on. I hope this second narrative illustrates in microcosm how bias can play a significant role, independently from structural factors, in the continued marginalization and exclusion of Latina/o and Latin American philosophy and philosophers. Of course, bias is operative in classrooms as well as faculty meetings. I turn next to research on bias in pedagogical contexts.

### IMPLICIT BIASES IN EDUCATION

Although research in the United States is dominated by the black/white paradigm, there is a substantial—and quickly expanding—body of research on ethnic and anti-immigrant biases in Europe, especially in the Netherlands and Germany. This constitutes some of the most suggestive research for thinking about biases toward Latina/o and Latin American students. European social scientists have investigated teachers' explicit and implicit prejudices and stereotypes related to students' socioeconomic status (SES), gender, and Arab-Muslim identity.

One landmark study found that Dutch teachers explicitly reported unprejudiced attitudes toward Arab-Muslim students but harbored implicit biases.<sup>28</sup> Teachers' implicit biases predicted their expectations of student success as well as the ethnic achievement gap between Dutch-origin and ethnic minority students (largely of Turkish or Moroccan descent). That is, the ethnic achievement gap was larger in classrooms with more implicitly biased teachers. (This research group found the same pattern of results regarding teachers' explicit egalitarianism, implicit bias, and the achievement of students with dyslexia.<sup>29</sup>) Another study, set in Midwestern communities that have recently seen an influx of Muslim and Christian immigrants from the Arab world, found that teachers with anti-Arab implicit biases were less likely to foster interethnic respect among their students or to explore proactive strategies to help students work through interethnic conflict.<sup>30</sup>

At first glance, these correlational studies do not settle whether ethnic minority students do worse in school because their teachers implicitly dislike them, or whether teachers implicitly dislike them because of how they behave. However, subsequent research has revealed numerous ways in which teacher bias negatively affects students. One study in an urban Texas district found that teachers' biased perceptions of their students (specifically, the gap between how motivated students perceived themselves to be and how motivated their teachers believed they were) significantly affected students' final grades in math and English, even when controlling for standardized measures of ability.<sup>31</sup> The effects of teacher bias are especially pronounced for low-income African-American and Latina/o students. Such findings are all the more troubling because Latina/o students already tend to have less confidence in their ability to succeed in math.<sup>32</sup> Teachers' biases likely influence how they interact with students and grade their work, and, in turn, how students come to think of themselves.

In one impressive demonstration of the causal effects of implicit bias on teaching performance, white undergraduates were tasked with giving lessons to other students, who were either white or black.<sup>33</sup> Among these "instructors," those who were more implicitly biased were more visibly anxious while teaching black learners and gave poorer lessons. In fact, even non-black learners who subsequently watched videos of their lessons did significantly worse on tests measuring how well they had absorbed the material.

Cumulatively, the research shows that teacher bias has pernicious effects on student performance and well-being across a variety of academic subjects. There is no reason to suppose philosophy is an exception from these trends. Let us return to the example of Professor Tobias from the preceding section: we are now poised to peek further into the workings of his implicit biases toward his Latina/o students. It is not just that Tobias thinks these students sound less brainy and knowledgeable when they speak in class or office hours. He also underestimates the time and effort they invest on reading and writing assignments. These false perceptions, in turn, lead him to grade them unfairly. He is, for example, more likely to notice and penalize the grammatical mistakes in their writing than in the writing of U.S.-born white students.<sup>34</sup> But the harmful effects of Tobias' biases are not limited to discounting Latina/o students' contributions to class discussion or grading them inaccurately. His discomfort around them leads him to give poorer lessons. They actually learn less. And they internalize the biases he projects onto them, becoming less motivated, less identified with school, and more anxious in test-taking situations.

### DEBIASING STRATEGIES

Thus far, I have drawn on general patterns of research to sketch the complex, self-perpetuating situation of bias against Latina/os, and especially against Latina/o philosophy students. But what can we do to combat anti-Latina/o bias in educational settings, and specifically in philosophy? I first mention a few general strategies that teachers can employ to reduce their own biases and to

help buffer students against the effects of bias. I then consider whether Latin American philosophy might itself serve a bias-reducing function.

Research has uncovered a variety of effective “debiasing” strategies that each of us as individuals can pursue.<sup>35</sup> One is to identify the contexts in which we suspect that we’ll be biased, and form concrete if-then plans (or “implementation intentions”) for how to act in those contexts.<sup>36</sup> For example, form plans such as, “If a Latina student raises her hand, then I will call on her!” and “If a Latina student makes a contribution to class discussion, then I will refer back to her point later!” In general, when interacting with students from diverse social backgrounds, consider taking an “approach-oriented” mindset, in which you have an opportunity to engage with and learn from someone else, rather than an “avoidance-oriented” mindset, in which you are concerned about what not to say and how to avoid appearing prejudiced.<sup>37</sup> Research also suggests that a common strategy is mistaken: don’t try to compensate for your biases simply by being especially warm and friendly; it is often more important to members of disadvantaged groups that they feel *respected* rather than liked.<sup>38</sup> To better convey respect and understanding for the student as an individual, actively imagine yourself in the student’s position,<sup>39</sup> and look for the student’s “individuating” features, interests, and traits. One simple strategy to facilitate taking a student’s perspective and honing in on individuating features is to focus on the student’s eyes,<sup>40</sup> which are a rich source of emotional cues. Implicit biases lead us to make less eye contact with outgroup than ingroup members, and this attentional difference partly underlies the awkwardness and communicative difficulties of intergroup interactions. Eye gaze can, in most contexts, be adjusted with minimal thought and effort, and, after a little practice, improved eye contact in intergroup situations may become a relatively effortless habit. (Form the plan: “When students speak to me, I will look them in the eye!”)

Although these represent a few of the many strategies teachers can employ to be less biased, their cumulative impact will be difficult to assess. For one thing, Latina/o students may still experience discrimination outside of the classroom and internalize negative views about their group from mass media. These experiences can lead to stereotype threat, which occurs when being reminded of stereotypes about one’s social identity (for example, by telling Latina undergraduates that they are about to take a “genuine test” of their intellectual “abilities and limitations”<sup>41</sup>) induces anxiety and harms performance. Here, however, there is another set of strategies that, I believe, will be of use to philosophers. Although teachers may not be able to prevent their students from internalizing stereotypes in the first place, a number of strategies have emerged to counter stereotype threat, and, more broadly, to buffer students against discrimination and other obstacles to psychological well-being and academic success. One example is values affirmation. This is a simple but incredibly powerful 15-minute exercise wherein students identify, and write in an open-ended way about, the values most important to them.<sup>42</sup> This intervention has been found to reduce the achievement gap between white, black, and Hispanic middle schoolers (with the beneficial effects on minority

student achievement persisting for at least three years),<sup>43</sup> and to reduce the achievement gap between men and women in college physics.<sup>44</sup> This intervention has not yet been tested in academic philosophy, but it is such a low-cost intervention that I nevertheless recommend philosophy departments include this exercise, e.g., on the first day of all introductory courses. (Your very own department could do a virtually costless controlled study comparing classes that get this intervention to those that don’t.)

Another strategy for reducing stereotype threat is to emphasize that tests and papers are not measures of innate or fixed abilities, but rather are merely indices of students’ gradual progress toward the mastery of learnable skills.<sup>45</sup> One way to bring home the message that philosophy—and undergraduate life in general—consists in learnable skills is to bring senior philosophy majors to discuss their personal experiences adapting to college life and learning how to do philosophy. One study found that this sort of intervention (not specifically focused on philosophy majors) was especially helpful for students who were the first generation in their family to go to college. In their first month at college, these students spoke for one hour with a diverse panel of upper-division students, who emphasized “that students’ different backgrounds can shape the college experience in both positive and negative ways and that students need to utilize strategies for success that take their different backgrounds into account.”<sup>46</sup> This intervention led first-generation students to feel less stressed and better prepared, to make more use of school resources, and to earn significantly higher GPAs through their first year (reducing the achievement gap between first- and continuing-generation students by 63 percent).

### THE “PROBLEM” OF MESTIZAJE AS PART OF THE “SOLUTION” TO BIAS

I conclude by considering the possible role that Latin American philosophy might play in addressing some of the challenges discussed above. Explaining what I have in mind requires first bringing into view the benefits and limitations of what is perhaps the most intensively studied intervention for reducing intergroup bias and inequality: social integration.<sup>47</sup> Meta-analyses suggest that integrating schools reduces racial and ethnic achievement gaps (“bringing up” minority students without “bringing down” whites),<sup>48</sup> and that positive intergroup contact reduces bias, often by creating a shared sense of identity across groups.<sup>49</sup> Integration is likely beneficial for reducing both inter- and intra-group biases. For example, emphasizing a shared pan-ethnic Latina/o identity may reduce implicit colorism among Latina/os.<sup>50</sup>

However, a significant body of research has revealed that successful instances of intergroup contact incur unforeseen costs.<sup>51</sup> The virtue of contact—that it breaks down “us” vs. “them” group differences and leads individuals to think of themselves as members of a larger, shared group—is also its vice. As disadvantaged-group members come to think of themselves as sharing a superordinate identity with advantaged-group members, they simultaneously become less likely to recognize social injustice as a serious problem, and they come to expect—often mistakenly—to



receive fair treatment from advantaged-group members. These “ironic” effects of intergroup contact suggest that prejudice reduction—where this is conceived solely in terms of finding common ground and forging a shared identity across group lines—undermines disadvantaged-group members’ motivation to fight collectively for social justice. The counterproductive effects of intergroup contact have led some theorists and activists to conclude that, so long as substantive intergroup inequalities persist, prejudice reduction is a misbegotten aim.<sup>52</sup> They think we should instead animate certain forms of intergroup conflict in order to spark effective collective action.

Rather than abandoning prejudice reduction altogether, however, another tradition of research suggests that leading models of prejudice reduction have been oversimplified. Prejudice-reduction advocacy has been focused too narrowly on eliminating intergroup distinctions and building a common identity, even as decades of research show that there is another way. This other way is disarmingly straightforward: emphasize commonality and difference. There is obviously no *logical inconsistency* in thinking of oneself, e.g., as both an American and also a Latina. Research suggests that there need be no *psychological inconsistency* in this either.<sup>53</sup> Often, disadvantaged-group members prefer to think of themselves in terms of a “dual identity,” e.g., as adopting a shared identity with all residents of the United States, or with all members of their university, while simultaneously maintaining a distinctive subgroup identity, whether it is constituted by a set of idiosyncratic interests, or by broader ethnic or cultural inheritances. In a range of intergroup interactions, discussing dual identity—emphasizing common ground without dismissing difference—brings many of the benefits of positive contact, without incurring its most pernicious costs. Maintaining a sense of oneself as a member of distinctive subgroups prevents one from conflating the advancement of intergroup harmony with the achievement of intergroup equality.

But what, exactly, does it mean to “discuss” dual identity in intergroup contexts? Much of the empirical literature leaves the content of these conversations underspecified, but my sense is that they risk slipping into what Edward Said called “a lazy . . . feel-good multiculturalism.”<sup>54</sup> Is there a more rigorous, challenging, or nuanced way of thinking through dual identity? It is in this context that I propose that Latin American and Latina/o philosophy has much to offer, for example, in the wide-ranging and diverse traditions of thought surrounding *mestizaje*.<sup>55</sup> I can think of no intellectual traditions better suited to examining and debating the complexity of social identity than those embodied in thinkers from Bolívar to Vasconcelos to Anzaldúa to Lugones and Alcoff.

Although *mestizaje* has at times been rhetorically invoked to stress pan-ethnic Latin-American homogeneity and common cause, many theorists go to lengths to emphasize precisely the opposite: the heterogeneity, tension, and contestation inherent in *mestiza/o* identities. In a similar way, the empirical research doesn’t suggest that individuals must settle on some conclusive, definitive interpretation of ingroup, outgroup, or subgroup social identities. To the

contrary, several studies find that emphasizing the internal heterogeneity of groups is more effective for reducing explicit and implicit bias than is portraying groups in a homogeneous and unequivocally positive light.<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps, then, the longstanding practical and theoretical “problem” of characterizing Latina/o and Latin American group identity can figure as one part of the “solution” to the downsides of integration. While the danger of positive intergroup contact is that it leads us to form misleadingly simplified and unified conceptions of our social identity—conceptions that sap our motivation to struggle for social change—Latin American and Latina/o thinkers have long been oriented toward constructing more complex and contextualized conceptions of social identity, often with an eye toward inspiring political activism.

