

Introduction

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Until quite recently, Latin American philosophy was neglected in the United States.¹ Given the rich and interesting history of Latin American philosophy, such neglect is regrettable—the result of uninformed prejudices rather than of well-grounded judgments. During the early history of Latin American philosophy, the contributions from Latin American thinkers were generally viewed to be mere copies of the work done by Spanish and Portuguese philosophers. Hence, there was not much interest in investigating the contributions from the “colonies,” as the general view was that the intellectual tradition, like the political one, was dominated by the colonizers. Nowadays, the lack of general knowledge regarding Latin American philosophy can be attributed to many factors, one of which is a language barrier. Few major philosophical texts from Latin America have been translated into English, and this is in part due to the fact that while English, French, and German are recognized as important philosophical languages, Spanish is relegated to the realm of magical realism or of immigrant fruit pickers. In philosophy graduate programs throughout the United States, students are encouraged to learn French and German and to read the philosophers who wrote in those languages, but Spanish is dismissed as a philosophically irrelevant language: a consequence of the view that the philosophical discussions in Latin America are mere echoes of discussions carried out in the United States or Europe. We believe that the contributions included in this volume demonstrate that there are original positions to be found in the work of Latin American philosophers and so that at least some philosophical work from Latin America offers new insights and solutions to problems, hence making it relevant to philosophers from other regions of the world. One goal we have in presenting this collection is to introduce some important, contemporary philosophical voices of the Latin

American philosophical tradition. It is our hope that this collection will help eliminate some of the prejudices that stand in the way of a serious reception of Latin American philosophy in the United States.

The contributions of the philosophers included in this collection shed light on the roots of some of the generally dismissive views of Latin American philosophy put forth by Latin American philosophers themselves. The colonial past of Latin America has created a host of socioeconomic problems that continue to plague the region. Philosophy has not been free of the problems that accompanied the conquest of America by Spain and Portugal and the ensuing centuries of Spanish and Portuguese domination. According to the prominent Mexican philosopher, Leopoldo Zea (1912–2004), a certain sense of inferiority affects the philosophers of Latin America and leads them to see their own philosophical tradition as less valuable than the traditions of Europe.² European figures and traditions have usually been considered superior to anything autochthonously Latin American. The authors of this collection discuss some of the historical reasons for the tendency to devalue Latin American philosophy, and they also use the very history of Latin American philosophy to put forth arguments to contest the view that Latin American philosophy is inferior to the philosophy of Europe or the United States.

Before turning to a discussion of how the authors included here address the ways in which history has been a hurdle for the development of philosophy in Latin America, and how they propose to overcome these hurdles, a brief overview of the major periods of the history of Latin American philosophy is in order so that the reader will have a basic reference point for some of the points raised by our authors.

THE MAJOR PERIODS OF LATIN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

The Colonial Period and the Rise of Scholasticism in Latin America

The history of Latin American philosophy can be broken down into three major periods. The first recognized period of Latin American philosophy is the colonial period (ca. 1550–1750). The main philosophical centers during the early colonial period were Mexico and Peru, the two places where there had been substantial indigenous empires and rich natural resources such as gold and silver, coveted by Europeans. The colonial period was shaped by the philosophical concerns of the Iberian clergy, who were sent by the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns to convert the indigenous people. The texts studied were those of medieval scholastics and of their Iberian commentators, and the major issues addressed in the colonies were similar to those prevalent in

Spain and Portugal; thus, logical and metaphysical questions dominated philosophical discussion. Nonetheless, the scholastic emphasis on abstract speculation did not preclude a dedication by some of the period's thinkers to the political and legal questions raised by the colonization of the Americas.³

Critics of colonial scholasticism often overlook the progressive, humanistic aspect of this movement, demonizing the entire colonial period as one in which the authority of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns and the Catholic church restricted the thought of the region's thinkers, who had little freedom to develop positions critical of the colonial powers and so did next to nothing to speak out against the injustices committed in the name of both crown and church.

