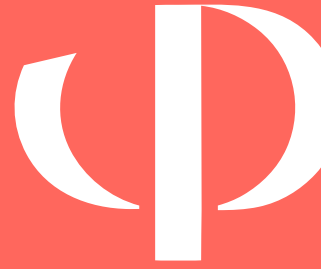


Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy



FALL 2025

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Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

VOLUME 25 | NUMBER 1 | FALL 2025

FROM THE EDITOR

Lori Gallegos

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

For decades, scholars—particularly Latina feminists and those who were part of the Chicano Movement—have done philosophical work focusing on the circumstances, concerns, experiences, statuses, or ways of being associated with Latinx people in the U.S. For the most part, academic philosophers paid little notice. It wasn't until roughly the turn of the century that U.S.-based academic philosophers began doing work that was explicitly framed in terms of its significance for U.S. Latinx people.¹ Since then, Latinx philosophy has quickly emerged as a distinctive area of research. This issue of *APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* is a testament to the growth that this area of philosophy has undergone in a matter of decades.

The issue opens with a report, written by Jesus Raya and Grecia Sánchez, about the Society for Mexican American Philosophy's (SMAP) first biannual summer institute at the University of Portland. The authors explain that the event was "nothing short of historic," because it was a "gathering of Mexican American philosophers whose work is actively redefining what philosophy is, who it is for, and why it matters." Their report offers readers an inside look at the ideas that were circulating at the institute, both in the academic talks and in the workshops. It also gives us a sense of what it was like to be a participant in the SMAP Summer Institute.

This issue of *APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* also includes an editors-meet-critics discussion about the recently published *Latinx Philosophy Reader*, edited by Lori Gallegos, Manuel Vargas, and Francisco Gallegos (Routledge, 2025). The volume includes thirty-five chapters, made up of previously published articles and three newly commissioned contributions. It aims to showcase display the breadth, distinctiveness, originality, and diversity of Latinx philosophy, and to do so in a way that is suitable for classroom use. The discussion of the volume includes three essays of commentary by Alexander Guerrero, Grant Silva, and Emma Velez, as well as a response from the editors.

NOTES

1. Manuel Vargas, "Latinx Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/ENTRIES/latinx/#SelfConsLatiPhil>, accessed July 14, 2025.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy is accepting contributions for the Spring 2026 issue. Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on that topic or on any topic related to Hispanic/Latinx thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as *meditaciones*, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

ARTICLES

All submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All essay 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. All articles undergo anonymous review.

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

The deadline for the spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15. The deadline for the fall issue is May 1. Authors should expect a decision by June 15. Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Lori Gallegos, at LoriGallegos@txstate.edu, Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Studies* 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.

ARTICLES

SMAP Summer Institute: Celebrating 10 Years of Encuentros and Engagement

Jesus Raya

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Grecia Sánchez

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

From June 6 to June 8, 2025, the Society for Mexican American Philosophy (SMAP) hosted its first biannual summer institute at the University of Portland. The motivation behind the SMAP Summer Institute was twofold. First, the SMAP Executive Board—consisting of Alejandro Santana, President; Manuela Alejandra Gomez, Vice President; Rocio Mercedes Alvarez, Secretary; and José Jorge Mendoza, Treasurer—recognized the need to provide a venue for practitioners of Mexican American philosophy, where early career individuals could present and receive feedback on their work from an audience already familiar with and invested in Mexican American philosophy. The SMAP Executive Board also felt that while there are programs already in place that directly or indirectly help Mexican Americans get into and succeed in philosophy graduate programs (e.g., PIKSI and Rutgers Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy), there are few, if any, programs that help Mexican Americans as they leave graduate school and prepare to enter the academic job market or after they have landed a job help them navigate the promotion process (e.g., get tenure). So a second aim of the SMAP Summer Institute is to connect early career philosophers both with each other and with potential mentors who can help them with professional development by offering advice, letting them know about opportunities, both formal and informal, that could help them with their careers, and perhaps in the future write tenure and promotion letters.

With these goals in mind, the institute was designed to have three parts. The first is traditional academic talks, where Mexican American philosophers can showcase their academic work. The second is workshops, where experts in certain areas relating to Mexican American philosophy can provide tutorials or overviews of how they produce their philosophical work (including translations, tips about pedagogy, and finding philosophy in non-traditional places). Finally, the SMAP Executive Board wanted to ensure there were built-in opportunities to build community and connect on a personal level. For this reason, the institute offered various opportunities for participants to have meals together, including an informal lunch discussion on the direction of the society. It used the final day of the institute to go on an excursion out to the Oregon coast. In what follows, we will not be able to summarize all the papers and workshops in great detail but instead provide an overview of some of the general themes and highlights from our shared time together.

DAY 1: ACADEMIC TALKS

We began the institute with a session on Mexican American

Philosophy featuring talks by Noell Birondo and José-Antonio Orosco. In his talk, “Questions and Strategies for Mexican American Philosophers: What Is Enlightenment? What Are Cultural Vices?” Birondo identified three central cultural vices: nationalist zeal, craving for novelty, and subaltern fervor. Nationalist zeal, he argued, reflects a constrained mode of thinking shaped by uncritical patriotism, potentially comforting but ultimately aligned with what he calls arrogant reason: an elitist, exclusionary mindset marked by condescension and disdain for marginalized perspectives. Birondo noted that the “headquarters of thought and power” (i.e., institutions like the academy, publishing houses, and others) often perpetuate these dynamics by systematically excluding non-dominant voices. The craving for novelty, he explained, manifests in the desire for originality at the expense of tradition or rootedness, while subaltern fervor reflects the anxiety of needing to belong, often by conforming to dominant standards. Both, he suggests, reveal the pressure Mexican American philosophers face to gain recognition from gatekeepers of arrogant reason.

Following Birondo was José-Antonio Orosco, whose talk, “Mexican American Philosophy Under the Latinx Futurism Imperative,” looked at three kinds of speculative fiction movements—including Afro-Futurism, Indigenous Futurism, and Latinx Futurism—to consider how and why we ought to bring the questions, knowledge, and themes present in science fiction into Latin American philosophy. With their themes laid out, Orosco left us all with a call to action: As Mexican American philosophers, we are *Mecachihua* or cord-weavers—philosophers who make connections between the past, present, and future. Our task, as *Mecachihua* Orosco explained, is to continue weaving these connections, using ancestral knowledge to imagine a liberatory future that differs drastically from the present we currently find ourselves in and subject to. In this way, both talks framed Mexican American philosophy as a practice that is simultaneously personal and sociopolitical, highlighting this approach to philosophy as a strength rather than an impediment. This session was truly the kind of opening that not only welcomes you into a space but also reorients you within it.

The next session was on Mexican Identity with Layla Mayorga and Emmanuel Carrillo. Layla Mayorga began the session by presenting her talk on “Nationality, Nationalism, and El Ser Mexicano Negativo.” She argued that José Revueltas offered a dialectical model of Mexican identity in which the process of becoming Mexican can be best understood as involving a double negation of identities undertaken for the sake of preserving the appearance of a unified identity. Mayorga explains the first negation as a rejection of one’s colonial identity and the second as the suppression of one’s Indigenous, diasporic, or transnational identities. With this laid out, Mayorga ultimately argued that Mexican identity consists of these layered negations that are undergone in order to fit into an externally constructed and state-sanctioned identity, or what she calls “El ser Mexicano Negativo.”

Drawing on Husserl’s phenomenology, particularly his concept of transcendental subjectivity and understanding

of personalistic attitude, Emmanuel Carrillo presented an original account of *Zozobra* as a form of affective orientation which he describes as reflecting an existential-phenomenological anxiety within Mexican society. His talk, "Zozobra, Mexican Identity, and Philosophy Itself," argued that this anxiety could be traced to two main sources. The first, he explained, could be traced from the perceived failure of Mexican philosophers to replicate or live up to European philosophical traditions. The second, Carrillo attributed to what he described as a lack of or an inarticulation of a life-world's meaning-making frameworks leading to social disintegration.

Both presenters for the session on Feminist Philosophy, Ana Sánchez and Arely Macías-Licon, explored *digna rabia*: a righteous anger rooted in feminist resistance. They argued for the philosophical value of dark moods, especially anger, as legitimate emotional responses to oppression. In her talk "When Virtues Oppress: Digna Rabia and the Role of Anger in Feminist Resistance," Ana proposed that anger be recognized as a virtue in philosophical discourse, with the power to foster dignity, community, and self-respect. Drawing from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Arely illustrated how rage can be transformative rather than destructive in her talk, "The 'Dark' Modes of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz." Her reading of Sor Juana's poetry highlighted how dark moods, such as anger and sorrow, are not only survivable but can also fuel reflection, resistance, and the creation of beauty in the form of poetry and art.