But what are the real prospects of Latin American philosophy serving a bias-reducing function? One immediate challenge is that advantaged-group members (e.g., white undergraduates) tend to prefer to focus exclusively on commonality and shared superordinate identities.<sup>57</sup> They are often reluctant to acknowledge and openly explore intergroup differences. There is, in these contexts, a genuine risk of white backlash and hostility. Based on my own (very, very) limited experience, however, I find that the history of thought surrounding *mestizaje* can actually serve as an exciting point of entry for thinking more generally about social identity, and for confronting the challenge—faced by individuals from virtually all walks of life—of making sense of one’s self *qua* inheritor of diverse traditions and inhabitant of multiple identities. To take a low-stakes example, while white undergraduates may be uncomfortable, resentful, or even jealous of the code-switching they observe among their African American or Latina/o peers, it doesn’t take much to get them to realize that they engage in rampant code-switching as well. For example, they speak differently with their friends than with their grandparents, they communicate differently on social media than in the classroom, and so on. Appreciating the pervasiveness of their own code-switching may reduce white students’ perception that minority code-switching is somehow especially exclusionary or problematic. Code-switching is a ubiquitous feature of contemporary linguistic life; it is one clear manifestation of how we all take up and move between a variety of social roles and identities.<sup>58</sup>

What is the nature of the “self” who inherits, navigates, and actively reinterprets these multiple social identities? How can we embrace our disparate multiple roles and traditions when they seem to conflict with each other? Latin American thought has long engaged such questions. When I frame Latin American philosophy as an especially well-developed tradition of grappling with problems that, at a certain level of generality, are faced by nearly everyone, non-Hispanic students seem at least a little more open to exploring it. As Alcoff explains, “In certain respects the philosophical issue at stake is the same whether the object is mixed race, mixed ethnicity, or mixed culture: all have been devalued as incoherent, diluted, and thus weak.”<sup>59</sup> Of course, this way of framing *mestizaje* introduces the danger of the colonizer “appropriating” or “assimilating” the identities and experiences of the colonized. But my suggestion that



thinking about *mestizaje* can be a springboard—even for students who do not identify as *mestiza/o*—into thinking either more generally or more idiosyncratically about social identity is not meant to imply that, deep down, all human beings are really *mestizos*. In fact, acknowledging the risk of appropriation itself needs to be part of the class discussion.

Another potential challenge for the idea that philosophical reflection on *mestizaje* might accrue substantial social-psychological benefits is that emphasizing dual identity can sometimes be a source of stress instead of strength. Under another guise, “bicultural stress”—navigating the felt expectation to live up to two distinct cultural ideals—can lead to significant mental health challenges for *Latina/os*.<sup>60</sup> One worry, then, might be that what I am identifying as the “solution” in this context is in fact the “problem” in other contexts. Indeed, when it comes to navigating social identity and prejudice, there is no ready-made, context-general solution. How to approach these issues is a context-sensitive matter. In some cases, an individual suffering from bicultural stress might benefit from cultivating a more “mainstream” superordinate identity.<sup>61</sup> That said, researchers make a crucial distinction between two ways of responding to bicultural stress: “active” vs. “avoidance” coping.<sup>62</sup> Mental-health setbacks tend to be concentrated among “avoidance copers,” who respond to tensions among their multiple identities by not thinking about it (e.g., by distracting themselves with TV). Active copers have a more “problem-solving” orientation, and are more open to proactive strategies for talking and thinking through these experienced conflicts of identity. Seen in this light, then, rather than being a genuine problem for my proposal, research on coping with bicultural stress might point toward much the same conclusion. Specifically, engaging seriously with the Latin American philosophy of group identity might itself constitute an avenue for active coping among *Latina/o* youth. In this way, philosophically oriented reflection on *mestizaje* might function in some contexts as an instrument for prejudice reduction and in others as a form of therapy.

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**NOTES**

1. See, e.g., Steffanie Guillermo and Joshua Correll, “Attentional Biases Toward Latinos,” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 38, no. 2 (2016): 264–78, 265; and John F. Dovidio et al., “Understanding Bias Toward Latinos: Discrimination, Dimensions of Difference, and Experience of Exclusion,” *Journal of Social Issues* 66, no. 1 (2010): 59–78.
2. Melody Sadler et al., “The World is Not Black and White: Racial Bias in the Decision to Shoot in a Multiethnic Context,” *Journal of Social Issues* 68, no. 2 (2012): 286–313.
3. Galen V. Bodenhausen and Meryl Lichtenstein, “Social Stereotypes and Information-Processing Strategies: The Impact of Task Complexity,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 5 (1987): 871–80.
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college students. This is usually considered to be a limitation, but in the context of a special issue on the educational experiences of *Latina/os*, the specificity of the research participants strikes me as something of a virtue.

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6. Irene V. Blair et al., “Clinicians’ Implicit Ethnic/Racial Bias and Perceptions of Care Among Black and Latino Patients,” *The Annals of Family Medicine* 11, no. 1 (2013): 43–52.
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10. See Tiane L. Lee and Susan T. Fiske, “Not an Outgroup, Not Yet an Ingroup: Immigrants in the Stereotype Content Model,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 30, no. 6 (2006): 751–68, and Catherine A. Cottrell, David A. R. Richards, and Austin Lee Nichols, “Predicting Policy Attitudes from General Prejudice versus Specific Intergroup Emotions,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 46, no. 2 (2010): 247–54.
11. See, e.g., Thomas Frank, “Millions of Ordinary Americans Support Donald Trump. Here’s Why,” *The Guardian*, March 7, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/07/donald-trump-why-americans-support>.
12. See, e.g., Matthew Yglesias, “President Obama Has a Theory about Why People Support Donald Trump. But He’s Wrong,” *Vox*, December 22, 2015, <http://www.vox.com/2015/12/22/10636538/obama-trump-theory>; and David Roberts, “Are Trump Supporters Driven by Economic Anxiety or Racial Resentment? Yes,” *Vox*, December 30, 2015, <http://www.vox.com/2015/12/30/10690360/racism-economic-anxiety-trump>.
13. See Heeju Shin, David L. Leal, and Christopher G. Ellison, “Sources of Support for Immigration Restriction Economics, Politics, or Anti-Latino Bias?,” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 37, no. 4 (2015): 459–81.
14. This tendency is stronger among men, and, strikingly, it is especially strong among individuals with very positive attitudes toward Mexico. See Claudia San Miguel et al., “Xenophobia Among Hispanic College Students and Implications for the Criminal Justice System,” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 27, no. 1 (2011): 95–109, 100.
15. *Ibid.*, 104.
16. David Córdova and Richard C. Cervantes, “Intergroup and Within-Group Perceived Discrimination Among U.S.-born and Foreign-born Latino Youth,” *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 32, no. 2 (2010): 259–74. This was a qualitative, focus-group study, and it would be invaluable to follow it up with quantitative and experimental-interventional work. See, e.g., Tatiana Basáñez et al., “Perceptions of Intragroup Rejection and Coping Strategies: Malleable Factors Affecting Hispanic Adolescents’ Emotional and Academic Outcomes,” *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 43, no. 8 (2014): 1266–80.
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52. Ibid.
53. See, e.g., John F. Dovidio et al., "Included but Invisible? Subtle Bias, Common Identity, and the Darker Side of 'We'," *Social Issues and Policy Review* 10, no. 1 (2016): 6–46.
54. *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (Columbia University Press, 2004) 50.

55. In lieu of *mestizaje*, one might also speak here of “hyphenation,” “hybridity,” or other terms denoting mixed, complex identities. I focus in what follows on *mestizaje* partly for ease of presentation, but also because it is a historically fraught, contested, mercurial notion. It is *because* it has meant different things to different people across times and places, and because very many Latina/os and Latin Americans do *not* identify as *mestiza/o*, that it can play the role I’m interested in here. Also, I would not suggest that Latin American thought is the *only* tradition to engage with the complexity of social identity. From African-American thought, for example, consider Du Bois’ notion of “double-consciousness,” or Kimberlé Crenshaw’s notion of “intersectionality.” See, respectively, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford University Press, 2007) and “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* (1991): 1241–99.
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academic year of 2009–2010 obtained 4.8 percent of the master’s degrees awarded and 4.7 percent of the doctoral-level degrees—in fact, in 2013, only 5 percent of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions were Latinos/as.<sup>3,4</sup>

As I explain below, the explanations for this gender gap are varied and complex; however, in this essay I do not seek to explain this situation, but rather I attempt to provide resources to understand the complexities of Hispanic/Latino masculinities through an anthropological and feminist perspective. I argue that such an understanding is not only important in increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino men who graduate college and who obtain postgraduate degrees, but also in creating a dialogue about gender, violence, and masculinity that includes more Hispanic men.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that although this essay deals with philosophical questions, the resources that I provide are scholarly works from the social sciences. For these reasons, this essay addresses Latino men and Latino masculinities in higher education in general and not exclusively in relation to academic philosophy.

## CULTURALIST EXPLANATIONS OF THE GENDER GAP

The gender gap between men and women in enrollment and graduation is not limited to Latinos. As with other populations, one of the most popular explanations for this gap is often based on “culture.” In the last decades sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists have problematized the stereotype of the Latin American *macho*. In this area, the most well-known work that analyzes the stereotype of the Latin American *macho* is Matthew Gutmann’s seminal work *The Meanings of Macho*.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of the move against stereotypical definitions of the *macho*, the “culturalist” explanation of the Latin American man continues to inform many of the studies and discussions surrounding Latin American and Latino masculinity. According to this “culturalist” explanation, Latin American masculinity is often characterized by control over female family members articulated through the use of physicality, psychological power, and sexuality. More significantly, however, the “culturalist” explanation of Latin American and Latino masculinity highlights the centrality of breadwinning as the core element in Latin American masculinity. Under this model, threats to the breadwinning ability of Latin American and Latino men result in a crisis situation that leads men to compensate through the use of violence and to rely on substance abuse.

Although scholars have been successful in going beyond the *macho* stereotype when studying Latin American and Latino men, opening up a dialogue that employs a feminist analysis in the study of masculinity, the “culturalist” explanation continued to reaffirm ideas about Latin American men as controlling, conservative, aggressive, and hypersexualized. Such explanations have been used to account for the gender gap in school enrollment. For example, some scholars have argued that Latinas do better in school than

## Understanding Latino Masculinities in the Classroom

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In May 2013, Richard Fry and Paul Taylor of the Pew Research Center documented that Latino/a high school graduates had surpassed by two percentage points their white counterparts (69 percent and 67 percent, respectively). This accomplishment, however, should be taken with caution as enrollment in college does not necessarily lead to obtaining a bachelor’s degree. Thus, although in 2012 Latinos/as accounted for 19 percent of college-enrolled students between the ages of 18 and 24, they only account 9 percent of those who earned a bachelor’s degree (or higher) and are between the ages of 25 and 29 years old.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the enrollment of Latinos/as in college is also colored by an ongoing “gender gap” between women and men, as another Pew Research Center report showed that Latino women “outpaced [Latino] men by 13 percentage points” in college enrollment in 2012.<sup>2</sup> The gender gap is also reflected in postgraduate degrees as Latinos/as in the

Latinos because they are more used to being controlled and, thus, respond better to academic environments that reward good and docile behavior.<sup>7</sup> Men, on the other hand, are seen as being “culturally” predisposed to defy authority, not adapting well to academic environments. The “culturalist” explanation of why Latino men don’t do well in higher education obscures other factors while it reifies the idea that Latino men are all part of one cultural background. In the following section I analyze how understanding the diversity in the construction of Latino masculinities can become an important tool allowing Latinos to perform better in higher education while, at the same time, being critical of their own positionality and privileges.

The narrative of the masculinity crisis, and the image of the Latino *macho* that comes with it, reproduces linear accounts of what it means to be a Latino man by naturalizing the connection between the use of violence and masculinity. Thus, in the classroom, being able to go beyond this narrative, and to problematize the connection between violence and masculinity, can potentially lead to discussions regarding gender, violence, and masculinity from a feminist and anthropological perspective by questioning the ways in which “culture” is constructed historically and politically.

### LATINO MASCULINITIES

One of the main causes of the prevalence of the “culturalist” explanation of Latino masculinity is rooted in the lack of understanding of the diverse forms in which masculinities are constructed in Latin America and in Latino communities in the United States. Although the study of Latin America masculinities is growing, there is still a lot to be done, especially in addressing the diversity in the historical and contemporary ways in which men and women construct ideas of masculinity.