The Mexican philosopher, Samuel Ramos (1897–1959) claims that scholasticism was used as an ideological weapon to protect the status quo and maintain an oppressive regime in New Spain (as Mexico was known during the colonial period).⁴ Ramos claims that when Mexico broke from Spain, a philosophical revolution was needed to complement the political revolution, and so a complete break with scholasticism was in order. Several authors in this collection address the damaging legacy of such a dismissive view of the colonial past, a view that has led to ruptures in Latin American intellectual history and which has created serious hurdles for establishing a coherent history of Latin American philosophy. One of the authors, Mauricio Beuchot, has done much work to show that narrow readings of scholasticism, such as Ramos's, are oversimplistic and do not do justice to the scholastic movement.⁵ Yet, Ramos is just one of a considerably large number of leading philosophers who has promoted a view of scholasticism as an instrument used to maintain the power and privilege of Spain and thereby contribute to the passive attitude of the Mexicans, thus infecting their intellectual tradition. Leopoldo Zea, one of Mexico's most important philosophers, shares Ramos's generally disdainful view of scholasticism.⁶ In his contribution to this collection, Oscar Martí discusses the ramifications that such dismissals of scholasticism have had on the development of philosophy in Latin America. Among other things, these interpretations of scholasticism have led many historians to ignore not only the two centuries of colonial thought shaped by scholasticism, but also the century between the fall of scholasticism and full independence. On such accounts, three entire centuries of intellectual history are cast aside, and the history of Latin American philosophy is said to begin with the period of independence. The 1800s, the century of independence movements in Latin America, are presented as a kind of clean, fresh start for a region no longer dominated by or dependent on, any colonial power. In their contributions to this volume, Oscar Martí and Mauricio Beuchot discuss the hazards of ignoring three centuries of thought and argue that we can only approximate a complete understanding of the history of Latin American

philosophy if we take a close, objective look at its *entire* history, not just those parts deemed virtuous and free of colonial dominion.

Independence and the Rise of Positivism

A break with scholasticism was attempted during the independentist period (1750–1850). This second major period of Latin American thought is named after the goals that the intellectuals of the New World had, namely, to gain independence from Spain and Portugal. This period has been lauded as fundamental for the development of an intellectual tradition free from dependence on colonial powers for its models of thought. Yet, while thinkers no longer turned to Spain and Portugal for models of thought, there was a notable influence of European philosophical trends: a strong influence of Utilitarianism was reflected in the emphasis on progress and the move to make ideas tools for social change; another source of the thought of this period is found in the liberal ideas of the French *philosophes*, who made reason a measure of legitimacy in social and governmental matters. Yet, critics of scholasticism note a crucial difference between the “imported” ideas that bolstered independence from the colonial power and the “imposed” ideas of the colonizers, which formed the foundation of scholasticism.

The independentist period was followed by positivism (1850–1910). This was in part a response to the social, financial, and political needs of the newly liberated countries of Latin America. Juan Bautista Alberdi (Argentina, 1812–1884), Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Argentina, 1811–1888), and Andrés Bello (Venezuela, 1781–1865) were important figures of this movement, and they remain important points of reference for Latin American philosophers.⁷ Each of these thinkers emphasized experience over theoretical speculation and was interested in issues of social justice, educational reform, and progress. Positivists emphasized the explanatory value of empirical science and rejected metaphysics. Positivism exerted an unusually strong influence in Latin American society, and it was generally interpreted as a kind of panacea for the ills caused by too long a reliance on the allegedly nonprogressive tendencies of scholasticism. Latin American intellectuals equated positivism and its ahistorical method with progress not only for philosophy, but for society in general. Testifying to this is the preservation of the positivist inscription “Order and Progress” on the Brazilian national flag. In Mexico, the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz adopted positivism as its official philosophy. Positivism’s warm reception hinged upon the promise of progress it offered, and when that promise was not delivered, positivism’s popularity quickly waned. The disenchantment with positivism heralded a new period in Latin American thought.

Stabilization and Contemporary Latin American Philosophy (1910–present)

The third period of Latin American Philosophy began with the generation of thinkers who adamantly rejected the central principles of positivism. This group of thinkers became known as the *founders*, a term coined by Francisco Romero, and included Alejandro Octavio Deústua (Peru, 1849–1945), Alejandro Korn (Argentina, 1860–1936), Enrique Molina (Chile, 1871–1964), Carlos Vaz Ferreira (Uruguay, 1872–1958), Raimundo de Fariás Brito (Brazil, 1862–1917), José Vasconcelos (Mexico, 1882–1959), and Antonio Caso (Mexico, 1883–1946). These thinkers began to develop thoughts that culminated in the development of what can be called philosophical anthropology.

In addition to the work of the founders, other crucial influences in the overcoming of positivism and its legacy were vitalism and intuitionism, especially the versions imported from French philosophers such as Émile Boutroux and Henri Bergson. Yet, arguably the most important force in the transition from positivism to vitalism was the influence of the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset. Ortega introduced the thought of German philosophers such as Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann to a generation of Latin American thinkers, thereby expanding the philosophical dialogue of the entire region.

The generation shaped by the founders and by the ideas imported from Spain, France, and Germany have been characterized by Francisco Miró Quesada (Peru, b. 1918), as “the generation of forgers.” A major figure of this generation who played a central role in the development of philosophical anthropology was Samuel Ramos. He focused on Mexican culture, thereby inspiring interest in what is culturally unique to Latin American nations. Ramos’s book, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (*Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*) (1934), was the first attempt at interpreting Mexican culture. Francisco Romero (Argentina, 1891–1962) was also dedicated to the development of philosophical anthropology, and his *Teoría del hombre* (*Theory of Man*) (1952) was highly influential. Romero sought to develop a view of the human in terms of intentionality and spirituality, and this in universal terms rather than the culturally specific parameters outlined by Ramos.