Next followed the session on Applied Mexican American Philosophy. In his talk, "Holistic Utopianism in Mexican Philosophy," Emiliano Salomón revisited Mexican philosophy through the lens of holistic utopianism, a framework that seeks unity through ideals contributing to the highest form of social organization. Drawing from figures like José Vasconcelos and Augusto Sierra, Salomón argued that the ultimate goal is not merely liberty or progress but aesthetics: the pursuit of beauty as our highest aim. In the same session, Grecia Sánchez presented her bilingual public philosophy project, (Un)Learning Filosofía in her talk "Introducing (Un)Learning Filosofía: Fronteriza Praxis, Communal Wisdom and Radical Reimaginings," which uses social media to reimagine what philosophy is and does. She called for a rooted, communal, and bilingual practice—one that invites us to unlearn inherited academic norms and return to the curiosity that first drew us to philosophy.

The session on Latin American and Mexican Identity featured talks from Ángel Sosa and Joel Alvarez. Ángel Sosa's talk on "Lo Mexicano como 'Lo Apasionado': una Tercera vía para Conformar la Identidad Mexicana" analyzed two common yet opposite extreme approaches to investigating the question of Mexican identity, including abstract universalism and culturalist particularism. Sosa argued that a plausible answer required a middle-ground approach, equipped with the strengths found in each approach without any of their pitfalls. The solution he proposed was to take an analogical approach. Using this approach, Sosa concluded that *lo Mexicano* is best understood in his words as a modality of the Hispanic, with its characteristics expressed through its passions.

In the same session, Joel Alvarez presented his talk, "Latin Philosophers as the Knight of Self: The Abraham-Agamemnon Paradigm and the Survival of Philosophy." Alvarez argued that many first-generation Latinx philosophers can be considered Kierkegaardian Knights of Faith, or what he calls a Knight of Self, given their devotion to philosophy. He further explained that these Knights of Self experience isolation manifesting in three important areas of their lives. The first is cultural, where their family and friends fail to understand the very thing they are devoted to. The second is intellectual, describing the disconnect that Latinx philosophers feel with the dominant Western ways of practicing philosophy. The third is the ideal or the feeling of not being recognized and valued as a "typical" philosopher. Despite these hardships, Alvarez argued that more Latinx philosophers ought to take up the call to become Knights of Self for the sake and survival of philosophy itself.

The first day of the institute concluded with a panel on Issues in Indigeneity featuring talks from James Maffie, Julio Covarrubias, Emily Cheyenne Evans, and Alejandro Santana. James Maffie began the panel with his talk, "The Huey Tzompantli as Cosmic Milli (Milpa): A Metaphysical Understanding." As the title suggests, Maffie proposed a metaphysical understanding of the Huey Tzompantli, one that comes not by asking what it is but rather what it does. Maffie's answer to this question was twofold. Specifically, he explained that the Huey Tzompantli, first, contributed to the reseeded of the cosmos with human skull-maize seeds and, second, that it contributed to the cosmic regeneration of maize. In this way, Maffie adds to traditional understandings of the famous tower of skulls, which is often depicted simply as a symbol of death, conquest, and glory, suggesting that the Huey Tzompantli was instead constructed to ensure both horticultural and human prosperity.

Following James Maffie was Julio Covarrubias, who, in his talk "Dilemma's of Mexican Mestizaje," posed the following question: Are ethnic Mexicans truly Indigenous, and if so, in what sense? In raising this question, Covarrubias exposed a dilemma that leads to a tragic outcome: the acceptance of the colonizer's world as reality. On the one hand, claiming indigeneity risks appropriating and erasing real Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, rejecting indigeneity amounts to a betrayal of our ancestral origins. For Covarrubias, naming this tension allows us to better distinguish between indigeneity, "Indian," and indigenismo as distinct frameworks.

Emily Cheyenne Evans's talk, "Relatability and Philosophical Value through Nepantla," centered on the concept of *Nepantla*—the Nahuatl word for "in-between" or "in the middle." The concept was popularized by Gloria Anzaldúa in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestizaje*, where she utilizes the term to describe the state of being in a liminal space between two cultures, identities, or worlds. Given the popularity of the concept—especially in areas such as Chicana/o/x studies and Mexican and Aztec philosophy, among others—Evans called for a clarification of the concept of *nepantla*. Without this clarity, Evans worried that the term can lead to conceptual confusion

or conceptual inflation for those who utilize and theorize about it.

Alejandro Santana's talk, "Danza Azteca and Embodied Metaphysics," was the perfect end to the first day as it served as a call to think about philosophy differently. He argued that the *saludo* or *permiso* in Danza Azteca should be recognized as embodied Mexica metaphysics. When understood this way, Danza Azteca becomes a restorative, reclamatory, and reaffirming act of embodied spiritual and philosophical resistance.

DAY 2: ACADEMIC TALKS

The session on the Borderlands kicked off day two of the institute, beginning with Mariana Alessandri's talk on "Broken Spanish." Alessandri's talk centered on the linguistic shame that often comes from being what is colloquially referred to as a "no sabo kid" or a person of Hispanic descent who either cannot speak Spanish or cannot speak it "well." Using personal stories and historical examples, Mariana Alessandri argued that there is nothing wrong with no sabo kids and that rather than internalizing the shame and guilt of not knowing Spanish, the blame would be more aptly aimed at the multigenerational oppression and trauma perpetrated by institutions which have for decades systematically denied individuals of the opportunities to utilize and pass down their mother tongues. Alessandri's talk was perhaps one of the most emotionally touching presentations of the institute. This was made evident during the Q&A portion, which generated many vulnerable and heartfelt discussions, with some confessing they had lived with these feelings of shame for years and others disclosing that they and their close ones had experienced the archaic punishments discussed by Alessandri firsthand simply for speaking in Spanish in primary school.

Mariana Alessandri's talk and the discussions that followed were the perfect transition for Alexander V. Stehn's talk, "Philosophizing in Tex-Mex: Bilingual Philosophy Courses in Paredes's "Greater Mexico," which reported on the fantastic work being done by the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Philosophy Department. With the help of a grant from the APA, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) currently offers a regular rotation of roughly a dozen Bilingual, Bicultural, and Biliterate (3B) Philosophy courses. These are philosophy courses where the class discussions, writing assignments, lectures, and tests can be done in English, Spanish, and/or a combination of the two (i.e., Spanglish or Tex-Mex). The purpose of this offering is to combat the institutionalization of linguistic shame and linguistic terrorism, as Alessandri referred to it in the talk prior, and to create a space where students can use any language they need to thrive. Given UTRGV's proximity to the Mexico border and its large Hispanic population, it may seem like UTRGV is uniquely positioned to offer such classes. However, Stehn urges that as Mexican American philosophers, we seriously consider implementing such approaches to doing and teaching philosophy, given the many personal, practical, and pedagogical benefits that have come from their findings.

Following this was a session on Mexican American Identity. In his paper, "Chicanx Triangulation: Distinct from Double

Consciousness?" Leonel Alvarez proposed a Chicane triangulation as a more flexible and accurate framework for understanding identity than Du Bois's double consciousness. Rather than seeking to overcome these layered identities, he argued that we should embrace them as central to our lived experience. Later in the session, Kayla Aceves presented her talk, "Narratives of Crisis and Identity in the Borderlands," which challenged the dominant narratives of a perpetual "border crisis." She examined how the overuse of the term shapes public perception and reviewed the case of Calexico's cartel violence alongside the historical impact of treaties like Guadalupe Hidalgo in constructing the idea of a border "always in crisis." Both talks encouraged us to reframe our understanding of identity, place, and political discourse.

The topics presented by Kayla Aceves—namely, the border and cartels—were followed through to the next session, which was on the State, Police, and Violence. The session began with Aubrial Harrington, who urged us to recognize the U.S.-Mexico border not merely as a physical barrier but also, and importantly, as a structure capable of excluding individuals from political, social, and economic spheres. In short, Harrington's talk, "The U.S.-Mexico Border as Structuring Exclusion and Inclusion: A Multidimensional Approach," argued that the border follows undocumented migrants regardless of how far they may be from their physical location. In doing so, Harrington gave us new ways of understanding the border and its more insidious functions.

Itzel Garcia followed the talk with her presentation titled, "Neither Criminals nor Insurgents: The Conceptual Challenge of Cartels." Her talk centered on the following question: What are cartels, and does liberal political philosophy have the conceptual terminology needed to classify them properly? Garcia's position was a resounding no, showing that cartels are not adequately classified as revolutionaries, rebels, secessionists, parastates, or criminals, given the complex and almost paradoxical ways in which they operate both within and against the state. By raising the unique example of cartels, Garcia issues an interesting challenge for liberal political theorists to either classify cartels squarely into an existing concept or revise current conceptual frameworks in order to better theorize about them.

José Manuel Cuéllar's presentation on "Repensar a Emilio Uranga: Tres Nuevas Publicaciones sobre su Crítica Literaria, su Filosofía y su Biografía" felt like stepping into Uranga's home due to its richness in detail, biography, and context. In this Book Review session, Cuéllar emphasized that to truly grasp a philosopher's thought, we must first understand their sociopolitical conditions. Situating Uranga within what is often called Mexico's "golden era" of philosophy, when philosophers were also public and presidential advisors, Cuéllar traced his journey from Dr. Gaos's classroom to founding Grupo Hiperión. Uranga's key contribution was reframing the question of Mexican identity through a phenomenological lens. Rather than asking what a Mexican is, he explored what it entails to be one, proposing phenomenology as a method for engaging existential questions grounded in lived, historical experience.