This is especially true when considering that most of the research done on Latin American men and Latinos in the United States is based on analyzing the role of men as fathers in urban contexts. In this sense, the study of Latin American men and Latinos often relies on perspectives and theories produced in Anglo-Saxon contexts which do not always fit with the gender and racial dynamics that Latinos have had to negotiate in different historical moments. Take, for example, the concept of “masculinity crisis” that has shaped much of the recent discussions on masculinity. According to the proponents of this concept, as more women enter the workforce and take on breadwinning roles, men feel “alienated” and unable to fulfill their idealized “sex-role” as breadwinners. However, many Latin American men and Latinos have always faced difficulties in achieving a “breadwinning” role because of racial discrimination, and national and international economic policies.

Philippe Bourgois argued that for many young men from Puerto Rico, the feeling of being discriminated against was directly connected to ways in which their body language was misunderstood by white New Yorkers. For many of these Puerto Rican men, the struggles they faced in the United States were not unlike the struggles that their fathers and grandfathers faced in Puerto Rico.<sup>8</sup> In the same way, in my own ethnographic research in Oaxaca, I have

seen that the Zapotec men who migrate to the United States to work in industrial farming in the Pacific Northwest construct a narrative that connects their struggles as farmworkers to the struggles faced by themselves, their fathers, and their grandfathers as peasants engaged in subsistence agriculture in Mexico. The study of Afro-Latino and Indigenous men in Latin America and in the United States is important in offering a counter-narrative to urban and Anglo-Saxon studies of masculinity. Indigenous masculinities have been explored in scholarly works such as that of Evelyn Puga Aguirre-Smith<sup>9</sup> in Mexico, as well as in that of other scholars working with Native American communities, such as Ty Tengan.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, thinking critically about Latin American men as heterosexual family men also poses problems when hegemonic ideas about Latino masculinity are challenged by men who are not heterosexual or who do not classify “as family men” for one reason or another. Thus, non-heterosexual Latinos from different racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds are often pressured to perform within the expectations put forward by the “culturalist” explanation of Latino masculinity that also erases the contributions of queer and gay Latinos and Latinas. In this respect, books such as Michael Hames-García and Ernesto Martínez’s *Gay Latino Studies* can help students and professors to better understand the complex masculine identities.<sup>11</sup>

As students at different levels learn about the work of Latinos and Latin American men who challenge the common narrative of the heterosexual family man, this not only destabilizes the monolithic narratives of what it means to be a Latino man, but it also provides important sources of inspiration to Latinos who are part of the LGBTQ community.

### HISPANIC MEN AND FEMINIST REFLECTIONS ON MASCULINITY

The importance of discussing the construction of different forms of masculinity from a feminist perspective is particularly relevant in certain contexts where terms such as masculinity and feminism are occasionally presented as contradictory. As Cristina Alcalde<sup>12</sup> points out, the challenge of critically engaging in feminist approaches to Latino masculinities is to de-link models of Latinos from violence while simultaneously acknowledging the intersectionality of being a Latino man in the United States. The feminist and intersectional perspective provides important context when discussing critically the formation and manifestation of a masculine Latino identity because it highlights both the experiences of discrimination and disempowerment that Latino men face as well as the experiences of privilege that heterosexual Latino men have within their own communities. The feminist and intersectional approach to Latino masculinities thus offers an important counterpoint to masculine narratives constructed by men’s movements that reify heterosexual hegemonic masculinities as well as patriarchal values.

The gender gap between Latinas and Latinos in higher education enrollment and in graduation needs to be grounded on the acknowledgment that the experiences



of Latinos and Latin American men are historically and regionally situated, and do not respond to one single “culture.” Thus using a feminist and intersectional approach can better help educators, and students, to think both inside and outside of the classroom about the oppression and the privileges that different groups of men experience. By incorporating insights from the social sciences, educators of all levels can expand their frameworks for understanding Latino men while also providing their students with new sources of inspiration that showcase the diversity in the experience of being a Latino.

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## *Philosophy for Children and the Legacy of Anti-Mexican Discrimination in El Paso Schools*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands Program was initiated in September 2014 with the opening of a weekly children’s philosophy class at Rayito de Sol Daycare and Learning Center in El Paso, Texas. Rayito de Sol is part of the independent Chicana organization La Mujer Obrera, which is “dedicated to creating communities defined by women.”<sup>1</sup> Since then, the program has grown to also serve a number of community partners in El Paso: Aliviane, Inc., an organization that “provides prevention, intervention and treatment programs in the areas of substance abuse, behavioral health, HIV services, homelessness and education,”<sup>2</sup> Austin High School (of the El Paso School District), and a YWCA Early Learning Center of the El Paso Del Norte Region.

Like other established Philosophy for Children outreach programs, such as the University of Washington Center for Philosophy for Children and Teaching Children Philosophy, the program is partially run through a university class—taught, in this case, at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)—through which students receive in-class training in Philosophy for Children teaching techniques, and then go out into the community to practice and “apply” what they have learned. When this course is not officially offered, the program is run in a more “grassroots” fashion by a team of volunteers, most of whom are students at UTEP. Like the Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative, which operates in Oaxaca City, Mexico,<sup>3</sup> one of the main goals of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program is to explore the ways in which the local sociopolitical, linguistic, and historical context impacts how the Philosophy for Children classes are and should be approached and taught.

In this spirit, we explore, in this paper, the historical forces that shape the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program. In so doing, we place particular emphasis on the history of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in El Paso K–12 public schools. So-called “Mexican schools” in El Paso, we shall argue, have been sites of significant anti-Mexican discrimination as well as objects of important local acts of political resistance. Engaging this complicated history, we argue that the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program does not operate in a vacuum; it is compelled to respond to the legacy of anti-Mexican discrimination in El Paso schools. In highlighting the ways in which this program is shaped (and strives to be shaped) by local acts of resistance to anti-Mexican discrimination in the school system, we hope to articulate new ways in which Philosophy for Children practioners can engage in a “placed-based



philosophy" that may benefit children of social groups that are underrepresented in academic philosophy, such as Latin Americans, Latin@s, and Chican@s.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to beginning, we believe that we should identify ourselves as authors and explain our relationship to the issues under consideration, for neither of us is "neutral" with regard to these issues. Yolanda Chávez Leyva was born and raised on the border and attended first through twelfth grades in El Paso's public schools. Policies such as the "no Spanish" rule greatly affected Leyva's family, who went to school on the city's south side. In addition, the stories told by her father and mother (who attended school through third and sixth grades, respectively) led to her interest in the history of border childhood and the inter-generational effects of unequal educational opportunities. Amy Reed-Sandoval is not an El Paso native; she grew up in Pennsylvania and moved to the El Paso del Norte region two years ago. She is the founding director of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program, and writes from this perspective.

Let us now turn to the complicated history of anti-Mexican discrimination in El Paso schools.

## II. MEXICAN AMERICANS AND EL PASO SCHOOLS

Mexican Americans have long fought for equal education in the face of a system that considered them second-class citizens. Poverty, segregated schools, and punitive language policies shaped the educational experiences and identities of ethnic Mexican children on the border and throughout the Southwest.<sup>5</sup> In response to these severe conditions, Mexican-American parents, students, and civil rights organizations fought to create equitable educational opportunities. For decades, the El Paso school district intentionally maintained unequal facilities for Mexican students, as determined in a 1970s class action suit. Yet, from the very beginning of public schools, parents worked to provide education to their children. In El Paso, the efforts began in the 1880s when a group of Mexican parents met to create a school for their children in El Paso's south side. Almost a century later, in the early 1970s, parents and students organized to transform high school and university opportunities for Mexican-American students. The history of Mexican Americans and education along the border has been one of disparity and the fight for equality.

In 1922, educational expert Paul W. Horn asked, "Is it right or wrong for the administration of the school system of El Paso to keep in its mind this idea of two different cities, 'North of the tracks' and 'South of the tracks'?"<sup>6</sup> He had reason to ask that pointed question. The schools diverged in resources, classes, and even the number of classroom hours children received. By the 1920s, ethnic Mexican students received fewer daily hours of education than Euroamerican students and, as occurred across the Southwest, received training to prepare them for manual and domestic work.<sup>7</sup> From the earliest years of El Paso's public school system in the 1880s, individual schools were characterized as "Mexican" or "American." The "Mexican district" was located south of the railroad tracks in the ethnic Mexican neighborhoods,

particularly Chihuahuita, El Segundo Barrio (or Second Ward), and later in what was known as east El Paso (now part of South Central). These barrios were the most densely populated neighborhoods in El Paso in the early twentieth century, and served as home to the lowest paid workers and their families.

Residentially segregated in low-rent areas located near their work, Mexicans suffered exploitation by landlords and neglect by the city. Living in crowded tenements in El Segundo, Mexican families shared one or two bathrooms, often lacked heat, and lived with unpaved streets. These conditions lasted throughout 1960s and 1970s. Juan Hernandez, born in El Paso in 1954, grew up in El Segundo Barrio. He remembered,

We used to have a three-room apartment with the toilets outside, and about 50 people shared the toilets out there. When we were small, I remember I used to sleep with my sister because we only had three beds: one for my parents, one for my three sisters, and one for me and my little sisters. We used to sleep in the kitchen right next to the sink, and it used to drip all the time.<sup>8</sup>

Even today, El Segundo Barrio remains densely populated and represents one of the poorest ZIP Codes in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

Because the Mexican population lived in segregated neighborhoods, their schools were also segregated. At the beginning, however, Mexican-origin children were excluded. The El Paso school district opened its first school in 1883, two years after the arrival of the railroads that brought a large migration of Euroamericans to the city. The schools enrolled only children who could speak English, eliminating the possibility for Mexican children. Although a contemporaneous census showed 100 Mexican children in the city, the school census did not reveal even one child with a Spanish surname.<sup>10</sup> When the Spaniard Olivas Aoy, former Franciscan seminarian turned Mormon missionary, arrived in El Paso on his way to Mexico in 1887, he observed the great need for education among Mexican children. Joining with a group of Mexican parents, Aoy founded what would be later named the Mexican Preparatory School following its incorporation into the school district in 1888. Aoy funded the school through his own resources, including money he had received for his part in translating and publishing a Spanish translation of *The Book of Mormon*. When Aoy died in 1895, the school remained part of the district as the first "Mexican school" in El Paso. By 1900, the Mexican Preparatory School (later renamed Aoy Elementary) had the highest enrollment of any school in the city.<sup>11</sup>

In the following years, a number of other "Mexican schools" were built as the population grew and expanded to new barrios. By the 1910s, a new Mexican barrio emerged to the east, along the river. To serve that area, the district built Beall School in 1918. A 1928 booklet published by the school district described Beall as a school for Mexican pupils, "usually overcrowded."<sup>12</sup> The Mexican schools were almost always "overcrowded" and had the highest enrollments of schools in El Paso. In the 1920s, the school district dealt

with this overcrowding by scheduling double-sessions in the Mexican schools so that some students attended in the morning and others in the afternoon. In the "American schools," students received a regular full day of classes.

Throughout the twentieth century, ethnic Mexican children comprised the largest number of school children, yet school enrollment did not always reflect these demographics. The enrollment of Mexican children declined dramatically in the higher grades. Horn's 1922 *Survey of the City Schools of El Paso, Texas* demonstrated. In the first and second grades, Mexican-origin children comprised between 61 percent and 74 percent of the student population. Beginning in third grade, the number declined. By seventh grade, Mexican children represented less than 25 percent of children enrolled in El Paso's schools.<sup>13</sup> Nationally, this pattern was evident as well, and it remained true for decades. For example, the 1950 Census revealed that the median level of education for white individuals over 25 years old was 10.3 years, while the median for Spanish-surnamed individuals was 3.5 years. In addition, over a quarter of Spanish-surnamed individuals over 25 had no formal education at all.<sup>14</sup>

In 1922, Horn attributed the declining enrollment of ethnic Mexican children to "the handicaps of an unfamiliar language, poverty and other matters of heritage."<sup>15</sup> Yet heritage had not prohibited children from attending school in the earlier years. Poverty, however, had profound effects on children's educational opportunities. Despite child labor and compulsory school attendance laws passed by the Texas state legislature in the 1910s, great numbers of Mexican children left school to work in order to help support their families. The low wages of the adults meant that children's work was crucial to family survival. Geronimo Ruacho, who attended Beall School in the 1910s, dropped out in third grade in order to help support his family. In a 1978 interview he recalled,

empecé ir a la escuela, a la Beall School. Hay estuve yendo como unos tres años, nada más. Porque en ese tiempo había mucha necesidad y todo. Y mi mamá nos sacó de escuela. 'Tienes que trabajar para ayuda a la familia a sostenerse.' Y me puse a trabajar en la lechería de ayudante, a la edad de siete años, ocho años. Andaba ayudándoles a los lecheros a repartir la leche.<sup>16</sup>

The limited educational and employment opportunities of the adults, more than Mexican culture, pushed ethnic Mexican children out of school at an early age.

