

# APA Newsletters

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## NEWSLETTER ON HISPANIC/LATINO ISSUES IN PHILOSOPHY

**FROM THE EDITOR**, ARLEEN L. F. SALLES

**FROM THE CHAIR**, SUSANA NUCCETELLI

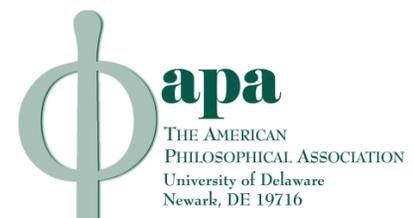
### ARTICLES

BERNARDO CANTENÑS

“Francisco De Vitoria’s Just Intervention Theory and the Iraq War”

MANUEL VARGAS

“Eurocentrism and the Philosophy of Liberation”





APA NEWSLETTER ON

# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

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Arleen L. F. Salles, Editor

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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I am very happy to take over the task of editor of the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues*. Hispanics in the United States and abroad have worked and continue to work on a wide range of philosophical issues. The *Newsletter* amounts to a deliberate attempt to present a sample of these different views and to avoid confining Hispanics' philosophical production within narrow categories.

The two articles included in this issue of the *Newsletter* are the winners of the APA Prize in Latin American Thought. In the first, "Francisco De Vitoria's Just Intervention Theory and the Iraq War," Bernardo Canteñs argues for the relevance of Vitoria's just war theory to contemporary discussions of international law and political affairs.

In "Eurocentrism and the Philosophy of Liberation," Manuel Vargas examines whether the philosophy of liberation can adequately answer the charge of Eurocentrism. Vargas argues that it can, but this requires that we change our conception of what the philosophy of liberation is and how it must be developed.

### Contributions

I encourage our readers to contribute to the *Newsletter*. Articles that address recent developments in Hispanic/Latino thought, book reviews, and reflections on topics of interest to the philosophical community are welcome. Furthermore, I encourage suggestions that might help toward creating a more diversified newsletter. Please submit two copies of essays. References should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*. All items and inquiries should be sent to the editor: Arleen L. F. Salles, Department of Art, Music, and Philosophy, John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), [asalles@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:asalles@jjay.cuny.edu)

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## FROM THE CHAIR

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I am happy to report that the Committee on Hispanics has succeeded in making a reality an event that was long overdue: an National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute for College Teachers on the topic, *Latin American Philosophy: The Appropriation of European Thought in Latin America*, scheduled for this summer at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The Institute will run under the directorship of Jorge J. E. Gracia, with me serving as co-director, and a number of distinguished speakers and faculty. We plan

to explore new ideas for curriculum development, thus helping further developments in this fast-growing area of philosophy. In addition, as this issue of our *Newsletter* testifies, the committee continues its effort to promote Latin American philosophy by offering an annual prize to a high-quality essay on the subject. There is no doubt that our undertakings will be noticed in the profession and that, as a result, research on Latin American thought will be promoted. At the same time, I expect an increase in the number of instructors that will join those who have already incorporated either the entire subject, or topics from it, to their course offerings.

Susana Nuccetelli

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## ARTICLES

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### ***Francisco De Vitoria's Just Intervention Theory and the Iraq War***

**Bernardo Canteñs, Ph.D.**  
*Barry University*

The Spanish conquest and colonization of the American Indians presented a new reality from which emanated new social-political and philosophical questions concerning the ethical relationship between the Spanish and the Indians.<sup>1</sup> Francisco De Vitoria, O.P. (1485-1546),<sup>2</sup> was one of the first to address many of the social-political issues arising from the Spanish conquest. In this essay, I will examine some of the central tenets of Vitoria's political writings, and I will explore how the United States's war in Iraq measures up to Vitoria's theory. The paper is divided into three parts. In the first part, I will discuss the difference between just war theory and just intervention theory. I will argue that, in an attempt to modernize Vitoria's political theory, the task of re-evaluating and reconstructing his *just war theory* as *just intervention theory* is worth the effort. Second, I will examine several of Vitoria's central tenets on the issue of intervention (egoistic intervention, war intervention, and ideological intervention). Finally, I will demonstrate the relevance of Vitoria's arguments for contemporary discussions of international law and international political affairs by evaluating the current U.S. conflict in Iraq using Vitoria's reconstructed just intervention theory.

### **1. Just Intervention Theory versus Just War Theory**

The world has changed dramatically in the past few decades. Major changes in the global political structure, such as the fall of the Soviet Union, communism, and the end of the Cold

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War, have led to a new and dynamic political reality. Today, the international community is faced with unique challenges involving the resolution of international crises, such as determining the rules and criteria of a just intervention and a just war. Concrete examples of these new challenges are the wars and civil unrest that have occurred in places such as Haiti, Rwanda, Sudan, and the former Yugoslavia. Another example, closer to home, is the United States's invasion and occupation of Iraq. Two factors of the current political reality that have exasperated the efforts for the perseverance of peace and justice in the world are the threat of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These changes in the modern landscape of global politics have made the notion of *just war theories* somewhat obsolete. Instead, the notion of *just intervention theories* is more appropriate for the contemporary volatile political environment. Michael Walzer, in his preface to the third edition of *Just and Unjust Wars*, acknowledges that the questions surrounding interventions have become the fundamental issue in international politics. He says, "But there has been one large and momentous shift in both wars and words. The issues that I discussed under the name 'interventions', which were peripheral to the main concerns of the book, have moved dramatically into the center."<sup>3</sup>

What is the difference between intervention and war? War refers to a state of affairs in which one sovereign state enters into armed conflict with another sovereign state. War is essentially characterized by the use of force. It is intrinsically evil. Walzer describes it in this way: "Then, perhaps, the best way to describe the crime of war is simply to say that there are no limits at either of these points: people are killed with every conceivable brutality, and all sorts of people, without distinction of age or sex or moral condition, are killed."<sup>4</sup> Intervention refers to a state of affairs in which a sovereign state interferes in some substantial way in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state. While the notion of war is intrinsically characterized as adversarial and hostile, the notion of intervention has a broader connotation; it includes war, but it may also include activities that are not hostile or adversarial.<sup>5</sup> For instance, it may include peace-keeping activities, humanitarian activities, or even "nation building." It may also include practices less hostile than war, but hostile nonetheless, such as economic sanctions. Intervention may also come in the form of mediating efforts by a sovereign state to end a civil war or internal strife in another sovereign state. Finally, intervention may also take on a paternalistic dimension when one sovereign state attempts to impose its way of thinking or values on another sovereign state.

The shift of the political discussion from war to intervention is not simply a semantic one; it raises a different set of questions from those posed by the concern over war. The central questions concerning intervention are: Does a sovereign state have a *prima facie* right to conduct its domestic affairs independently and autonomously? If so, what gives it this right? Under what circumstances or grounds can this *prima facie* right of sovereignty of a state be infringed upon? Who has the authority to make such decisions? In reconstructing Vitoria's Just Intervention Theory, I will be guided by these questions.

## 2. Francisco De Vitoria's Just Intervention Theory

In this paper, I will not lay out a complete theory of intervention; instead, I will focus on three forms of intervention.<sup>6</sup> The first is intervention for the purpose of a state's self-interest, or egoistic intervention. The second is intervention for the purpose of war, or war intervention. The third is intervention for ideological purposes, or ideological intervention.<sup>7</sup>

### 2.1 Egoistic Intervention: Intervention for the Purpose of Self-Interest

Egoistic interventions occur when one sovereign state intervenes in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state for no justified reason other than to seek some positive benefit for itself (e.g., land, natural resources, strategic position, economic benefits, establish reputation, etc.). These sorts of interventions have been common in the history of warfare. For instance, many of the war efforts of the Roman Empire were openly regarded as egoistic forms of intervention. Today, it is difficult to imagine that a sovereign state would admit that an act of hostile intervention on its part is motivated solely for self-interest. Instead, egoistic interventions are usually camouflaged by attributing some form of just cause to them. Only after some scrutiny of the declared causes for intervention and the determination of their illegitimacy can one conclude that the intervention in question is an egoistic intervention. Not all interventions that produce some benefit for the intervening power, however, are to be considered egoistic interventions. Indeed, almost all legitimate forms of intervention will have substantial positive consequences for the intervening power. This benefit should in no way undermine the legitimate cause of the intervention and hence its ethical status.

Are egoistic interventions unethical? Who is to decide if a sovereign state has intervened egoistically? If, in fact, no current sovereign state will voluntarily admit that it has participated in an egoistic intervention, then how can it be proved? According to Vitoria, the act of intervention by a sovereign state into the domestic affairs of another sovereign state without just cause is wrong. The argument supporting this conclusion rests on the idea that, given the nature of a sovereign state, it has a *prima facie* right to conduct its domestic affairs independently and autonomously. To reconstruct Vitoria's argument, two things are required: 1) an understanding of his notion of the nature of a sovereign state and 2) an understanding of his theory of intervention. I will discuss the first of these in this section and his theory of intervention (as it applies to war and ideology) in the sections that follow.