The final academic talks at the SMAP Institute came from the session on Indigeneity, which featured José Alfredo Ortiz-Angeles and Randall Rodriguez. José Alfredo Ortiz-Angeles's talk, "Theories of Plurality and Indigenous Thought," highlighted the virtues of pluriversal thinking, calling on theorists to adopt this critical framework and denounce universalism. Randall Rodriguez's talk, "Sahagún, Nahuatl Religious Beings, and Unintelligibility in the Wake of Colonialism," uncovered the ways in which Bernardino de Sahagún inaccurately depicted the foundations of Nahuatl religion and consequently rendered the cosmology unintelligible in his first book of the Florentine Codex. According to Rodriguez, this was so for two reasons. The first reason, he explained, is that Sahagún was working with Western concepts that were simply incompatible with Nahuatl concepts. The second was that Sahagún was driven by his own evangelical purposes.

This final session exemplified the realization of the goals that led to the founding of the first biannual SMAP Summer Institute, showing precisely why SMAP, its Summer Institute, and others like it are so important—especially for those in underrepresented subfields. The presenters gained a unique and coveted opportunity to benefit from the questions and comments of experts in their field present within the audience, like James Maffie and Alejandro Santana. Simultaneously, those present in the audience were able to benefit from the exposure to these talks as, for many, it was their first time being introduced to MesoAmerican and Indigenous philosophy.

WORKSHOPS

The SMAP Institute also ran a series of workshops with the main goal of informing us about the wonderful ways in which Mexican American philosophers have been creating community outside of SMAP and the ways in which they are engaging in philosophy in profoundly innovative ways, both within and outside of traditional academia. Most importantly, however, they were meant to invite us to join them.

With community-building at its heart, the SMAP Executive Board—Alejandro Santana, Manuela Alejandra Gomez, Rocio Mercedes Alvarez, and José Jorge Mendoza—hosted a workshop to share exciting updates and ways to stay connected after the summer institute. First, they informed us of the SMAP website, which was designed as a living resource for those looking to join, preserve, contribute, or donate to the society. The website can be found at <https://www.mexicanamericanphilosophy.org>. Attendees were also encouraged to follow SMAP on LinkedIn and Facebook—SMAP's official social media platforms—to keep up to date with SMAP events and calls for collaboration. The Executive Board also informed participants of the Virtual Speaker Series held every couple of months, which is meant to provide SMAP members and scholars with a space to share their work across borders. The Executive Board also warmly called for volunteers, providing those interested with ample opportunities to get involved with SMAP by putting our various skills, philosophical and nonphilosophical, to use. They explained that any and all help would be welcome, be it through website design, photography, signing up for the speaker series, and more.

Lastly, the workshop ended with a reminder that elections for the SMAP Executive Board are coming up this summer; an open door to shape what comes next and to continue the legacy this Executive Board graciously started.

The Mexican Philosophy Lab workshop was dynamic, engaging, and collaborative as Clinton Tolley, Emiliano Salomón, and Kayla Aceves introduced the Lab as a resource for philosophers focused on research, pedagogy, and community building. Their work includes collaborative reading groups, translation projects, curriculum design, and public-facing initiatives that expand the visibility of Mexican and Mexican American philosophy. The Lab also hosts social gatherings and research talks and maintains a website featuring archival materials and publications in progress. More than just a research hub, the Lab models a philosophy rooted in collaboration. Their invitation was clear: We are not just attendees of a summer institute; we are potential collaborators shaping this evolving field together.

In the Philosophy in Action workshop, Manuela Gomez presented "Teaching Philosophy: Practical Pedagogical Recommendations," chapter five from her book, *Intersecting Worlds in Mexican American Philosophy: Pedagogies from the Border*, forthcoming in 2026 by Bloomsbury. In her presentation, Gomez explored the epistemic authority of *dichos* and pedagogical *tranzas*, or creative strategies that transcend traditional educational practices. She explained how the *dicho* "el que no tranza, no avanza" could be used as a valuable pedagogical tool for students to express their philosophical ideas creatively. It was clear that her innovative and culturally informed approach to doing and teaching philosophy truly centers students lived experiences, honors their internal voices, and legitimizes their ways of knowing. When implemented, Gomez's pedagogy creates a space for authentic philosophical expression unconstrained by linguistic, academic, and even identity borders. We look forward to learning more from her book and implementing her strategies in our courses as soon as it comes out.

In the same workshop, Alejandro Santana invited us, during his talk, "Reflections on Mexican American Philosophy in Action," to recognize our hobbies, interests, and acts of service as meaningful extensions of our philosophical practice. These everyday activities, he argued, are not separate from philosophy but are embodied expressions rooted in who we are and how we move through the world. He emphasized that our teaching, scholarship, grant writing, and community engagement can all be enriched by staying connected to the things we love and the communities we serve—a call to action he has certainly lived by. Ultimately, he reminded us that philosophy isn't only found in texts; it lives in our daily actions, our passions, and the lives we choose to lead.

The institute's final workshop was a workshop on Immigration Ethics led by José Jorge Mendoza, Alex Sager, and Jesus Raya. This workshop began with a simple yet hard-hitting question: What would you consider to be three of the most pressing immigration-related issues today? The answers provided by the workshop participants were enough to cover three whiteboards. Seeing the long yet

nonexhaustive list confronted us with an important reality: immigration demands our philosophical attention now more than ever. For this reason, the workshop leaders left participants with two incredibly valuable resources for anyone interested in working in or teaching immigration ethics. This included a list of strategies for writing a publishable paper on immigration ethics, complete with examples of successful papers that have employed these strategies, and a reading list covering four important topics: the Open Borders Debate, Immigration and Discrimination, Refugees, and Proposals and Responses to Unauthorized Migration.

CONCLUSION

What we experienced during the SMAP Summer Institute was nothing short of historic. It was a gathering of Mexican American philosophers whose work is actively redefining what philosophy is, who it is for, and why it matters. This experience was truly an *encuentro*, where we demonstrated that we are here to contribute, challenge, and illuminate the gaps within philosophical discourses on existentialism, identity, migration, metaphysics, Indigeneity, the philosophy of action, and more. This was most evident during the keynote address given by David Carrasco, a renowned Mexican American scholar from Harvard University's Divinity School. During his keynote, titled "Waiting for the Dawn: Finding Aztlán in the Mirror of Philosophy," Carrasco spoke about Aztlán not only as a mythical and historical concept but also as something that resides within our community and among us. Throughout his talk, Carrasco urged us to continue taking care of one another, mentioning that community and caretaking, especially in moments of crisis, are defining characteristics of what it means to practice Mexican American philosophy.

Carrasco's words resonated both with the important academic work we are doing and with the bonds that we created and will carry with us for years to come. There is no more explicit manifestation of this caretaking than the work put in by the SMAP Executive Board for whom we are eternally grateful. For ten years, they have been hard at work turning what once began as *un sueño*, a dream and longing for an established community shared among friends during late-night conversations, into a reality that Mexican American philosophers now get to enjoy, preserve, and pay forward for years to come. The space and community offered by the SMAP Institute was a refreshing reminder that we are not alone despite how isolating academic philosophy can sometimes make us feel. Not only did they show that we are not alone, they ensured that we would always have a group of people who share similar experiences and who are willing to put in the work to make the next generation of Mexican American philosophers more welcome and supported in the field.

While gesturing to the whole group present at the institute, President of the SMAP executive Board, Alejandro Santana, put it this way: "We're in a utopia right here. The future is now, and we're here for it." What once felt like a distant, even impossible, future for many of us—a future where our work, our presence, and our ways of thinking would be taken seriously—was finally realized. We were not just included; we were centered. We experienced true

philosophical *encuentros* that were radical, joyful, and truly transformative. For this, we would like to extend a special thanks to the SMAP Executive Board—Alejandro Santana, Manuela Alejandra Gomez, Rocio Mercedes Alvarez, and José Jorge Mendoza—without whose dreams and dedication none of this could have been possible. We appreciate them and the legacy they created so carefully and lovingly which offered us something beyond intellectual engagement; it made us feel seen, heard, and at home—attributable, no doubt, to their conscientious decision to schedule moments where we could eat together, chat together, and go on an excursion together to the Oregon Coast. To the SMAP Executive Board, thank you for making history and for showing us through example what it means to do philosophy in community. Thank you as well to the University of Portland for hosting both several of our participants and our first biannual SMAP Summer Institute. We look forward to the Summer Institutes to come and to the future of our organization y familia.

Comments on The Latinx Philosophy Reader

Lori Gallegos, Manuel Vargas, Francisco Gallegos, eds. (Routledge, 2025). ISBN 9781032472874. Paperback \$43.99; Hardback \$152.00; eBook \$41.24.

Alex Guerrero

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK

The editors of *The Latinx Philosophy Reader* have put together a remarkable resource. It is not an overstatement to suggest that this volume will help to shape, define, and further solidify the standing of the subfield of Latinx Philosophy (as notably distinct from other nearby subfields such as Latin American Philosophy or Native American and Indigenous Philosophy). It will serve as an entry point for students, teachers, and researchers. It is a lot of work to put together such an extensive collection of material, and there are many choices involved in doing so. The editors have done a wonderful job in that regard, including an exciting mix of classics and more recent work, organizing and editing pieces thoughtfully, and explaining the choice points and choices along the way. This book will make it easier for people already teaching classes in the vicinity to do so, and it will be very helpful for those who would like to create and teach such classes, even if they are coming from far outside these topics.