Just as segregated schools and poverty shaped children's experience, language policies that punished students for speaking Spanish helped mold Mexican Americans' identity, and even their sense of self-worth. From the earliest years of the school district through the twentieth century, many educators viewed Spanish as an inferior language, undermining the schools' Americanization efforts, and serving as a deterrent to learning. Even the legendary educator Olivias Aoy told a reporter in the summer of 1887, "As long as the Mexican can speak only Spanish, he continues to be a Mexican. Teach him English

and at once he begins to be an American. He takes interest in American ideas and customs. The English language is the great civilizer."<sup>17</sup>

As in other schools with large Mexican American populations across the Southwest, El Paso's schools adopted a no-Spanish speaking policy for ethnic Mexican children. Students were corporally punished, humiliated, and even fined for speaking Spanish on school grounds. A. H. Hughley, who served as the superintendent of schools from 1919 to 1951, endorsed the policy, which lasted until the 1970s. A 1918 Texas law that made English the language of instruction laid the foundation for a system that prohibited Spanish on school grounds in schools with predominantly Mexican-American student bodies. Ironically, El Paso's school promoted Spanish-language classes in the "American schools" with the assumption that Euroamericans would be employers of Spanish-speaking workers.

Raul Ruiz, who attended a central El Paso elementary school, remembered the school's response to students speaking Spanish. "We were punished for speaking Spanish, including corporal punishment. . . . In some cases, the principal would administer corporal punishment, such as paddling us. Or he would send us to the coach who would spank us, swat us, or hit us on the head with the big ring that he wore."<sup>18</sup> For generations of El Paso students, these incidents had traumatic and long-lasting effects.

In its 1972 report, *The Excluded Students: Educational Practices Affecting Mexican Americans in the Southwest*, the United States Commission on Civil Rights reported that children were fined, had to write "I must not speak Spanish," and other humiliating punishments as late as the 1970s.<sup>19</sup> They also found that teachers frequently believed that speaking Spanish was a sign of lower intelligence. In fact, the report quoted scholar and activist George I. Sanchez who observed, "In practice, Mexican American children are frequently relegated to classes for the Educable Mentally Retarded simply because many teachers equate linguistic ability with intellectual ability. In California, Mexican Americans account for more than 40 percent of the so-called mentally retarded."<sup>20</sup>

Hector Bencomo, who served two terms on the city council, recalled his days as a student in El Paso schools. Remembering that children spoke Spanish at home, but were not allowed to speak it at school, he told Richard Estrada in 1975,

It just didn't make any sense to me. And I think that it probably hurts the student. It gives you a complex. You kind of grow up thinking that speaking Spanish is really a bad thing instead of something to be proud of. The fact that you spoke Spanish was kind of like a sin or something. It leaves quite a deep scar.<sup>21</sup>

The scars were emotional and physical as well.

The prohibition against speaking Spanish at school caught bilingual children in a painful dilemma. Facing continual attacks on their language and culture, ethnic Mexicans

policed each other to ensure they maintained their Mexican culture and identity. Bowie High School teacher Lucile Prim Jackson saw firsthand what segregated schools, harsh language policies, and cultural defensiveness could do to children's identity. In her 1938 M.A. thesis, Jackson wrote that students were ashamed to speak English for fear of being ridiculed by other students who accused them of "trying to forget they are Mexicans and become 'gringos.'"<sup>22</sup> Their intelligence questioned by school administrators and teachers because of their Spanish, and their Mexican identity questioned by their peers for speaking English, students were in a no-win situation.

Texas had the highest percentage of schools that discouraged the use of Spanish on school grounds, according to the Civil Rights Commission's 1972 findings. Almost 41 percent of elementary schools and 34 percent of secondary schools "discouraged" Spanish on school grounds. The numbers were higher for in-class policies where 66 percent of elementary schools and 67 percent of secondary schools had the no-Spanish rules described earlier. Arizona, which came in as the second highest state, prohibited Spanish in less than 12 percent of their elementary and secondary schools.<sup>23</sup> No school principals or staff admitted to using corporal punishment on students speaking Spanish, instead reporting that they simply "corrected" students. One El Paso principal, however, did mention the existence of "Spanish detention class."<sup>24</sup>

Despite segregated schools, poverty, and language policies that traumatized Spanish-speaking students, Mexican-American students slowly moved into high school. Bowie elementary school, which had been built in El Segundo in 1923, was converted to a high school in 1927 when additional grades were added. For students living in eastern South Central, however, there existed no school in their neighborhood. In the 1940s, youth living in the eastern part of South Central attended El Paso High School, an hour-and-a-half walk each way from their neighborhood. Some students walked downtown and then took a city bus to the high school. In the 1940s, a group of parents, including Maxine Silva, Francisco G. Villa, and his wife, Luz Hernandez Villa, organized to get a high school in their barrio. Responding to the parents' demands, the school district built Jefferson High School in 1947. It initially shared a campus with Burseson, another "Mexican school." Over the next few years, the Villas witnessed their children's graduation from Jefferson, and they remained lifelong members of the Jefferson PTA. "La Jeff," along with "La Bowie," became the iconic Mexican-American high schools in El Paso.<sup>25</sup>

In 1970, a group of parents filed a lawsuit against the El Paso Independent School District in *Alvarado v. EPISD*. Represented by the Mexican American Legal Defense Educational Fund (MALDEF) and attorney Albert Armendariz, Sr., parents claimed that EPISD's policies created segregation of Mexican-American students and that the EPISD provided inferior facilities for Mexican-American students.<sup>26</sup> The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas found that historically, EPISD had "intentionally maintained inferior facilities for Mexican-American students." The court also found evidence of segregation in the failure of the school

district to promote Mexican Americans to higher positions, that school boundaries were gerrymandered in order to maintain Mexican schools, and that school resources were unequally distributed. The court also found that in 1961, EPISD had "abandoned" intentionally maintaining inferior facilities for Mexican Americans. The inferior facilities had included limited funding, poor building maintenance, overcrowded facilities, inadequate playgrounds, and poor lighting.<sup>27</sup>

The 1970s also witnessed activism among college students attending the University of Texas at El Paso in growing numbers. UTEP students joined MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), formed in 1969, one of the most important student groups coming out of the Chicano movement. The Chicano movement at UTEP emerged from the community, particularly El Segundo Barrio. Wanting more Mexican-American faculty (at the time there was one) and staff, as well as the expansion of Chicano studies, and meeting resistance on the part of the university's administration, students took over the administration building in 1971. Over 3,000 UTEP Chicano students and supporters protested the lack of support they experienced at UTEP. As a result of student organizing, the Teaching and Learning Center was created to tutor students, and Chicano studies came into being. Inspired by their older counterparts, Ysleta High School students began making similar demands in 1973 and staged three walkouts.

In 1987, LULAC and MALDEF worked together again, filing a class action lawsuit against the State of Texas in *LULAC et al. v. Richards et al.*, arguing that Texas discriminated against Mexican Americans in south Texas by providing inadequate funding. The ruling found that Texas did not discriminate, but did fail to create "first-class" colleges and universities. In response, the state legislature created the South Texas Initiative, which included UTEP, resulting in additional funding and the approval of Ph.D. programs, including the Borderlands History Ph.D. program at UTEP, approved in 1999.

For over a century, the Mexican-American community struggled for equal educational opportunities. There has been improvement, certainly, but more changes must come to ensure all students have access to quality education.

### III. PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN IN THE BORDERLANDS

As noted in the introduction, the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program does not operate in a vacuum; like all educational initiatives, it is shaped by local sociopolitical, linguistic, and historical forces. On the one hand, practitioners in the program search for ways to respond to the legacy of anti-Mexican discrimination in El Paso schools. On the other hand, the program clearly benefits from historical and ongoing acts of political resistance to this discrimination, as there tends to be considerable enthusiasm for the anti-authoritarianism and critical thinking that are frequently fostered in Philosophy for Children classes. In this section, we shall explore three ways in which the program both responds to and has been shaped by these forces in terms of teaching and local outreach.

First, the program is decidedly bilingual (or, perhaps more appropriately, *multilingual*), offering philosophical dialogues to children in Spanish, English, and Spanglish. We saw in the previous section that historically, in El Paso, ethnic Mexican children were both denied opportunities to speak Spanish at school and even punished for doing so. Even today, after such punitive “official discouragement” of Spanish-language use has ended, ethnic Mexican children who may prefer to speak Spanish are still required to “adapt” to the dominant English language at school, and may be labeled as “underperforming” students if they use Spanish or Spanglish on official tests and other written work. Responding to this legacy of linguistic discrimination, Philosophy for Children practitioners of the UTEP Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program engage in philosophical dialogues in the language or languages preferred by the children and families with whom they are working. This practice is, of course, made easier by the fact that UTEP is a Hispanic Serving Institution where many students speak Spanish and/or Spanglish.

Importantly, engaging in philosophical dialogue with children and youth in *both* Spanish and English (that is, using both languages in a single session) not only responds to local historical resistance to anti-Mexican linguistic discrimination, it also expands kids’ opportunities to engage philosophically. Bilingual Philosophy for Children, in this context, is therefore politically *and* philosophically valuable. At Rayito de Sol Daycare and Learning Center, bilingual children as young as three and four are engaging in philosophical dialogue while they are also developing their early vocabularies. Bilingual Philosophy for Children classes enable them to philosophize with the full linguistic “tool kit” they currently possess, which often contains a mixture of Spanish and English vocabulary words. This increases the philosophical engagement and output for bilingual children, who often negotiate a range of abstract concepts and phrases in their different languages.

In addition, bilingual Philosophy for Children classes can generate fresh, pedagogically valuable philosophical questions. For instance, teachers can ask their students *why* they chose to use a Spanish or English word to describe a particular feeling or idea, or *why* they have chosen to speak Spanish or English today (at Rayito de Sol, some children will choose to use Spanish one day, and then English the next day). This often inspires philosophical dialogue about whether Spanish and English words that are taken to mean the same thing *really do* mean the same thing. Bilingual children as young as three and four years old are, in fact, well-equipped to respond to such philosophical questions.

To be clear, bilingual Philosophy for Children classes are not merely an “extra” and “special” feature of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program. In fact, bilingual classes are required by some community partners who are committed to addressing the history of linguistic discrimination endured by ethnic Mexican children in El Paso schools. To ensure that Philosophy for Children teachers are equipped to perform this task, the program has developed a lending library that contains Spanish-language children’s books that are philosophically suggestive.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to using Spanish and Spanglish in Philosophy for Children classes, the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program also offers lesson plans that respond, in different ways, to the history and sociopolitical context of the Mexico-U.S. borderlands region (a history and context that has historically been marginalized in some El Paso schools). For example, middle school students at Aliviane, Inc., have devoted a number of sessions to discussing whether the Mexico-U.S. border that divides El Paso from Ciudad Juárez is morally acceptable and just. Many children and youth in the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program have family members in both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, and many want to discuss their experiences engaging in weekly border-crossings to visit family and friends. Some children and youth in the program have family members who work for U.S. immigration enforcement. Having a parent or family member who does such work may make a child or teenager more likely to support immigration restrictions, but it may also inspire children to raise questions about the ethics of police violence. In exploring these issues, the program does not endorse a particular position; it merely creates space for open dialogue about the issues that matter most to young people in El Paso.

Another technique that the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program employs to respond to the sociopolitical and historical context of the region is that of adapting popular Philosophy for Children lesson plans to “fit” that context. One example of this is the adaptation of the “Fair or Equal?” lesson plan offered by David Shapiro in *Plato Was Wrong! Footnotes on Philosophy for Young People*.<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of the lesson plan, Shapiro explains that Philosophy for Children facilitators/teachers should present kids with a bag of candy and ask them how they believe the candy should be distributed. This often compels kids to address the question of whether an “equal” distribution is a “fair” one. Then, the Philosophy for Children facilitator/teacher should give groups of students cards that list different jobs/professions related to a particular task. For instance, with regard to the “task” of running a restaurant, the individual jobs that get distributed to students include dessert chef, dishwasher, soup-maker, and sandwich-maker.<sup>30</sup> Students are then asked to explore whether it’s fair that the dishwasher only wash dishes in the restaurant (and never get to, say, act as the dessert chef), and whether or not everyone ought to participate at some point in the hard work of dishwashing.