In *On Civil Power*, Vitoria provides an Aristotelian analysis of public secular power. The discussion begins with Lombard's *Sentences* II. 44, which discusses Paul's Epistle: "For there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1). Vitoria is concerned that this passage seems to contradict the notion that there is such a thing as legitimate lay or secular power.<sup>8</sup> He addresses this problem in three issues of which only the first concerns us: 1) "Every public and private power by which the secular commonwealth is administered is not only just and legitimate, but is of God, and so cannot be abolished even by the consensus of the whole people."<sup>9</sup> Vitoria argues that secular power is derived from natural law, and since natural law is derived from God, then secular power is indirectly dependent on God. For our purposes, what is important is that Vitoria considers secular power to be a *natural necessity* [my emphasis]. He explains:

It follows that the city (*ciuitas*) is, if I may so put it, the most natural community, the one that is most conformable to nature. ... The clear conclusion is that the primitive origin of human cities and commonwealths was *not a human invention or contrivance* [my emphasis] to be numbered among the artifacts of craft, but a device implanted by Nature in man for his own safety and survival. It follows immediately from this reasoning, *that the final and necessary cause of public powers is the same.*<sup>10</sup>

According to Vitoria, therefore, the nature of secular power is upheld and supported by the strongest of all possible arguments, a useful, natural, and necessary end for rational beings. As a consequence, secular power grants any sovereign state the *prima facie* right to exist and conduct its own affairs without the intervention of any outside power. Vitoria sums up the notion of secular power as follows: “This [the form of public powers] is nothing other than the essence of power itself, which may be expressed in the following definition, as formulated by the authorities on the subject: *public power is the authority or right of government over the civil commonwealth.*”<sup>11</sup> This authority and right of government over the civil commonwealth is an inherent power that should be respected by other external powers. Thus, interventions in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state are *prima facie* wrong; all interventions require a just cause.<sup>12</sup>

As a consequence, it may be that an intervening power has the ethical burden of proof with respect to any form of intervention whatsoever.<sup>13</sup> The burden of proof ought to consist of three factors. First, a sovereign state that intends to intervene in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state has the ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience<sup>14</sup> that it has a legitimate cause for its intervention.<sup>15</sup> What are legitimate causes for any form of intervention is something that requires further analysis and will be discussed in the sections below. Second, an intervening sovereign state has an ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience that it is reasonable to believe that the causes it has stated as justification for the intervention are true. Third, the intervening sovereign state has an ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience that its specific form of intervention (i.e., force, sanctions, etc.) is appropriate given the causes of justification for the intervention. I will refer to these criteria as the *just intervention criteria*, or the JIC. If the JIC are not met, then it must be concluded that the intervention is arbitrary, grossly negligent, or motivated solely for self-interest. Since it is absurd to believe that any serious form of intervention would be arbitrary, then, if the burden of proof is not met, the intervention in question is either grossly negligent or egoistic. In either case, the intervention is unethical. The gravity of the injustice committed, as a result of an unethical intervention, will depend on the kind of intervention, the most serious of all being a hostile attack on a sovereign state or war intervention.

## 2.2 War Intervention: Intervention for the Purpose of War

War intervention occurs when one sovereign state intervenes in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state, and the intervention is marked by the use of armed force. A serious commitment to use force to accomplish certain objectives initiates the first formal stage of war. Such a commitment may be formally expressed in an explicit declaration of war or implicitly in the concrete planning for war. The objectives or ends that the sovereign state declares it strives for through the use of force will support its moral argument for going into war. Thus, the moral argument for war requires that the purpose of the war be stated clearly and unequivocally. What are the legitimate objectives a sovereign state can seek through force? What are legitimate causes of a just war?

Vitoria explicitly names several causes that do not support a just war. The first illegitimate cause is difference in religion.<sup>16</sup> Vitoria claims that war for the purpose of evangelization is unjust. Moreover, as I will discuss in greater detail in the next section, religious belief cannot be imposed on foreigners by force. The second illegitimate cause of war is the enlargement of an empire.<sup>17</sup> Vitoria claims that aggression by one sovereign state towards another sovereign state cannot be justified for

the sole purpose of strengthening the aggressor’s position. The third illegitimate cause of war is the personal glory or convenience of the prince.<sup>18</sup> Vitoria emphasizes the principle of *the common good* [my emphasis] as the end of any use of armed force. He stresses that the leader of a commonwealth should never prioritize his own interest or the interest of a few over that of the public and the subjects of the commonwealth when deliberating on whether it should go into war. He says, “The Prince must order war and peace for the common good of the commonwealth; he may not appropriate public revenues for his own aggrandizement or convenience.”<sup>19</sup>

What justifies war? Vitoria claims that there is only one legitimate cause for a just war. He says, “the sole and only just cause for waging war is when harm has been inflicted.”<sup>20</sup> He argues, therefore, that war can only be justified as a form of self-defense.

Likewise, a prince cannot have greater authority over foreigners than he has over his own subjects; but he may not draw the sword against his own subjects unless they have done some wrong; therefore he cannot do so against foreigners except in the same circumstances. ...It follows from this that we may not use the sword against those who have not harmed us; to kill the innocent is prohibited by natural law.<sup>21</sup>

A first formulation of Vitoria’s just war intervention theory may be expressed as follows:

(1) *A sovereign state can enter into a just war against another sovereign state only in self-defense.*<sup>22</sup>

For Vitoria, self-defense is not limited to retaliation. It may also include securing a sovereign state’s legitimate right, according to the law of nations (*ius gentium*), that is, being violated or denied by another sovereign state. Therefore, it is appropriate to expand the definition of a sovereign state’s notion of self-defense to include: *defending its legitimate rights granted to it by the law of nations.* Vitoria explains this doctrine in the concrete case concerning the Spanish and the Indians. After having argued that the Indians are true and lawful masters of their lands and properties and that no form of just intervention by the Spaniards in the Indian communities can be justified, he argues that the Spaniards do have certain international rights, such as the right to travel peacefully in the land of the Indians; the right to use “common areas,” such as rivers; the right to preach the gospel; the right to trade and form partnerships; etc. Furthermore, he argues that these rights are international rights (i.e., they belong to the law of nations) and are derived from natural law. According to Vitoria, if these legitimate rights of the Spaniards are denied or challenged, then they may defend them, even by the use of force. He explains, “But if the barbarians deny the Spaniards what is theirs by the law of nations, they commit an offense against them. Hence, if war is necessary to obtain their rights (*ius suum*), they may lawfully go to war.”<sup>23</sup>

We may add to Vitoria’s just war intervention theory the following:

(2) *A sovereign state can justly defend itself in the event of (a) an unjust armed forced attack or (b) from the violation or denial of any of its legitimate rights.*

Even though Vitoria restricts the just use of armed force to cases of self-defense (as defined above), he grants the commonwealth liberty in its use of force in extraordinary cases. He refers to this excess of force as an *offensive war*. He argues that, in cases arising from self-defense, the commonwealth, unlike the private individual, can legitimately carry over its defensive war into an offensive war. He explains, “The common wealth, on the other hand, has the authority not only

to defend itself, but also to avenge and punish injuries done to itself and its members.”<sup>24</sup>

He also says, “but even after the victory has been won and property restored to its rightful owners, and peace and security are established, *it is lawful to avenge the injury done by the enemy, and to teach the enemy a lesson by punishing them for the damage they have done.*”<sup>25</sup> This lawful vengeance, or what Vitoria calls “offensive war,” appears to contradict the notion that war can be justified only for reasons of self-defense, with the exclusive purpose of self-preservation. How are we to understand Vitoria’s notion of offensive war?

The argument that supports the doctrine of offensive war—that is, war to avenge and punish—also enhances the idea that Vitoria was one of the first political thinkers to establish global legal parameters and speak of international law. First, it is essential to notice that an offensive war is not an isolated conflict but rather one that is intrinsically connected to a defensive war. Vitoria says: “Similarly, offensive war is for the avenging of injuries and the admonishment of enemies, as we have seen; but there can be no vengeance where there has not first been a culpable offense.”<sup>26</sup> Also, it is important to reconstruct the context in which Vitoria advocates the notion of vengeance as a justification for the *continuation* of war. He envisions a global situation, one involving more than two sovereign states. Thus, his theory of just war intervention argues that it is lawful for the world’s sovereign states, as a collective whole, to judge the character of a particular sovereign state. If they view this state as hostile and a threat to the peace and perseverance of some other innocent sovereign state, or as a continued future threat to its neighboring states, they have the right to carry out the war of punishment in an effort to prevent this state from carrying out future hostile acts. Vitoria explains:

...it should be noted that the prince has the authority not only over his own people but also over foreigners to force them to abstain from harming others; this is his right by the *law of nations and the authority of the whole world* [my emphasis].<sup>27</sup>

These arguments modify his theory of just war intervention in two ways. First, a just war may include more force and inflict more harm than is necessary to win the war or for the restoration of peace. Second, by changing the perspective from the particular sovereign state to the international community, a state may be justified in going into war as a member of the international community even if it has not been directly injured or attacked, or its rights have not been denied or violated. As a result, a state can justify going into war in order to protect another state from an unjust attack. We can add to Vitoria’s just war intervention theory the following two principles:

(3) *A sovereign state may defend another sovereign state in the event of (a) an unjust armed force attack or (b) violation or denial of any of its legitimate rights.*

(4) *A just war may include more force and inflict more harm than is necessary to win the war or for the restoration of peace and stability; the excess force and damage is justified as punishment for a state’s past wrongful hostile attacks and as a deterrent from further similar hostile attacks to its neighbors in the future.*

There is yet another twist in Vitoria’s just war intervention theory. Vitoria claims that there are extraordinary circumstances that may justify the Spaniards’ intervention into the Indian communities of the New World. He considers these cases as exceptions to the general rule that there are no causes

for a just intervention by the Spaniards in the Indian communities. He says,

I assert that *in lawful defense of the innocent from unjust death, even without the pope’s authority, the Spaniards may prohibit the barbarians from practicing any nefarious custom or rite.* ...If they refuse to do so, war may be declared upon them, and the laws of war enforced upon them.<sup>28</sup>

This view modifies, once again, Vitoria’s just war intervention theory as follows:

(5) *A sovereign state can defend the subjects of a tyrant from nefarious practices.*

## 2.2 Ideological Intervention: Intervention for Ideological Purposes

Can a legitimate objective of any sovereign state’s entering into war against another sovereign state be to change the customs, culture, values, and religious beliefs of its people? Vitoria argues that the law of nations ought to provide people with the necessary freedom of speech to make their case concerning their beliefs on any of the issues mentioned above. Thus, according to Vitoria, it is not only permissible but a right granted by the law of nations that sovereign states, institutions, and organizations can attempt to disseminate their views to any group of people they wish, even people of another sovereign state.

However, Vitoria claims that the method of persuasion must be honest and open and, more importantly, must not be coercive. If ideas are imposed on a group through duress, oppression, or intimidation, then the intervention is unjust. Vitoria’s arguments were concerned specifically with the Christian faith. But we may use his arguments concerning the ideas of Christianity analogously and apply them to any other ideological subject matter. Indeed, if Vitoria felt that the Christian ideas that led to eternal salvation could not be coerced on people, we can safely assume that, for him, this line of argument will hold true for any ideology, such as capitalism, democracy, etc.

He distinguishes between theological consequences and secular consequences. The theological consequences of not accepting the gospel are grave. He says:

...if the Christian faith is set before the barbarians in a *probable fashion*, that is with provable and rational arguments and accompanied by both decent and observant of the law of nature, such as are themselves a great argument for the truth of the faith, and if this is done not once or in a perfunctory way, but diligently and observantly, *then the barbarians are obliged to accept the faith of Christ under pain of mortal sin.*<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, he also argues that there should be no secular consequences for those who do not accept the Christian faith, thus rejecting paternalism.