In my comments, I will introduce three background aims that one might have in producing such a volume, and perhaps to "doing" Latinx Philosophy at all, and to consider how the book does with respect to those aims. I'm not sure that the editors (or the authors of the pieces included) have all or even any of these aims, but it seems reasonable to think that they might.

Unity: helping those who are Latinx, or who are likely to be classified as Latinx, to better understand their *common* and *shared* experiences, aims, and political

situation, perhaps with political or at least practical goals.

Reflection: helping those who are Latinx better understand their own experience, to see themselves reflected back in philosophical work that focuses on experiences that they can and do relate to, and to encourage individuals to engage in their own reflection on their identity, sense of self, history, and trajectory.

Invitation: helping to bring people who are currently outside of the Latinx world or Latinx experience, as well as outside of Latinx Philosophy, into thoughtful, extended engagement with it. This might be connected to bringing Latinx Philosophy into the “canon,” increasing common understanding of important ideas and texts in Latinx Philosophy, or helping people (who may or may not be Latinx) to a better understanding of Latinx identity and Latinx experiences.

I think it might be helpful to consider these aims as a way of thinking about what, if anything, might be missing or might be added to future editions (let there be many!), and as a way of noticing possible tensions that emerge in the book.

I. THE UNITY PROJECT

The book starts with this sentence: “Let’s get this out of the way: there is no single ideal label for the group whose name figures in the subject matter of this volume.” The editors make their choice but note that “any choice is fraught” and that they expect the preferred label “will likely continue to shift.” They also say that they are not “particularly interested in policing language use.”

Here’s why it’s hard to come up with a good name. We are trying to label something that isn’t really (right now) much of a group. The options are familiar, as are the possible problems:

Latinx: puts English first, elite, academic, can seem to foreground and take a stand on issues of identity and gender about which there is internal group conflict and difference

Hispanic: made ubiquitous because it is on the forms, right level of “eh” to it (it is nobody’s first commitment or dearest identity), but it can seem inaccurate in the details, and might seem to get the extension wrong

Latino/a: awkward, feels exclusionary to go back to something so binary

Latine: kind of fancy, pronunciation unclear

Behind these issues of the precise label, there are many dimensions of difference regarding the community of people who are in some sense “supposed” to be covered by a label and unified, including the following:

- whether they speak Spanish (or English): always, sometimes, rarely, never

- whether they are born in the United States, live here permanently, or live here temporarily
- legal status, immigration status, passport status
- racialization and passing as “White Non-Hispanic”: skin color, hair color, eye color, accent
- indigenous heritage and connections (extensive to nonexistent)
- education, class, occupation
- religion
- politics (the assumption of Democratic party membership)
- background place of origin (Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, Argentina, etc.)
- recency of family arrival

Parts One and Two of the book focus on the Latinx/Latina/o/Hispanic identity, taking up many of these issues of difference, definition, and categorization. Part One does so at a general level, considering the basic question of what is Latinx/Hispanic/etc. identity? Is it a racial category, relating to genetic ancestry and biology? Is it an ethnic category, having to do with culture, language, and other social practices? Is it some more complex thing, perhaps an ethno-racial combination, or something where history matters, but cultural history, not biological history? It includes classic work by Linda Martin Alcoff, Jorge Gracia, and Enrique Dussel that raise these questions, as well as an essay by Gertrude Gonzalez de Allen that complicates the issue by focusing on Afro-Latin identities, and an essay by Axel Barceló that provides a general framework for thinking about social identity categories as “habitable categories.” Dussel talks about the distinctive configuration of lived experience, the “complex identity with many overlapping stories” that constitutes the identity, however we decide to refer to it.

The work in this Part could easily be brought into classes on Philosophy of Race, social ontology, or general classes on social and political philosophy that engage questions of social identity. The Latinx case is a fascinating, puzzling one, usefully juxtaposed alongside debates about the metaphysics and philosophy of racial identities.

With Latinx identity, we might ask, and several of the authors do ask, what’s in a name? What’s behind the push to use a label like this, to draw together these overlapping stories and provide a name for them?

One natural thought: we are trying to create something that doesn’t (fully) exist, not just to aptly describe something that does. But why should we try to do this? One aspect of the Unity aim draws our attention to the way in which identities can be sites of political and social mobilization and organization. Alcoff, for example, is explicit in her essay that political and practical considerations run through these issues, not just metaphysical ones.

On a simple version of this Unity aim, one simply notices that there is strength in numbers. The larger the umbrella, the more protection from the rain. It might seem a necessary background condition for this to work that the people brought together are connected, feel connected, embrace the identity. But it also might be enough just that others will lump you together.

Speaking of the recent horrors involving Kilmar Abrego Garcia and many others, Representative Jim McGovern of Massachusetts wrote on Twitter/X,

Ask yourself—what’s going to stop the government from deporting you to a prison in El Salvador? How would you prove it’s an error if you don’t have due process? If it can happen to anyone, it can happen to you. The people get it. Either everyone has due process—or nobody does.¹

Of course, that doesn’t quite seem right. “If it can happen to anyone, it can happen to you.” But it isn’t just happening to anyone. Exactly who “it” might “happen” to isn’t the only reason to consider this kind of broad label as important and valuable, but it might be a reason, perhaps only as a way of naming a potential concern.

Here we see some of the potential grounds of political mobilization and organizing around the Latinx identity. And that might apply even if all are not equally likely to be targeted, even if many want to identify primarily and initially just as an individual.

This first aim of Unity might help us to see some of the motivation for the second aim, too, an aim that is less political and more personal. Latinx philosophy and the embrace and articulation of a Latinx identity might be helpful for people to better understand themselves and their place in the world.

Which brings us to...

II. REFLECTION

Reflection: helping those who are Latinx better understand their own experience, to see themselves reflected back in philosophical work that focuses on experiences that they can and do relate to, and to encourage individuals to engage in their own reflection on their identity, sense of self, history, and trajectory.

Several parts of the book can be seen as connecting centrally to this aim. For example, Part Two focuses on the idea of “mestizaje”—which the editors introduce as a “Latin American term for ‘mixedness.’” Connected also to the idea of “mestizo,” both refer to and engage questions relating to the complex genetic and cultural exchange between people of European and Indigenous descent. Beginning with a bit of non-Latinx Philosophy—the classic work of Jose Vasconcelos—Part Two also includes work by Jack Forbes that is critical of the role of “mestizo” in the legal and colonial order, as well as the powerful embrace of a new Mestiza consciousness captured in the work of

Gloria Anzaldúa. Work by Laura Pulido and Andrea Pitts engages in a more recent reconsideration of the complex relationship, with Pulido sounding a compelling note of caution regarding the displacement of Indigenous people by Latinx people in both academic and literal terms, and Pitts highlighting the genealogy and sometimes strategic use (and rejection) of a number of “mixed” concepts by Indigenous and Afro-diasporic communities advocating for their land, rights, and place in the Americas.

Reflection might be very useful to and potentially supportive of Unity, by helping to draw out and highlight commonalities and shared experiences.

But Reflection might also push against Unity: this bit doesn’t at all capture or reflect my experience; this difference between us fundamentally colors and alters our experience of the world; we aren’t all in this together, at least not in the same way. These are deep and difficult conversations and tensions, and I expect that they will remain a core part of “Latinx Philosophy” even as we in other ways aim for Unity. We shouldn’t expect agreement, or easy answers, nor should we aim to force consensus across disagreement. The volume does an admirable job drawing out and drawing attention to these issues, encouraging us to sit with them and experience them, rather than to race past them.

One challenge for the book is the extent to which it might be difficult, over time, for the authors and texts and topics included in the reader continue to support the aim of Reflection. There might be some difficulty in “keeping current” as issues of language, immigration, assimilation, class, racialization, sexuality, gender, religion, and much else change from one generation to the next. Some issues that were central in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s might feel distant and settled; new concerns and identities might emerge as the focal ones for the newest students and readers and researchers. Philosophy is slow moving. Perhaps eventually some multimedia, interactive elements could be created bringing more of-the-moment engagement with the book via online content, perhaps created by current and early career students and scholars.

III. INVITATION

I have a longstanding interest in bringing philosophical work from “neglected” traditions into the canon and into classrooms and scholarly conversation. A reader such as this one is very helpful to have as a resource. So a further aim for the reader follows:

Invitation: helping to bring people who are currently outside of the Latinx world or Latinx experience, as well as outside of Latinx Philosophy, into thoughtful, extended engagement with it. This might be connected to bringing Latinx Philosophy into the “canon,” increasing common understanding of important ideas and texts in Latinx Philosophy, or helping people (who may or may not be Latinx) to a better understanding of Latinx identity and Latinx experiences.