This lesson plan has been adapted by the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands context such that it engages and reflects Chican@ history. At Rayito de Sol, this lesson plan is used to celebrate Cesar Chavez Day on March 31, with the goals of (1) discussing the history of the United Farm Workers Union, and then (2) exploring ongoing concerns about justice and fairness at work in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands. Rather than candy, the Philosophy for Children facilitators/instructors at Rayito de Sol distribute grapes to the three- and four-year-old kids in recognition of the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott of 1965–1970.<sup>31</sup>

To begin with, the facilitators distribute a clearly unequal amount of grapes to different kids. This inevitably leads



the kids to protest that the situation is not fair (note that this is later rectified by distributing the grapes equally). The facilitators then talk to the kids about the Delano Grape Strike and Boycott, all the while “checking in” to get their perspectives on that history. Third, the facilitators ask the kids to “color in” a picture of a farmworker to inspire them to discuss the nature of farm work itself. This inspires questions such as is farm work hard work? Is it unfair that some people always have to do harder work than others? Should all people have to do farm work? Fourth, the facilitators ask the kids to list a range of different jobs they can think of, and they then discuss whether it is fair that some people, and only some people, almost always have to do those jobs.

This adaptation enables children and facilitators to “access” some of the core philosophical questions about fairness and equality that Shapiro’s lesson plan is designed to explore. At the same time, it does so in a way that is relevant to lives, particular concerns, and historical context of many children and families in the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program. This responds to historical discrimination against ethnic Mexicans in El Paso schools, where Mexican, Mexican-American, and Chican@ histories have tended to be underrepresented and even marginalized in the classroom. Because of this, almost all of the Philosophy for Children lesson plans employed in the program are adapted to the local sociopolitical context.

The Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program also responds to the legacy of anti-Mexican discrimination in the schools, as well as resistance to that discrimination, by carefully choosing community partners that will facilitate this process. As mentioned previously, all of the current community partners with which the program collaborates are dedicated to the goals of empowering underserved, socioeconomically marginalized groups in El Paso.

For instance, Philosophy for Children facilitators/instructors at Aliviane, Inc., lead weekly philosophical discussions with children and youth whose mothers are going through a drug rehabilitation program. The children who participate in these classes appreciate the opportunity to have their voices heard with regard to questions of fairness, equality, and a host of other philosophical concerns. At Austin High School, UTEP students in the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program support a local high school teacher who developed a high school philosophy program despite lacking funding for textbooks and other “basic” resources.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have explored the history of anti-Mexican discrimination in El Paso schools in order to paint a picture, so to speak, of how the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program is influenced by the local histories in terms of outreach and pedagogy. The program is bilingual/multilingual, and it employs adapted lesson plans that respond to the local sociopolitical context. It also works exclusively with community partners that serve socioeconomically marginalized groups in El Paso. Hopefully, this will make a small but significant contribution to local efforts to empower El Paso children and youth to defend their rights in the fact of ongoing discrimination.

At the same time, local resistance to anti-Mexican discrimination in the schools continues to transpire, and this raises ongoing challenges for the program. For example, there is currently a movement to keep Beall Elementary School open (an aforementioned “Mexican School”) amidst rumors that it will soon be closed.<sup>32</sup> The Comité de Padres de Familia, which takes part in these efforts, is also questioning what a “model” or “community” school would look like in El Paso (and particularly at a “Mexican School” like Beall). The Comité has explored the idea of incorporating Philosophy for Children into a “model” “Mexican school.” In situations such as these, the burden is on Philosophy for Children practioners and academic philosophers to articulate and defend the value of philosophy itself to communities who are resisting various forms of discrimination.

#### NOTES

1. See “About Our Organization,” La Mujer Obrera, accessible at [www.mujerobrera.org](http://www.mujerobrera.org)
2. See “About Us” at the Aliviane, Inc. website, accessible at <http://www.aliviane.org/aboutus/aboutus.html>
3. For further information, see The Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative documentary (2014, Julia Reihs), accessible at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3HEjPff\\_20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3HEjPff_20)
4. For more on “place-based philosophy,” see Amy Reed-Sandoval, “The Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative as Place-Based Philosophy: Why Context Matters in Philosophy for Children,” in the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic and Latino Issues in Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 9–12, accessible at <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.apaonline.org/resource/collection/60044C96-F3E0-4049-BC5A-271C673FA1E5/HispanicV14n1.pdf>
5. The term “ethnic Mexican” refers to both Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born Mexican Americans. Through the 1930s, immigrants made up the majority of the Mexican origin population. By 1940, the demographics shifted and the majority of the ethnic Mexican population in the United States was U.S.-born.
6. Paul W. Horn was the superintendent of American Schools in Mexico City and had served as superintendent of the Houston schools as well. He was widely published on matters of education.
7. For decades, schools and the media used “Mexican” to refer to any Mexican-heritage person without reference to nationality or citizenship.
8. Juan Hernandez interviewed by Roberto Carrillo, March 18, 1976. UTEP Institute of Oral History, interview 218.
9. A 2008 report showed that its population was almost 17,000 persons per square mile compared to 2,700 for El Paso as a whole. The same study reported that in 2013, the household median income for El Segundo was \$13,000 compared with \$41,000 for the city as a whole. <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Segundo-Barrio-El-Paso-TX.html>
10. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fao01>
11. Mario T. Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880–1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 110–11.
12. The schools of El Paso: a booklet published by the El Paso City Schools for public information. Publication Information: [El Paso, Tex.]: El Paso Vocational School Printing Dept., El Paso City Schools, 1928.
13. Paul W. Horn, *Survey of the City Schools of El Paso, Texas* (El Paso: El Paso Public Schools, 1922, no. 1), 41.
14. V. Carl Allsup, “Delgado v. Bastrop ISD,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, available at <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jrd01>, accessed January 8, 2016. Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
15. Horn, *Survey of the City Schools of El Paso, Texas*, 41.
16. Gerónimo Leyva, interviewed by Yolanda Leyva, in “Son Cosas Que Pasan en la Vida Que se Acuerda Uno Como Un Sueño: Two



Oral Histories,” transcript, May 1978, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas.

17. “A Noble Work,” *El Paso Times*, June 23, 1887, p. 4.
18. Mario T. Garcia, *The Chicano Generation: Testimonios of the Movement* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2015), 22.
19. United States Commission on Civil Rights, *The Excluded Students: Educational Practices Affecting Mexican Americans in the Southwest*.
20. *The Excluded Students*, 13.
21. Interview with Hector Bencomo by Richard Estrada and Oscar J. Martinez, 1975. Interview 171. Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.
22. Lucile Prim Jackson, “An Analysis of the Language Difficulties of the Spanish-Speaking Children of the Bowie High School, El Paso, Texas” (M.A. Thesis, University of Texas, 1938).
23. *The Excluded Students*, 16.
24. *Ibid.*, 18.
25. Villa Family Oral History Project, courtesy of Cynthia T. Renteria.
26. Civil rights attorney Armendariz, who graduated from the Texas College of Mines after serving in the military in World War II and graduated from USC’s Law School, was one of the founders of MALDEF. In 1954, he argued the *Hernandez v. State of Texas* landmark case, representing the first time Mexican American attorneys had appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court and which resulted in the ruling that Mexican Americans had equal protection under the 14th amendment.
27. *Alvarado v. El Paso Indep. Sch. Dist., United States District Court for the Western District of Texas, El Paso Division*, December 23, 1976, accessed at [http://tx.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19761223\\_0000021.WTX.htm/qx](http://tx.findacase.com/research/wfrmDocViewer.aspx/xq/fac.19761223_0000021.WTX.htm/qx)
28. For a helpful set of Philosophy for Children lesson plans in Spanish, see the Spanish-language page at “Teaching Children Philosophy,” accessible at <http://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/Espa%C3%B1ol/Espa%C3%B1ol>. See also the website of the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program at <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=75257>
29. David Shapiro, *Plato Was Wrong! Footnotes on Philosophy for Young People* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2012), 140–43.
30. *Ibid.*, 141.
31. For further information, consult the United Farmworkers Union Website at [http://www.ufw.org/\\_board.php?mode=view&\\_code=cc\\_his\\_research&\\_no=10482](http://www.ufw.org/_board.php?mode=view&_code=cc_his_research&_no=10482)
32. See Luis Hernández, “Rechazan padres de familia posible cierre de la escuela Beall,” in *El Diario de El Paso*, available at [http://diario.mx/El\\_Paso/2016-04-07\\_3b0c87a6/rechazan-padres-de-familia-posible-cierre-de-escuela-beall/](http://diario.mx/El_Paso/2016-04-07_3b0c87a6/rechazan-padres-de-familia-posible-cierre-de-escuela-beall/)

to the present, must be taught in clear detail and to the letter, even if the archons of Greece are overlooked.” The Aztecs, Maya, and Incas (to name only the most well known but by no means the only “archons” of Martí’s America) represent the “Greece,” that is, the civilizational starting point, for Latin Americans. Martí famously identifies “Our America” with Latin America, self-consciously resisting the appropriation of “America” by the USA, “our formidable neighbor” and “Our America’s greatest danger.” In dramatic contrast with the visions advanced by other Latin Americans intellectuals such as Domingo Sarmiento, José Enrique Rodó, and José Vasconcelos, Martí’s vision, like José Carlos Mariátegui’s vision, of a future America includes indigenous peoples. The “American university” for Martí is not the Yankee university but the Latin American university, and he sees the study of the philosophies of the native peoples of Latin America as an essential component in Latin@ self-knowledge and self-decolonization as well as Latin@ autonomy and self-determination. The philosophy of the Aztecs may in addition have special interest for instructors and students who self-identity as Chican@ since Aztec philosophy offers them the opportunity to explore their self-identified Aztec roots and heritage in Aztlán, the mythical birthplace and homeland of the Aztecs before their subsequent migration to Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City, DF).<sup>2</sup>

Teaching the philosophy of the Aztecs (as well as other indigenous peoples) also provides instructors and students the occasion to reflect critically upon such notions as Latin@, Chican@, and Ladin@ identity, *Latinidad*, *mestizaje*, and indigeneity.<sup>3</sup> What’s more, and arguably more controversially, it provides instructors and students the opportunity to focus critically upon European imperialism and settler colonialism in Latin America as well as contemporary Latin American internal colonialism vis-à-vis native peoples, and *crioll@* and *mestizo@* racism towards and genocide against native peoples. After all, captured by the hemispheric sweep of Martí’s “our America” are contemporary indigenous peoples—Nahua, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aymara, Quechua, Mapuche, Huichol, and Guarani to name only a fraction—who have *not only* been historically excluded from the modern nation building projects of Martí’s “our America” *but at whose expense*—in terms of loss of life, land, culture, language, religion, and autonomy—these projects have been predicated—indigenous peoples who want no part of Martí’s “our America” and its attendant Latin@, Chican@, and Ladin@ identities.

It would appear, therefore, teaching and studying Aztec philosophy may be experienced as simultaneously decolonizing for Latin@s and Chican@s (vis-à-vis Europe and the USA) and while perpetuating of colonialism for indigenous peoples (vis-a-vis the *crioll@* and *mestizo@* elites who govern the nations of Latin America). It is, for example, simultaneously positive for Latin@s, Mexican-Americans, and Chican@s seeking to understand better their Aztec roots, their “Greece” as Martí puts it, while negative for the indigenous peoples of Mexico who continue to define themselves as “*macehualli*,” i.e., commoners born of *Anahuac* (the land now called “Mexico”) and whose ancestors were born of *Anahuac*; commoners who define

## Teaching Aztec (Mexica) Philosophy: Discussion and Syllabus

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Teaching the philosophy of the Aztecs (as well as other indigenous peoples of what is now called the “Americas” such as the Inca and Maya) is surely one way to engage Latin American/Latin@/Chican@ students in philosophy. Indeed, one can interpret José Martí’s (“*Nuestra America*” [“Our America”])<sup>1</sup> as calling for precisely this: “Our Greece must take priority over the Greece which is not ours. We need it more. The European university must bow to the American university. The history of America, from the Incas

themselves apart from the *criollo* and *mestizo* majority of Mexico, who often speak no Spanish, who trace no ancestors to Europe, and who continually endeavor to distance themselves from their *mestizo* neighbors—the latter’s part-native ancestry notwithstanding—whom they characterize as “*coyotes*,” i.e., as disrespectful, hurtful, ill-mannered, murderous, thieving, lying, and greedy. From this perspective, teaching a course in Aztec philosophy represents yet a further instance of *criollo* or *mestizo* cultural romanticization, appropriation, objectification, and/or imperialism.<sup>4</sup> However, even this is not clear-cut. It appears that such a course may be non-colonizing for native students (living in Latin American settler states or in the USA) if the course respectfully presents Aztec philosophy as an instance of what indigenous North American philosopher Anne Schulherr Waters calls “America’s heritage philosophy.”<sup>5</sup> And yet for other North American indigenous philosophers such as Thomas Norton-Smith, even this will not do.<sup>6</sup> Here, then, are issues of profound significance for discussion with students.