Since the twentieth century there has been a tension in Latin American thought between those philosophers who focus on the universal human condition and those who focus on the particular conditions of specific cultural circumstances. In the case of Mexico, for example, many philosophers have discussed the impact of the colonization on the development of culture in Mexico. This particularist tendency grew as result of a historical event that

brought two traditions into even closer contact with one another and heralded yet another stage in the development of Latin American philosophy.

During the late 1930s and 1940s, due to the upheavals created by the Spanish Civil War, a significant group of thinkers from Spain arrived in Latin America. These philosophers became known as the *transterrados* (trans-landed), those who had crossed over from their land to settle in various Latin American countries. Among those who had a strong influence on the development of Latin American philosophy are José Ferrater Mora (1912–1991), José Gaos (1900–1969), Juan D. García Bacca (1901–1992), José Ortega y Gasset (1883–1955), Eduardo Nicol (1907–1986), Luis Recaséns Siches (1903–1977), and Joaquín Xirau (1895–1946). Their presence helped to break some of the national barriers that had existed in Latin America before their arrival. The conception of *hispanidad* that they inherited from the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936) and the need to establish themselves in their adopted land helped the process; they went from country to country, spreading ideas and contributing to an ever broadening philosophical dialogue.

José Gaos was one of the most influential of the *transterrados* and references to his influence are found in many of the contributions to this volume. Gaos was a student of Ortega and became the teacher of one of Mexico's most important philosophers, Leopoldo Zea. Gaos encouraged Zea to study the history of Mexican thought, and this resulted in one of Zea's most important books, *El positivismo en México (Positivism in Mexico)* (1943). Through Gaos, Ortega had a strong influence on Zea's views. One of Ortega's most important insights was that in order to understand ourselves, we must understand our circumstance. In Zea's work, a central problem is the meaning of the Latin American circumstance for the development of the philosophy of the region.

Zea's unique philosophical approach was also influenced by Ramos. The latter's existential, psychoanalytic approach to the problem of cultural identity was transformed by Zea into a critique of philosophy and the articulation of a *mestizo* (racially/culturally mixed) consciousness. The term *mestizo* points to an interest in issues associated with race and culture, for it opens a philosophical discussion concerning the meaning of the being of a person who is of both Spanish and indigenous heritage. The source of this line of questioning can be traced back to the events following the colonization, when the Spaniards mixed with the indigenous people to create what became known in the cultures of the New World as a new, *mestizo* race. For this reason, Beuchot reminds us in his article, we would do well to pay more serious attention to the colonial period, where the source of many contemporary issues can be found. In his article, León Olivé addresses the central role that the concept of *mestizaje* (or the mixing of races and cultures) continues to have in contemporary Latin American philosophy, especially in

the debates over multiculturalism and related issue of rights for the conquered indigenous groups of Latin America.

With this admittedly brief account of the history of Latin American thought in mind, let us now turn to an overview of how the contributors to this volume respond to the issue of the role that history has played in the development of Latin American philosophy.

PART I: SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL MODELS FOR ESTABLISHING A HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

Views about the relation between philosophy and its history affect the way in which one approaches the very activity of doing philosophy. This is not unique to Latin American philosophy. Why, then, should the question of the role of history in Latin American philosophy be of interest to us? Let us return for a moment to a problem that Zea has addressed in his work. According to Zea, Latin American philosophy has suffered from an inferiority complex, that is, from the belief that the philosophical traditions of Latin America do not measure up to those of Europe and are, at best, second-rate imitations of trends started elsewhere. In order to determine whether this belief is justified and true, Latin American philosophers must have a history to which they can turn in order to assess the merits of the philosophical work done through the years. Yet, such histories are scarce.

The articles of part I deal with the issue of why, despite the fact that historical approaches to philosophy are highly valued, the history of philosophy has not developed well in Latin America. A major hurdle in the development of a strong, original intellectual tradition in Latin America has been a misunderstanding of how to approach the history of philosophy. The first four essays explore a range of theoretical issues surrounding specific problems that have hindered the development of a solid history of Latin American philosophy and of measures that need to be taken in order to overcome these problems.

