

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy



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APA STUDIES ON

Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

LORI GALLEGOS, EDITOR

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FROM THE EDITOR

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Since the beginning of the twentieth century, Latin American philosophers have made substantial contributions to the area of metaphilosophy, grappling with questions about the distinguishing features of Latin American philosophy, about Latin American philosophy's relationship to European philosophy, and about what characteristics a work must possess to be considered truly philosophical. US-based Latinx and Latin American philosophers have continued to advance this line of inquiry, and this issue of *APA Studies in Hispanic/Latino Philosophy* contains some of the fruits of that labor.

We begin with the winner of the 2023 Essay Prize in Latin American Thought—an essay titled “Rethinking Extractivist Epistemologies: Mexican Philosophy and Philosophy *al otro lado*.” In this award-winning essay, Emmanuel Carrillo Meza raises concerns about the precarious positioning of Mexican philosophy in its encounter with US academic philosophy. In particular, he warns against the tendency to consume Mexican philosophy by merely extracting from it what has already been determined to be theoretically valuable by dominant epistemological frameworks.

The essay is followed by a discussion of Susana Nuccetelli's *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). In the book, Nuccetelli surveys and situates primary material spanning the history of Latin American philosophy. Then, in the final chapter, Nuccetelli advances the proposal that Latin American philosophy should be thought of as an applied branch of philosophy that takes up philosophical issues that arise in the experiences of Latin American people. The discussion of Nuccetelli's text includes commentaries by Maité Cruz, Ricardo Friaiz, and Vicente Medina, followed by Nuccetelli's replies to her interlocutors.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

APA Studies on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy is accepting contributions for the fall 2024 issue. The issue will include a special cluster on the term “Latinx.” Our readers are encouraged to submit original work on that topic or on any topic related to Hispanic/Latinx thought, broadly construed. We publish original, scholarly treatments, as well as *meditaciones*, book reviews, and interviews. Please prepare articles for anonymous review.

ARTICLES

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

BOOK REVIEWS

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

DEADLINES

The deadline for the fall issue is May 1. Authors should expect a decision by June 15. The deadline for the spring issue is November 15. Authors should expect a decision by January 15.

Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions electronically to the editor, Lori Gallegos, at LoriGallegos@txstate.edu, Department of Philosophy, Comal Building 102, Texas State University, 601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

The *APA Studies* adhere to *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an “em dash” (—) instead of a double hyphen (--). Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90. See Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” *Noûs* 34 (2000): 31–55.

ARTICLES

Rethinking Extractivist Epistemologies: Mexican Philosophy and Philosophy al otro lado

Winner, 2023 APA Essay Prize in Latin American Thought

Emmanuel Carrillo Meza
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US academic philosophy has, until now perhaps, shown little interest or concern for Mexican philosophy. This indifference has fueled and continues to entertain debates regarding the possibility of the existence of *Mexican philosophy*, per se. The result of this indifference, especially within the landscape of US academic philosophy, has been a disregard for philosophical thought produced in México and by Mexican thinkers. For me, however, there is unquestionably such a thing as Mexican philosophy, and its encounter with US academic philosophy no longer represents a question of the possibility that Mexican philosophy exists, but of how we manage this encounter both as students and academics, *al otro lado*. Thus, an important question we should ask is how does US academic philosophy in its positionality *on the other side* of the border and as part of a dominant epistemological framework understand and engage in this encounter? What can be affirmed is that work with Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* is being done! Praiseworthy evidence of this is the launching and publication of the first issue of the *Journal of Mexican Philosophy*. According to the editors, this journal seeks to “transform indifference into passion and commitment and to present Mexican philosophy as what we take it to be, namely, a rich philosophical tradition worthy of inclusion in the standard story of the West.”¹ I agree that Mexican philosophy must be recognized for its richness. Moreover, because I recognize this richness, I worry about how we then move to *include* it as part of the standard story of the West, while preserving this distinct richness.

One principal concern related to this proposed inclusion is the way in which we as US academics speak of *extracting* philosophy, such that the theoretical value of what is extracted can then be employed for various purposes. My argument is that *extraction*, as just described, functions as a method which only seeks and consumes what it has determined as valuable. Furthermore, it seems that what we find theoretically valuable via this extractivist methodology, and as structured by the dominant epistemological frameworks of the West, is overdetermined. Specifically, the extraction of theoretical value is enacted by a determination-in-advance, since we seem to have already determined what represents intelligibility within Western philosophical traditions and, as such, we only seek what already represents intelligibility within this structure. This extractivist methodology reinvigorates pernicious presuppositions that totalize what it means to do philosophy when it attempts to subsume traditionally marginalized thinking into its intelligible categories. The

challenge and call to action for those of us seeking to engage with Mexican philosophy is to consider ways in which we can escape academic philosophy’s totalizing desire(s). We should question the manner in which we engage with Mexican philosophy in such a way that we avoid methodologies which overdetermine its theoretical value both as a body of work *outside* the Western canon of philosophy, but which, nonetheless can be consumed or included in it by way of extractivist projects.

EXTRACTIVIST METHODOLOGIES

The first task is to provide an account of epistemic extraction in which value is overdetermined, such that this method of extraction can thereby be said to seek and consume what appears as intelligible to dominant epistemological frameworks, exemplified in this case by US academic philosophy. Linda Martín Alcoff presents a useful account of *extractivist epistemologies*, defined as having four salient features. These features are as follows:

1. The practice of ranking knowers,
2. Denying the need for collaboration across groups,
3. Defining values as nonrelational and objectively determinable, and
4. Seeking the exclusive appropriation and control over intellectual items such as knowledges and processes.²

The main focus of my analysis will be on the second and third features as the extractivist practices which most poignantly illustrate how my sense of extraction seeks and consumes what is overdetermined as valuable.

Alcoff’s account is grounded within capitalist frameworks of market economies which extract and bring to market natural resources from colonized domains. My account will differ, however, since I argue that we can extend this concept to “non-material” resources like concepts, methods, and traditions. On her account, then, extractivist epistemologies undergird extractivist practices which purport to objectively determine what is valuable. These practices conceptualize the object(s) of their pursuits via the function of assigning them a certain marketable or commodifiable value. My account does not deny that theoretical value can be extracted from the body of work that is Mexican philosophy and then marketed within the marketplace of ideas. Instead, I want to draw attention to and critically analyze the methodology of this extraction and, from this, construct my own account of epistemic extraction. I argue that the type of extraction which I am focusing on, and one which is employed by dominant epistemological frameworks, functions by recognizing and giving value only to that which already appears within the totality of ideas of the dominant force. Consider that Mexican philosophy has been shaped by its relationality to at least two particularly significant forces: its Spanish colonial history and its geographic location to the US. In this way, Mexican philosophy is often circumscribed by these forces to the extent that it can be understood to be *within* them, yet paradoxically, Mexican philosophy’s lack

of inclusion into the Western canon of philosophy places it *outside* of this body of work.