Teaching a course in Aztec philosophy offers both instructors and students the opportunity to *problematize* their understandings of philosophy as well as question the self-proclaimed Euro-American (Western) monopoly on philosophy.

For example, what is philosophy? Does it have an essence? Is philosophy to be defined in terms of its aims, method, subject matter, or origin? Moreover, how do we decide these issues? Who gets to define what philosophy is, and why? Whose definition counts? Whose standards govern such a discussion? Is writing a necessary condition of philosophizing, thus excluding in one fell swoop what we call oral cultures? Must all philosophy resemble ancient Greek or modern European philosophy? Must we find Aztec or Inca equivalents of Socrates, Hume, or Russell? Who advances as a legitimate such questions as “Can indigenous peoples do philosophy?” and why do they do so? For whom is this an issue, and why? What is at stake? Why does it matter whether we call Aztec cognitive practices “philosophy” or not? On the other hand, does calling them “philosophy” inevitably distort them and/or colonize them? If native cognitive practices fail to meet Western philosophy’s standards, is that a bad thing or good thing? Is it possible to see Aztec cognitive practices without the distorting lens of Western philosophical notions? Finally, can any of these issues be settled in a non-circular and non-ethnocentric way?<sup>7</sup>

Thoughtfully engaging with a native American philosophy such as Aztec philosophy also provides instructors and students with the opportunity to *problematize* basic Western philosophical categories such as ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, and aesthetics. Are these hard-and-fast, inviolable conceptual distinctions, or are they culturally specific and parochial distinctions? Are those who neglect to distinguish, say, ethics from epistemology guilty of some deep confusion, or are those who draw this distinction guilty of making a distinction where there is none to be made? How do we decide? What’s at stake?

This course likewise offers instructors and students the opportunity to *problematize* their understanding of religion. What is religion? Does it have an essence? Is belief in a god a necessary condition of being religious? Is pantheism a religion? Must all religions resemble Christianity? Moreover, what is the difference between philosophy and religion? Are they mutually exclusive? What does it matter whether or not we call Aztec cognitive practices “religious”? Is it possible to see Aztec practices without the distorting lens of Western religion notions? In a similar way this course *problematizes* basic Western religious notions such as deity, spirit, idol, ritual, worship, prayer, faith, belief, ritual, ceremony, sex/gender, the (putative) distinctions between sacred vs. profane supernatural vs. natural, and religious vs. secular. Are these necessary components of any religion? Is religion a matter of belief or a matter of practice?

Approaching Aztec philosophy also requires that we *problematize* Western anthropology’s conceptual toolbox: e.g., its notions of self, personhood, animism, ritual, magic, symbolism, myth, and perhaps most importantly, “human sacrifice.” Once again, is it possible to see Aztec cognitive and behavioral practices without the distorting lens of Western anthropological notions?

Finally, this course gives us the opportunity to *problematize* the European conquest itself. Can one separate history from self-aggrandizing European myth here? How do we adjudicate between indigenous and Spanish accounts of the conquest? And how do we now explain the conquest itself: in terms of superior European technology, its guns and steel; the hundreds of thousands of indigenous soldiers who fought alongside the Spaniards; the disease and famine wrought by the European invasion; a superior European practical savvy; a largely unchecked European willingness to commit mass genocide; or some combination of the above?<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, studying Aztec philosophy both inside and outside of the classroom provides instructors and students with a wealth of opportunities for personal, cultural, and philosophical self-reflection and self-understanding.

#### NOTES

1. José Martí, “Our America,” *La Revista Ilustrada*, January 1, 1891. [http://writing.upenn.edu/library/Marti\\_Jose\\_Our-America.html](http://writing.upenn.edu/library/Marti_Jose_Our-America.html) (accessed 5/15/16).
2. See Josefina Saldana-Portillo, “Who’s the Indian in Aztlan? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism, and Chicanismo from the Lacandon,” in *The Latin American Subaltern Studies Reader*, ed. Ilcana Rodriguez (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 402–23; Magnus Pharo Hansen and Kurlly Tlapoyawa, “Aztlan and Mexican Transnationalism: Language, Nation and History,” in *Changing World Language Map* (unpublished manuscript).
3. For a nuanced and up-to-date discussion of the complexities surrounding issues of Chicano v. Mexican American identity, see Robert Sánchez, “Chicano/a or Mexican American: A Philosophical Reflection” (manuscript).
4. For discussion of indigenous identity and indigenous attitudes towards *mestizo@s* in Mexico, see Ildelfonso Maya, “*Ixtlmatinij* [The Learned Ones],” in *Words of the True Peoples/Palabras de los Seres Verdaderos: Anthology of Contemporary Mexican Indigenous-Language Writers*, eds. Carlos Montemayor and Donald Frischman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 230–82; Doña Luz Jiménez, *Life and Death in Milpa Alta*, trans. and ed. Fernando Horcasitas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press,

1972); James M. Taggart, *Remembering Victoria: A Tragic Nahuatl Love Story* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007); Alan R. Sandstrom, *Corn is Our Blood* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); Alan R. Sandstrom, "Blood Sacrifice, Curing, and Ethnic Identity Among Contemporary Nahua of Northern Veracruz, Mexico," in *Ethnic Identity in Nahua Mesoamerica*, ed. Frances F. Berdan et al. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2008), 150–82; Alan R. Sandstrom, "The Weeping Baby and the Nahua Corn Spirit: The Human Body as Key Symbol in the Huasteca Veracruzana, Mexico," in *Mesoamerican Figurines: Small-Scale Indices of Large-Scale Social Phenomena*, ed. Christina T. Halperin et al. (Gainesville: University of Florida, 2009), 261–96; Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, trans. Philip A. Dennis (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996). In the case of Guatemala, see I. Rigoberta Menchú: *An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, ed. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray and Ann Wright (London: Verso Books, 1984); and for the Andes, see Fausto Reinaga, *La revolución india* (La Paz, Bolivia: Edición Fundación Amáutica Fausto Reinaga, 2da edición 2000).

5. "Ontology Matters! A Review of *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, by James Maffie," *APA Newsletter on Indigenous Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 11–17.
6. Thomas Norton-Smith, "A Shawnee Reflection on Franz Wimmer's 'How Are Histories of Non-Western Philosophies Relevant to Intercultural Philosophizing?'" *Confluence: Online Journal of World Philosophies* 3 (2015): 88–91.
7. For discussion, see Miguel León-Portilla *Aztec Thought and Culture* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1963); Alejandro Santana, "Did the Aztecs Do philosophy?" *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2008): 2–9; Robert Bernasconi, "African Philosophy's Challenge to Continental Philosophy," in *Postcolonial African Philosopher: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwadi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 183–93; Walter D. Mignolo, "Philosophy and the Colonial Difference," in *Latin American Philosophy*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 80–86; Barry Hallen, "'Philosophy Doesn't Translate': Richard Rorty and Multiculturalism," *SAPINA* 8, no. 3 (1995): 1–42; James Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion* (Colorado University Press, 2014). For related discussion, see the recent op-ed piece and readers' comments addressing Jay L. Garfield and Bryan W. Van Norden, "If Philosophy Doesn't Diversify, Let's Call it What It Really Is," *New York Times*, May 11, 2016, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html?_r=1)
8. For discussion, see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, Joan Pinkham (trans.), Robin D. G. Kelly (intro) (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000); Camilla Townsend, "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June 2003): 659–87; Inga Clendinnen, "'Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty': Cortez and the Conquest of Mexico," *Representations* 33, Special Issue: The New World (Winter 1991): 65–100; Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, "'Aztec' 'auguries and memories of the conquest of Mexico,'" *Renaissance Studies* 6, No. 3/4 (September 1992): 287–305; Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); James Maffie, "'Guns and Steel Don't Commit Genocide, Mass Murderers Commit Genocide': The Missing Psychological Component in Explanations of the European Conquest of the Americas" (unpublished manuscript).

praxis, and ritual. The second examines various historical accounts of the conquest, both European and indigenous, as well as various contemporary Western explanations of the success of the conquest. Lastly, it examines Europeans' attempts to fit the indigenous peoples of the "New World" into their Biblically defined understanding of the world, as well as Europeans' philosophico-religious efforts to justify the initial conquest and continuing subjugation and enslavement of these peoples. Here we pay particular attention to the debate between Bartolomé de las Casas and Ginés de Sepúlveda in Valladolid, Spain, regarding the Christian moral-religious legitimacy of the conquest and subjugation of the indigenous peoples of the "Americas."

### REQUIRED TEXTS

(1) A general survey textbook on the Aztecs that provides broad background for the course. The following are all excellent:

Berdan, Frances F. *Aztec Archaeology and Ethnohistory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Aguilar-Moreno, Manuel. *Life in the Aztec World*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Carrasco, David, and Scott Sessions. *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth*, 2nd ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2011.

Smith, Michael E. *The Aztecs*, 3rd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 2012.

[In the course outlined below I just happen to use Carrasco & Sessions (C&S)]

(2) León-Portilla, Miguel. *Aztec Thought and Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

(3) Maffie, James. *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2014.

(4) León-Portilla, Miguel. *Aztec Thought and Culture*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

(5) Additional readings will be made available on ELMS/Blackboard.

### COURSE OUTLINE

#### (I) Conquest-era Mexica (Aztec) Philosophy

##### 1 session: Introduction to Course:

(a) The who, where, and when of the Aztecs (Mexico).

(b) Explore, discuss, and record for later discussion students' preconceptions of the Aztecs along with the origins of these preconceptions.

**1 session: Film: "The Five Suns"** What key themes of Mexica philosophy/religion are highlighted by the film?

**Required reading:** C&S, Ch. 1.

León-Portilla. *Aztec Thought & Culture*, Introduction.

## Aztec (Mexico) Philosophy Course Syllabus

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**Course Description:** The course is divided into three main areas. The first and largest area examines the philosophical-religious worldview, themes, and concepts of the Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs (Mexico) of central Mexico, with special attention to metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics,

**Assignment:** Write a short, 1- to 2-page paper that addresses: (1) What key themes of Mexica philosophy-religion are raised by the film "The Five Suns"? (2) How does the Mexica creation "myth" function prescriptively to tell the Mexica how they ought to live? Bring to following class for discussion.

**1 session: Class discussion: What key themes of Mexica philosophy does the film raise? How does the Mexica creation "myth" function prescriptively to tell the Mexica how they ought to live?**

**3 sessions: (a) Did the Aztecs do Philosophy? (b) Aztec Philosophy: Path-Oriented vs. Truth-Oriented?**

**Required reading:**

(a) León-Portilla. *Aztec Thought & Culture*, Ch. I.

Santana, Alejandro. "Did the Aztec Do Philosophy?" *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 8, no. 1 (2008): 2–9.

Maffie. *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, pp. 4–8.

Meyer, Leon M., and Tony Ramirez. "'Wakinyan Hotan' \* 'The Thunder Beings Call Out': The Inscrutability of Lakota/Dakota Metaphysics," in *From Our Eyes: Learning from Indigenous Peoples*, Sylvia O'Meara and Douglas A. West (eds.). Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996, pp. 89–105.

Hester, Jr., Thurman Lee, and Dennis McPherson. "The Euro-American Philosophical Tradition and its Ability to Examine Indigenous Philosophy," *Ayaangwaamizim: The International Journal of Indigenous Philosophy*, pp. 3–9.

(b) Sahagún, Bernardino de. *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana* (excerpts).

[e.g. excerpts reproduced in various places, including: León-Portilla, Miguel, and Earl Shores. *In The Language of Kings*. NY: Norton, 2001, pp. 316–23.

Maffie. "Double Mistaken Philosophical Identity in Sahagún's *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana*" *Divinatio*, pp. 63–95.

Maffie, "Colloquios Handout."

**Recommended:**

Tim Connolly. *Doing Philosophy Comparatively*. London: Bloomsbury 2015, chs. 1, 3.

**2 sessions: Is this philosophy or religion, neither, or both?**

Deloria, Jr., Vine. *God Is Red* (selections).

