

PLAN DE SAN MIGUEL

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The development of Mexican philosophy, both in the United States and in Mexico, reflects a broader interest in the promise of global philosophy, and we believe that Mexican philosophy provides a model for how global philosophy will and ought to develop. Specifically, Mexican philosophy teaches us how to appreciate the value of *particularizing* a tradition. It teaches, in other words, to value the characteristics, history, and local color that distinguish one tradition from another. More than the specific concepts and lessons unique to it, we believe that this will be the lasting contribution of Mexican philosophy—its “gift to the world,” to paraphrase one of its great representatives, Emilio Uranga.

To particularize a tradition means, in part, distinguishing it from larger traditions that may have encompassed it at some point. For instance, in the United States, much of what counts as Mexican philosophy today fell under the larger banner of “Latin American philosophy” less than two decades ago. This made sense: “Latin American philosophy” unified the scant resources that were available in English, as well as the very small group of philosophers who were interested in them. These resources pointed to a common history representing familiar themes. “We are neither indigenous nor European, but a species midway between,” Bolívar proclaimed in Venezuela, and we all felt that *some version of that sentiment* captured the problem of identity in our philosophy. In Cuba, José Martí spoke of *nuestra América*, and we were thankful for the contrast. However, with the rapid growth of Mexican philosophy, we find that it no longer makes sense to speak of a “Latin American philosophy.” While it has undoubtedly served as a useful guide, the emergence of Mexican philosophy teaches us, by contrast, that the themes and figures that constitute the Latin American philosophical tradition are overly general, which is unhelpful in defining a robust philosophical tradition. So, just as Latin American philosophy taught us that it doesn’t help to think of a philosophical tradition as hemispheric (*viz.*, Latin American philosophy as opposed to Western philosophy, or Eastern as opposed to Western), so too are we beginning to appreciate the fact that neither is it helpful to think of it as continental. In short, in its specificity, “Mexican Philosophy” is helping us to learn what constitutes a philosophical tradition.

We thus believe it is imperative to continue building on the momentum gained in the last decade by Mexican philosophy, both in the United States and in Mexico.

In the prologue to the Spanish translation of Patrick Romanell's *El neo-naturalismo norteamericano*, published in 1956, José Vasconcelos recounted when he met Romanell, who at the time was writing his *Making of the Mexican Mind*, by saying that "It is clear that you have much money in the North, since they have given you the mission of writing about nothing, for Mexican philosophy or a philosophy that could be called that does not exist." It is unclear whether Vasconcelos was being ironic or falsely modest because, while he did not believe that there was no such thing as Mexican philosophy, especially not in 1956, he had every reason to believe that Mexican philosophy would not *continue to exist*. Again, looking at the United States, despite early efforts to introduce and promote Mexican philosophy by O. A. Kubitz in 1940s, Romanell in the 1950s, John Haddox in the 1970s, Amy Oliver in the 1980s, and so on, Mexican philosophy simply did not take root. So, when we look back on the explosion of work dedicated to Mexican philosophy in the last decade, it is imperative that we find a way to disprove Vasconcelos, once and for all. Mexican philosophy is not nothing.

If we are to establish Mexican philosophy as a permanent fixture of global philosophy, however, we must start by acknowledging that it is not an accident that Mexican philosophy has so far failed to take root and that every genuine effort to promote global philosophy is still met with opposition and will continue to be. After all, global philosophy represents change, and the effort to particularize philosophy constitutes a major blow to any tradition that arrogantly pretends to be *the* tradition. In this sense, particularization is a strategy of resistance and reclamation against hegemonic forces in the history of philosophy that through insistent claims to universality have justified their pretensions.

The opposition to particularization, however, is subtle and insidious. It has evolved from straightforward rejection to now quietly hiding behind a culture that promotes diversity and inclusion. The profession encourages us now to diversify our syllabi, but so far that has amounted to asking us to look for someone in the history of another tradition who has something to say about epistemology, or aesthetics, or the problem of free will. We might thus include an excerpt by Sor Juana, for example, so that we can make a point about standpoint epistemology. But herein lies the danger. *How* we introduce her into our syllabi allows us to diversify philosophy without knowing anything about Sor Juana or the tradition that she belongs to. In other words, there is a way of excluding by including, a way of diversifying philosophy that does not take seriously the project of particularizing philosophy, even as a possibility. There is a way of silencing a tradition precisely by shining a tiny light on an excerpt of it.