My sixth conclusion is that, however probably and sufficiently the faith have been announced to the barbarians and then rejected by them, *this is still not reason to declare war on them and despoil them of their goods.*

We may summarize Vitoria’s just ideology intervention theory as follows:

(6) *A sovereign state has the right to intervene in an effort to proclaim and persuade others of beliefs and values it upholds*

as true to the extent that its method of doing so does not harm or cause injury to others. A sovereign state may not use coercive methods (duress, intimidation, or violence) as part of its persuasive campaign.

### 3. The United States's War in Iraq and Vitoria's Just Intervention Theory

The objective in this section is to explore how Vitoria's standards of just intervention can help evaluate whether the United States' war intervention in Iraq was just. The intention is not to formulate a political statement but rather to demonstrate how significantly relevant Vitoria's political doctrines are for our contemporary international affairs.

I have argued above that, according to Vitoria, an egoistic intervention is considered unjust. Moreover, I argued that the burden of proof for demonstrating that an intervention is just lies on the side of the intervening power; the proof must meet the JIC. Thus, the United States needs to show the following: 1) that it had a legitimate cause for its war interventions in Iraq, 2) that it was reasonable to believe that the causes it stated as justification for the intervention were true, and 3) that the extent of force used in the intervention was appropriate given the causes of justification that support the intervention. These criteria are sufficient for a just war; however, Vitoria argues that if the objective of the war is to depose a ruler and change a government, then additional criteria are required. Since the specific objective of the United States's war on Iraq was not simply to defeat it but to change its regime, the United States must satisfy additional criteria, thus raising the standard for a just war intervention.<sup>30</sup> Vitoria says:

The ninth doubt is whether we may depose the enemy's princes and set up new ones in their place, or take over governments ourselves? ...It is *not* lawful to do this in every case, or for any cause of just war. This is clear from what has been said: punishment should not exceed the crime. On the contrary, punishment should be diminished in favor of mercy. This is the rule not only of human law, but also of natural and divine law. Therefore, although the harm done by the enemy may be a sufficient cause for war it will not always be sufficient to justify the extermination of an enemy's kingdom and deposition of its legitimate native princes; this would be altogether too salvage and inhumane.<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, the United States, according to Vitoria, would not only need to show just cause for going into war with Iraq but also just cause for regime change. What would justify a regime change? He argues:

However, it cannot be denied that there may sometimes be legitimate reasons for supplanting princes, or for taking over the government. This may be because of the number or atrocity of the injuries and harm done by the enemy, and especially when security and peace cannot be ensured, when failure to do so would cause a dangerous threat to the commonwealth.<sup>32</sup>

The exception to this added criterion is when the cause of war is to protect subjects from a tyrant ruler. In such a case, the cause for war would also justify regime change. Vitoria explains:

The barbarians are our neighbors, therefore anyone, and especially the princes, may defend them from such tyranny and oppression. ...If [the leaders] refuse to [modify their oppressive policies], war may be declared upon them, and the laws of war enforced

upon them; and if there is no other mean of putting an end to these sacrilegious rites, their masters may be changed and new princes set up.<sup>33</sup>

The questions that we must address are the following: Did the United States have a legitimate cause for its war intervention in Iraq? Did the United States have a legitimate cause for supplanting Saddam Hussein and for taking over the government?

There are several plausible causes that the United States can appeal to in an attempt to justify its war intervention in Iraq. They are: 1) to democratize and bring "freedom" to Iraq; 2) to defend the citizens of Iraq from the tyranny of its ruler, Saddam Hussein; 3) to defend other sovereign states from the threat of attack and to bring peace, security, and stability to the world; and 4) to defend itself from the threat of attack and to bring peace, security, and stability to the United States.

The first cause of war, to democratize and bring "freedom" to Iraq, is not a legitimate cause for a just war, according to Vitoria. One could argue that this justification is an attempt to impose Western ideologies on the Iraqi people. According to Vitoria's just ideological intervention theory, the United States would have the right to attempt to persuade the people of Iraq of the benefits of adopting a democratic system and democratic values. This objective, however, ought to be accomplished through rational argumentation and not through the use of force.

The second cause of war, to defend the citizens of Iraq from the tyranny of its ruler, Saddam Hussein, is a legitimate cause for a just war, according to Vitoria.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, this cause also provides a just cause for regime change. The United States would have to satisfy the second criterion of the JIC, namely, to provide evidence that Saddam Hussein committed a large "number or an atrocity of injuries and harm" to the citizens of Iraq. This may be easy to do.

There are, however, three difficulties that prevent the United States from using this cause to justify its going into war with Iraq. The first difficulty is that it would create an inconsistency within U.S. foreign policy since, in the past, U.S. foreign policy has turned a blind eye to many similar abuses, and, even worse, there have been cases in which the U.S. has actually supported regimes under which such abuses have been common practice. It should be noted that this inconsistency in U.S. foreign policy is not sufficient to undermine this cause from being a just cause. However, it does call into question the genuineness of the U.S.'s appealing to this cause as its real objective in going into war with Iraq. The second difficulty concerns the feasibility of such a war. The multifarious factors and complexities involved in engaging in a war of this magnitude, the financial burden, the human sacrifice, and the probability of success would all have to be taken into consideration. The examination of these elements is outside the scope of this paper. (Indeed, it is outside the scope of the discipline of philosophy; these studies are better left to political scientists.) Finally, Vitoria's theory of the law of nations establishes a legal international paradigm that would have legal jurisdiction over interactions between sovereign states. Thus, war interventions that are not in self-defense and that have widespread international consequences should fall into the international domain and within the jurisdiction of the law of nations. According to Vitoria's just intervention theory, then, the United States' *unilateral* war intervention in Iraq for the purpose of regime change would be difficult to sustain as a just intervention based solely on the cause of defending the citizens of Iraq from the tyranny of its ruler, Saddam Hussein, if the war is opposed by the international community.

The third plausible cause for the United States's going into war with Iraq is to defend other sovereign states from the threat of attack and to bring peace, security, and stability to the world. The fourth plausible cause for the United States's going into war is to defend itself from the threat of attack and bring peace, security, and stability primarily to the United States. Both of these are just causes for going into war, but not necessarily for regime change. The Bush administration has used both of these as its official cause for war intervention and regime change in Iraq. Are they legitimate causes given that Iraq has not conducted any major attacks on the United States or any of its neighbors since the Gulf War?

Since Iraq has not attacked the United States or any other sovereign state, the Bush administration has relied on the notion of preemption to justify its use of the cause of self-defense. Preemptive strikes have traditionally been considered within the realm of self-defense. If a sovereign state knows (i.e., has reasonable evidence) that it will be attacked, it may strike first with the intention of gaining the advantage in war. Thus, both of these causes meet the first criterion of the JIC. The difficulty for the Bush administration would be in meeting the second and third criteria of the JIC, and in meeting the higher standard necessary for its specific intention of regime change.

There are two factors that play heavily into the Bush administration's arguments. They are weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. It is difficult to appeal to preemption as self-defense in the absence of present or foreseeable explicit signs of aggression. However, because weapons of mass destruction may cause such extensive and overwhelming damage with one strike, and no explicit signs of aggression are necessary for a strike to take place, the notion of preemption as self-defense may require re-evaluation.<sup>35</sup>

There is a spectrum of cases that can be considered under preemptive strikes. They may range from the actual build-up of an armed force in readiness for war to suspicious rulers who have shown a dislike to a particular state and have a past record of unprovoked aggression towards other sovereign states. The former is a clear case in which a preemptive strike could be classified as self-defense. The latter, however, is not so clear. To categorize it as preemption, there needs to be, at a minimum, clear evidence that the state has weapons of mass destruction and that it is willing to use them in an unjust war. Because this was not demonstrated in the case of Iraq, the United States's war intervention in Iraq fails to meet the second criterion of the JIC (i.e., that it was reasonable to believe that the causes it stated as justification for the interventions were true).

The third and fourth plausible causes for the United States's going into war with Iraq will also have difficulty meeting the third criterion of the JIC (i.e., that the extent of force used in this intervention was appropriate given the causes of justification for the intervention.) Even if (or especially if) there had been good evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and would have used them in an unjust war, there would have been a strong case against war intervention and in favor of a less provocative form of intervention. It may be argued that a more aggressive plan for the disarmament of Iraq coupled with a plan of containment would be less dangerous and destructive, and more effective in protecting the security of the U.S. and other sovereign states. Also, we must not forget that even if there had been evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was willing to use them, the United States would still have had to justify overthrowing the Iraq regime. Regime change, according to Vitoria, would have required further argumentation showing that, even after

having rid Saddam Hussein of weapons of mass destruction, he remained a serious threat to the Middle East and to the United States.

Finally, if the third cause, to defend other sovereign states from the threat of attack by Iraq and to bring peace, security, and stability to the world, is emphasized, then the U.S. is dealing with an international issue and not simply a sovereign issue. As a consequence, judgments concerning intervention belong to the international community and the law of nations. According to Vitoria's just intervention theory, then, the United States' *unilateral* war intervention in Iraq for the purpose of regime change would be difficult to sustain as a just intervention based solely on the cause to defend other sovereign states if it is opposed by the international community.

#### 4. Conclusion

According to Vitoria, an intervening power has the ethical burden of proof with respect to any form of intervention whatsoever. The burden of proof ought to consist of three factors. First, a sovereign state that intends to intervene in the domestic affairs of another sovereign state has the ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience that it has a legitimate cause for its intervention. Second, an intervening sovereign state has an ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience that it is reasonable to believe that the causes it has stated as justification for the intervention are true. Third, the intervening sovereign state has an ethical obligation to prove to the appropriate audience that its specific form of intervention (i.e., force, sanctions, etc.) is appropriate given the causes of justification that support the intervention. I referred to these criteria as the *just intervention criteria* or the JIC. Moreover, if the JIC are not met, then it must be concluded that the intervention is either grossly negligent or motivated solely for self-interest; I have argued that in either case the intervention is unethical. I have shown that all of the plausible causes that may be used to justify the United States' war intervention in Iraq have little or no chance of meeting the JIC. We may conclude therefore that according to Vitoria, the United States' war intervention in Iraq is unjust.