Tinker, George E. "Religion" in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, in Frederick E. Hoxie (ed). NY: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1996: 537–41.

Kidwell, Clara Sue, Homer Noley, and George E. Tinker. *A Native American Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002, pp. 1–12.

Allen, Paula Gunn. "The Sacred Hoop: A Contemporary Perspective," and "Something Sacred Going on out there," in *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986, pp. 54–75 and 102–17.

Weaver, Jace. "Preface," in Weaver. *Native American Religious Identity*, pp. ix-xiii.

Graham, Elizabeth. "Close Encounters," in Leslie G. Cecil and Timothy W. Pugh (eds), *Maya Worldviews at Conquest*, pp. 17–38.

Bilimoria, Purushottama. "What Is the 'Subaltern' of the Philosophy of Religion?"

Asad, Talal. "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category," in Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

**Discussion topics:** (a) Did the Aztecs do philosophy? Who defines philosophy? Who decides who does it and who doesn't? Is there an essence to philosophy? (b) Is there a distinction between philosophy and religion for the Aztecs? Does this matter? (c) Two conceptions of philosophy: truth-seeking and path-seeking.

**4 sessions: Aztec Metaphysics**

**Required reading:**

"*Legend of the Suns*," in John Bierhorst (trans), *The Codex Chimalpopoca: History and Mythology of the Aztecs*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), pp. 139–62.

Nicholson, H.B. "Religion in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico," in *Handbook of Middle America Indians*, vol. 10, Robert Wauchope et al (eds), Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971, pp. 395–46.

Maffie, *Aztec Philosophy*, chs. 1-3, 8.

... "Weaving the Cosmos: The Metaphysics of the 5th Era" <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/home/aztec-philosophy>

... "Aztec Study Guide" (bring to class).

Norton-Smith, Thomas. "Stories" in Norton-Smith, *Dance of Person & Place*, pp. 48–51.

C&S, Chs. 2 & 3.

**4 sessions: *Toltecatoytl*: the Mexica conception of the well-balanced human life, or how to Balance on the Slippery Earth (treats as seamless whole what Western philosophy categorizes as praxis, ethics, environmental ethics, social-political philosophy, ceremony/ritual, epistemology, and wisdom)**



**Required reading:**

Sahagún, Bernardino de, *Florentine Codex* (selections).

Book X: Ethics: virtuous and vicious kinds of people.

Book VI: *Machiotlatolli* (Figures of speech)

Book VI: *Tlatlatolli* (adages)

Book VI: *Huehuetlatolli*

"The Bancroft Dialogues" (Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart [eds], *The Art of Nahuatl Speech: The Bancroft Dialogues*, LA; UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1987): "Greeting of a woman who passes by the house of her relatives on the way to the market," and more ... (pp. 107–13); "How children were raised in the old days, the pagan times" (pp. 149–53); "Advice for eating with good-breeding" (pp. 194–95).

(Other sources including passages from the *Florentine Codex* and *Bancroft Dialogues* are:

León-Portilla, Miguel, and Earl Shores. *In The Language of Kings*. NY: Norton, 2001.

León-Portilla. *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.

Restall, Mathew, Lisa Sousa, and Kevin Terraciano (eds). *Mesoamerican Voices*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Burkhart, Louise M. *The Slippery Earth* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989: Chs. 3 & 4.

... "Nahua Moral Philosophy," *Mexicolore*. <http://www.mexicolore.co.uk/aztecs/home/nahua-moral-philosophy>

... "Mexica Women on the Home Front: Housework and Religion in Aztec Mexico," in *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, Susan Schroder and Stephanie Wood (eds). Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997, pp. 25–54.

Berdan, Frances. "Living on the edge in an ancient imperial world: Aztec crime and deviance," *Organized Crime in History*, London: Routledge, 2009: 20–34.

Maffie, "Flourishing on Earth: Nahua Philosophy in the Era of the Conquest," *The Nahua Newsletter* 40 (2005): 18–23. <http://www.nahuanewsletter.org/default.html>

... "The Centrality of Nепantla in Conquest-era Nahua Philosophy," *The Nahua Newsletter* 44 (2007): 11–31.

... "Toltecatoytl: Mexica Thinking about the well-Balanced Life" (manuscript)

... *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, "Conclusion."

... "Aztec Study Guide" (bring to class).

León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture*, Ch. IV.

León-Portilla. "Those Made Worthy by Sacrifice" in Miguel León-Portilla and Gary Gossen (eds.), *South and Mesoamerican Spirituality*. 1993, pp. 41–64.

Norton-Smith, Thomas. "The Semantic Potency of Performance." *The Dance of Person and Place*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2010: pp. 95–118.

C&S: Chs. 4, 5, 6.

**1 session: Flower and Song (in xochitl in cuicatl)**

**Required reading:**

*Cantares Mexicanos* and *Ballads of the Lords of New Spain* (selections): Selections are reproduced in various texts, including:

León-Portilla, Miguel, and Earl Shores. *In The Language of Kings*. NY: Norton, 2001.

León-Portilla. *Fifteen Poets of the Aztec World*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.

León-Portilla. *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.

C&S: ch. 6

**1 session: Art: Beyond symbolism and representation**

**Required reading:**

Richard Townsend. "The Renewal of Nature at the Temple of Tlaloc."

Felipe Solís Olguín. "The Art of the Aztec Era," in *The Aztec World*, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman (eds). New York: Abrams, 2008, pp. 153–78.

León-Portilla, Ch. V.

Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, pp. 3–7; 69–71; 96–97; 121; 191.

Sillar, Bill. "Acts of God and Active Material Culture: Agency and Commitment in the Andes" in *Agency Uncovered: Archaeological Perspectives on Social Agency, Power, and Being Human*, Andrew Gardner (ed). London: Cavendish Publications, 2004, pp. 153–89.

C&S, ch. 6.

**1 session: Aztec codices**

**Required reading:**

Boone, Elizabeth. "Aztec Writing and History," in *The Aztec World*, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman (eds). New York: Abrams, 2008, pp. 179–94.

Digital copies of Aztec, Mixtec, and Maya codices are available online at <http://www.famsi.org/>

**2 sessions: Problematizing “Sacrifice”**

Sahagún. *Florentine Codex: Toxcatl; Tlacaxipehualiztli*.

Maffie. *Aztec Philosophy*, “Tlacaxipehualiztli,” pp. 297–307.

Berdan, Francis. *Aztec Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, pp. 236–44.

Read, Kay. “Sacrifice as Transformative Exchange,” in Kay Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos*, pp. 144–55.

Carrasco, David. “Give Me Some Skin: The Charisma of the Aztec Warrior” and “The Sacrifice of Women: The Hearts of Plants and Makers of War Games,” in David Carrasco, *City of Sacrifice*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.

... “Human Sacrifice/Debt Payments from the Aztec Point of View,” in David Carrasco (ed), *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*, Albuquerque, Univ of New Mexico Press, 2008, pp. 458–65.

... “The Exaggeration of Human Sacrifice,” in David Carrasco (ed), *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2008, pp. 439–47.

López Austin, Alfredo, and Leonardo López Luján. “Human Sacrifice,” in *The Aztec World*, Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman (eds). New York: Abrams, 2008, pp. 137–52.

Monaghan, John. “Sacrifice, Death and the Origins of Agriculture on the Codex Vienna,” *American Antiquity* 55, no. 3 (1990): 559–69.

Graulich, Michel. “Aztec Human Sacrifice as Expiation,” Jan n. Bremmer (ed). *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*, Leuven: Peeters, 2007, pp. 9–30.

C&S: Ch. 7.

**Recommended:**

Aimers, James J., and Elizabeth Graham. “Noble Savages and Savage Nobles: Gibson’s Apocalyptic View of the Maya,” *Latin American Antiquity* 18, no. 1 (2007): 105–106.

Graham, Elizabeth. *Maya Christians and their Churches in 16th Century Belize*, pp. 41–43.

Alexander, Caroline. “If It Pleases the Gods: *The Parthenon Enigma*, by Joan Breton Connelly.” *New York Times Sunday Book Review*, 1/23/2014.

Robicsek, Francis, and Donald Hales. “Maya Heart Sacrifice: Cultural Perspective and Surgical Technique.”

**(II) Problematizing the Conquest**

**2 sessions:**

**Required reading:**

C&S: Ch. 8.

Townsend, Camila. “Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico,” *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (June, 2003): 659–87.

Clendinnen, Inga. “‘Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty’: Cortez and the Conquest of Mexico.” *Representations* 33, Special Issue: The New World (Winter 1991): 65–100.

Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. “‘Aztec’ Auguries and Memories of the Conquest of Mexico.” *Renaissance Studies* 6, no. 3/4 (September 1992): 287–305.

Restall, Matthew. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, chs. 1, 3, 7.

Carrasco, David. “Spaniards as Gods,” in David Carrasco (ed), *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2008, pp. 64–83.

Hassig, Ross. *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest*, chs. 9–11.

Sandra Cypess. “La Malinche as Palimpsest,” in David Carrasco (ed), *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo*. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2008, pp. 418–38.

Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*, Joan Pinkham (trans), Robin D. G. Kelly (intro), New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Maffie. “‘Guns and steel don’t commit genocide, mass murderers commit genocide’: the missing psychological component in explanations of the European conquest of the Americas” (manuscript).

**1 session:** Film: “Indigenous Always: The Legend of *La Malinche* and the Conquest of Mexico.”

**1 session:** Film: “*La Otra Conquista*.”

**1 session: Indigenous views of the conquest**

**Required reading**

Selections are reproduced in various texts, including:

León-Portilla, Miguel, and Earl Shores. *In The Language of Kings*, NY: Norton, 2001.

León-Portilla. *Pre-Columbian Literatures of Mexico*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969.

Lockhart, James (ed. and trans.). *We People Here: Nahuatl Accounts of the Conquest of Mexico*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1993.

León-Portilla, Miguel, (ed.), *Broken Spears: Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1962.

Restall, Mathew, Lisa Sousa, and Kevin Terraciano (eds). *Mesoamerican Voices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

**Recommended:**

Stephanie Wood. *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.

**1 session: "Writing back"**

Burkhart, Louise M. "The Amanuenses Have Appropriated the Text: Interpreting a Nahuatl Song of Santiago," in *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*, Brian Swan (ed.). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1992, pp. 339--55.

**(III) The Apologetics of Conquest**

**3 sessions: The European Conceptualizing of the Indigenous 'Other'; the Valladolid Controversy**

**Required reading:**

"The Requirement" (*El Requerimiento*), text available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Requerimiento>

Seed, Patricia. "The Requirement," in *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, ch. 3.

"The Bull Romanus Pontifex," (Nicholas V) 1455, text available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanus\\_Pontifex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanus_Pontifex)

Las Casas, Bartolomé. *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. London, Penguin Books, 1992: selections.

Sepúlveda, Juan Ginés de. "Prologue to the Members of the Congregation" (selections).

Las Casas, Bartolomé de. *In Defense of the Indians*, Stafford Poole (trans. & ed.). DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1992.

**Recommended:**

Williams, Robert. "The Perfect Instrument of Empire," from *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*, ch. 2.

Hanke, Lewis. *All Mankind Is One*.

... *Aristotle and the Americas*.

Keen, Benjamin. *The Aztec Image in Western Thought*, chs. 4 & 5.

**(IV) 1 session: Conclusion to Course**

Discussion: Revisit students' preconceptions about the Aztecs, as well as the origins of these preconceptions.

BOOK REVIEW

*Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Border*

Edward S. Casey and Mary Watkins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014).

Emma Velez

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

*Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Border*, by Edward Casey and Mary Watkins, is an important work on the topic of the border wall between Mexico and the United States and its far-reaching effects on the environment and those bodies that encounter it. A truly decolonial text, it serves as an invitation and solicitation to re-imagine the border, to Anglos and Mexicans alike. With their book Casey and Watkins open up a space to re-imagine the future at *La Frontera*, a future in which the healing of *la herida abierta*, the open wound, is possible.

Part I of *Up Against the Wall*, written by Edward Casey, begins with a philosophical reflection on *La Frontera* as edge, on the way it serves as both border and boundary. Theoretically and definitionally speaking, Casey writes that an edge is meant to "make clear where one thing, place, or person begins and another ends."<sup>1</sup> In the case of the border/boundary at *La Frontera*, these edges are intended to demarcate a certain place, two different nation states, and to differentiate these two places from one another. In spite of the interchangeability of the terms "border" and "boundary" in our everyday vernacular, Casey seeks to tease out and identify the diverse origins of the two terms as well as their different modes of realization. Under his analysis, a border acts as a "clearly and crisply delineated entity" with distinctly human origins.<sup>2</sup> A boundary, on the other hand, does not exhibit the same precise sense of demarcation. Rather, boundaries are characterized by their porosity. It is these two very different destinies that we are given the opportunity to explore in light of Casey's careful distinctions.