Indeed, this is a stated goal of the *Journal of Mexican Philosophy*: to distinguish Mexican philosophy as representing a tradition which critiques *from within*, that is, "It represents a critique of the Western tradition *from within*, one that serves as a model—available to insider and outsider alike—for combatting the sorts of marginalization and the kinds of silencing that Western philosophical hegemony makes possible."³

I recognize the value of a critique from *within* in as much as it can magnify the issues already present within dominant epistemological frameworks. The language of *within* or *outside of*, however, delimits and ossifies its potential to serve as a critique, perhaps even as a mode of decolonial praxis, because it concretizes and delimits the value of Mexican philosophy as merely and only a response to the dominant forces. The potentially positive critique that would result from dissolving the asymmetric relation which circumscribes Mexican philosophy as *within* or *outside of* dominant epistemological frameworks of the West is reduced to an overdetermined and unidirectional relation wherein academic philosophy on the other side of the border could continue to dictate the ways in which Mexican philosophy emerges as intelligibly recognizable.

The kinds of aims which dissolve these asymmetric relations fall squarely within the scope of projects related to decolonization. Decolonizing praxis is an ongoing process, allergic to any conceptualizations as a completed project. Though the initial force of the event of the Spanish arrival and attempted conquest continues to extend into *the past*, Mexican philosophy's continued interrelations with the United States are active, palpable, and constructive. As I type and listen to online Mexican radio in the background, I chuckle as I hear an ad for an English-language school claiming that English-language speakers in Mexico earn up to 30 percent more than their monolingual counterparts. Palpable, active, constructive/destructive.

Where I think there is potential for pitfalls, as US academics, is in a foreclosed conceptualization of the object of our pursuit. In other words, we might be tempted to conceptually delimit the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy as simply and mostly an intellectual response to the dominant epistemological frameworks and forces which have shaped its development. As Alcoff argues, extractivist projects are motivated by the presupposition that certain commodifiable values can be universally conceptualized and, in this way, become easily identifiable as *objects of pursuit*.⁴ For example, as proponents of dominant epistemic frameworks, universities in the United States, and specifically their philosophy departments and the philosophers who comprise them, may very well internalize certain presuppositions regarding the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy as, perhaps, mostly a response to dominant epistemologies. Granted, though the aforementioned may form part of the equation, we must however, also recognize and attempt to illuminate the interior cultural and intellectual processes embedded within Mexican philosophy itself, and in this way, allow its

emergence as something recognizably different beyond theory which is only reactive to forces which attempt to circumscribe it. As a challenge to extractivist projects, Alcoff urges us to recognize that the process by which *value* is defined is an "interpretive practice for all parties."⁵ I argue that these interpretive practices must seek to dissolve asymmetric relations where the interpretation of Mexican philosophy doesn't *just* happen through the dominant epistemological frameworks, but instead, considers the interior cultural and intellectual processes unique to its ongoing practice as a potential decoupling from these dominant frameworks.

HABITUS, INSTITUTIONS, AND SITUATED KNOWERS

Having discussed ways in which US academics might engage in and become agents of extractivist projects, I would like to ground this discussion by illuminating ways in which the intellectual environment and academic institutions in the US, as offshoots of its *habitus*, are oriented in such a way that they constitute a space primed for the creation and cultivation of extractivist projects. I will now turn to the critical phenomenology of Sarah Ahmed in *Queer Phenomenology*.⁶

Ahmed's account, which explains the whiteness of space as accumulations or sedimentations of repeated practices and tendencies, is important because of the ways in which these spaces and the tools available within them are oriented around certain bodies (white bodies in Ahmed's work) more than others. Furthermore, if we understand institutions (academic institutions for my purposes) as collective and public spaces of discourse, one question that materializes before us is how can the overwhelmingly white orientation of US academic philosophy shape the intellectual tools available to its philosophers? Thus, following Ahmed, it becomes crucial to distinguish not only how spaces acquire the shape and orientation of the bodies that inhabit them, but we must consider how these orientations shape and influence our own academic practices.

The *habitual* is a form of inheritance. Not just particular habits as practices or tendencies, but additionally, what we inherit are bodily and spatial *orientations* which then inform our processes of habit formation. This is why in redescribing the processes by which bodies find themselves channeled towards specific tendencies, Ahmed writes, "We can redescribe this process in the following terms: the repetition of the tending *toward* is what identity 'coheres' around (= tendencies). We do not, then, inherit our tendencies; instead, we *acquire* our tendencies from what we inherit."⁷ Undoubtedly, as an institutional space, academic philosophy in the United States is inscribed with tendencies that overvalue not just the white bodies that inhabit them, but also the orientation that has been signaled by these white spaces and which is then received as an inheritance or "tradition." Consequently, what nontraditionally represented scholars enter into are monochromatic academic spaces with predetermined ideals about what it means to do philosophy and what it means to be *philosophical*. Additionally, these habitual spaces appear to scholars as fully formed totalities imprinted

with a Greek origin, and punctuated events or places as the culminations of the Western intellectual tradition found mostly in US and European academic philosophy.

It is very easy for new scholars to enter these spaces, and in order to gain favor with academic advisors or professors, such that these relations can influence future job prospects, avoid questioning the inheritance and habits that we then internalize and repeat. Referencing the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Ahmed links these habits with practices that as *second nature* become unconscious and routine.⁸ Inherited structures, then, actualize the possibilities of action for certain spaces and bodies, but this structural inheritance can also restrict the possibilities of actions that do not cohere around the tradition. For Ahmed, to think about institutions as orientating devices means that institutions may appear overdetermined and given as complete, fully contextualized, a totality, arising from the effects of “the repetition of decisions made over time, which shapes the surface of institutional spaces. Institutions involve lines, which are the accumulation of past decisions about ‘how’ to allocate resources, as well as ‘who’ to recruit.”⁹ The work of individuals doing Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* as situated knowers, then, seems twofold. On the one hand, we must avoid reifying the US academic and philosophical institutions which we are part of as entities that are fully contextualized, that is, as spaces where all contextual relations are known and have been *exhausted*. To say that something might be fully contextualized because its contextual relations have been exhausted is to accept the sedimentation of past decisions as accumulations. This denies the appearance of future contexts which push against overdetermination. As scholars of these institutions, failure to avoid this reification means that the orientation from which we approach Mexican philosophy might fail to adequately capture the theoretical richness inherent in Mexican philosophy. This could happen if we conceive of Mexican philosophy as not yet forming part of the larger history of the Western canon, and thus, not congruent with inherited beliefs as they relate to the traditional practice of philosophy. Likewise, in our calls for the inclusion of Mexican philosophy into the larger story of the philosophical landscape, we must also avoid subsuming Mexican philosophy by applying the inherited epistemic frameworks which can facilitate its appearance upon this larger landscape as simply something already recognizable within the historic philosophical framework. Failure to do the latter exemplifies yet another instance in which Mexican philosophy is required to stand in a unidirectional and subordinate relationship to dominant epistemological frameworks. What’s more, independently, not to mention in combination, these failures would undercut the unique richness of the Mexican philosophical orientation because they obfuscate the interrelationality to both its historic past and in its dealings with academic philosophy in the United States, thereby depriving it of the ability to speak to and to engage in what can be considered a decolonial praxis from *within*.