#### Endnotes

1. Vitoria says: "This whole dispute and relection [on whether it is lawful to baptize the children of unbelievers against the wishes of their parents?] has arisen again because of these barbarians in the New World, commonly called Indian, who came under the power of the Spaniards some forty years ago, having been previously unknown to our world." Vitoria. "On The American Indians." In *Francisco De Vitoria Political Writings*, edited by Anthony Pagden and Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 233. This anthology includes the following of Vitoria's unpublished works: *On Civil Power*; *I On the Power of the Church*; *II On the Power of the Church*; *On Law: Lectures on ST I-II. 90-105*; *On Dietary Laws, or Self-Restraint*; *On the American Indians*; and *On the Law of War*.
2. This era was Spain's Golden Century 1500-1650 (*El Siglo de Oro*). This era of Spanish history is also called the "Second Scholasticism" because it produced some of the greatest philosophers and theologians not only of Spain but of Europe. Since the institution that cultivated the minds of many of these intellectuals was the University of Salamanca, these theologians have come to be known as "The School of Salamanca." Included among these were Francisco

- De Vitoria (1485-1546), Melchoir Cano (1509-1560), Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), Bartolomé de Medina (1527-1580), Diego de Zúñiga (1526-1598), Alfonso de Castro (1495-1558), Benito Pererio (1535-1610), Gregorio de Valencia (1549-1602), Gabriel Vázquez (1549-1604), Francisco de Toledo (1533-1599), Pedro de Fonseca (1528-1599), Domingo Bañez (1528-1604), Juan Martínez de Ripalda (1594-1648), and Luis de Molina (1535-1600). See José Luis Abellán. *Historia Del Pensamiento Español: de Séneca a nuestro días* (Madrid: Editorial Espasa Calpe, S.A.), 206-235.
3. Michael Walzer. *Just and Unjust Wars*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (New York: Basic Books, 1977), xi.
  4. *Ibid.*, 22.
  5. See Vitoria, *On The American Indians*, 233.
  6. These forms of interventions may overlap one another. So, it may be that an egoistic intervention may also be an intervention for the purpose of war and so on.
  7. It is interesting to note that Vitoria's political writings were motivated by the latter, specifically on whether it is lawful to baptize the children of unbelievers against the wishes of their parents? See *On The Indians*, 233.
  8. Vitoria, *On Civil Power*, 3. Vitoria says: "This passage [For there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1)] raises a number of problems, but I will be strictly confined to the single topic of lay or secular power, avoiding unnecessary digressions."
  9. The other two questions are: 2) A monarch may be appointed over the whole of Christendom by the majority of Christians; and 3) Laws and constitutions are binding in conscience. Vitoria. *On Civil Power*, 30 and 32.
  10. *Ibid.*, 9-10.
  11. *Ibid.*, 18.
  12. Michael Walzer agrees with this principle. He says: "But intervention is differently understood [than war]. The word is not defined as a criminal activity, and though the practice of intervening often threatens the territorial integrity and political independence of invaded state, it can sometimes be justified. It is more important to stress at the outset, however, that it always has to be justified." *Just and Unjust Wars*, 86.
  13. Michael Walzer also holds this position. He says, "The burden of proof falls on any political leader who tries to shape the domestic arrangements or alter the conditions of life in a foreign country. And when the attempt is made with armed forces, the burden is especially heavier." *Just and Unjust Wars*, 86.
  14. The question concerning who the leader needs to persuade is an important issue. If the issues concerned are international, he would have to consult the leaders of other states. If the issue is self-defense, then the leader would have to persuade the appropriate parties as set out by the laws that govern the state. In our case, this would be Congress. Vitoria argues that neither the subjects nor the soldiers of a state need to be persuaded of a just cause of war before its leader decides to enter into war. I would argue that in a democracy in the twenty-first century a leader ought to consult and receive the approval of the citizens before it commits the state to participate in any armed conflict with another sovereign state.
  15. The question concerning whom a leader needs to consult before going into war is an important issue. According to Vitoria, a leader should consult "wise men." This would be the equivalent of experts in our day. If a leader does not consult wise men or acts contrary to the advise of wise men and enters into an unjust war in good conscience (i.e., believing that it is a just war for the common good) he would be responsible for a wrong and unethical act—a crime of war. In the introduction of *On The Indians*, "Whether this dispute is justified," Vitoria argues, "But where there is some reasonable doubt as to whether an action is good or bad, just or unjust, then it is pertinent to question and deliberate, rather than acting rashly without any prior investigation of what is lawful and what is not." These things which have both good and bad on both sides are like many kinds of contracts, sales, and other transactions; if undertaken without due deliberation, on the mere assumption that they are lawful, they may lead a man into unpardonable wrong doing. In that case, a plea of ignorance will be invalid; it is obvious that the man's ignorance was not invincible, since he failed to do everything he could to consult beforehand what was lawful or not. It follows that, for an action to be good in cases in which a person has no other means of certainty, it is a necessary condition that he act in accordance with the ruling and verdict of wise men. This is defined as one of the necessary conditions of a good action in the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1106b36 – 1107a2). "Similarly, if a man does consult wise men on a doubtful case, and then disregards their verdict, he acts wrongly, even if the action is in itself lawful, [My emphasis] 234-236.
  16. Vitoria says, "First, difference of religion cannot be a cause of just war." *On the Laws of War*, 302.
  17. Vitoria says, "Second, enlargement of empire cannot be a cause of just war." *On the Laws of War*, 303.
  18. Vitoria says, "Third, the personal glory or convenience of the prince is not a cause of just war." *On the Laws of War*, 303.
  19. Vitoria, *On the Laws of War*, 303.
  20. *Ibid.*, 303.
  21. *Ibid.*, 303
  22. Self-defense requires that a sovereign state be unjustly attacked. Therefore there cannot be case and *unjust* self-defense.
  23. Vitoria, *On the American Indians*, 281-282.
  24. Vitoria, *On the Laws of War*, 300.
  25. *Ibid.*, 305.
  26. *Ibid.*, 303
  27. *Ibid.*, 304-5.
  28. Vitoria, *On the Indians*, 288.
  29. *Ibid.*, 271.
  30. Vitoria, *On the Laws of War*, 325-6.
  31. *Ibid.*, 326.
  32. *Ibid.*, 326.
  33. Vitoria, *On the Indians*, 288.
  34. The Bush administration has not recognized this cause as its primary or fundamental cause for going into war with Iraq.
  35. The Bush administration also felt it necessary to re-evaluate the standards of preemption. Woodward

describes it as follows: “After 9/11 it was clear to Cheney that the threat from terrorism had changed and grown enormously. So two matters would have to be changed. First, the standard of proof would have to be lowered—smoking gun irrefutable evidence would not have to be required for the United States to act to defend itself. Second, defense alone wasn’t enough. They needed an offense. The most serious threat now facing the United States was nuclear weapons or a biological or chemical agent in the hands of a terrorist inside the country’s borders. And everything, in his view, had to be done to stop it.” *Plan of Attack*, 30.

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## ***Eurocentrism and the Philosophy of Liberation***

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In this paper, I consider a problem that has plagued various versions of the philosophy of liberation.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, proponents of the philosophy of liberation generally counsel that various forms of liberation in at least the Americas require that we should fight Eurocentrism and resist the ontology and conceptual framework of Europe. On the other hand, most of the work done in this tradition relies heavily on the terminology and theoretical apparatus of various strands of European philosophy. The apparent disconnect between the aims and methods (or, if you like, the theory and practice) has given rise to a criticism I call *The Eurocentrism Problem*.<sup>2</sup>

In what follows, I argue that the Eurocentrism Problem has not received an adequate reply. Until it has, there is reason

to be skeptical about the philosophy of liberation as it currently exists. However, a reply can be made—though it requires we fundamentally change how the philosophy of liberation is conceived of and how it is developed.

In section 1, I consider the motivations and implications of the Eurocentrism criticism. In section 2, I take up and criticize an important reply to it and offer a blueprint for an alternative conception of the philosophy of liberation. In the final sections, I consider objections and replies

### 1. The Eurocentrism Problem

The Eurocentrism Problem has several facets that we can group under the headings of dialectical, contextual, pedagogical, and practical. In what follows, I give a brief characterization of each of these facets.

The most obvious worry is that because the philosophy of liberation is pursued in the terminology and categories of European philosophers, it re-inscribes the Eurocentrism that it struggles against. If one thinks, as Enrique Dussel and others have maintained, that European categories and concepts have played a crucial role in the historical<sup>3</sup> and contemporary<sup>4</sup> domination of the Americas, a philosophy of liberation that relies on those categories will seem a sham. Genuine liberation—economic, cultural, sexual, and so on—appears compromised when such liberation is framed in terms of the conceptual system that is bound up with the very systems of domination it is supposed to overcome. This is the dialectical facet of the Eurocentrism Problem.

The Eurocentrism Problem also has a contextual facet whose recognition requires some familiarity with historical currents in Latin American thought. A long-standing apparent vice of Latin American philosophers and educated elites has been a preoccupation with foreign, especially European, intellectual and cultural production. The roots of the phenomenon are varied but largely tied to the history of colonization in Latin America. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the seminal works in the history of Latin American philosophy are calls to produce autochthonous philosophical programs, a philosophy responsive to local conditions and problems.<sup>5</sup>

The extent to which the philosophy of liberation is perceived to rely on European philosophical discourse raises several difficulties unique to this context. By those who are antecedently convinced of the value of Latin American thought or, more minimally, the need to do philosophy in autochthonous terms, the philosophy of liberation can appear to be a regressive philosophical movement, another incarnation of the long sequence of European movements that were enthusiastically embraced, and then ignominiously abandoned by Latin American philosophers.<sup>6</sup> It thus perpetuates a disappointing dependency on foreign cultural production, augmenting the threat that what original cultural production there is in Latin America will be co-opted by foreign cultural systems.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, even if the philosophy of liberation is recognized as sufficiently original, its reliance on European philosophical categories may be taken to imply—however unintentionally—that Latin American concepts, theories, and vocabulary are insufficient to the task of liberation.

The perceived Europhilia that purportedly infects the philosophy of liberation is also troubling external to the Latin American philosophical context. *From the perspective of the mainline of the European tradition*, the most prevalent forms of the philosophy of liberation appear to be recastings of Levinas and Marx and, to a lesser extent, Hegel and Heidegger. The possibility that any philosophical contribution made by the philosophy of liberation could be original, genuine, and valuable is threatened by the simple (and misleading) observation that the work is merely derivative. If it is derivative, so the logic

goes, then there is little point in spending the time reading the texts, training students, and encouraging research and implementation of its ideas. And, since the Latin American region has limited international status as a site for innovative philosophical production, there is little reason to give work from that region—especially work derivative of European masters—the benefit of the doubt.<sup>8</sup> In sum, since Latin America's philosophical contributions have little role in the global economy of ideas, anything that smacks of dependency on foreign—especially European—philosophical movements will ultimately work against the success of the philosophy of liberation.