These manifestations of the wall as border and boundary are thrown into relief by the story of Ambos Nogales. The chapter on these two cities, the book's second, takes the twoness of the border as its theme. This theme of two'ing is woven throughout Casey and Watkins' text, from its construction—it's two authors, two parts, two postludes—to the very double character of its subject matter. This "tale of two cities" at Ambos Nogales reflects one story of many pairs of twin sister cities at the border. The text then moves to an investigation of the wall at Tijuana, the wall performs its function primarily as border in the way that Casey has defined it; this belonging-together quality, established using the example of Ambos Nogales, is vehemently denied. The fierceness of the wall in Tijuana does not remain an external edge, but works its way into the flesh, the lived body, of anybody that lives in its long shadow. It is the very nature of the lived body's flesh as "porous" and "pliable" that enables it to metabolize the external experience of the border wall, thereby rendering

it internal to the lives of the beings that live under its shadow.

As an alternative to this imposing relationship between the wall and the surrounding human and ecological communities that results from the wall's extreme indifference as border, Casey offers up the term "ecotone." The term, borrowed from ecology, offers a way to re-think and re-conceptualize the ways in which communities interact at *La Frontera*. As a site of mixing and intermingling, ecotonal edges help enrich our sense of *la mestiza* as theorized by those like Anzaldúa. As boundary, *La Frontera* becomes a "social ecotone," a site where two different cultural communities come together. As border, the wall resists the inherent breadth associated with ecotonal edges and instead of acting as a fecund site of generativity, the wall "splits an entire cultural complex right down its middle."<sup>3</sup> The wall does not allow for the open interval of space that difference requires. Rather than a hinge point joining two different communities, the wall is decidedly divisive, dirempting one community from another. But because Casey helps equip us with the knowledge of the ways borders and boundaries operate, we have the power to imagine an alternative.

Part II of *Up Against the Wall*, written by the text's second author, Mary Watkins, begins with a reflection on Watkins' own first encounter with the border wall at Friendship Park. She describes her first encounter with the wall as an unexpected and visceral assault. Rather than reflect on the material wall as Part I of the text does, Part II offers an examination of the wall in its metaphorical instantiations and the resulting psychological, relational, and political effects.

In order to begin to re-imagine the wall and borderline at *La Frontera*, Watkins maintains that we must first understand the historical contexts that birthed its construction. The wall at the U.S.-Mexico border encourages those inhabiting the American side to forget the not-so-long-ago past when these lands were not divided by man-made borders, to disappear the claim of the brown bodies that lived there first. This forgetting has dangerous consequences for relationships between Mexican and Anglo neighbors, for it is indeed "possible to live as an Anglo in Santa Barbara without thinking about these questions."<sup>4</sup> Recounting the systematic political and economic disenfranchisement of Mexicans, Watkins describes in detail the creation of an internal colony and ethnoracial caste system that governs Mexican-Anglo relations in the United States.

Through her analysis, the blatantly racist underpinnings of colonial power dynamics in the institutionalized acts of "Juan Crow Laws" are made stark. These institutionalized and racist laws are remarkably analogous to the Jim Crow laws of the South, under which being an undocumented immigrant is increasingly criminalized. Arizona SB 1070 and the increasing propensity to house undocumented immigrants in detention centers are paradigmatic examples. The proliferation of hateful rhetoric and hate crimes directed at Latino/as also serve as indicators of the ever-growing social exclusion and othering of Latino/as. This dispossession has obvious psychic consequences for Latino/as. Citing W. E. B. DuBois, Watkins recounts the

way in which being relegated to the position of Other in society generates a "double-consciousness" in the "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others."<sup>5</sup> This misrecognition, as Hegel and Watkins remind us, has consequences for the Master, too. For "It is not just Mexican migrants who are 'up against the wall'; Anglos are as well."<sup>6</sup>

In her chapter titled, "The Souls of Anglos," Watkins outlines the toll that the othering of Mexicans takes on the Anglo soul. At the outset of the text, our authors acknowledge their Anglo subject position and the ways in which they have been decentered from this position by their respective encounters with the wall. By reversing the gaze so often wielded by Anglo eyes, Watkins addresses the reality of feeling ashamed by finding oneself an active participant in systems of oppression and the recipient of the gains of white privilege. Embracing shame in this way, she outlines the ways in which we can begin to see the "possibilities for using this shame in a restorative manner."<sup>7</sup> But the restorative potential that the feeling of shame contains can only be actualized by an accompanying sense of responsibility that compels one to change long held behavioral patterns. Anglos must work to listen to and respect their Mexican neighbors, to develop their ability to "look both ways." The self that accompanies this new mode of being recognizes her deep interconnectivity with her neighbors. Only by mutually recognizing one another can we engage in a "politics of hospitality" to challenge the imposed limits of the border and begin to exercise our prophetic imaginations to create a new and shared future.

What would it take to heal *la herida abierta* at *La Frontera*? It is this thought experiment, an exercise in prophetic imagination, which our authors invite us to join in at the end of this text. The last two chapters of the book offer two ways in which this healing can begin to take place—through art and the creation of communities of hospitality. Both acts of creative resistance serve as what Watkins refers to as a "limit act," defined as "an act that both resists the imposition of destructive limits and creates anew in the face of them."<sup>8</sup> As limit act, border-wall art creates the circumstances necessary for transforming the wall's function as border working not just to offer alternative possibilities but also to actually create them. Whether performative or an installation, border-wall art reconfigures the way in which we interact with the wall.

But these creative acts of resistance are not enough to overturn the violence and oppression occurring still today at *La Frontera*. Indeed, as Casey reminds us, to attempt to straddle a border or boundary "is to take up a precarious position; eventually, one must go one way or another—you can teeter on either kind of edge for only so long."<sup>9</sup> We must attempt the impossible, to inhabit both shores at once, to use the "double vision" that has been cultivated in this text to act in order to engage in what Watkins and Casey describe as a "politics of hospitality." This hospitality is a decidedly Derridean one, and as such, like the ecotone, creates the circumstances under which difference and ambiguity thrive. We must embrace the opportunities that the ecotone at *La Frontera* offers to us for the cultivation of the fecund and creative power inherent at this ambiguous edge. And most importantly, we must remember that the



struggle at *La Frontera* is our reality still. In the words of the prophetic imaginer, Gloria Anzaldúa, we can envision a future where this struggle will cease and true integration will take place, but “in the meantime, *tenemos que hacerla lucha*.”<sup>10</sup> We have to do battle.

#### NOTES

1. Edward Casey and Mary Watkins. *Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 14.
2. *Ibid.*, 14.
3. *Ibid.*, 76.
4. *Ibid.*, 125.
5. *Ibid.*, 179.
6. *Ibid.*, 205.
7. *Ibid.*, 185.
8. *Ibid.*, 207.
9. *Ibid.*, 14.
10. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Austin, TX: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), 85.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Caroline T. Arruda** is assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso. Her current and future research sits at the intersection of ethics (both normative ethics and metaethics) and philosophy of action. In particular, she focuses on the relevance of conceptions of agency and intentional action for understanding the nature of our moral and political obligations to others. Her work has appeared in *Synthese*, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *Ethics*, and other journals. She is currently working on a monograph on practical reason tentatively entitled *Enriching Practical Reason*.

**Yolanda Chávez Leyva** was born and raised on the U.S.-Mexican border. She is the director of the Institute of Oral History and the Borderlands Public History Lab in the Department of History at UTEP, where she is an associate professor. She is co-founder, along with Dr. David Romo, of Museo Urbano. Her specialities are border, Mexican American, and public histories. She teaches graduate courses in public history. She has published articles on the border, identity, and childhood. She is also a published poet. She is revising a manuscript on the history of Mexican children in El Paso.

**Alex Madva** is assistant professor at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He works on philosophy of mind and cognitive science, philosophy of race and feminism, and applied ethics, with an emphasis on issues of prejudice and discrimination.

**Jim Maffie** earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University Michigan, Ann Arbor, and is currently senior lecturer in the Department of American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park. He specializes in Conquest-era Aztec or Mexica philosophy and studies broadly in Conquest-era and

contemporary indigenous philosophies of the Americas, comparative world philosophies, and philosophy of social science. He teaches courses in Aztec philosophy, Andean philosophy, indigenous philosophies of the Americas, world philosophies, Latin American and Caribbean philosophies, and Africana philosophy for the Departments of American Studies, Philosophy, and History, Latin American Studies Center, and Religious Studies Program. His first book, *Aztec Philosophy: Understanding a World in Motion*, reconstructs Aztec metaphysics at the time of the Conquest. His second book, now in progress and tentatively entitled, *Aztec Ethics: Balance and Reciprocity in a World in Motion*, reconstructs Aztec ethics and philosophy of life. He is co-editor of *Confluence: An Online Journal of World Philosophies*, and has published articles in *The Nahua Newsletter*, *The Inter-American Journal of Philosophy*, *The Blackwell Companion to Latin American Philosophy*, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, *Hypatia*, *Philosophical Studies*, *History of the Human Sciences*, *Ludis Vitalis*, and *Biology and Philosophy*.

**Eduardo Mendieta** is professor of philosophy at Penn State University, and associate director of the Rock Ethics Institute. He is the author of *The Adventures of Transcendental Philosophy* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) and *Global Fragments: Globalizations, Latinamericanisms, and Critical Theory* (SUNY Press, 2007). He is also co-editor with Jonathan VanAntwerpen of *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (Columbia University Press, 2011), and with Craig Calhoun and Jonathan VanAntwerpen of *Habermas and Religion* (Polity, 2013), and with Stuart Elden of *Reading Kant's Geography* (SUNY Press, 2011). He recently finished a book titled *The Philosophical Animal*, which will be published by SUNY Press in 2016 and he is presently co-editing with Amy Allen the Cambridge Habermas Lexicon.

**Abraham Monteros** is an undergraduate philosophy major at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is interested in political philosophy, philosophies of race and gender, and Latin American and Latin@ philosophy. He has served as a volunteer and research assistant for the Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands program since spring 2015.

**Mariana Ortega** is professor of philosophy at John Carroll University, University Heights, OH. Her main areas of research and interest are twentieth century continental philosophy, specifically Heideggerian phenomenology, Latina feminism, woman of color feminism, philosophy of race, Latin American feminism, and aesthetics. Her research focuses on questions of self and sociality, the question of identity, and visual representations of race. She has published articles in journals such as *Hypatia*, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, *Radical Philosophy Review*, *Critical Philosophy of Race* and *Contemporary Aesthetics*. She is co-editor with Linda Martín-Alcoff of the anthology *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader* (SUNY, 2009). In her monograph, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* (SUNY, 2016), she introduces the notion of multiplicitous, in-between selves in light of existential phenomenology and Latina feminisms. She is the founder and director of the Roundtable on Latina Feminism a forum dedicated to discussions of Latina and Latin American feminisms.

**Amy Reed-Sandoval** is an assistant professor of philosophy and affiliated faculty in the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso. Her work focus on issues of immigration justice, anti-Latin@ racism, Indigeneity, and Latin American philosophy. She is the founding director of two Philosophy for Children outreach programs: Philosophy for Children in the Borderlands, and The Oaxaca Philosophy for Children Initiative. Further information about her philosophical work can be accessed at <http://amyreedsandoval.com>

**Iván Sandoval-Cervantes** is visiting assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Texas at El Paso. He is cultural anthropologist who recently completed his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Oregon. He received his B.A. in anthropology from Universidad de las Americas, Puebla (Mexico), and M.A. in anthropology from the University of Oregon. Iván also holds an M.Sc. in philosophy of social science from London School of Economics and Political Science. His research analyzes the formation of femininity and masculinity in migration contexts, including transnational and internal forms of migration.

**Emma Velez** is currently pursuing doctoral study in philosophy at the Pennsylvania State University. She earned her MA in Philosophy from SUNY Stony Brook and her BA in Philosophy and Political Science with a minor in Economics from Oklahoma City University. Her philosophical interests include social and political philosophy, feminist theory (especially Latina feminisms), decolonial theory, as well as critical theory and hermeneutics. Her current research interests center around understanding how and why certain experiences, identities, and ways of speaking are considered valid while others are marginalized and disregarded, how these epistemic valuations limit political access, and how to construct an ameliorative politics that will further the project of democratization.