In the opening essay, "The History of Philosophy and Latin American Philosophy," Jorge Gracia takes as a starting point the fact that neither Latin American philosophy nor its history has been taken seriously by the Western philosophical community. Historiographers of the philosophical mainstream do not feel the need to refer to it, and Latin Americans themselves are suspicious of its value. This is demonstrated by the fact that when Latin Americans engage in any kind of philosophical activity, they do so by adopting the philosophical views of European or North American intellectuals, while neglecting the traditions developed within Latin

America. Gracia argues that one important reason why Latin American philosophers do not take the ideas of their contemporaries or of their philosophical ancestors seriously is because "Latin American philosophy is not as original as it could be" and this lack of originality can be traced to the fact that Latin American philosophers "use the history of philosophy in their philosophizing and in the teaching of philosophy in a non-philosophical way and therefore suppress rather than develop genuine philosophical activity and originality." In short, Gracia traces many of the ills facing philosophy in Latin America to the fact that Latin American philosophy is studied and taught in a historical, yet nonphilosophical way.

Gracia examines several historiographical approaches to philosophy that are popular in Latin America such as the culturalist, the ideologist, and the doxographical approaches. He argues that they are philosophically useless because they are fundamentally nonphilosophical in nature. They do not further the recognition of the value of philosophical ideas and of their relations. Gracia's goal, however, is neither merely to show the flaws in these approaches nor to argue that philosophy and its history are incompatible, but rather to insist on the possibility of a *philosophical* approach to the history of philosophy. To this end, he proposes something he dubs "the framework approach." This approach leads to the creation of a conceptual map for determining the location and relation of ideas and figures in the history of philosophy relative to each other and to us, and it provides essential description, interpretation, and evaluation not only of positions but also of problems and arguments and thus maintains a strong philosophical dimension. The framework approach is not limited by the particularism of the culturalist approach: it does not reduce philosophy to a form of cultural expression. It seeks the truth about the positions it examines, thus having clear advantages over the ideological approach, which instrumentalizes the history of philosophy and subordinates philosophy to a particular interest. And the framework approach is critical in contrast to doxographical approaches to the history of philosophy which "lack dimensions of interpretation and evaluation essential to the *philosophical* task of developing a comprehensive and adequate view of the world." Gracia maintains that although the application of the history of philosophy is not necessary for all tasks of philosophy, if one uses the history of philosophy philosophically, then the history of philosophy in Latin America can be rescued from the unphilosophical soil in which it has been seeded, and it can help foster a rich philosophical tradition.

Like Gracia, Carlos Pereda is primarily concerned with the issue of how certain approaches to the history of philosophy in Latin America have created hurdles for the development of a robust philosophical tradition in the region. Pereda, like Gracia, suggests a way to overcome these hurdles.

In his article, “Explanatory and ‘Argumentative’ History of Philosophy,” Pereda delineates two different approaches to the history of philosophy and argues that the problem of Latin American philosophy is its tendency to sever the connections between them. Explanatory history is concerned with explaining the past, reconstructing texts and discourses, and connecting arguments, works, and philosophers to their time. Argumentative history is concerned with generating debates by confronting arguments, and it is guided by concerns about comprehension, truth, and value. Pereda observes that an explanatory approach plays an important role in an argumentative reading, for in order to confront and evaluate arguments, one must know what the author is saying, understand the argument in the first place, and this requires the kind of reconstructive process typical of an explanatory reading. On the other hand, an argumentative reading plays an important role in determining and justifying the subject matter of an explanatory history.

In Latin America, Pereda argues, the separation of these two kinds of readings has affected not only the history of philosophy but philosophy itself. The history of philosophy has been totally assimilated to a deficient version of explanatory history: it has become mere doxography, providing pieces of information without making it clear why the information is philosophically relevant. In turn, this has resulted in a mistaken understanding of philosophical activity (which requires not only understanding, but the evaluation of arguments) as history of philosophy. Pereda concludes that if Latin American thinkers really want to engage in philosophical inquiry, they must go beyond doxographical accounts, and train themselves to confront arguments and address questions of truth and relevance.

A tone of alarm and an accompanying urge for change in how the history of philosophy is received by Latin American philosophers continues in the next article of the collection, “History and Philosophy in the Latin American Setting: Some Disturbing Comments,” by Argentine philosopher, Eduardo Rabossi. Rabossi, who is well known for his work in analytic philosophy, discusses the uncritical ways in which the history of philosophy has taken over in Latin America, having an especially pernicious effect on how philosophy is taught at Latin American universities. He points to a strange situation, namely that while there is a widespread conviction that “being a historian of philosophy is a way—perhaps *the* way of being a philosopher,” “first-rate historical research is not as frequent as one would expect.” Rabossi calls for a more critical approach to the general view that the history of philosophy is philosophically relevant and indispensable to the development of the discipline.

Rabossi is troubled by the general assumption that being a historian of philosophy is *the* appropriate way of being a philosopher in Latin America.