REPRISE AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

To summarize and by way of conclusion, I’ll continue employing the language of *situated knowers* and *dominant epistemological frameworks*, borrowed in part from

Murdock.¹⁰ Using this language, we can conceive of US academics as situated knowers, that is, situated within a particular epistemic habitus comprised of US academic institutions which wield considerable power as a dominant epistemological framework. I would like not only to recap and take stock of what has been said thus far, but also to underscore the need to be mindful of potential slippages into extractivist methodologies as I have formulated them.

First, epistemic projects function through epistemic practices which themselves work by defining the value of what is extracted as objectively determinable and nonrelational. We perceive Mexican philosophy to be imbued with a uniquely rich theoretical orientation which can inform decolonial praxes because of its historic relation to Western colonialism. In this way, Mexican philosophy heralds the opportunity for a model of critique launched *from within* the very orientations by which it was shaped. However, an important way in which the theoretical orientation of Mexican philosophy is typically understood is simply as a response to the constructive forces of dominant epistemological frameworks. As situated knowers within dominant epistemological frameworks, philosophers doing Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* must concern themselves to avoid this characterization of Mexican philosophy, that is, as always being on its backfoot and just responsive to the constructive forces it has dealt with and continues to contend with in modern times. Ignoring this concern and enabling this reactionary perspective enables an ossified, relationally disproportionate, and objectified conceptualization of the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy. This perspective, which is disproportionately relational and where value becomes perniciously objectifiable, is what most saliently distinguishes extractivist projects and the methodology of those who might engage in these endeavors.

Second, I attempted to ground the preceding discussion by claiming that US academic philosophy is an institution which constitutes a space primed for the creation and cultivation of extractivist projects. This happens if, following Ahmed’s analysis, we understand institutions (in this essay the institution of US academic philosophy) as collective and public spaces that acquire their orientation and tendencies from habits inscribed in their inherited structures. These inherited structures thus appear to scholars as fully formed totalities, since they usually trace their inheritance through a genealogy of linear historicity—a history which begins with the Greeks and culminates with the US and European traditions as the would-be-inheritors of the Western intellectual tradition. For various reasons, but mostly in order to gain a certain acceptance and favor with individuals who may be critically important for our advancement and job placement in the field, many scholars avoid questioning the sometimes pernicious inheritance of the Western intellectual tradition. Instead, we often internalize many of the presuppositions inherent in this intellectual tradition, and thus, its habits become a practical *second nature* that becomes routine and often goes unquestioned.

The task of philosophers working on Mexican philosophy *al otro lado* is twofold. First, we must avoid reifying US academic philosophy as an entity that is fully contextualized, complete, and, as such, overdetermined, in

order to approach and appreciate the richness of Mexican philosophy more openly and charitably. Second, we should resist characterizing Mexican philosophy as both *within* the dominant epistemological frameworks that have sought to circumscribe it, while simultaneously regarding it as a valuable philosophical project that is *outside* of these bounds and thus apt for inclusion and consumption via the negative sense of extraction I've described above. Based on the foregoing, and in my judgment, all of us who engage with Mexican philosophy *al otro lado*, or perhaps even as Mexican academics working with Mexican philosophy in México, must avoid subsuming Mexican philosophy into and without questioning our inherited epistemic frameworks. Though these traditional epistemic frameworks may indeed facilitate Mexican philosophy's appearance within the more dominant and thus accepted academic landscapes, it does so only through a recognition granted by the habitual and sedimented philosophical frameworks. Failures to recognize and address these issues would only bolster the work of extractivist epistemologies and their practices as they undercut the unique richness of a Mexican philosophical orientation. Furthermore, stemming from the asymmetric or disproportionate relationality that is unleashed by extractivist epistemologies, the theoretical value of Mexican philosophy would be obfuscated, and its value as a decolonial praxis diminished.

NOTES

1. Robert Sanchez Jr. and Carlos Alberto Sanchez, "Editor's Introduction to the First Issue," *Journal of Mexican Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2022): i.
2. Linda M. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," *Tapuya: Latina American Science, Technology and Society* 5, no. 1 (2022): 16.
3. Sanchez and Sanchez, "Editor's Introduction to the First Issue," i.
4. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," 5.
5. Alcoff, "Extractivist Epistemologies," 4.
6. Sarah Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).
7. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 129.
8. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*.
9. Ahmed., *Queer Phenomenology*, 133.
10. Esme G. Murdock, "Land(Point) Epistemologies: Theorizing the Place of Epistemic Domination." in *Making the Case. Feminist and Critical Race Philosophers Engage Case Studies*, ed. Heidi Grasswick, and Nancy Arden McHugh (Albany: State University Press, 2021), 211–39.

Comments on Susana Nuccetelli's An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy

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In the Preface to *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, Susana Nuccetelli describes the discipline of Latin American philosophy as one that is "still defining itself" and "the subject of lively debates over basics." Indeed, one of these lively debates is a debate on the

very question of "What is Latin American philosophy?" Nuccetelli does not take a stance on the nature, goals, or methodology of the discipline from the outset. Instead, she dives straight into the material that seems to clearly belong in the discipline, namely, philosophical ideas and works that have been generated in Latin America or by Latin American authors from the sixteenth century to the present, and that have been "contested" and "original." The book presents an accessible and engaging survey of this material, one that is nevertheless informed by Nuccetelli's enormous expertise in the field as author of two previous textbooks and editor of a sizeable anthology of secondary literature. Overall, by synthesizing a great deal of primary material lucidly and rigorously, while treating this material in a way that acknowledges that "many major issues . . . still need to be worked out," Nuccetelli has done a tremendous service to a discipline "still defining itself."¹