This aim might sit a bit more in tension with the other Unity and Reflection. One issue concerns the need to

provide more historical background and social context for “outsiders” to these experiences and topics. Perhaps a bit more context and history would be useful in introducing some of the issues and topics. Many readers will not have much knowledge of the history of immigration in the United States; the complex and distinctive histories of Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and the rest of Latin America; nor the various distinctive Latinx social and political movements in the United States. Although it is hard to say exactly what sociohistorical, legal, and political knowledge might be needed, that was one place where I could imagine teachers and researchers needing to supplement what was offered in the book in order to situate and contextualize some of the distinctive issues raised by, for example, Anzaldúa and Dussel.

Some (many of the most interested) readers will not need this—can consider their own experience, and that of their friends, family, community. But it might make it harder to welcome the non-Latinx to this philosophical work and to see the universal questions and interest approached by these philosophers: questions of identity, race, ethnicity, language culture, indigeneity, mestizaje and inter mixture. And there also is some danger of even Latinx readers feeling alienated because of what is assumed by way of background historical and social knowledge by some of the readings. I am personally always a fan of more editorial and contextual notes, particularly as we move further in time from some of the key historical references and events.

A final, related note on Invitation. The reader focuses on what might be described as the distinctive issues of Latinx Philosophy. This is exciting and important for bringing together some of the distinctive, focal concerns. But there is a question that arises, too, both for those within Latinx communities and those outside of them: Are there distinctive Latinx Philosophy answers to issues of general or universal philosophical interest? These issues get some discussion in the closing metaphilosophy section of the book (particularly the very last chapter, by Nelson Maldonado-Torres, which challenges this framing). But—in part because I think the answer to that question is obviously “yes”—I might have appreciated a few more explicit points of connection and explicit noting of these connections throughout the volume. How do these various philosophical contributions (and others, perhaps not included in this volume) contribute to age-old questions about knowledge, ethics, personal identity, language, justice, freedom, metaphysics? There are clear connections to be drawn, and powerfully distinctive new contributions to these questions from Latinx Philosophers, but I could imagine a philosopher from outside of Latinx Philosophy glancing at this volume while thinking about altering how they teach Philosophy 101 and not immediately seeing how they might bring in some of this work into their classroom. Of course, not every piece has to be suited to that aim, but it might be useful to consider this Invitation aim more in future editions, perhaps influencing both some of the editorial material but also perhaps some of what is included in the reader as part of Latinx Philosophy (even if not distinctively so).

Let me close by saying that these three editors, Lori Gallegos, Manuel Vargas, and Francisco Gallegos, have done philosophy a tremendous service in creating *The Latinx Philosophy Reader*, and Routledge is to be congratulated for supporting this volume. I look forward to using it regularly in my teaching, encouraging others to use it, and seeing many future editions.

NOTES

1. Rep. Jim McGovern (@RepMcGovern), “Ask yourself—what’s going to stop the government from deporting you to a prison in El Salvador? How would you prove it’s an error if you don’t have due process? If it can happen to anyone, it can happen to you. The people get it. Either everyone has due process—or nobody does.” X, April 15, 2025, <https://x.com/RepMcGovern/status/1912305435865915881>.

Towards a Non-Alienated Philosophical Practice? A Critical Review Essay on The Latinx Philosophy Reader

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Although there’s no universally accepted moniker by which one can refer to “Latinx” peoples, nor even consensus on whether such labels have any real value or meaning, that did not thwart the construction of *The Latinx Philosophy Reader*. I am grateful for that. It is a tremendous resource and monumental step forward for Latinx philosophy. “We are trying to understand things that in some sense remain open questions,” the editors write, “and we can make progress doing that, even if we don’t have a perfect account that everyone agrees on” (2). Indeed, as I explain below, there’s too much at stake to not further the subfield of Latinx philosophy—or whatever you wish to call it.

This volume begins from that range of experience born within the peripheries of the United States national imaginary. The editors are correct that Latin America independence movements, the Chicano movement in the United States, and the work of Latina feminists in the 1990s inspired Latinx philosophy (3). The last of these, they write, is probably the “most significant genesis point for contemporary Latinx philosophy” (3). They continue, “Figures like Gloria Anzaldúa and María Lugones . . . paved the way for philosophers inside and outside of the academic discipline of philosophy to take seriously the task of philosophical reflection on Latinxs, including their circumstances and experiences” (3).

Given this account of the genesis of Latinx philosophy, to what extent can this volume help to preclude the alienating, assimilatory, and acculturating aspects of professional philosophical practice? My inspiration for this query comes out concerns with what I term methodological abstractionism,¹ but can be grounded in José Jorge Mendoza’s provocative essay “The Latinx Racial Disintegration Thesis” (found in Part VI: Immigration/Citizenship).

Mendoza ponders the extent to which the incorporation of Latinxs into the fold of whiteness in the United States might forestall the emergence of a more just political landscape. Many Latinx peoples, he explains, are now being offered either white status or, I would add, white adjacency, an offer that is slowly (but surely) disintegrating Hispanics as a nonwhite racial/ethnic group. Much like with past immigrant groups, the extension of white in-group status occurs when social dynamics threaten white racial domination and seek to offset the growing demographic and political power of immigrants and minority groups combined.

Here, we can debate the extent to which Mendoza's disintegration thesis requires an *anterior* integrated racial status of Latinx peoples. If we are *not* a racially or ethnically homogenous group now, then is racial *disintegration* occurring? While Mendoza has in mind Latinx identity as registering some kind of nonwhite status, one can nevertheless question the assumptions factoring into his talk of demographics and majorities. James Baldwin, after all, taught us that majoritarian politics need not refer to number but *power* and *influence*.² Additionally, it's worth reminding that on a global scale, many white supremacies thrived amidst having white minorities, e.g., South African and certain parts of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regardless of any disagreement one might have with it, Mendoza's essay reignites the debate between racial *assimilationist* and *preservationist* of old. Recall, for example, W. E. B. Du Bois's worry about the "disintegration" of Black Americans in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Each race having a gift to present to the world, assimilating into mainstream U.S. culture (read "white culture") would do little to preserve whatever it is that Black people have to offer. It also spurs the type of inauthenticity and contempt that comes from being derivative. In "Whither Now and Why?" (1960), written half a century later, Du Bois ventures so far as to call for the creation of communities, associations, and institutions that promote the well-being and existence of Black people. Specious forms of equality, he realized, can harbor assimilatory risks that cause many to become "white in action if not completely in color," Du Bois writes. "We would take on the culture of white Americans, doing as they do and *thinking as they think*," he continued.³

Returning to Mendoza's essay, to combat racial disintegration, then, might it be necessary to create a scenario where, as Eduardo Mendieta writes in his first entry in the *Latinx Philosophy Reader*, the development of a "pan-Latin consciousness and a Latino American citizenship" (394) becomes our main political task? How might such a task require the formulation of a *philosophy*, especially if "we ought not think as they think"? Such is the reason why I find the *Latinx Reader* to come at time when preserving difference, especially those insights and concerns garnered by existing in the world as Latinx, is important today—it's also worth pondering how concerns about authenticity, which dominated much of the literature in Latin American philosophy, manifest again.

For Mendieta, the challenge before us is to build a sense of Latino *citizenship*, the embracement not of an ethnic or racial nationalism but a constitutional/political identity

and practice whereby individuals recognize this country, its laws and democratic practices (or what is left of them these days), as *their* own (394). This sense of belonging is precisely the fear of many xenophobes and racist; it would signify that the inclusion of Latinx folks is not trivial but substantive and integral to the reconstitution of the whole.

Along these lines, Mendieta's second contribution, "Jus Sanguinis vs. Jus Soli: On the Grounds of Justice," operates within the legacy of the Second Founding, the birth of a less racist nation concerned with combatting the legacy of slavery after the Civil War. Central to this second founding is the emergence of federal government as a conduit for a more just United States, one that explicitly under attack today. In a society undergirded by a racial contract meant to safeguard white supremacy, laws *ought* not work for nonwhite minority or immigrant groups, hence the reason why so many people today feel left behind or betrayed by what ought to be *their* government. Appropriating the idea of treason and claims of insufficient loyalty, Mendieta writes, "What do we call it when the nation breaks faith and betrays its citizens by treating them as enemy combatants, as resident aliens, in fact, as suspect citizens, as unworthy citizens, as dispensable and contemptible citizens?" (450–51). Mendieta's second essay is thus a powerful manifesto calling for the emergence of a political consciousness hitherto known in white dominated societies.

Finding a way for Latinx folk to bury their identity in this political consciousness, with its concomitant sense of nationhood for all, would provide an embracement of active forms of citizenship and a renewed pride in "American" identity. How to accomplish this goal and not "disintegrate" is the right question, and the pathway to creating this sense of citizenship will not be easy. Indeed, the pull to the white side is strong. But it's not strong because everyone susceptible to it wants to be or considers themselves white. Instead, what one sees is a *racist* convergence of interests, glued together by such things as machismo, conservatism, and willful ignorance. In speaking with many young Latino/a people through the United States, I am frequently reminded of myself at eighteen years old: desperately wanting to avoid talking about race, racism, citizenship, immigration, or alienage because I wanted to assert my own independence and agency—machismo reveling in assimilatory aspirations.