He claims that “by doing the history of philosophy one gains in authority and prestige without being exposed to the hazards of having to induce progress in the state of the art.” Rabossi goes on to question the philosophical merit of purely historical approaches to philosophy, after all, he points out, being a historian of chemistry does *not* make one a chemist, being a historian of medicine does *not* make one a physician, and historians of art are *not* artists in virtue of their status as historians. Why then, asks Rabossi, do we assume that a historian of philosophy *is* a philosopher? Rabossi calls for arguments in favor of the philosophical relevance of the history of philosophy in light of the fact that in Latin America it is uncritically assumed by many in the field of philosophy that *the only* way to be a philosopher is by doing the history of philosophy.

An uncritical assumption that engagement with the history of philosophy is a necessary part of doing philosophy will not serve the field of philosophy well. Indeed, Rabossi points out that despite the high value placed on the relation between history and philosophy, there has been little high quality work in the history of philosophy carried out in Latin America. In his article, “Breaking with the Past: Philosophy and Its History in Latin America,” Oscar Martí also focuses on the striking absence of histories of Latin American philosophy before the turn of the twentieth century. Martí considers several possible reasons for this. Some argue that there was no philosophical activity worthy of consideration in Latin America before the twentieth century: according to these voices, most Latin American thought was merely imitative and thus, inherently deficient, and not deserving of a history. Martí also discusses reasons related to socioeconomic factors, that is, factors external to philosophy itself, such as oppression and social turmoil that are taken to be impediments to the flourishing of philosophical activity in Latin America. Furthermore, Martí points out, it has been claimed that there was no philosophical tradition in Latin America, and not enough philosophers to create one. According to Martí, none of these explanations adequately explains the scarcity of histories of Latin American philosophy.

Martí’s argument is centered around what he ultimately takes to be a more promising reason to account for the dearth of histories of Latin American philosophy: the fact that scholars in Latin America have to value the past in order to consider it worthy of writing about. Yet, as Martí indicates: “Much of what passed as a Hispanic past and its philosophical tradition was rejected as biased—based upon backward and oppressive superstitions.” Latin America’s colonial past gave rise to a general disdain for the history of the region. Martí supports his claim with ample historical evidence, beginning with the scholastic period of Latin American philosophy, a period during which the authority of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns and the Catholic religion silenced all philosophical voices that

spoke out against them, and during which time anything American was looked down upon as barbaric. As the colonies began to break from Spain and Portugal, a new period in the history of Latin American thought was heralded, modern thought replaced scholasticism, and during the period of independence, positivism became the official position of many newly independent countries. The past was seen as a source of gloom and lacking in progress. Martí points out that one of the independence period's leading intellectuals, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, viewed the history of Argentina as a process from barbarism to civilization, "and who would want to write about barbarism?" According to Martí, understanding the reason for the absence of histories of Latin American philosophy requires understanding the complicated relation Latin American philosophers have to the colonial past of their respective countries.

PART II: WRITING THE HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY IN AND DESPITE THE SHADOWS OF ITS COLONIAL LEGACY

The articles in part II of this collection explore the complexity inherent to the attempt to do the history of philosophy in a region still haunted by the specter of colonialism. Unlike the articles in part I, which are focused on the tension between the high value placed on approaching philosophy historically in Latin America and the fact that there is little original history of Latin American philosophy actually done, with the authors offering *theoretical solutions* to the problem, the contributions in part II are more concerned with the *practical issue* of writing a history of philosophy for a region overshadowed by its colonial past.

In his article, "The Study of Philosophy's History in Mexico as a Foundation for Doing Mexican Philosophy," Mauricio Beuchot, one of Mexico's leading historians of colonial philosophy, defends the view that the history of philosophy is not only useful to the development of the discipline, but that it is necessary and that we have an obligation to attend to the past. Underlying Beuchot's view is a contextual understanding of philosophy as an essentially situated activity that far from being threatened by particularistic considerations and values is enriched by them.

In order to support his claims concerning the value of history for the activity of philosophizing, Beuchot highlights three reasons why an awareness of the past is critical in order to do philosophy: (1) in order to have an adequate understanding of concrete philosophical problems of today, we need to understand them genetically; (2) philosophical progress is impossible without a constant dialogue with the past, because by looking to the

contributions of past philosophers we find both models that we can emulate and mistakes that we should avoid (in this way the history of philosophy provides us with a dialogue); and (3) a serious study of the past enables us to come to terms with the tradition to which we belong; in the case of Mexico, Beuchot contends, a deeper awareness of the strong humanistic tradition that has manifested itself as an enduring concern for the integration of its indigenous people and the question of their just treatment would enable contemporary Mexicans to deal with some pressing social problems. Beuchot argues his case for the crucial role that history plays in philosophy by referencing a neglected period of thought: colonial philosophy. According to Beuchot the neglect of the colonial period is unwarranted: the philosophers of the colonial period raised “problems, theories and attitudes still prevalent today.”