While I cannot do justice to the book's breadth, we might understand the organization as follows. **Chapter 1** presents the views of Spanish Scholastic philosophers (Las Casas, Vitoria, and Acosta) on questions pertaining to the Spanish and Portuguese conquest of the Americas, for instance: How should Europeans evaluate the rationality of the native inhabitants of the Americas? Is the Spanish war against the native inhabitants morally justified? Can Scholasticism explain the geography and climate of the Americas? **Chapter 2** presents responses to machismo in Latin America, from the "equal rights" feminism of Sor Juana, to the scientific feminism of Roxana Kreimer, to the liberationist feminism of Ofelia Schutte and Enrique Dussel. **Chapter 3** turns to Simón Bolívar's views on questions that became salient during the South American wars of independence in the first half of the nineteenth century: What is the best form of government for Latin American nations? What is the relationship between the geography and the best form of government? And what is the collective identity of Latin Americans? **Chapters 4 and 5** turn to the question of how to diagnose and address the root causes of Latin America's "barbarism" in the period after the wars of independence; "barbarism" is the label several authors applied to describe Latin America's apparent economic, political, and cultural inferiority to Europe and North America. **Chapter 4** focuses on responses to this broad question by two Argentinian authors, Domingo Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi, while **Chapter 5** discusses responses by a series of Venezuelan, Chilean, Brazilian, and Mexican authors working under the framework of Comtean positivism. **Chapters 6 and 7** continue the exploration of the same broad question, this time presenting the views of authors who rejected the positivist framework and the alleged inferiority and "barbarism" of Latin America: José Martí, José Enrique Rodó, and José Vasconcelos. **Chapters 8 and 9** turn to questions on the relevance of Marxism and dependency theory to twentieth century Latin America, as they arise in the thought of José Carlos Mariátegui, Ernesto Che Guevara, Raúl Prebisch, and Enrique Dussel: Do Indian poverty and racism in Latin America admit of Marxist explanations? How are the needs of the state and the needs of the individual to be balanced in the Cuban socialist state? What are the causes of international wealth disparities? Is Western philosophy's search for universal truths a form of domination?

In **Chapter 10**, Nuccetelli identifies a feature that most of these aforementioned philosophical works have in common: they deal with “characteristically Latin American issues”; in other words, they are “a type of applied philosophy that conducts philosophical inquiry on issues that are related to Latin America.”² Nuccetelli proposes that Latin American philosophy is an applied branch of philosophy, the domain of which is philosophical issues that arise in the lives and experiences of Latin American people.

Thinking of a philosophical text as a work of applied philosophy invites the following question: What is the theoretical foundation of the author’s thought? Many of the philosophers Nuccetelli discusses do not explicitly announce a theoretical foundation (such as a set of fundamental commitments) from which they then proceed to derive conclusions on the specific applied questions. It falls on the scholar to figure out the fundamental commitments and how these commitments result in the specific applied conclusions. It is a strength of Nuccetelli’s book that it is attuned to this interpretive issue: she identifies a theoretical foundation for most of the authors in the book and helpfully directs the reader to additional sources. Yet, I want to raise a series of interpretive challenges that remain.

As Nuccetelli identifies them, the theoretical foundations in the thought of some of these thinkers are not concrete principles but a range of broad principles. For example, Nuccetelli identifies the foundation of Bolívar’s thought in “the contractualism of Rousseau and Thomas Hobbes, the Lockean natural law theory of Thomas Jefferson, and the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham.”³ She suggests that “Bolivarism”—Bolívar’s theory on the best form of government—derives from these foundational commitments. However, it strikes me that the foundational commitments are too many and too vague to be helpful in deciphering Bolívar’s reasons for Bolivarism. Similarly, for Sarmiento and Alberdi, Nuccetelli describes the foundational commitments only in broad strokes: “liberal republicanism,”⁴ determinism,⁵ and “market capitalism.”⁶ Given such broad foundations, it is unclear how the thinkers arrive at their specific applied views. For instance, Sarmiento sees the lack of *education* in Latin America as a cause of its barbarism, while Alberdi rejects this view in favor of the view that the *economy* is the main cause of barbarism,⁷ but it is unclear what prior commitments result in this difference in their views: Where does the disagreement stem from? A similar worry arises for Bello and Lastarria. As positivists, Bello and Lastarria share a theoretical foundation in the value of “progress,” but disagree on the applied question of “how to achieve it.”⁸ Nuccetelli defines “progress” in two ways: in Comte’s sense of a transition from theology to science⁹ and in a broad Darwinian/Spencerian sense of “perfectibility” or “change for the better.”¹⁰ What specific sense of “progress” is the value at the foundation of Bello and Lastarria’s thought? More specifically, how do they each arrive at their respective views—in Bello’s case, that *order* is necessary for progress,¹¹ and in Lastarria’s, that *freedom* is necessary?¹² Let me give one last example of this type of worry. Nuccetelli identifies the foundations of Martí’s views in Krausism. Krausism construes the fundamental ethical value that society must pursue as “harmony” or “unity.”¹³ Nuccetelli connects the values of “respect for individual

rights” and “freedom” with Krausism, but the connection is unclear: Are “freedom” and “respect for rights” other fundamental values, alongside unity, or do they somehow derive from unity, and, if so, how? More importantly, thus construed, Martí’s foundational commitments remain rather vague: What exactly do “unity,” “freedom,” and “respect for individual rights” entail?

One of the most interesting debates throughout the book is the debate on how to characterize the collective identity of Latin Americans. Nuccetelli presents several theories on this question: Bolívar’s “mestizaje” theory; Sarmiento and Alberdi’s “European-transplantation” theory; Rodó’s identification of Latin American identity with Ancient Greek, Ancient Rome, and Christianity; and Vasconcelos’s “mestizaje” and “cosmic-race” theories. Here, again, it seems that to fully understand this debate we must trace it to its roots: What theoretical or methodological commitments underpin each view? What fundamental differences between these thinkers lead to their differing views on Latin American identity?

More generally, the methodological question I want to raise is the following. When studying works of applied philosophy where the author does not explicitly announce the theoretical foundations of their thought, and instead seems to draw on an eclectic array of philosophical theories, how should we approach the task of interpreting the structure of their thought? Should we assume that the author is nevertheless relying on a concrete theoretical framework, which they apply to the specific applied questions but do not make explicit? If so, how should we go about identifying this framework? Alternatively, could the search for a concrete theoretical foundation be wrongheaded? If so, how else should we understand the structure of these thinkers’ arguments? Do they rely on a pluralistic set of fundamental commitments? Or do they instead adopt a particularist method, philosophizing about particulars without any overarching framework?