A third facet of the problem is pedagogical. Again, some background is in order. As Mexican philosopher Guillermo Hurtado has noted, the study of philosophy in a third world country can and perhaps should generate serious reflection on the conditions that are required to pay the salaries of philosophers in the third world.<sup>9</sup> Concerns such as these can make philosophical approaches concerned with the primacy of *praxis* especially attractive in this context. It is thus no surprise that social and political philosophy are to many strands of philosophy in Latin America what metaphysics and epistemology have been for much of the European and Anglo-American philosophical traditions. (It would be an interesting project in comparative philosophy to examine the extent to which the comparative economic poverty of a nation or region is correlated with an emphasis of social and political philosophy.) Since the philosophy of liberation has always emphasized the priority of *praxis*, the “face of the oppressed,” and the ethics of genuine engagement with the Other, it may appear to be a natural fit for philosophical concerns in Latin America. To some extent, this is an advantage of the philosophy of liberation, but here again the Eurocentrism Problem introduces particular challenges.

Because of its varied upstream influences, contemporary philosophy of liberation bristles with exceptionally thick terminological challenges for the uninitiated.<sup>10</sup> Among students of philosophy, the cost of admission to the philosophy of liberation is, minimally, substantial background in the thought of nineteenth and twentieth century French and German thinkers. Though this has its own costs in the United States, this concern has an especially sharp bite in Latin America, where the time and resources required to study philosophy are a luxury that few can afford. If satisfactory engagement with the philosophy of liberation requires that one master another intellectual tradition *first*, this seems to raise at least two problems. First, awareness of the need to master a foreign tradition first may serve as a deterrent to the study of the philosophy of liberation. Some will be deterred for reasons having to do with the contextual issues I raised above. Others will be deterred by the time and resource cost of mastering a foreign tradition before studying the philosophy of liberation. Second, when students are *not* deterred by these factors, there may be a tendency to be drawn to the philosophy of liberation without adequate prior preparation. The resultant level of poor scholarship is liable to disadvantage the development of the philosophy of liberation in both the short and long runs.<sup>11</sup> Thus, part of the concern motivating objections about the Eurocentrism Problem seems grounded in pedagogical concerns.

A final aspect of the Eurocentrism problem concerns the implementation of the philosophy of liberation. The most influential forms of the philosophy of liberation take practical philosophy to be first philosophy.<sup>12</sup> However, one might reasonably worry that academic theorizing that maintains that “Liberation is not a phenomenal, intrasystemic action; liberation is the *praxis* that subverts the phenomenological

order and pierces it to let in a metaphysical transcendence, which is the plenary critique of the established, fixed, normalized, crystallized, dead”<sup>13</sup> will be ill-suited to convince the very people it aims at liberating—the poor, the oppressed, and other groups not likely to have much formal education. The abstract discourse of the philosophy of liberation may seem ill-suited to achieving the practical aims of the theory.<sup>14</sup>

To summarize, the Eurocentrism Problem has at least four aspects to it: dialectical, contextual, pedagogical, and practical. Individually and collectively, these issues weigh against a philosophy of liberation couched in a heavily Eurocentric discourse.

## 2. Codetermination, Wide Philosophy of Liberation, and Eurocentrisms

Among philosophers of liberation, Enrique Dussel is both the most prominent and perhaps the most vulnerable to the charge of Eurocentrism.<sup>15</sup> His work is heavily indebted to the philosophical apparatus of various European philosophers. However, focusing on Dussel raises a number of distinct challenges. First, his philosophical corpus is immense. Given its complexity and variety over time, criticisms that may hold true of one period of his work do not always hold true of a different period of his work.<sup>16</sup> Second, although much of his work has appeared in translation, significant portions of it remain untranslated or otherwise inaccessible. So, this discussion will necessarily be constrained by some of these limitations. Still, there is good scholarship on and by Dussel that is now widely available, and it provides adequate resources to evaluate some lines of response to the Eurocentrism Problem.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the most effective response to the Eurocentrism Problem is the one offered by Eduardo Mendieta. Consider the reply he offers in *The Underside of Modernity*:

A frequent criticism against Dussel is that he is not really developing a Latin American liberation philosophy because he remains as fixated on European philosophical discourses as the most naïve Eurocentrist. This criticism is not only unfounded, but also blind to the dialectic of ideas. It is unfounded because Dussel has pursued one of the most extensive analyses of Latin American autochthonous critical and emancipatory thinking. ...His histories of the church, theology, and philosophy in Latin America are compendiums and encyclopedias of occluded and forgotten popular knowledge. His histories are always histories from the “underside,” from the side of the oppressed. This criticism, furthermore, is blind to the dialectic of ideas by pretending that there has not been a co-determination of both center and periphery. Latin America is as much what it is and what is not in the eyes of European thinkers (think of Hegel and Marx), as Europe is what it is and is not in the eyes of Caliban the savage, the primitive.<sup>18</sup>

Though Mendieta’s response goes some distance towards answering the Eurocentrism Problem, I do not think it is sufficient. While Dussel’s histories may be compendiums of occluded and forgotten popular knowledge, the main thrust of the Eurocentrism criticism is not directed at his histories. Rather, the target of the criticism is against his “systematic” philosophical work, work that is not primarily historical or theological in orientation but instead seeks to advance the main lines of contemporary *philosophy* of liberation. This is not meant to disregard the historical features of the more systematic texts. However, I take it that there is a useful distinction to be had between Dussel’s more historically-oriented works on church and theology, to which Mendieta

appeals, and Dussel’s more theoretical works, on behalf of which Mendieta mentions the historical works.<sup>19</sup>

What is more, Dussel himself appears to reject a key assumption in Mendieta’s defense of him. In a telling passage, Dussel discusses the relationship of his work in philosophy, theology, and in the history of the church, arguing that “I have always written works on these three discursive, epistemological fields, but I have always exercised great caution not to confuse them or even treat them in the same work.”<sup>20</sup> He goes on to explicitly caution against moving from one of his discourses to another. Thus, to the extent to which we accept Dussel’s division of his own work, it is no defense of his philosophical works to cite his histories of the church or his theological works. Therefore, if the Eurocentrism criticism against Dussel’s systematically philosophical works is as unfounded as Mendieta suggests, it cannot be unfounded because his historical works are encyclopedias of non-European knowledge. The point might even be put this way: Dussel’s philosophical work should be more like his historical work, more frequently filled with the concepts and ideas of Latin America.

Regarding Mendieta’s second response, that this criticism of Dussel is blind to the codetermination of both center and periphery, the issue is more complicated. Let us grant the idea that the center and periphery are codetermining. Here I may grant too much, especially given the slipperiness of concepts like “the center” and “the periphery” in Dussel’s work.<sup>21</sup> If it ultimately makes sense to speak of center and periphery, it will only be because we are careful to specify center and periphery of *what*. In Dussel’s early work, it is the center and periphery of “political space.”<sup>22</sup> Later, he more explicitly adopts the language of Wallerstein’s discussion of world systems.<sup>23</sup>

Note, however, that the fact of the codetermination of the center and the periphery does not, by itself, rescue Dussel from criticism. Though it does go some distance to resolving the standard concerns captured by the dialectical facet of the problem, the Eurocentrism critic might instead argue a point about the *comparative* benefits of a philosophy of liberation that is less indebted or codetermined by the European center. Rather than, for example, attempting to deploy the ontology of the center for the ends of the periphery, it may be more dialectically beneficial for a philosophy of liberation to develop local categories, ideas, and labels. Given the inescapable facts of history and context, this project will necessarily be partly defined by aspects of the center. However, the degree to which it is so determined is less, and therefore perhaps more appropriate for a philosophy of liberation. At the very least, it promises greater independence from both potential and actual conceptual colonization and co-optation by European philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

So, the critic might well concede that center and periphery are codetermining in a way that is reproduced in the dialectic of ideas, but argue that what is at stake is the degree to which the periphery does its part in determining the center. And, I take it, that the most powerful version of the objection just is that there is—or ought to be—a better way for the periphery to do its codetermination of the center. Thus, it is not an adequate answer to *this* criticism to say that there has been or will continue to be codetermination of the center.

Here, I think philosophers of liberation have more they can say. The point of appropriating European discourse is to reconfigure the dominant categories to show what they hide, presume, and exclude. There are at least two models of how this appropriation might go. Call the models *narrow* and *wide*. On the narrow model, philosophers of liberation do as I have

described: they use the concepts and discourse of the center, but reconfigure them to reveal what is sometimes called the “underside” of these categories and their implementation, that is, the otherwise hidden histories of who is excluded, marginalized, or oppressed by various conceptual and social arrangements. On the wide model, the categories of the center are reconfigured and undermined (as in the narrow model) but, where possible, also supplemented with terms, categories, and discourses from various local or “peripheral” sources.<sup>25</sup> Even if most philosophers of liberation sign on to the wide model—which they should—the dialectical concern of the Eurocentrism Problem remains, though now as a complaint that most philosophers of liberation are failing to be wide enough. So, no matter how many times you meet with the indigenous, poor, oppressed, or peripheral peoples of Latin America, if your theoretical work does comparatively little to systematically rely on their categories in the fight against oppression, it will fail to count as a suitably wide philosophy of liberation.