To substantiate this claim, Beuchot discusses the concept of *mestizaje*, which was studied during the colonial period and continues to shape Mexican thought, especially, that group of thinkers who are interested in issues related to cultural identity. As Beuchot explains, the term *mestizaje* “refers not only to the racial mixing that went on during and after the colonization but also, and even more importantly, to a kind of cultural mixing.” According to Beuchot, discussions surrounding the meaning and legacy of *mestizaje* continue to be of interest to contemporary philosophers trying to understand the issues raised by multicultural societies in their quest to establish norms that will take the needs and rights of conquered groups into account.

The colonial past, as Beuchot explains, has led many indigenous scholars to “portray colonial thought as obscurantist and exclusively concerned with legitimizing genocide.” This leads these thinkers to dismiss the colonial period and its philosophers, yet this dismissal is based on a serious misreading of the period, as Beuchot’s discussion of some of the leading thinkers of the periods demonstrates. Bartolomé de las Casas, for example, dedicated most of his life to defending the rights of the indigenous people of New Spain. Beuchot’s careful historical work presents an accurate and detailed account of the figures and issues that shaped the colonial period.

Beuchot stresses that, “[t]he history of ideas in Mexico is bound to the history of the country, and with a clear sense of the history of Mexico we obtain clarity regarding the concrete problems that have been presented philosophically: problems such as ideological emancipation, national identity, and multiculturalism.” The important relation between philosophy and history is not limited to the tradition in Mexico: progress in philosophy is linked to an understanding of the past.

María Luisa Femenías also point to the problems of ignoring the past, arguing that justice calls for us to be vigilant about the spaces created (or

those that are absent) in the intellectual histories we create. Femenías argues that philosophy and feminist thought are served by history and that they serve history. Her article, “Philosophical Genealogies and Feminism in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,” represents the kind of approach that Pereda recommends in his essay. Femenías deals with the arguments of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and more than merely trying to explain the history of Sor Juana’s thought, she shows how philosophy, feminist thought, and history can serve each other in important ways.

Femenías discusses Sor Juana’s feminism and her philosophy. She delineates two kinds of feminism in Sor Juana. Sor Juana’s explicit feminism is underscored in some of her most famous poems where she defends the rights of women. Yet, there is a more subtle kind of feminism displayed by Sor Juana’s rhetorical uses of language. Indeed, Sor Juana’s mastery of rhetorical techniques allows her to place herself in the unthreatening space traditionally occupied by women (and thus to slip by the censors) while defending her status as an intellectual woman. Sor Juana advocated the equality of men and women, and demonstrated women’s rational capabilities by her witty poems and her famous “Response” to Sor Filotea. Yet, traditional genealogies of thought leave no space for the contributions of a female, Hispanic thinker. As Femenías points out, Hegel’s account of the development of Spirit leaves women and the entire continent of Latin America out of the picture, and so Sor Juana’s contributions do not even show up on the Hegelian radar screen. Femenías discusses the general problem of accommodating a figure like Sor Juana into any historical scheme: she was a woman, a poet, a feminist, and a philosopher, in a time during which women were not even seen as subjects. Femenías’s article also demonstrates that according intellectual women a place in the canon was a problem that endured long after the colonial period of which Sor Juana was a part. Moreover, Femenías points out that even well-intentioned alternatives to the exclusionary system of Hegel (for example, Foucault’s work) failed to accommodate Sor Juana as a “woman/subject/poet/feminist/philosopher.”

By considering the problems that Sor Juana confronted, that is, how to construct a space in the history of ideas to accommodate and legitimize her contributions, we are given a way to reflect on how philosophers in Latin America can create new spaces in the history of ideas, spaces that would facilitate an appreciation of their contributions. Femenías’s article provides a clear portrait of how the feminist reconstruction of history rescued the work of Sor Juana from philosophical oblivion and thereby also broadened the history of philosophy by enlarging the notion of who counts as a philosopher.

León Olivé is also concerned with how the history of philosophy grows when new issues are introduced. In his article, “A Philosophical