Nuccetelli’s book has given rise to these questions for me not as a result of any shortcoming, but, on the contrary, as a result of convincing me that it is rewarding to study Latin American philosophy as applied philosophy, as well as converting me to its systematic, rigorous, and foundations-oriented approach to the subject.

NOTES

1. Susana Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), xi.
2. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 246.
3. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 58.
4. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 74.
5. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 76.
6. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 90.
7. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 86.
8. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 100.
9. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 96–97.
10. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 99.
11. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 100.

12. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 101.
 13. Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*, 140.

Comments on Susana Nuccetelli's An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy

Ricardo Fria
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Susanna Nuccetelli's new introduction to Latin American philosophy sets itself apart from other recent entries into the field by treating Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy. In my comments, I raise a concern about the issue of race in Latin American philosophy, specifically the role of white supremacy in Latin American philosophy. My comments draw on Nuccetelli's conceptual vocabulary and analysis to ask the question: How do we grapple with race in Latin American philosophy if race is both an internal factor (in the sense that Latin American philosophy theorizes race) as well as an external factor (in the sense that racism and raciality have significantly determined the production of Latin American philosophy)?

In the book, Nuccetelli takes up two challenges: the Marxist challenge alleges that Latin American philosophy is largely a result of colonialism and determined by the upper class, and present-day Analytic challenges, the latter of which she is more sympathetic to. Analyzing the accounts of Carlos Pereda, Maite Ezcurdia, Guillermo Hurtado, and Eduardo Rabossi, Nuccetelli recognizes the following critiques of Latin American philosophy: it is an insular practice that follows European and US trends, performs poorly at certain kinds of originality, lacks any dialogue with mainstream philosophy, and fails to engage with its own tradition.

To these views, Nuccetelli presents what she calls an anti-skeptical view that takes Latin American philosophy as "a type of applied philosophy that deals with *characteristically* Latin American issues." To qualify as Latin American philosophy under this definition, "a philosophical work must have some relation in content or method to a Latin American context," and Nuccetelli notes here that her book is replete with examples of what these contexts are. The examples are mainly of issues concerning moral, social, and political philosophy produced by nonacademic and academic philosophers alike. Against the view shared by Jorge Gracia and Jamie Nubiola that characterizes Latin American philosophy as "philosophy produced in regions America by nations whose official language is Spanish," Nuccetelli means her own definition to avoid the issue of centering Latin American philosophy as the philosophy produced by a particular people, for people move, use different languages, and identify in all kinds of mutually exclusive ways.

Nuccetelli's definition of Latin American philosophy neatly responds to the problem raised by the Gracia/Nubiola definition, which risks treating Latin American philosophy as merely "capturing the worldview of a supposed 'ethnos,'" or else treats it only as a tool for a larger issue, notably "remediating some social injustices facing Latinos." I agree that philosophy is arguably distinct from or else is a unique kind of worldview, for philosophy's capacity to recognize a worldview as such is what distinguishes it from itself being one worldview among others. I think that Nuccetelli rejects Leopoldo Zea's view of Latin American philosophy as a deficient *perspectivism* for the similar reasons that Heidegger rejects the equivalence of philosophy and worldview. Even if worldview was synonymous with philosophy, it remains to be determined what could count as a stable enough *ethnos* or people that would lend a determinate meaning to Latin American philosophy as an ethnophilosophy. I think that the importance of race in Latin American philosophy suggests that establishing the bounds of the discipline as of or for a particular *ethnos* runs the risk of assuming a stable answer to a key concern of the Latin American context, namely, who or what constitutes the Latin American.

In responding to skepticism about Latin American philosophy, Nuccetelli provides a thorough definition that takes into account "external factors," which Nuccetelli clarifies as referring to social and economic burdens that affect the practice of philosophy. While internal factors concern the content of the philosophy itself, external factors refer to those things that don't directly have to do with the philosophy. To give one example of a contemporary external factor, we could gesture to the stunning lack of new jobs in philosophy that are surely affecting the direction of the discipline. One of the factors that Nuccetelli discusses is the hostility to positivism in Latin America, mentioning that, while a "mistrust of science among intellectuals" accounts for the "rapid spread of philosophical views that were hostile to science," philosophy in "Western centers such as the UK" was "developing in close relation with mathematics and the natural sciences," presumably suggesting that this motivates "the problems facing philosophy in Latin America." This factor emerges in discussion of Euryalo Cannabrava's charge that "Latin American philosophy rest[s] on sophistry and a kind of literary method of reasoning" that Nuccetelli says is "completely unlike North American philosophy," and notes that Cannabrava's explanation rests on the presumed "attractiveness of Continental philosophy to Latin American philosophers."

I am concerned with the issue of race in Latin American philosophy in relation to the critique of white supremacy found in critical philosophy of race. The issue concerns the distinction between the ideological and the philosophical as invoked by Nuccetelli, and this distinction is at play, for example, in her rejection of Ofelia Schutte's proposal for liberationist feminism as "more an ideological call for action than a piece of philosophical reflection." What is ideological is distinct from the philosophical such that ideology is functionally indistinguishable from worldview in this case. The issue that concerns me is how the distinction between the philosophical and the ideological is made. In this regard, I find Nuccetelli's conceptual pair of "internal" and "external" factors insightful.

The language of internal and external appears at the very concluding section of the book concerning the definition

of Latin American philosophy as an applied philosophy. Nuccetelli discusses internal and external factors that together may explain why “academic philosophy in Latin America may lack” certain properties, particularly “originality” or “being tradition-generating.” External factors are defined here as “social and economic burdens that make the practice of philosophy in Latin America comparatively more difficult,” and internal factors would refer to the actual philosophical practice itself. On this theme, I would be interested to hear more about the “genealogical clue” that Cannabrava gives for understanding the problems facing philosophy in Latin America. In her discussion of Cannabrava, Nuccetelli goes on to discuss philosophy in twentieth-century Latin America and why positivism seems not to have taken off. Her account emphasizes external factors, such as the fact that “[m]any Latin American positivists were also literary figures.”

The sense I get from Nuccetelli’s discussion is that Latin American philosophy was troubled to the degree that it remained mired in non-analytic philosophy, which is presumably Continental philosophy, a tradition that, unlike the former, does not appear in the book’s glossary. I am struck by the fact that it is this place in the book that Nuccetelli seems to be most sympathetic to external factors, for otherwise she is attentive to keeping internal factors in view such as the philosopher’s own account of their thinking. The impression I get from *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* is that to attribute all explanations to external factors is to make everything a matter of ideology and so to banish philosophy, but to make everything a matter of internal factors is to fatally decontextualize all philosophizing. It is in this context that I am thinking about race in Latin American philosophy, and to what degree race is an external or internal factor. To expand on this point, I will allude here to Charles Mills’s *The Racial Contract*, which alleges that white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.