A further difficulty for the codetermination reply is that at least the contextual and pedagogical aspects of the problem remain. Even if a less Eurocentric discourse of liberation brings no dialectical advantage, or even if it brings some dialectical disadvantage to the philosophy of liberation, the historical context of Latin American Eurocentrism will provide grounds to criticize contemporary philosophy of liberation. Recognizing codetermination does little to discourage the marginalization of the philosophy of liberation internally and externally to Latin America. Indeed, highlighting the fact of codetermination—if indeed it is a fact—may strike the ears of particularly cynical critics as merely another attempt to justify Eurocentrism or, perhaps only slightly more charitably, as a piece of false consciousness. Similarly, recognition that ideas, even the ideas espoused by one’s favorite form of the philosophy of liberation, are tied to the codetermination of Europe and Latin America will not reduce the deleterious pedagogical consequences of the philosophy of liberation. Recognition of the codetermination point might make the requisite prefatory studies of French and German philosophy seem more appealing to some students, but some of that charm will surely wane when it becomes clear that the direction of apparent influence in those European traditions does not tend to favor the Latin American side of the codetermination equation.<sup>26</sup>

I do think there are resources for the philosophy of liberation to respond to the practical issue (that is, the concern that a Eurocentric discourse will impede the implementation of liberationist practices). The key here is to distinguish the theory and practice of the philosophy of liberation. For praxis-oriented theories such as the philosophy of liberation, this is, I think, a complicated issue whose adequate resolution would take us far a field. However, given the acceptability of some division between the abstract theoretical work of philosophers and the practical implementation of philosophical aims by activists, the jargon of the former need not grossly impede the activities of the latter. Though some interaction of interests is, of course, to be expected, we need not suppose that those who are “on the ground” struggling for freedom from various forms of oppression will need to speak in terms of “the praxis that subverts the phenomenological order and pierces it to let in a metaphysical transcendence”—even if that is precisely what they are doing.<sup>27</sup>

I have been speaking as though there continues to be such a codetermination between the periphery and center. Strictly speaking, Mendieta’s point was that there *was* a codetermination. But if Mendieta’s claim is just that the history of codetermination is enough to justify the attempt to provide “genuinely” Latin American philosophy by re-deploying the

historical center’s categories, then it is even more puzzling why the current influence of strands of French and German philosophy in the philosophy of liberation is at all appropriate. Though both France and Germany have played greater and lesser roles in the history of Latin America, twentieth century “Continental” philosophy is a strange choice for a codeterminant, given that the overwhelming bulk of colonial and oppressive traditions in Latin America were either Scholastic or, in the late nineteenth century, liberal and then positivist. It simply is not clear what benefit there is to using discourses only loosely connected—if at all—to these traditions.

The focus on twentieth century European philosophy is especially puzzling when considering its relevance to contemporary systems of oppression. The codetermination response is legitimate, inasmuch as it can be, to the extent that it has correctly identified the center and the role it plays in the codetermination of ideas, concepts, and so on in the periphery. However, a very plausible case can be made for the United States being the cultural and economic center of the contemporary world order. At least since the end of the second World War, Europe’s influence in the determination of culture and ideas has been significantly diminished, whatever remains of its political influence. As Pierre Bourdieu recently argued,

There is, on the one hand, a Europe autonomous from the dominant economic and political forces and capable, as such, of playing a political role on a world scale. On the other, there is the Europe bound by a kind of customs union to the United States and condemned, as a result, to a fate similar to that of Canada, that is to say, to be gradually dispossessed of any economic and cultural independence from the dominant power. In fact, truly European Europe functions as a decoy, concealing the Euro-American Europe that is on the horizon and which it fosters by winning over the support of those who expect of Europe the very opposite of what it is doing and of what it is becoming.<sup>28</sup>

This is not to deny a real cultural, economic, and political power in Europe. Rather, the point is that Europe’s cultural influence has greatly diminished and that much of the influence it retains is dependent on (that is, informed by) United States culture. In contrast, the cultural power of the United States is increasingly independent of contemporary Europe (and, of course, its nineteenth and early twentieth century philosophical movements).

These are disputable claims, to be sure. But if they are right, the point about the codetermination of periphery and center seems to render Mendieta’s point irrelevant—or at least damaging to the cause of contemporary philosophy of liberation. It is irrelevant if it turns out that the favored European discourses of contemporary philosophy of liberation play little or no role in the current codetermination of the center and periphery’s dialectic of ideas. It is damaging if having some role in the contemporary dialectic of ideas and the economies of culture, politics, and finance is a prerequisite to being an appropriate condition for a project of liberation. If one aims to liberate the oppressed from a conceptual, economic, and cultural order whose center is the United States, the concepts and discourse of late nineteenth and twentieth century French and German philosophy appear rather remote from this dialectic, or, more minimally, they are not central elements in this process of codetermination.<sup>29</sup>

The talk of centers and peripheries suggests a distinction between two senses of “Eurocentrism.” One sense, a

normative sense, is clearly objectionable. This is the sense in which, roughly, something is prejudicially or unreflectively pro-European. Another sense is not as obviously pejorative, something we might call descriptive, highlighting when something is focused on or centered on Europe. Given the project of undermining the categories and conceptual system of a European center, a suitably sophisticated philosophy of liberation might count as descriptively Eurocentric without being normatively Eurocentric. To the extent to which Mendieta's codetermination point is right, and to the extent that an effective philosophy of liberation must incorporate this fact by working to transform the central categories of the center in a project of wide-philosophy of liberation, it seems difficult to make stick the charge of objectionable normative Eurocentrism.

Even so, the philosophy of liberation's descriptive Eurocentrism is objectionable precisely because it is focused on or centered on Europe when it should be focused somewhere else.<sup>30</sup> If we take seriously the idea that Mendieta seems to suggest—that an effective philosophy of liberation will be in some deep way intertwined with the codetermination of ideas between center and periphery—and we concede that the United States is, in many cases, the site of one or another center that the philosophy of liberation is concerned to struggle against, then it seems that what is needed is a (for lack of a better term) U.S.-centric Philosophy of Liberation. In contrast to contemporary Eurocentric philosophy of liberation, this philosophy of liberation would involve the re-deployment of categories central to the various systems of oppression rooted in the hemispheric and global power of the United States and its primary economic, cultural, and political alliances.

Such a philosophy of liberation would, of course, retain the aim of securing liberation across the various contexts that are of concern to philosophers of liberation. And this new philosophy of liberation's theoretical work would be heavily embedded in a project of subverting the central categories that are used to cloud our sensitivity to the corrosive effects of these oppressive systems. But this philosophy of liberation would be shorn of its (descriptively) Eurocentric discourse, replaced with a U.S.-responsive discourse that is alive to the possibilities of reconfiguring it for the purpose of fighting oppression.<sup>31</sup>

A U.S.-centric philosophy of liberation does not already exist. To bring it into existence would require some important foundational work that is beyond the scope of this paper. What I can offer, however, is a preliminary blueprint for that project.

As a first step, we need an account of United States power relations and the way in which its conceptual schemes contribute to the occlusion of various oppressive political, economic, and social arrangements. Minimally, this would be an account of the language of rights, the public discourse of evangelical democracy, the purported importance of open markets, the significance of terrorism in domestic and foreign policy, and the commodification of culture and individual expression. To some extent, perhaps a large extent, we already have a critical discourse of the ontology of the United States. The key move for a U.S.-centric philosophy of liberation, however, is the step that follows. The new philosophers of liberation would need to set about determining the most effective ways to recast these central categories. The aim would be to create an alternative theoretical discourse in the service of various projects of liberation. Crucially, though, this would be a discourse framed not in terms of centers and peripheries, totalities, alterities, and the like. Instead, it would be framed in the concepts of mainstream theoretical discourse in the United States.

Here, too, though, there are temptations to be avoided. There is, of course, a wide range of theoretical discourses in the United States, and some of them are informed by precisely the same intellectual traditions that gave rise to the Eurocentrism Problem for the philosophy of liberation. To the extent that these discourses *in fact* inform existing mechanisms of oppression (as opposed to reflecting comparatively isolated academic commentary on them), a certain degree of incorporation of this ontology is sensible. However, it is clear that the overwhelmingly influential discourse of United States power and its attendant conceptual scheme is far more heavily indebted to rational choice theory, Adam Smith, and conceptions of rights than it is to Marx, Heidegger, and Levinas.

If we assume that jurisprudential and economic discourses provide the best models for the conceptual schemes that govern the systems of oppression centered in the United States, then a U.S.-centric philosophy of liberation will need to work through the reappropriation of these discourses. For example, consider that legal status plays a central role in how various populations are conceived and treated (e.g., "illegal aliens" and "illegal combatants"). The conceptual resources of the United States legal framework will provide the very tools that a new philosophy of liberation will rely on to combat various forms of oppression in at least these contexts. The traditional model of the philosophy of liberation has shown us one way to do this—philosophers elucidate the limits of the ontology presumed in the philosophical discourse (in this case, illegality), reveal the "underside" of those categories, and show how central categories can be recast in ways that recognize the humanity or legitimate rights or interest of the oppressed. For example, in domains where the status of "illegality" is determined by criminal law, the recasting of those categories will exploit the theoretical resources of the criminal law (chiefly retributivist and consequentialist formulations of justification). So, forms of oppression created by the implementation of the United States categories of criminality will be reconstructed by appeal to, for example, the rights and just desserts of the victims, or the overall effects on the large numbers of disadvantaged peoples.

The presence of both retributivist and utilitarian discourse within legal discourse about the criminal law is telling in an important way. What it shows is that it would be unreasonable to expect that a U.S.-centric philosophy of liberation will have anything like a monistic or unified discourse. The same set of categories do not apply equally well across all contexts or networks of oppression because networks of oppression are oftentimes configured by a motley of normative concepts.<sup>32</sup> There will be domains in which one or another discourse is predominant. The language of rights and preference satisfaction will likely retain considerable pull in those domains most obviously structured by economic and political systems centered in the United States. But oppression, even U.S.-centered oppression, is hardly limited to these contexts and so, in other contexts, different discourses will be required. What that entails is that a U.S.-centric philosophy of liberation is unlikely to have a deep normative systematicity, apart from the unifying practical aim to uncover and eradicate systems of oppression.

Consequentialist reasoning will take a prominent role in recasting our understanding of the effects of economic systems of oppression for two reasons. First, it is notoriously difficult to show why national borders and other in-group/out-group biases have normative force internal to consequentialist considerations.<sup>33</sup> This is not to say that comparatively greater regard (of which "special obligations" are an instance) for the needs and interests of those who stand in some relation of

social proximity cannot be justified in consequentialist terms. Rather, it is to say that liberationist reasoning that comes in consequentialist form will already be structured in a way that initially *disfavors* in-group bias and is resistant to disregard for the suffering of non-nationals. At least on a standard conception of consequentialist normative considerations, there is no reason to think that normative considerations stop at the edges of standardly conceived in-groups (families, communities, nations, genders, races, ethnic groups, etc.). A second reason why consequentialist reasoning will have special significance in contexts of economic oppression is that in many cases what is at stake are the lives of the poor, especially in the global south or the Third World. That, as Dussel has repeatedly reminded us, is the vast majority of humanity. These examples of how liberationist thought might be recast in U.S.-centric terms are obviously impoverished in a variety of ways, but a more systematic and developed version of this new philosophy of liberation will involve more expansive aims and discourses.