Debate Concerning Traditional Ethnic Groups in Latin America and the History of Philosophy,” Olivé discusses the role of the history of philosophy and the contributions made to the debate concerning multiculturalism in Latin America (especially in Mexico)—he is particularly interested in the issues of the rights of ethnic minorities, the relationship between the state and minority groups, and the problem of cultural diversity and moral relativism. Olivé organizes his discussion around the work of three prominent contemporary Latin American philosophers: Ernesto Garzón Valdés of Argentina, and the Mexican philosophers, Fernando Salmerón, and Luis Villoro. As Olivé tells us, these thinkers “belong to the first generation which in the twentieth century developed a professional treatment of philosophy in Latin America.” Salmerón and Villoro were students of Gaos and therefore strongly influenced by Gaos’s teacher, Ortega y Gasset. Olivé identifies three ways in which these thinkers use past philosophical ideas: (1) as ideas that shape their thought; (2) as ideas that provide a background for their analysis; and (3) as ideas that constitute the object of philosophical analysis. Through a careful examination of their work, Olivé tries to show the mistake in any attempt to isolate historical considerations from the discussion of some of the key issues raised by multiculturalism in a Latin American context. And given that “the multicultural situation in Mexico and in many Latin American countries is different from that in the United States, which is not the same as the situation in England or Spain,” it makes sense to look to the discussions from thinkers not only from the United States, Canada, and Europe, but also from Latin America. Olivé points to the Nahuas of central Mexico, as a challenge to certain discussions of multiculturalism going on in Canada and the United States. Olivé understands multiculturalism as “a normative concept which could justify the so-called ‘right to difference’ applied to cultures, that is to say, the right of a given culture to preserve itself, reproduce, flourish, and evolve.” Olivé is particularly concerned with the role that traditions have played in the debates concerning multiculturalism in Latin America, and uses the work of Valdés, Villoro, and Salmerón, to discuss the construction of the philosophical foundations of multiculturalism.

Olivé contends that serious attention to history is necessary in order to address the problems surrounding multiculturalism in Latin America. Yet, he makes it clear that he does not believe that historical perspective and knowledge is always necessary to practice philosophy. He is willing to concede that although beneficial, knowledge of the past is not necessary for shaping all ideas, or for coming up with solutions to all philosophical problems. Yet, to deal with the political and social problems concerning the situation of the indigenous groups in Mexico, that is problems that affect the state and its relationship to traditional ethnic groups, knowledge

of history is critical. Olivé argues that the notion of a state or of a culture both play a significant role in the examination of the particular needs and demands of indigenous groups. And, according to Olivé, these notions are such that “in order to understand those institutions and cultures correctly, it is necessary to understand the ideas constitutive of their identity as they were originally discussed and later developed.” Thus the history of philosophy is necessary to deal with issues of group rights for indigenous groups and other such issues raised by multiculturalism.

The last essay of the collection takes up the concrete problem of “How and Why to Foster the History of Philosophy in Postcolonial Contexts.” In his self-described “short and provocative essay,” Horacio Cerutti-Guldberg provides a useful summary of how the history of Latin American philosophy has been told since the postcolonial era, which “started in the beginning of the nineteenth century” and has lasted until now. The term *postcolonial*, we are told, “refers to the course of history and the situations that the course of history produces,” *not* to “discourses, interpretations, approaches or schools of thought.” According to Cerutti, during this postcolonial period, Latin America has witnessed “at least two types of situations”: neocolonialism (exemplified by Puerto Rico) and dependence with domination (which has given rise to liberation *philosophy*).

After a survey of the three decisive moments that shaped the Latin American historiographic tradition, Cerutti compares the Latin American tradition to contemporary African thought, and then moves on to a discussion of the problems with how the history of philosophy is taught at Latin American universities and what measures need to be taken in order to move from a memory of what came before to the creation of a history of Latin American philosophy.

Cerutti is sympathetic to the view that the history of philosophy is philosophically relevant. He begins his essay with an account of three historical milestones of the Latin American historiographical tradition: (1) a prologue to Emile Bréhier’s history of philosophy written by Ortega in 1942, which is a reflection on the necessity of a reassessment of the history of philosophy, and closer attention to its “less spectacular moments”; (2) the attempt by José Gaos to define the object of study of a history of Hispanic-American philosophy (in Gaos’s 1952 work, *Conflict between the History of Philosophy in Mexico and the History of Philosophy in General*); and (3) Augusto Salazar Bondy’s 1968 book, *Does There Exist a Philosophy of Our America?*, which, according to Cerutti, made the categories of alienation, dependence with domination, and structural transformation essential topics of philosophical discussion in the Latin American region.

After presenting these milestones and discussing their importance for the development of philosophy in Latin America, Cerutti addresses some

of the problems raised by Martí and Beuchot concerning the effects of the colonization on the history of the region. Yet unlike Martí and Beuchot, who claim that philosophers have tended to ignore the colonial past and so ignore three decades of thought, some of it quite valuable, Cerutti argues that the memory of the colonized has been stripped, the past has been distorted to “consolidate domination.” Cerutti then turns to a discussion of African philosophy, which, coming from a region of former colonies, faces similar problems to those faced by Latin American philosophy, in particular, the situation of dependency.