Mills claims that the idea of white supremacy as a political system has mostly been missing from any standard textbook for an intro to philosophy course, and this is so because “standard textbooks and courses have for the most part been written and designed by whites, who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as *political*, as a form of domination.” Mills claims that philosophy has been significantly determined by a decidedly external factor, namely, white supremacy. It is also the case that white supremacy may also be an internal factor, which is to say that it was in many ways the implicit political and philosophical project of philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Immanuel Kant. Given that Latin American philosophy has so often discussed race from its own vantage point, it seems important to me to discuss in further detail to what degree it shapes and influences the tradition then and now. In a question, I ask Nuccetelli how we ought to think about white supremacy in Latin American philosophy, especially with regard to whether it is an external or internal factor, and whether the basic claim that white supremacy has significantly determined Latin American philosophy should ultimately be considered an ideological or a philosophical claim.

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Reflections on Professor Susana Nuccetelli’s book, An Introduction to Latin America Philosophy

Vicente Medina

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

I am honored to have been invited to participate in this panel discussing Professor Susana Nuccetelli’s book, *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*. By exploring most of the significant issues present in debates on and about Latin American philosophy, I find Professor Nuccetelli’s book not only philosophically rigorous but also illuminating.

Since I am sympathetic to Professor Nuccetelli’s analytic approach, I will focus on some issues that might enrich conversations and narratives on and about Latin American philosophy regardless of people’s ideological commitments. For example, for skeptics about the possibility of an indigenous Latin American philosophy, one can offer as evidence of its existence the long, historical, metaphysical debate exploring such a possibility. This debate is a meaningful philosophical issue peculiar to Latin America. More importantly, the existence of this debate is an important contribution to Western philosophy, despite critics who might not consider it an “authentic” philosophical contribution. This is a unique and genuine philosophical conversation whose origin and longevity are nowhere else to be found. People in Latin America, including Brazil, have been deliberating on and about this issue for over 180 years, if we take Juan Bautista Alberdi’s lectures, “Ideas,” in 1842 as the starting point of the conversation. One might argue that this conversation/debate reached its apex in the 1960s in two classic works: Leopoldo Zea, *La filosofía Americana como filosofía sin más*, and Augusto Salazar Bondy, *¿Existe una filosofía de nuestra América?* As Professor Nuccetelli aptly explains in her book, nowadays practitioners of Latin American philosophy have shifted their attention to issues about culture, race, and feminism, to mention only a few.

I agree with Professor Nuccetelli’s argument in favor of conceiving the notion of Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy but not necessarily reducible only to it. Similarly, one might conceive of American Pragmatism as a form of applied philosophy, but it is also more than that. Some scholars might contend that issues related to applied philosophy are not as rigorous as traditional issues in metaphysics or epistemology as found in analytic circles. However, that is more a prejudice than an argument because one can do rigorous philosophy regardless of the subject matter in question. In any case, the notion of what constitutes rigorous philosophy is as contestable as the nature of philosophy itself because it

is mostly related to methodology rather than to the issues being discussed.

One of the objections raised against the originality or authenticity of Latin American philosophers is that they have not deliberately participated in system building à la Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Husserl, or what have you. And yet, I think that is a virtue rather than a vice of Latin American philosophers, with the exception of those who try to imitate European system builders, while arguing against such an approach.

Since one cannot expect that an introductory text will cover all relevant issues, the following is an observation rather than a criticism of Professor Nuccetelli's work. I would like to underscore the significant role that eclecticism has played in the development of philosophy in Latin America. The eclecticism that I have in mind is the one espoused and developed by Victor Cousin (1792–1867). Cousin was an influential French philosopher and pedagogue at the École Normal in Paris who was a pioneer in the history of philosophy, philosophy of history, and German Idealism. He also translated Plato's works and edited the works of René Descartes. Cousin grounds his eclecticism on two commitments: his objections to arguments that solely appeal to authority as practiced by late scholastic philosophers when using the so-called *magister dixit*, and his attempt to find a *just-milieu* among different philosophical and political views. While some Latin American philosophers, such as José de la Luz y Caballero (1800–1862), objected to Cousin's eclecticism for being too politically conservative, other Latin American philosophers, such as Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810–1884) and Andrés Bello (1781–1865), embraced Cousin's eclecticism to argue against the authoritarian component found in late scholastic philosophy as practiced in Latin America.

Next, I would like to address issues of liberation within a Latin American context. When scholars discuss "philosophy of liberation" in Latin America, it is important to note that many Latin American philosophers tried to liberate, namely, to free us from the shackles of late scholasticism and its authoritarian practice. This aspect of Latin American philosophy tends to be overlooked in favor of the new liberationism. However, I think that, while Professor Nuccetelli does not explore the role that eclecticism played in liberating philosophy in Latin America during the nineteenth century from the authoritarian practice of late scholastic philosophy, the spirit of her work is precisely to liberate the practice of contemporary Latin America philosophy from the new shackles of liberationism. Discourses on and about liberation frequently go hand in hand with discourses of coloniality where decoloniality is understood as advocating liberation from the presuppositions of Western philosophy idiosyncratically understood to accomplish a given social, economic, or political goal.

Latin American philosophers have displayed another virtue that oftentimes has been ignored. Like American Pragmatists, but even before them, some Latin American philosophers have tried to apply their philosophical skills to address important social, racial, economic, and political challenges. That is not to say, as Professor Nuccetelli incisively argues,

that all of them succeed in offering compelling arguments for their positions. There are many dubious claims and arguments that practitioners of philosophy in Latin America have proposed from Bolívar's questionable republicanism, Rodo's elitism, and Vasconcelos's theory of *mestizaje* in his *Cosmic Race*, to supporters of contemporary liberation philosophy and decoloniality. The latter assumes that those who practice, for example, analytic philosophy broadly conceived cannot offer cogent and compelling arguments in favor of worthwhile social, economic, or political goals. Such an assumption, however, is not warranted. Like in any other field, there is a division of labor in philosophy where no privileged point of view exists. It does not matter who is proposing the argument or where it is coming from; what matters is their cogency and the strength of the evidence supporting them.

An earlier precursor to the pragmatic approach in the way that philosophy was practiced in Latin America, even prior to William James's lectures on Pragmatism, was the nineteenth-century Cuban presbyter Félix Varela y Morales (1788–1853), who, by the way, spent the last twenty-five years of his life in the US as a political exile, dying in St. Augustine, Florida, in 1853. By favoring the inductive method of modern science over the traditional deductive method as practiced in late medieval philosophy, he argued that no one should bother with explanations of states of affairs whose possible truth or falsity might have no practical results in science. If that were to be the case, the issue in question would be idle or just a philosophical curiosity. He did not deny that philosophical curiosity is valuable, but rather that scientific research, as Pragmatists would later argue, should be gauged by its results rather than by claims on truth.