A new philosophy of liberation will be considerably better suited to achieving its ends than is the current form of philosophy of liberation. Minimally, it would avoid the Eurocentrism Problem that plagues current influential forms of the philosophy of liberation. Of course, that it is U.S.-responsive is not meant to be a permanent or implastic feature of any philosophy of liberation. As suggested above, as the facts about the source of various oppressive regimes change, so too should the philosophy of liberation. And, we need not suppose that the chief source of oppressive arrangements is always nation states. Multinational, transnational, subnational groups, and social institutions can have significant power to oppress.

### 3. Some Objections and Replies

The very idea of a new, descriptively U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation, anchored in a careful rewriting of the language and concepts, with currency in the United States will doubtlessly encounter resistance on the part of contemporary philosophers of liberation. Beyond the obvious and natural reluctance to dramatically change the character of an ongoing philosophical program, there are at least three obvious objections that merit reply.

One line of response to the proposal I have offered is to warn against a philosophy of liberation that is couched in the terms of “analytic philosophy,” for it risks superficiality, depth, reflectiveness, etc. In a related context, Mario Sáenz has made remarks that are in keeping with this concern:

It is true that jargon may exclude others, and it often used precisely with that intention. We must be careful, however, in not doing in our relationship with the dominant analytic discourse in philosophy departments in the United States what Fourier tried to do when he scheduled an audience with the Czar of Russia to convince him of the virtues of socialism: We must not reduce discourse to a level of unthinking superficiality for the sake of a place at the table with those who have directed that philosophy be done without self-criticism.<sup>34</sup>

First, it is not obviously the case that a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation needs to be an “analytic” philosophy of liberation. It does seem fair to say that the discourse of analytic philosophy is more closely bound up in the conceptual currency of United States politics, economics, and culture than philosophy of liberation as it currently stands.<sup>35</sup> So, an “analytic” philosophy of liberation may make a certain amount of sense. However, a suitably U.S.-responsive philosophical discourse will be calibrated toward the foundations of U.S. political,

economic, cultural, and conceptual hegemony. If that turns out to be recognizably analytic, fine—but it need not be. The point is to effectively fight oppression via a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation, not an analytic-responsive philosophy of liberation. And if you accept the contention by Dussel, Mendieta, and other philosophers of liberation that this is best done through a recasting of the center’s categories, then you should think it is time to recast the discourse of philosophy of liberation.

A second point of which we ought not need reminding is that even if there were an analytic philosophy of liberation, it need not be committed to any particular style, approach, methodology, or ontology. There is no one thing that is “analytic philosophy” any more than there is one thing that is “Continental philosophy.” Consequently, it would be sheer prejudice to suppose that only one and not the other can be superficial, profound, rigorous, or valuable. It is, I maintain, just as feasible to undertake “the praxis that subverts the phenomenological order and pierces it to let in a metaphysical transcendence” couched in broadly analytic terms as it is to undertake “a set of suitably normatively-informed practices that changes the way we think about categories of interaction with each other and the world, given the end of attaining a more ideal world” in broadly Continental terms.<sup>36</sup>

A second objection one might make to the proposal for a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation is that it has no advantage over a (descriptively) Eurocentric philosophy of liberation with respect to the contextual problem of Eurocentrism. As long as philosophy of liberation is foreign-oriented, it will garner considerable resistance because of features in the Latin American context. So, to the extent that the contextual aspect of the Eurocentrism Problem is genuine, it too is a problem for a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation.

Here my reply is less confident, though I think it can be sustained. First, I take it that the opposition to United States intellectual and cultural influence, while significant, does not run as culturally deep as concerns about Eurocentrism. Latin America and its cultural (including intellectual) products are so systematically and pervasively bound up by the European legacy of conquest and colonization that fears about Eurocentrism and its threat to local identity are ultimately inescapable in a way that concerns about the United States’ influence cannot (yet) be. Second, there are already important antecedents to the project of appropriation, transformation, and re-deployment of United States intellectual and cultural life.<sup>37</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that the existence of such a tradition might mitigate the skepticism that would greet a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation as opposed to a Eurocentric philosophy of liberation. Third, it is also relevant that the United States is becoming increasingly “Latin American” in a way that Europe is not. The obvious demographic changes, coupled with the simple fact that some of the best work in the philosophy of liberation is done by Latinos of both Latin American and United States origins, will necessarily make the fear of “outside” influence less pronounced than it might otherwise be if (as is now the case) scholars are demanding the incorporation of a (non-Latino) European discourse for liberation. Fourth, inasmuch as the codetermination and related points hold, what philosophers of liberation should want is to have a wide philosophy of liberation that is parasitic on the dominant discourses. So, even if there is a generally justifiable fear of U.S.-centric theoretical discourses, the efficacy of such a discourse given the current geopolitical order should trump concerns about U.S.-centrism. At the same time, this exigency should not blind us to the risks inherent in developing a philosophy of liberation in the terms of any

conceptual scheme implicated in oppressive conceptual, economic, and social arrangements.

A third objection one might direct at the U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation proposal is that it does nothing to remove the pedagogical dimensions of the Eurocentrism Problem. At best, it merely replaces the need to learn European philosophical discourses with the need to learn some other discourse. Since a problem replaced by another is little in the way of a solution, a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation gains us no ground against this aspect of the Eurocentrism Problem.

In reply, there are two points to be made. First, the categories of the chief conceptual systems in use in the United States (market capitalism, neo-liberal political philosophy, etc.) already have wide play throughout much of the world, including Latin America. Optimistically, this means that the proposed recasting of the liberationist project only eliminates a layer of jargon or intellectual apparatus, replanting it in concepts and ontologies that are already in existence in much of Latin America. Second, as noted above, part of the pedagogical aspect of the Eurocentrism Problem hinges on contextual features. If what I have said about the contextual benefits of a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation is true, then this will have benefits for the pedagogical aspects of the problem as well. Third and finally, it need not be the case that, from the perspective of pedagogy, a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation is obviously better than Eurocentric philosophy of liberation. All that is required to justify the switch from Eurocentric to U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation is that, overall, a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation does a better job of attaining the end of liberation. Given the acceptance of codetermination and related points, and given the shift in center, there is reason to think a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation would do just that.

#### 4. Desde el Principio

The Eurocentrism Problem deserves to be taken seriously, for it is a charge that threatens many versions of the philosophy of liberation. If there is something objectionable about contemporary philosophy of liberation's reliance on European philosophy, it infects much of the philosophy of liberation as it is currently pursued.

That said, existing philosophers of liberation can offer a reply to at least the dialectical aspect of the Eurocentrism Problem. It seems reasonable to hold that any discourse—including discourses that are only tangentially related to the dialectic of ideas between considered centers and peripheries—can be used to formulate stringent critiques of various systems of oppression. Though there are surely complicated ethical and political issues in doing so, we need not deny that philosophy of liberation can be articulated and defended in any language and within a wide range of borrowed or autochthonous ontologies. It is just not plausible to maintain that any idea will be corrupted in virtue of its terminological origins being traced back to Europe. Entire new philosophical vocabularies would have to be invented, which is neither necessary nor desirable. Moreover, to the extent that those newly invented vocabularies are rooted in Spanish, English, or any other European language, this too would seem to raise worries about the inescapability of conceptual oppression by Europe. Thus, if we accept Mendieta's point that there is a certain degree of codetermination of center and periphery that is inevitable and required by an effective philosophy of liberation, then what is needed is not an entirely new vocabulary but only one that is responsive and internal to the discourses of the center(s).

All philosophers are subject to a certain amount of intellectual inertia. We are trained in particular traditions and discourses, and we apply it to whatever contexts strike us as suitable. Too few of us stop to consider whether there are alternative discourses available, perhaps ones we are not ordinarily disposed to using and that might better suit our purposes. Something like this is at the root of the Eurocentrism Problem that contemporary philosophy of liberation faces. Contemporary philosophy of liberation is understandably Eurocentric, given the histories of the relevant figures.<sup>38</sup>

This is not, in itself, problematic if we accept that (1) there is a certain malleability to language and (2) the sensible idea that one effective strategy of resistance is to reshape the familiar oppressive categories so that we become more sensitive to what they exclude, cover up, ignore, and presume. What makes the Eurocentrism Problem a genuine problem for philosophy of liberation are several things: the contextual and pedagogical aspects, of course, and primarily the issue of whether or not philosophy of liberation is *best* served by its Eurocentrism. If I am right, these things favor the transformation of the philosophical practice of philosophy of liberation so that it is more closely engaged with contemporary sources of oppressive discourse, concepts, and ontologies—namely, those of the United States. I have called this a U.S.-responsive philosophy of liberation. But if and when the relevant center shifts, then so too should the discourse of philosophy of liberation. The point is to have a center(s)-responsive discourse, whatever that turns out to be, and not merely a discourse bound up in critiquing, recasting, and revealing problems with just or even primarily Europe.

If I am wrong about this, and if the Eurocentrism Problem is not really a problem for contemporary philosophy of liberation, then I think it is clear that philosophers of liberation still need to offer a better account of the justification of their discourse, given their stated aims. Having said this, though, I should also note that I suspect Mendieta would ultimately agree. His defense of Dussel is clearly not meant to be a sustained defense but a reply to a certain unsophisticated version of the Eurocentrism Problem. But whether I am right or wrong about how philosophy of liberation should reply to the Eurocentrism criticism, a sustained and principled defense is precisely the thing that Dussel and other philosophers of liberation should offer their critics.<sup>39</sup>

#### Endnotes

1. Philosophy of liberation is a somewhat protean category. Broadly put, it takes as its central task nothing less than the liberation of all peoples (though especially the marginalized) from all forms of oppression. Important statements of it include Enrique D. Dussel. *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilina Martinez and Christine Morkovsky, *Filosofía de la liberación* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Arturo Andrés Roig. "The Actual Function of Philosophy in Latin America." In *Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1986); Horacio Cerutti Guldberg. *Filosofía De La Liberación Latinoamericana*, 2a ed. (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992). Other influential philosophical works concerned with themes of liberation in Latin America include Francisco Miró Quesada. *Despertar Y Proyecto Del Filosofar Latinoamericano* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1974); Leopoldo Zea. *Dependencia Y Liberación En La Cultura Latinoamericana*, 1. ed.