How can this situation of dependency be overcome? One way is to critically evaluate how philosophy is taught at Latin American universities. In the good company of several of the other contributors to this volume, such as Gracia and Pereda, Cerutti faults the way that the history of philosophy is taught in the universities. While there are some exceptions, Cerutti bemoans the prevalent method of philosophical instruction “carried out according to manualistic criteria and in a piecemeal way.”

Like Beuchot, Cerutti contends that philosophy cannot advance without attention to the past, for “one cannot prolong or break with that which is not known, except by coincidence, and that is not the way in which philosophical knowledge proceeds.” Thus, he advances a proposal to develop a history of philosophy for the postcolonial Latin American context that will fertilize philosophy rather than leading to what he calls an epistemically arid field. Cerutti ends his essays with a discussion of the following pressing needs for such a history: (1) the delimitation of the object of study; (2) the determination of a starting point, which, in the case of Latin America, Cerutti emphasizes, would have to affirm the existence of pre-Colombian philosophy and its present-day cultural manifestations; (3) the definition of criteria that can be used to divide the history into different periods, and which, in the case of Latin America would have to address the patterns of political domination; (4) the recognition that thought is particular and situated—the upshot of this is an examination of Indigenous and Afro-American thought overlooked when the particular circumstances of Latin America are not attended to; and (5) an openness to different forms of expression, Cerutti emphasizes that the Latin American essayist tradition has been looked down on in comparison to the grand, rigorous systems developed in other traditions.

Each of the articles in the collection sheds light on the tradition of Latin American philosophy and suggests ways for strengthening that tradition. All of the authors agree that the history of Latin America and the way in which the history of Latin American philosophy has been handled, have created hurdles for the development of philosophy in the region. Despite the tone of alarm that runs through the collection, there is also

much hope, as each author has also offered solutions to the problem of how to create a history of Latin American thought that does justice to this rich tradition.

NOTES

1. One of the earliest signs of serious interest in Latin American philosophy by the philosophical community in the United States was the special double issue on Latin American philosophy edited by Jorge Gracia for *The Philosophical Forum* 20 (1989). Included in the volume were articles from the leading figures doing work in the field. More recently, Gracia has published, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). Ofelia Schutte's work has also helped to generate interest in Latin American philosophy, see her *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993). In the last few years, attention to the area of Latin American philosophy has been growing steadily, see, for example, Mario Sáenz, *The Identity of Liberation in Latin American Thought: Latin American Historicism and the Phenomenology of Leopoldo Zea* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 1999); Susana Nuccetelli, *Latin American Thought: Philosophical Problems and Arguments* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002); and *Latin American Philosophy: An Introduction with Readings* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004). See also: Eduardo Mendieta, editor, *Latin American Philosophy: Currents, Issues, Debates* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003); Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta, editors, *Thinking from the Underside of History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000). Also indicative of the growing interest in the field is Jorge Gracia and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, editors, *Latin American Philosophy for the twenty-first Century: the Human Condition, Values, and the Search for Identity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Press, 2004). Alcoff's recent work on mixed race identity shows that much fertile ground remains to be explored in Latin American thought, especially as North American intellectuals become more interested in race, see her articles, "Mestizo Identity" in *American Mixed Race*, edited by Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995) and "Habits of Hostility: On Seeing Race," *Philosophy Today* 44 (2000): 30–40. Iván Jaksic, through his translation and scholarly work on the Venezuelan philosopher, Andrés Bello and other key figures of the period, is drawing attention to South American philosophical and political traditions. See his, *Academic Rebels in Chile: The Role of Philosophy in Higher Education and Politics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), *Selected Writings of Andrés Bello* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), and *Andrés Bello: Scholarship and Nation Building in Nineteenth Century Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

2. Cf. Leopoldo Zea, "Identity: A Latin American Philosophical Problem," *The Philosophical Forum* 20 (1989): 33–42 and "The Actual Function of Philosophy in Latin America," in Jorge Gracia and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, ed., *Latin American Philosophy for the twenty-first Century*, op. cit. See also, August Salazar Bondy, *The Meaning and Problem of Hispanic American Thought*, ed. John P. Augelli (Lawrence, Kansas: Center of Latin American Studies of the University of Kansas, 1969).

3. See especially the work of Bartolomé de las Casas. There have been several studies highlighting the philosophical relevance of his work: see especially Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959).

4. See Samuel Ramos, *Historia de la filosofía en México* (Mexico: UNAM, 1985).

5. See especially, Mauricio Beuchot, *The History of Philosophy in Colonial Mexico*, trans. Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), esp. pp. 1–18.

6. See Leopoldo Zea, *La filosofía en México* (Mexico: Libro-Mex, 1955).

7. Cf., Iván Jaksic, et al., eds., *Sarmiento. Author of a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), Iván Jaksic, ed., *Selected Writings of Andrés Bello* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Iván Jaksic, *Andrés Bello: Scholarship and Nation Building in Nineteenth Century Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).