Next, and last, I would like to address a philosophical puzzle Professor Nuccetelli brings to our attention by questioning the coherence of some of the arguments that practitioners of liberation philosophy offer. One can frame the issue as follows. The liberationists are trying to liberate *x* from *y* (where *y* is placeholder for any unjust state of affairs broadly construed as political, moral, or economic). And yet, the liberationists are self-appointed liberators, since no one has chosen them for this job. Also, the so-called liberators are trying to restrict the practice of philosophy to their own liberationist agenda disqualifying other philosophical approaches by offering at times strawman rather than compelling arguments, such as reducing modern epistemology to Cartesian foundationalism or making sweeping generalizations about colonial genocide in Latin America.

Apparently, liberationists, but not only they, seem committed to the fallacy of appeal to authority—the same fallacy that many nineteenth-century Latin American philosophers combated when they tried to dethrone the old scholasticism. It seems that paradoxically twentieth-century liberationists embrace a new kind of dogmatic scholasticism. The bottom line is that there are no sacred beliefs in philosophy, including the one just stated. There are better or worse arguments. To those who question who determines the quality of arguments? The answer since Socrates and prior to him has been and is an appeal to

reason. And to those who ask again who defines “reason”? One might plausibly reply, those who can enjoy the freedom to engage in philosophical speculation for the sake of knowledge rather than for the sake of promoting social and political goals.

Reply to Interlocutors

Susana Nuccetelli
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REPLY TO MAITÉ CRUZ

I’d like to thank Professor Maité Cruz for her careful reading of my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy*.¹ She accurately summarizes its chapters while making numerous interesting points which cannot receive in this brief reply all the attention they deserve. In what follows, I’ll focus instead on two of the metaphilosophical questions that Cruz raises in her comments. One concerns the nature of Latin American philosophy, the other its relations with the history of philosophy and philosophical principles.

In my book and elsewhere, I subscribe to the (much maligned) claim that Latin American philosophy is best construed as a branch of applied philosophy, which was first articulated by Juan Bautista Alberdi in the mid-nineteenth century.² Among philosophers who have reflected on the nature of Latin American philosophy, Carlos Pereda forcefully rejects that claim on grounds related to Alberdi’s Eurocentrism.³ Pereda believes that the claim devalues Latin American philosophy, and he is not alone. For example, during an NEH Seminar that I co-directed with Jorge Gracia at SUNY–Buffalo in 2005, I recall that some of the participants argued that my claim boils down to Alberdi’s view that it is only for Europeans to cultivate the universal branches of philosophy. If so, like Alberdi’s, my claim would treat Latin American philosophy as a “second class” area of philosophy. I don’t see that consequence of the applied-philosophy proposal. Compare with the applied branches of ethics, such as business ethics or bioethics: these are flourishing areas of ethics whose problems and arguments consistently attract the attention of serious scholars. Far gone is a common mid-twentieth-century prejudice against practical ethics.

Cruz looks closely at the consequences of taking Latin American philosophy to be a branch of applied philosophy. She laments the vagueness and plurality of the philosophical grounds of what I consider major thinkers in the history of this branch of applied philosophy. They mixed principles from a number of philosophical traditions (whether they be compatible or not), and produced theories of their own. Bolívar is a good example of thinker who developed his own views by assimilating principles of various political philosophers from Europe and the US at the time. The result was messy but original. Cruz points to the vagueness and plurality of Bolívar’s foundational commitments, noting that such foundations can hardly provide reasons for his political theory, a type of skepticism about liberal democracy that I refer to as “Bolivarism” in my book. But that’s just the way philosophical thought developed in Latin America.

Something similar happened in literature which, as noted by Pereda, resulted in the extraordinary success of Latin American literature. Pereda regrets that the philosophers of the region were not able to achieve a similar feat and recommends that they emulate the region’s literary figures. I disagree: Voluntarism of this kind won’t work, for reasons provided in the last chapter of my book—which have to do with external (cultural, socioeconomic, historical) forces determining whose philosophical products may succeed internationally and whose may not.

REPLY TO RICARDO FRIAZ

I’m very grateful to Ricardo Friaz for providing many thoughtful comments on the chapters of my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* as well as some sharp suggestions about issues that deserve more attention than what is offered in those chapters. He organized his critique in three parts, two of them devoted to summaries of topics covered in the book and a third part focused on an issue facing Latin American philosophy that he evidently regards as meriting more attention. This, as he puts it, “is the issue of race in Latin American philosophy in relation to the critique of white supremacy found in Critical Philosophy of Race.”

I must claim from the outset an expertise in neither critical philosophy of race nor Charles Mills’s *The Racial Contract*, a book that inspires some of Friaz’s comments on the issue of race and white supremacy. My rejoinder invokes instead some historical facts about the Latin American thinkers discussed in my book—together with some current debates in the US engaging philosophers interested in the question of Hispanic/Latino identity. Particularly encouraged by that publication, there has been insightful theorizing about the following:

- a) *What’s the meaning of terms such as “Hispanic,” “Latino,” or “Iberoamerican”?*
- b) *Is there is a group of people who may actually fall under the designation of at least one of these ethnic-group terms?*

I myself have contributed to the debate’s focus on (a). I argue in my book that that debate is one of the best examples of contemporary developments in Latin American philosophy because it meets all the conditions which on my view are necessary for counting within that kind of philosophy: Namely, it is an original debate about a topic that concerns the reality of the peoples of Latin America and their descendants abroad, and it has produced interesting philosophical arguments. In my book I also take issue with the theories of Gracia,⁴ Orosco,⁵ and some others on the collective identity of Latinos as an ethnic group. As Friaz points out in his comments, the history of concern with this question goes back to many of the thinkers discussed in my book (e.g., las Casas, Bolívar, Vasconcelos, Martí, and many others).

In Part III of his comments, Friaz states, “Given that Latin American philosophy has so often discussed race from its own vantage point, it seems important to me to discuss in further detail to what degree it shapes and influences

the tradition then and now.” I agree with him provided that by “from its own vantage point” he means that the issue of race in the history of Latin American philosophy has generally come up in connection with other issues of moral and political philosophy. For example, in the writings of las Casas, race appears as a moral question concerning the rights of the Amerindians. In those of Bolívar, race is important insofar as it allows him to determine what type of polity might work best for a mixed group of people. But either of them, like most Latin American thinkers discussed in the history of our discipline, has been a white male from privileged socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. In their cases, which illustrate the common background of many Latin American thinkers, we can talk about “white privilege” if that is what Friaз means by “white supremacy.” But I would make note of some exceptions, such as that of Martí.