- (Mexico: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1974); Leopoldo Zea. *La Filosofía Americana Como Filosofía Sin Más* [1. ed. (México, DF: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1969)]; and Augusto Salazar Bondy. *Sentido Y Problema Del Pensamiento Filosófico Hispano-Americano*, trans. Donald Schmidt (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Center for Latin American Studies, 1969). On some accounts, relevant earlier versions of liberationist thought can be found in José Carlos Mariátegui. *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971) and Samuel Ramos. *El Perfil Del Hombre Y La Cultura En México* (México, DF: Imprenta Mundial, 1934), among other historical antecedents. For these more expansive accounts of liberationist philosophy, see Ofelia Schutte. *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993) and Mario Sáenz. *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought: Latin American Historicism and the Phenomenology of Leopoldo Zea* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1999). For present purposes, I will focus on the Dussellian strand of the philosophy of liberation, which has been taken up by a number of scholars throughout the Americas, as exemplified by the collection edited by Linda Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta. *Thinking from the Underside of History: Enrique Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), and monographs such as Sáenz, *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought* and Michael D. Barber. *Ethical Hermeneutics: Rationality in Enrique Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).
2. Various formulations and suggestions of this criticism can be found in Cerutti Guldberg, *Filosofía De La Liberación Latinoamericana*; Ofelia Schutte. "Origin and Tendencies of the Philosophy of Liberation in Latin American Thought: A Critique of Dussel's Ethics," *The Philosophical Forum* XXII, no. 3 (1991), and Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation*.
  3. See Enrique D. Dussel. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (New York: Continuum, 1995).
  4. See Enrique D. Dussel. *Ética De La Liberación En La Edad De La Globalización Y La Exclusión*, 3. ed. (Madrid: Trotta, 2000); Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*.
  5. See Juan Bautista Alberdi. "Ideas Para Un Curso De Filosofía Contemporánea," *Latinoamérica: Cuadernos de Cultura Latinoamericana*, 9 (1978 [1842]); Francisco Bilbao. "Iniciativa De La América: Idea De Un Congreso Federal De Las Republicas," *Latinoamérica: Cuadernos de Cultura Latinoamericana*, 3 (1978 [1856]); Andrés Bello. "Autonomía Cultural De América," *Latinoamérica: Cuadernos de Cultura Latinoamericana*, 11 (1978 [1848]); and, a bit more recently, Salazar Bondy, *Sentido Y Problema Del Pensamiento*.
  6. The widespread Latin American adoption of Comtean and Spencerian positivism are the best examples of this phenomenon. Classic works discussing the influence of positivism in Latin American include Leopoldo Zea. *The Latin-American Mind* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), Leopoldo Zea. *Positivism in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), and Ricaurte Soler. *El Positivismo Argentino: Pensamiento Filosófico Y Sociológico* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1968).
  7. For an especially vivid version of the problems and complexities with cultural co-optation, see Gomez-Peña, Enrique Chagoya, and Felicia Rice. *Codex Espangliensis* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2000).
  8. For more on the particular and peculiar linguistic, cultural, and institutional barriers that work against the study of philosophy originally written in Spanish, see Jorge J. E. Gracia. *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000). For an examination of some related issues, see Eduardo Mendieta. "Is There Latin American Philosophy?" *Philosophy Today*, 43 (Supp) (1999).
  9. See Guillermo Hurtado. "¿Tiene Sentido Una Filosofía Hispanoamericana?" *La Jornada Semanal*, 22 de Diciembre 1996. Unsurprisingly, in some countries there has been a retreat away from the study of philosophy to more obviously "applied" fields. See Carlos Paladines. "¿Muere O Sobrevive La Filosofía En El Ecuador? Razones De Su Descrédito Y Propuestas Para Su Renacimiento." In *Philosophy of Latin America*, ed. Guttorm Fløistad (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003).
  10. Dussel studied in Europe and his work reflects this, which makes it more accessible to philosophers trained in the relevant European traditions than it does to philosophers who are not. It is therefore worth reminding ourselves that the propagation and development of the philosophy of liberation in the United States reflects this contingent history.
  11. I have made previously suggested a criticism along these lines in Manuel Vargas. "Review of Mario Sáenz's *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought*," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy*, 00 (2000).
  12. See Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 188.
  13. *Ibid.*, 58-9.
  14. For a version of this criticism, see Schutte, "Origins and Tendencies..." There, she remarks that Dussel's "methodology is largely Hegelian and his texts are heavily populated by German and other foreign terms that no Latin American peasant or worker could understand without highly specialized training" (p. 294, n.35).
  15. For important attempts to critically engage with the various strands of the philosophy of liberation, including Dussel's, see Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation* and Cerutti Guldberg; *Filosofía De La Liberación Latinoamericana*; Sáenz, *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought*; and the works collected in Alcoff and Mendieta, *Thinking from the Underside of History: Enrique Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation*.
  16. This is a point emphasized in Enrique D. Dussel. "Epilogue." In *Thinking from the Underside of History*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 270-1. See also his response to Elina Vuola on pp. 284-6 in that same volume.
  17. See n.1.
  18. Eduardo Mendieta. "Editor's Introduction." In *The Underside of Modernity*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta

- (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanity Books, 1996), xxvii, n. 5.
19. For the latter, see works such as Dussel, *Ética De La Liberación En La Edad De La Globalización Y La Exclusión* and Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*. In this group also more historical but philosophically-oriented texts such as Dussel, *Invention of the Americas* For instances of the latter, see works such as Enrique D. Dussel. *A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism to Liberation (1492-1979)*, trans. Alan Neely, *Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina*. 3rd ed. 1974. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981) and Enrique D. Dussel. *The Church in Latin America, 1492-1992* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).
  20. "Epilogue," 270.
  21. For additional concerns about Dussel's usage of this terminology, see Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation*, 201.
  22. *Philosophy of Liberation*, 2.
  23. For example, see *Invention of the Americas*, 9-10, as well as Saenz's comments on the significance of Wallerstein for Dussel's use of center/periphery in Mario Sáenz. "Dussel on Marx: Living Labor and the Materiality of Life." In *Thinking from the Underside of History*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), esp. pp. 230-231.
  24. Something like this seems to part of the motivation for a project of "mestizaje from below" as proposed by Mario Sáenz in *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought*, 305-352.
  25. Cf. Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs* (Princeton: Princeton, 2000), esp. pp. 91-171.
  26. The apparent imbalance in direction of influence may be due in some part to a systematic failure of self-critical reflection in various European traditions on the ways in which they have been affected—or culpably failed to be responsive to—developments in Latin America and the Iberian peninsula. See Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*, 63-90, and Sáenz, *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought*, 117-154. Though also see Jorge J. E. Gracia *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, Ch.4, especially p. 86 for a discussion that takes a different tact.
  27. My thanks to Eduardo Mendieta for helping me see this point.
  28. Pierre Bourdieu. *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*, trans. Loïc Wacquant, *Contre-feux 2: Pour un mouvement social européen* (New York: The New Press, 2003), 48.
  29. In fairness, Dussel's views on the nature of the center matter may have changed. Moreover, the shift of center that began after the end of World War II and accelerated with the fall of the Berlin Wall may have only become complete, apparent, or totalizing since he wrote *Philosophy of Liberation*. I should also note that Schutte mistakenly cites Dussel as claiming the center is in North America. She quotes him as claiming that "peripheral peoples results from imperialism. Philosophically it is founded on North American ontology" (her emphasis) ("Origins and Tendencies..." p. 276). The original text, however, reads "North Atlantic," not "North American," which is consistent with the text's predominant focus on Europe. See Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 71, and the diagram on p. 2.
  30. I also take it that avoiding the normative form of Eurocentrism only gets the philosopher of liberation so far. As we have seen, there are aspects of a purely descriptive Eurocentrism that take have normatively significant consequences in the context of the real world, as exemplified by the contextual and pedagogical aspects of the Eurocentrism Problem.
  31. In calling for the adoption of this strategy, I acknowledge the point that many have made (even in debates internal to the European philosophical scene) that given the socio-historical contexts of most professional academics, it is neither sensible nor even possible to get entirely "outside" of European-derived concepts and language. What is left for us to do is to adapt it to our ends, supplementing it and transforming it as our purposes demand. I remark on this further in section 4.
  32. Indeed, this may simply be a fact of contemporary Western normative discourse in general. See Alasdair MacIntyre. *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 1-5.
  33. For a now classic instance of this sort of reasoning see Peter Singer. "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 1, no. 3 (1972).
  34. Mario Sáenz. "On the Meaning of the Philosophy Liberation: Reply to My Critics," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy*, 1 (2001): 89.
  35. For provocative discussions of the links between mainstream U.S. philosophical practices and U.S. domestic and geopolitical history—and in many cases, remarkable silences about them—see John McCumber. *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy and the Mccarthy Era* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern, 2001) and Jeff Paris. "After Rawls: Review of *John Rawls: Collected Papers*," *Social Theory and Practice*, 28 (2002).
  36. Though they sometimes serve as useful shorthands, I do not find talk of "analytic" and "Continental" philosophy to be especially helpful. Even a cursory study of the philosophical scene outside the Anglophone world (e.g., in Latin America) makes it clear that the analytic/Continental distinction is hardly exhaustive, decisive, or even especially illuminating. See, for example, Manuel Vargas. "Crossing the Borders of Philosophy: Some Thoughts on the 14th Interamerican Congress," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy*, 99 (2000). If anything, what these distinctions mark out are social groups of philosophers who are more likely to talk among themselves than with other groups. See also the discussion in Brian Leiter. "Introduction." In *The Future for Philosophy*, ed. Brian Leiter (Oxford: Oxford, 2004).
  37. See, for example, José Vasconcelos's use of theory underdetermination in the context of anthropology, biology, and race in José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio. *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1926). I discuss this example in Manuel Vargas. "Lessons from the Philosophy of Race in Mexico," *Philosophy Today*, 44, no. SPEP Supplement 2000, vol. 26 (2000).
  38. See note 10.
  39. Thanks to Jeff Paris and Eduardo Mendieta for illuminating comments on a prior version of this paper.

I am confident that I did not pay them nearly enough heed. My thanks also to the Mortimer Fleishacker Endowment for Philosophy at the University of San Francisco and to the California Institute of Technology for financial support while I worked on this paper.

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