To meet this opposition, then, *we cannot think* of Mexican philosophy, or any other tradition in global of philosophy, *merely as a resource*. Its power lies in its difference, and its difference is that of a tradition.

Subtle and insidious though it is, opposition to Mexican and global philosophy is also concrete and practical. It is still very unlikely that someone will get into a top Ph.D. program, or get a job, or get tenure *as someone who works on Mexican philosophy*. Professionally, we might be encouraged to explore marginalized figures or traditions—it *doesn't hurt*—but we also tell prospective students and job candidates that they need to put something else on their CV as their primary area of specialization. In other words, one thing hasn't changed in the last ten years: despite the growing recognition of Mexican philosophy as a viable subfield of philosophy, anyone who wants to dedicate their intellectual effort solely to the tradition, as one might choose to work on early modern philosophy or the metaphysics of fundamentality, still has to choose between their commitment to Mexican philosophy and their career. In our own case, we wagered our careers on Mexican philosophy—something we say non-hyperbolically—but even though we have enjoyed a modicum of success, we can't in good conscience advise our students to follow our path because we know that chances are that *they* won't survive, just as chances were that we wouldn't.

So, if global philosophy is the future and Mexican philosophy offers direction and lessons on how to achieve that future, we must continue to build on the momentum Mexican philosophy has gained in the last ten years and we must articulate, so as to call out, the challenges to that momentum.

By way of closing, here are a few lessons we have learned this last decade, and steps that we still plan to take.

1. There is no single definition of Mexican philosophy to date and there won't be for a long time to come, and that shouldn't deter us. Our most urgent task is not to define the tradition, let alone insist on a single definition, but to clear a path to its full emergence. If there is one lesson that we keep having to learn over and over, it is that the historiography of Mexican philosophy, and the making of Mexican philosophy, is in its early stages, and that it would be irresponsible to define it now. Instead, we should adopt practices that make Mexican philosophy as inclusive as possible and that allow for revision. This includes, among other things, continuing to identify and translate contributions that might not fall under traditional definitions of philosophy or Mexican philosophy, particularly those of women, indigenous communities, Mexicans of African descent, and political dissidents. To this end, our goal is to publish a second anthology of Mexican philosophy in the near future—one that tells a richer, more inclusive, and more comprehensive story.

2. There is not yet enough institutional support producing advanced research in Mexican or global philosophy. To this end, the *Journal of Mexican philosophy* is establishing a mentorship program that we call the *familia model of peer review*. The

goal is not just to publish and promote the work of junior scholars, but to help them develop their work for publication and to develop professionally. As for senior scholars who already well-established, it will give them the opportunity to leverage their institutional authority to meet the opposition described above. The way this will work is that we will create a unique link for junior scholars seeking mentorship to submit their work. We will then choose one article per volume and pair the author of that article with a senior scholar on our editorial board who will help them develop their work until it is ready for publication.

3. As Mexican philosophy develops, so too will the temptation to take ownership of it. Mexican-American philosophy is a continuation of Mexican philosophy and is produced in multiple languages, as it always been. If Mexican philosophy is to provide a model for global philosophy, it must resist hierarchies in and outside of Mexico, it must recognize and celebrate its internal diversity, and it must continue to present itself as a collaborative project. In this way, Vasconcelos may have been sincere, and his lesson may have been, that if Mexican philosophy is to continue to exist and thrive, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans can't do it without each other.¹

¹ This plan was written in San Miguel, California, in the shadow of the Mission San Miguel Arcángel. Inside the Mission are remnants of 17th century Spanish culture—religion, music, philosophy. As we considered our task—that of putting together Volume 2 of JMp—the Mission reminded us that traditions travel and settle far from home, and that they take root and flourish only when they adapt to their surroundings and are *particularized*. After visiting the Mission, we felt a duty to prepare this call for action, this Plan, in the tradition of other Plans before.