In his comments Friaз also mentions a distinction from my book between internal and external factors. As I conceive of that distinction, factors such as race, gender, cultural, or socioeconomic status (SOS) are external to a certain philosophical work. Although they might permeate the work, they are independent of it. For example, I would say that las Casas’s SOS, gender, or ethnic group is not internal to his work, even when it permeates it. In my book, the internal/external distinction bears on the fate of Latin American philosophy because I invoke external factors to explain why this type of philosophy has deficiencies in originality, capability to generate communities of dialogue, and other vices often pointed out by skeptics. As Friaз notes, I follow Cannabrava in thinking that genealogy (i.e., the fact that many of its earlier practitioners were literary figures or something other than philosophers) played a role in undermining the development of philosophical critical thinking in Latin America. But unlike Cannabrava, I believe that genealogy is not the only external factor that may be brought to bear in any correct explanation of why very few Latin American philosophers (if any) have achieved international recognition. I hypothesize that some cultural factors (such as the language preferred in international publishing) as well as socioeconomic factors (such as the material means available for academic philosophers in Latin America) have put their work at a disadvantage compared with the work of peers from high-income regions of the world. A similar account might work to explain what Friaз regards as “white supremacy” in Latin American philosophy. But on my view, philosophers should defer to historians and social scientists for the development of that account.

REPLY TO VICENTE MEDINA

I’d like to thank Professor Vicente Medina for reading my *Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* and contributing his insightful comments to this APA session. As he and the other critics in the session note, my book aims at offering a general introduction to Latin American philosophy which, *per force*, leaves out numerous interesting topics and arguments. I want to believe that whatever my book covers, it does so in a critical, engaging manner.

Be that as it may, I’m honored that my *Introduction* has attracted the critical attention of the participants of this session. As with other participants, I agree with many of

Medina’s points. To begin with, as he notes, we agree on an analytic approach to the discipline. Using that approach, Medina also subscribes to an argument in the book for the existence of what he calls “an indigenous Latin American philosophy,” whose existence he associates with a debate that goes back at least 180 years, to Juan Bautista Alberdi and his (much misinterpreted in my view) “Ideas” of 1842. He locates the apex of that debate in the 1960s, for he links it to the famous polemic at the time between Leopoldo Zea and Augusto Salazar Bondy. I would add that there has been a revival of that debate in the early 2000s, in part due to the interest in it of an increasing number of philosophers in the US.

Moreover, we agree about conceiving of Latin American philosophy as a type of applied philosophy. But I would say that it’s mostly but not exclusively applied *moral and political* philosophy. The qualification “mostly” is needed to accommodate topics such as the debate over the nature of Latin American philosophy, which Medina and I place within the metaphilosophy of the discipline.

The parts of Medina’s comments that go beyond what’s covered in my book concern issues about which I defer to his expertise in the history of the discipline in general, and of Cuban philosophy in particular. Furthermore, I believe that his views on these issues deserve dissemination through some of the standard channels available to philosophers interested in the subject and encourage him to do so. In any case, the first of the issues mentioned by Medina, which I believe is the role of eclecticism in the struggle to liberate the discipline from the dogmatic thinking of Scholasticism, relates to Medina’s thesis that we must distinguish two types of liberationism in Latin American thought: the old liberationism that fought dogmatic Scholasticism, and what he calls “new liberationism,” which I engage in the book while discussing liberation philosophy and theology. From Medina’s brief comments, it appears that the impact of Cousin’s eclecticism in Latin America was broader than among Cuban thinkers. On his view, many theorists have invoked it to object to the authoritarianism typical of late scholastic philosophy. In particular, I’d like to learn from Medina whether there is a connection between such eclecticism and the positivism that standardly gets all the credits for having put to rest Scholasticism in the region.

About the “new liberationism,” we agree in questioning some of its ungrounded assumptions such as its conception of philosophy restricted to a liberationist agenda. It seems to me that by deciding for themselves what’s best for the so-called Other (i.e., the people from the periphery, the Latin American poor, the Indigenous people, etc.), their error is that of *unjustified paternalism*—a moral error not at all uncommon in the history of Latin American political thought. I would trace such paternalism to at least Christopher Columbus’s actions and words in his *Diaries*, which were emulated by most of the European colonizers who followed him in regarding the Amerindians as incapable of rationality and thus incapable of making their own decisions. Against that background, las Casas stands out as a notable opponent who, with arguments of his own, defended the rationality of the native peoples. Thus, Medina’s critique of the new liberationists opens the way

for charging that there is an inconsistency problem facing the new liberationists: namely, that of appealing to the authority of las Casas to support their own agenda, while at the same time appointing themselves as judges of what's best for the Latin American Other. In sum, what Medina sees a paradox facing the liberationist's attempt to decide for the Other, I see as the problem of replacing philosophy with ideology which I noticed in my book. Nevertheless he has led me to discover an inconsistency problem that otherwise would have gone unnoticed.

NOTES

1. Susana Nuccetelli, *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
2. J. B. Alberdi, "Ideas para presidir la confección del curso de filosofía contemporánea," in *Escritos póstumos*, vol. 15 (1840): 603–19, Buenos Aires: Imp. Juan Bautista Alberdi; page reference is to the reprint in Terán 1988.
3. See, for example, Carlos Pereda, "Latin American Philosophy: Some Vices," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 3 (2006): 192–203.
4. J. J. E. Gracia, *Hispanic-Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).
5. J. A. Orosco, "The Philosophical Gift of Brown Folks: Mexican American Philosophy in the United States," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 15 (2016): 23–28.

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Maité Cruz is assistant professor of philosophy at Union College in Schenectady, NY, where she regularly teaches courses on Latin American philosophy. Her research to date has focused on early modern philosophy, especially on epistemological and metaphysical topics in Hume and Shepherd. She has published articles on Hume's theories of time and memory and on Shepherd's proofs of causal principles.

Ricardo Friaiz is a PhD candidate in the philosophy department at the University of Oregon. His research concerns colonialism, philosophy of race, and abolition.

Vicente Medina is a professor of philosophy at Seton Hall University, where he has been teaching for the past thirty-two years. He has published on terrorism, political philosophy, applied ethics, and Latin American philosophy.

Susana Nuccetelli is professor of philosophy at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. She publishes in Latin American philosophy as well as epistemology, ethics, and metaethics. Her latest book in Latin American philosophy is *An Introduction to Latin American Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020).