Building this sense of national ownership requires pride in one's heritage, in their bi- or multinational or immigrant heritage, and even their linguistic difference (in fact, the embracement of difference rather than search for sameness). For myself, growing up in the 1980s–90s, the shame I felt when hearing my mother, stepfather, or other family members speaking Spanish was a consequence of my fixation with belonging. Desperately wanting to be a member of this American nation I took pride in speaking Spanish like a *pocho*. It was proof that I made it, a sentiment at odds with what Gallegos, Vargas, and Gallegos write in the introduction to Part 5 (on "Language and Communication"), "For some native English speaking Latinx people, the inability to speak fluent Spanish is a marker of their distance from their Latin American heritage

and family members and can be a source of shame or grief" (329).

Language and Communication is worth mentioning here because it is inspired by Anzaldúa's "if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language." She continues, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language" (335). From this passage one can arrive at a novel approach to the philosophy of language, one focused less of sense, meaning, and reference and more on how we inhabit the languages we speak.⁴ Lori Gallegos's contribution to this volume offers weighty material for my students to consider. To what extent, she asks, do interpreters/translators have a duty to remain faithful to their parents' or family members' words when translating for them, especially when what they want is not necessarily in their best interest? This problem is only exacerbated by the rise of misinformation and social media. Ofelia Schutte's famous "Cultural Alterity" essay, also found in this section, helps think about the nontranslatability of language, the linguistic excess that is always there, but nonetheless suggest we ought not to assume that cross-cultural communication is entirely impossible. There can be similarities *amidst* differences. Elizabeth Millan's essay challenges readers to find philosophical value in Spanish itself, another step towards the nonalienating type of philosophical practice is necessary today.

In the same way that one might worry about the racial disintegration of Latinxs, *we must also worry about their philosophical disintegration in professional philosophy.* I thereby measure this volume by its ability to realize the goal offered by the last essay in the text, namely, that of Nelson Maldonado-Torres.

For Maldonado-Torres, decolonizing philosophy does not mean that one simply adds "diverse" readings into syllabi, as he explains in "Notes on Decolonizing Philosophy." There's decolonizing the *discipline* of Philosophy, and then there's decolonizing philosophy. He writes, "decolonizing philosophy is not a matter of multiculturalism or of diversity and inclusion. Paying attention to the culture of the colonized without addressing colonialism is as problematic as addressing the ways in which the discipline of Philosophy, its scope, and its pedagogy reproduce coloniality" (541). During my time in academia, I have witnessed what Maldonado-Torres has in mind, namely, the type of diversity that embraces nonwhite bodies *but ignores nonwhite minds.* Maldonado-Torres proposes "a shift from decolonizing Philosophy, the discipline, to producing a philosophy—an activity and attitude that explores fundamental questions—that advances decolonization." Such a task, he admits, is necessarily intergenerational and collective. It requires that we venture through, and not abscond from or jettison, the identities and categories that Latinx folk are saddled with today and teach others to do so going forward.

The *Latinx Philosophy Reader* provides opportunity to theorize not only on Latinx identity, but to activate the experiential frame of reference that comes with this identity as a philosophical resource. To divest my experience in the world as Latino from my contributions to the production of philosophical knowledge is to further that colonizing logic

that told indigenous peoples that their languages, culture, worldview, concepts and philosophies were obstacles to their education and knowledge production. This is how philosophy remains locked in a stifling whiteness passing itself off as "universality." As Elena Flores Ruíz writes in her entry "Between Hermeneutical Violence and Alphabets of Survival," "Making sense of our lives in more just ways requires interpretive frameworks that re-envision the relationship between self and culture through a different archeology of know-how" (310).

This reenvisioning extends beyond concerns about "implicit bias," contrary to Alexander Madva's entry in "Implicit Bias and Latinxs in Philosophy." At stake is a sense of epistemic control which those in privileged positions do not want to give up, and the possibility what has often been viewed as a detriment to philosophical practice, ethnic identity, is now a possible future of the discipline. What's at issue then is the epistemic racism of professional philosophy.⁵ This racism is neither hate-based nor accidental, but contempt driven and infused with the desire to maintain exclusive control over the preconditions for knowledge production. It is motivated by an *intentional* dismissal of Latinx identity and experience as relevant to the production of philosophical knowledge.

If decolonizing philosophy means providing the theoretical conditions that allow for Latinx folk to find value in their identities as a source for/of philosophical knowledge, then the volume can accomplish the task I have in mind, but it will fall upon educators to keep pushing their students to consider this line of inquiry. Identity—robust identities not just disembodied selves—cannot be not accidental to philosophy. It wasn't for Socrates and ought not be for us. This is no easy task since those aspects of social identity that I am concerned with are "habitable categories," to use Axel Arturo Barceló Aspeitia's phrasing (70–88), i.e., dynamic categories that lend themselves to multiple purposes, some good, others nefarious. Nevertheless, in presenting a range of works that take seriously the issues that many Latinx folk face and care about, this volume will further my ability to have my students think about themselves as philosophers, especially my Latinx students; it is the consequence, continuation, counterpoint, of those philosophical questions and queries launched in the effort to answer that question, "Is there a Latin American philosophy?" so many decades ago.

NOTES

1. For more on how professional philosophical practice can be alienating, assimilatory, and acculturating, see Grant J. Silva, "Comparative Philosophy and Decolonial Struggle: The Epistemic Injustice of Colonization and Liberation of Human Reason," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 57, no. S1 (2019): 107–34.
2. James Baldwin, "In Search of a Majority," in *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison (The Library of America), 216.
3. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Whither Now and Why?* March 31, 1960, 2.
4. See Kiesha Martin, "Linguistic Identity: An Ostensive Definition" (PhD diss., Marquette University, forthcoming), for more on linguistic identity, linguisticism, and a renewed approach to the philosophy of language.
5. See Madva's narrative of "Tobias" (p. 528) for the sense of epistemic racism, and not bias, that I have in mind.

Meta-Philosophical Concerns from the Margins: A Decolonial Latinx Feminist Encuentro with The Latinx Philosophy Reader

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Emerging as a response to the question, “Why study Latinx philosophy?” *The Latinx Philosophy Reader (LPR)* aims to widen uptake and engagement with the important contributions of U.S. Latinx philosophical genealogies. As the editors note in the introduction to this collection, the philosophies emerging from U.S. Latinx contexts are often attentive to questions and topics that “aren’t discussed in any other part of philosophy” (2). However, despite these distinctive contributions to the field of philosophy and the growing numbers of Latinxs in the wider U.S. population, Latinx philosophies remain underengaged and are still not widely taught.

This is especially true of undergraduate classrooms, the space where many students encounter the study of philosophy for the first time. Reflecting on their own experiences and motivations for gathering this collection of foundational essays, the co-editors explain,

[A]s undergrads none of us was ever assigned a paper or book by a Latinx author in any of our philosophy classes. By and large, we had to teach ourselves about these things, hunting down the work of those who came before us, many of whom had the same disorienting and challenging experience of an education that seemed devoid of people of Latin American descent. (2)

Like the editors, I too was not exposed to Latinx philosophy as an undergraduate student. As I shared in my 2019 contribution to the APA’s Women in Philosophy blog series,

As a [Chicanx] undergraduate, I did not know that there were Latinas working in the field of philosophy and I was not exposed to the work of those like Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, Linda Alcoff, and Mariana Ortega whose work has since profoundly and deeply moved, inspired, and shaped my own thinking. . . . This continues to feel like a profound injustice. (Velez 2019)

Curating a reader with Latinx students like ourselves in mind, I am delighted that all these Latina philosophers appear as important and foundational thinkers for contemporary issues in Latinx philosophy. The philosophical issues dealt with by the essays compiled in the *LPR* are important for facilitating an experience that philosophy is not “just someone else’s puzzles” but can be something that *belongs* to Latinx philosophers and Latinx students (2). Which is to say, philosophy can be for, about, and by diverse practitioners who are too often relegated to the margins of the field and narratives about its history

and methodologies. Diverse practitioners, Kristie Dotson argues, may or may not themselves come from diverse backgrounds but are those who “almost always disrupt the monochromatic profile of the discipline of philosophy by the questions they ask, the methods they deploy, and the goals of their research.”¹ The *LPR* transforms the terrain of how we might think about Latinx philosophy, and philosophy more generally, by *centering* diverse practitioners as foundational to philosophical debates on epistemology, ethics, metaphysics, ontology, and more.

OVERVIEW OF PARTS 3 & 4 OF THE LPR

Given the impressive scope of this nearly six-hundred-page volume as well as my own research and teaching expertise in decolonial feminist traditions of Latinx philosophy, my review engages parts three and four of the *LPR*. These sections include path-making essays in Latinx feminist philosophy, Latinx phenomenological and existential traditions, and Latinx approaches to social and political issues that take up questions of translation, identity, and agency in the face of systems of oppression, domination, and violence.

Part 3: Cross-Cultural Challenges gathers a well-curated selection of texts that offer sustained and innovative philosophical reflection on issues related to crossings between cultures, traditions, and worlds (educational, linguistic, ontological). This section includes an analysis of Latinx identity politics by Linda Martín Alcoff that explores what it means for Latinxs to negotiate claims to being “American”; María Lugones’s foundational essay that articulates the philosophical concept of world-traveling that has sparked its own body of secondary literature in feminist philosophy; and essays by Edwina Barvosa, Jennifer Morton, and Manuel Vargas that each uniquely grapple with philosophical issues of autonomy, linguistic practices, as well as existential experiences of Latinxs who must constantly navigate multiple, shifting, and differentially situated worlds and as a result must negotiate meanings, subjectivities, and geopolitical terrain that is often liminal, ambiguous, and contested.

Part 4: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, and Coloniality centers philosophical essays by Latina feminists whose thinking has transformed the terrain of philosophical inquiry of these philosophical subfields. These essays are, to evoke Cherríe Moraga, *theories of the flesh* that prompt a reconsideration of how bodies and interpretive horizons were transformed and reconstituted by the racialized, gendered, and sexualized systems of power and political economy wrought by colonial modernity and the transatlantic slave trade. Part 4 includes Lugones’s influential account of the coloniality of gender as well as Xhercis Méndez’s analysis of “the wages of gender” that extends Lugones’s thinking on the coloniality of gender in order to examine its accompanying systems of power and privilege. This section of the *LPR* also includes Ada María Isasi-Díaz’s incisive call for a *mujerista* discourse that is attentive to *lo cotidiano*, the mundaneness of the everyday; Mariana Ortega’s articulation of “hometactics” that offers a complex consideration of the importance of carving out home-spaces for one’s own survivance in worlds that are hostile to the very existence of marginalized and oppressed

folks, particularly diverse practitioners of philosophy; as well as Elena Ruíz’s rigorous analysis of hermeneutic violence that challenges mainstream accounts of hermeneutical injustice that are not attentive to decolonial concerns such as epistemicide.

META-PHILOSOPHICAL CONCERNS & THE “X” IN LATINX

The *LPR* is a necessary volume that gathers voices from multiplicitous latinidades, going beyond mere inclusion to transform the terrain of how we might think about Latinx philosophy by *centering* the voices of Latina feminists as well as Black and Indigenous scholars as the heart of Latinx philosophy. However, by way of conclusion, I want to briefly offer two meta-philosophical considerations that return to the term “Latinx” evoked in the *LPR*’s title as well as to considerations of the necessary interdisciplinarity of Latinx Philosophy. Specifically, I ask, *what does it mean to lay claim to the term Latinx philosophy en estos tiempos and what does this endeavor commit us to politically, ethically, and methodologically as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and gender and ethnic studies are under explicit attack and censorship? And, relatedly, how do disciplinary delineations about what counts and doesn’t count as Latinx philosophy show up in the LPR?*

Given the *LPR*’s utilization of the term “Latinx” in its title, it is surprising that the discussion of the “X” in the editors’ introduction is treated rather ambivalently and largely framed as the most current (and contested) iteration of evolving self-naming conventions. As the editors explain,

[R]ecently, a number of students, scholars, and activists have sought to move away from the traditionally gendered nature of the Spanish language. . . . This effort gave birth to the idea of ‘Latinx,’ and more recently ‘Latine.’ These innovations come at a cost; both require changing familiar ways of talking. Moreover, ‘Latinx’ doesn’t work in spoken Spanish, and ‘Latine’ followed so swiftly after efforts to propagate the usage of ‘Latinx’ that it is unclear whether it will ever have widespread uptake. (6)

As the editors underscore in this quotation, the emergence of the X marks a site of resistance to binary logics regarding gender that are stitched into the grammatical structures of the Spanish language and has resulted in social, political, and linguistic cultural contestations. Considering the lively popular and academic debates about the “X” in Latinx, it is curious that the editors steer away from a thicker philosophical discussion of the “X” and this diplomatic toeing of the proverbial line is reflective of a deeper concern I have about the “who” and “how” of the texts and authors gathered under the header “Latinx philosophy.”

When considering the philosophical questions that emerge from a deeper consideration of the “X,” it is important to underscore that the “X” is not only a linguistic response to the binary gender conventions of Spanish grammar (as the editor’s note in the quote above). Foremost, the “X” in Latinx enacts a grassroots attempt to grapple with

pervasive transphobia, homophobia, and femicide *within* Latinx communities. As Alán Pelaez Lopez explains, the “X” is a stark reminder that LGBTQIA+ folks of Latin American descent “are still experiencing a colonization invested in disciplining them to fit a standard gender identity, gender presentation, sexual orientation, and a particular sexual performance.”² Indeed, gender-based violence against queer and gender expansive Latinxs has been normalized as a mechanism of social control “to the point that LGBTQIA+ Latinxs have had to create a linguistic intervention in the hopes that they can live a livable life.”³

The pervasiveness of these forms of racialized, gender-based violence in Latinx communities are evidenced in much of the recent backlash and rejection of the term. There are numerous examples of this in our current moment as legacy media in the U.S. frequently report on claims by those on the far-right that inclusive terminology like “Latinx” is the product of “the woke mind virus” and that it has been “forced” onto everyday folks. Indeed, at federal and local levels there have been attempts to ban the term “Latinx” from use in official communications on the charge that it is divisive and exclusionary. For example, H.R. 2906 – Reject Latinx Act, introduced by U.S. Representative Maria Elvira Salazar in 2023, seeks to prohibit official documents of executive agencies from containing the term, and a Texas Senate Bill 17 signed by Texas Governor Gregg Abbott in 2023 restricts the use of terms like “Latinx” deemed to be associated with DEI initiatives across public institutions of higher education.⁴

So, how does this political context come to bear on the pieces gathered in the *LPR*? While the *LPR* is sensitive to what Francis Aparicio terms the “horizontal hierarchies” within latinidades that have often excluded Indigenous and Black Latinxs, it is notable that both queerness and transness are largely missing from a robust consideration among the included texts.⁵ Further, it is problematic that the Indigenous voices that appear in the *LPR* are positioned to respond to the hegemonically constructed anti-Black and anti-Indigenous discourse of mestizaje. Given the research expertise of the scholars who appear in the volume, such as Andrea Pitts and Jack D. Forbes, this felt like a missed opportunity. Indeed, for a volume that aims to provide a foundational starting point for future courses and research on contemporary issues in Latinx philosophy, these structural occlusions are troubling. Neglecting the work of trans, queer, and Indigenous Latinxs results in what Mariana Ortega has called “decolonial woes,” that is, the situation in which the very oppressive colonial structures that decolonial philosophy seeks to critique are perpetuated through the invisibilizing of the contributions of minoritized Latinxs.⁶

As a Latinx philosopher who thinks and teaches in the interdisciplines of feminist and ethnic studies, these occlusions are palpable to me and point to how self-imposed disciplinary borders limit the scope of what is considered Latinx philosophy within the *LPR*’s own participation in canon construction. Despite the inclusion of a few scholars working outside the disciplinary borders of philosophy, the voices of leading contemporary Latinx thinkers such as Lourdes Alberto, P. J. DiPietro, Juliet Hooker, Francisco J. Galarte,

Juana María Rodríguez, Alán Pelaez Lopez, and Yomaira Figueroa Vásquez whose work is deeply philosophical and who circulate, publish, and are often cited in philosophical spaces are notably absent.⁷ While the editors' introduction acknowledges the diverse, transdisciplinary, movement-based lineages of contemporary Latinx philosophy, ranging from the Valladolid debate of the sixteenth century to the interventions of the Chicano and Third World Women's movement of the 1990s, the pieces included in the *LPR* do not venture far from those credentialed as academic philosophers. Explaining their choice to remain close to the disciplinary borders of the field, the editors argue that formal training in philosophy brings "a distinctive set of skills" and a "particular conceptual toolkit" that prioritize being "scrupulous about distinctions and arguments" (3). But, as many diverse practitioners of philosophy know all too well, this "scrupulousness" more often functions to police the disciplinary borders of philosophy, i.e., making judgments about what is and what is not philosophy, what does and does not count as philosophical, who is and who is not a philosopher. It is my hope that the conversations and courses sparked by this volume will continue to insist on the transdisciplinarity of Latinx philosophy. Indeed, the richness and unique contributions of Latinx philosophies come precisely from the messiness, liminality, and multiplicity of latinidades and the existential realities of Latinxs.

NOTES

1. Dotson, "Concrete Flowers," 404.
2. Pelaez Lopez, "The X in Latinx Is a Wound, Not a Trend."
3. Pelaez Lopez, "The X in Latinx Is a Wound, Not a Trend."
4. For full text of H.R. 2906, see <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2906/text>. For full text of TX S.B. 17, see <https://capitol.texas.gov/ftodocs/88R/billtext/html/SB00017F.htm>.
5. Aparicio, *Negotiating Latinidad*.
6. Ortega, "Decolonial Woes and Practices of Un-knowing."
7. See, for example, Lourdes Alberto, "Nations, Nationalisms, and *Indígenas*"; Juliet Hooker, "Indigenous Inclusion/Black Exclusion"; Juliet Hooker, "Hybrid Subjectivities"; Francisco J. Galarte, "On Trans* Chican@s"; P. J. DiPietro, "Ni humanos, ni animales, ni monstruos"; Juana María Rodríguez, "Divas, Atrevidas, y Entendidas"; Alán Pelaez Lopez, "The X in Latinx is a Wound, Not a Trend"; Yomaira Figueroa, "After the Hurricane,"

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Reply to Guerrero, Silva, and Velez

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INTRODUCTION

We are deeply grateful to Alex Guerrero, Grant Silva, and Emma Velez for their critical engagement with *The Latinx Philosophy Reader*, and for the care and attention they have given the volume. In our view, this kind of critical and constructive dialogue is essential to the work of collective scholarship. It has challenged us to think more deeply about our editorial choices, and it is a model for collaborative reflection on how we might serve the diverse audiences we hope to engage with this book.

In what follows, our remarks focus on two main lines of discussion: first, the principles and considerations animating the anthology and its structure, and second, some of the ways the volume might serve as a resource in various pedagogical and intellectual settings. Although these two themes cannot capture all the considerations raised by our discussants, we hope this speaks to some of the most urgent issues facing a volume like this at this particular moment.

THE AIMS OF THE VOLUME

Latinx philosophy, as we understand it here, is philosophical work substantively concerned with Latinxs, including but not limited to the circumstances, concerns, experiences, statuses, or ways of being associated with Latinxs. Why undertake the publication of an anthology on Latinx philosophy? Guerrero identifies three possible aims. The first is *unity*—helping Latinx individuals recognize the experiences and interests they share. The second is *reflection*—supporting deeper understanding of the diverse and specific experiences that exist within Latinx communities. The third is *invitation*—offering those outside Latinx philosophy insight into how and why they might engage with this philosophical tradition. For each, Guerrero identifies some theoretical challenges.

We are in broad agreement about these being some of the aims of the volume, and with the inevitably fraught nature of any concrete effort to realize these aims. That said, we understand the volume as also serving two additional aims: *recognition* and *ontologization*.

First, in assembling the volume, we sought to promote the recognition of the existence and high quality of Latinx philosophy. We wanted to celebrate the fact that work of this depth and quality exists, to recognize that Latinx philosophy is not emergent in a nascent sense, but is already well-developed, vital, and sustained. The conversations represented in this anthology build on decades of scholarly engagement, creative inquiry, and community-building. In bringing these philosophical works together, we hoped to affirm Latinx philosophy as a tradition in its own right, one that deserves acknowledgment not as a novelty or subfield, but as a site of serious philosophical labor and insight.

A second aim was consolidation, or what we might also call *ontologization*. Part of what anthologies can do is help bring something into clearer being by naming it, gathering it, and making its contours more accessible. Naming, in this sense, is not merely descriptive but generative: it invites discourse, it makes engagement possible, and it helps shape a shared sense of presence and orientation. We hoped that our curation of this collection would contribute to a broader sense of Latinx philosophy as something that can be seen, handled, and further developed, within and beyond academic philosophy.

THE ETHICS OF CONSOLIDATION

As we thought about how we should go about consolidating Latinx philosophy as a distinctive philosophical tradition, the ethical challenges inherent to a project like this were at the forefront of our minds. Velez and Silva articulate some possible drawbacks to the choices we made. Velez calls for even greater inclusion of Indigenous and trans perspectives, both in the contents of the anthology and in our discussion of controversies surrounding the term “Latinx.” Silva suggests that our editorial choices should have been guided by decolonial commitments and prioritized works that are grounded in the embodied experiences of racialized subjects. Implicit in both of these criticisms is, perhaps, the view that we erred on the side of adhering to traditional disciplinary standards.

For any volume, it is fair to ask why *that* volume, with *that* construction? To some extent, these concerns are always legitimate and unavoidable. They are legitimate because it is always true that more could and should be included. There is simply too much worth knowing, reading, and teaching, and this is true for Latinx philosophy as much as many other subject matters in philosophy. It is also unavoidable because, for any volume that perfectly captures one’s interests or sense of the field, there will always be others who have principled reasons for rejecting that conception as skewed, parochial, or ideological.

So, while acknowledging that there could be excellent volumes that better reflect their concerns, we also wish to take Velez and Silva’s criticisms as an opportunity to do something we didn’t explicitly do in the anthology, that is,

to highlight some of the criteria that animated our selection of the contents of the volume. Among the criteria were these:

1. First, the reader is focused on Latinx people and philosophy in the U.S., so we generally discounted texts that might better be described as “Latin American” in a broader sense.
2. Second, we prioritized readings that were undergraduate-friendly, so we put a special premium on readability.
3. Third, we sought essays that can stand on their own as individual pieces. Again, accessibility was key. Pieces that required considerable prior scholarship, theory, or having read lots of some figure’s corpus create barriers to entry that we wanted to avoid for a volume like ours. Our goal was for every chapter to offer comprehensible, original, and important ideas, or provide an unparalleled opportunity to reflect on a major philosophical question. We opted, then, to focus on key texts, rather than key figures.
4. Fourth, we wanted conversation. That is, many of the texts are in conversation with one another about a coherent set of questions. So, there was a premium put on texts that could be described as “contemporary classics,” in the sense that they address issues in ways that have shaped the wider conversations over the past couple of decades. By showing how those texts have sparked conversations, we help make salient that there is a genuine and sustained tradition of reflection in Latinx philosophy.

As our critics correctly observe, such criteria are inevitably value laden, with broader political implications. In particular, the concerns they voice have particular urgency in the context of the fact that, within the academic discipline of philosophy, the marginalization of philosophical work by and about oppressed groups has been justified on the basis of oftentimes strategically narrow conceptions of philosophy. It is morally imperative, then, that we not be overly deferential to such conceptions, so as not to reproduce this dynamic within the subfield.

It is precisely because we share this animating concern that we adopted a big-tent, pluralistic picture of philosophy. We sought material that can engage a wide range of readers and instructors, of diverse philosophical dispositions and training. For example, we include the work of several authors who work(ed) outside of philosophy departments, as well as texts representing a wide range of metaphilosophical presumptions, with very distinct conceptions about the borders of philosophy. In that spirit, we sought to avoid defining both the field and the discipline as a whole in a way that would artificially impose any single perspective about what the tradition is or should be. Inevitably, some of that material will not be to the taste of some readers, and that’s both inevitable and important to permit.

We also endeavored to highlight the importance of attention on these questions in a way unusual for anthologies of this sort, both by incorporating instances of work not by traditional academic philosophers, and by dedicating an entire section to texts that explicitly take up metaphilosophical questions about Latinxs and Latinx philosophy.

To be sure, no volume can meet every reader equally well. We hope that others will endeavor to assemble readers that reflect different assessments of the best tradeoffs in the balance of disciplinary and nondisciplinary conceptions of philosophy. That said, we maintain that whether one is pro-, con-, or agnostic about philosophical canons, there are worthwhile intellectual payoffs from engaging with some work that is in conversation with different instances of disciplinary philosophy. Similarly, with regard to style, we wanted to choose texts that observed what are generally valued as philosophical methods: a distinctive set of skills that goes along with a conceptual toolkit, which emphasizes nuance in how language, practices, and concepts relate to one another, and tends to be especially scrupulous about distinctions and arguments.

USING THE TEXT

An important thread in our discussants' remarks focuses on ways instructors and scholars might use the anthology to pursue their intellectual and pedagogical aims, and the drawbacks and advantages inherent in different approaches to these matters.

For instance, Guerrero notes that some readers may lack sufficient familiarity with the historical contexts that shape the contributions in the volume. We agree. Historical grounding is essential for fully appreciating the richness of Latinx thought, and this is something that many instructors cannot presume that their students have. To that end, we would encourage instructors to consider pairing our anthology with texts that deliver accounts of that history, such as Juan González's *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, or perhaps *Latino USA: A Cartoon History*, by Ilan Stavans & Lalo Alcaraz, which uses illustrations and storytelling techniques to dramatize diverse histories of Latinx folks in the U.S. Such pairings could help provide students with the broader social, political, and historical frameworks that animate the philosophical interventions included in the volume.

Likewise, *The Latinx Philosophy Reader* might be supplemented in other ways in order to accommodate specific interests and concerns that instructors or students might bring to it in other contexts. For example, Velez raises the important concern that the volume could have engaged more fully with trans issues, while Silva favors a more explicitly decolonial and liberatory approach to philosophical inquiry. Undoubtedly, there is more work to be done in these areas, and there are a variety of ways instructors wishing to focus on these issues and approaches might wish to supplement our volume. For those interested in moving Latinx philosophy in these directions, it may be useful to begin with the final section of the volume, which addresses metaphilosophical questions. For example, instructors and students might

then consider how decolonial practices could be brought into the classroom. Discussions might involve not only considerations of content but also pedagogical style, inviting students to question dominant epistemologies and to imagine alternative modes of inquiry.

The Latinx Philosophy Reader ought not be the last word on any of its contents. Our hope is that it is, instead, a generative opening of a dialogue with the needs and commitments of its users. We have aimed to curate a collection that is capacious enough to accommodate a range of interpretive frameworks, classroom practices, and scholarly trajectories. If the volume helps catalyze further scholarship and creative pedagogical experimentation, then we will consider it a success.

Thanks to our discussants for being some of the first readers of this volume, and for showing us multiple paths to the future of this field.

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