

1-31-2018

# Notes for an Ethical Critique of the Histories of Philosophy in Mexico: Searching for the Place of Women

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### Recommended Citation

del Rio, Fanny (2018) "Notes for an Ethical Critique of the Histories of Philosophy in Mexico: Searching for the Place of Women," *Essays in Philosophy*: Vol. 19: Iss. 1, Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.7710/1526-0569.1596>

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## **Erratum**

Fixed layout error 6/8/18

# Essays in Philosophy

ISSN 1526-0569 | Essays in Philosophy is published by the Pacific University Libraries

Volume 19, Issue 1 (2018)

## Notes for an Ethical Critique of the Histories of Philosophy in Mexico: Searching for the Place of Women

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### Abstract

The histories of philosophy in Mexico published between 1943 and 2016 display gender inequality, as they include many more male than female authors. But are they a true and objective portrayal of women's participation in, and contribution to, Mexican philosophy? In this essay I discuss why we should perform an ethical revision of the selection criteria used in the histories of philosophy in Mexico, and I will present some proposals that I believe could help repair the epistemic injustice that women have been historically subjected to in this field.

Erratum: Fixed layout error 6/8/18

Essays Philos (2018)19:1 | DOI: 10.7710/1526-0569.1596

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## Introduction

Ever since Herodotus' account of the 'Persian Wars' it has been accepted by a majority of people that historians try to offer in their investigations a rigorously true and objective view of the past. For this reason, if women are largely absent from the histories of philosophy, it is no surprise that it seems logical to consider this an objective reflection of a historical reality. But is it true?

Looking for an answer to this question I started a research—the results of which are summarized in these “Notes”—about the histories of philosophy in Mexico published between 1943 and 2016, which are the respective dates of appearance of the first and the most recent of these books: *Historia de la filosofía en México* [“A History of Philosophy in Mexico”],<sup>1</sup> and *Cien años de filosofía en Hispanoamérica (1910-2010)* [“One Hundred Years of Philosophy in Hispanic America (1910-2010)”].<sup>2</sup> I didn't find a *significant* increase in the number of women philosophers included in the ten books I examined chronologically, which doesn't seem consistent with the progressive emancipation of women in every profession and field of study. In this essay I will point out some of the possible causes of the underrepresentation of women in the histories of philosophy in Mexico, and I will formulate some proposals as an attempt to revert a practice that has persisted for more than seventy years.

## Why Make an Ethical Critique of the Histories of Philosophy?

In her piece, “Introduction: Some Remarks on Exploring the History of Women in Philosophy,”<sup>3</sup> Linda López McAlister says that during the 1960s, when she was finishing her PhD, she suddenly realized she had never once heard anyone mention the name of a woman philosopher in any of her classes. López McAlister waited impatiently for the release of *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,<sup>4</sup> which was edited by Paul Edwards. It had about 900 individual entries, and promised to be perhaps the largest compilation of philosophers to date—but it had no entries of women philosophers. The message seemed clear: there were no women philosophers in the past, or there were none that deserved an entry

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Ramos. *Historia de la filosofía en México*. (U.N.A.M., Biblioteca de Filosofía, México, 1943).

<sup>2</sup> Margarita M. Valdés. *Cien años de filosofía en Hispanoamérica (1910-2010)*. (México: FCE, UNAM, IIF, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Linda Lopez McAlister. “The History of Women in Philosophy,” *Hypatia Magazine* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1989).

<sup>4</sup> Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1967).

of their own. The truth was that Edwards had left out female philosophers that were his contemporaries, such as Hannah Arendt, Ayn Rand, Simone de Beauvoir, Elizabeth Anscombe, and hundreds of others from previous eras, even though he could not have been blind to their contribution to, and their influence on, philosophy.

This case exemplifies a certain approach to the history of ideas in English-speaking philosophical thought that was common for years until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although from the second half onward we find no shortage of literature from English-speaking countries discussing the lack of representation of women in philosophy. Models such as that of Carol Gilligan (*In a Different Voice*,<sup>5</sup> 1984), Wesley Buckwalter, and Stephen Stich (*Gender and Philosophical Intuition*,<sup>6</sup> 2011) suggest that a lesser presence of women in the philosophical field (and/or their failure in persevering in the field) denotes an “unintentional sexism.” The problem, they say, lies in the methodology and the dominant pedagogy in the academia, which is reluctant to accept a “different voice.” On the other hand, Louise Anthony gives a different explanation in *The Perfect Storm*,<sup>7</sup> arguing that discrimination is a presumption, not a consequence of the lower representation of women in philosophy. Anthony shows how a series of interconnected problems that are all related to gender bias (such as sexual discrimination) operate on a social level, and that they also have a specificity of their own in academics, where all the discriminatory forces converge with a singular intensity in the discipline of philosophy.

The aforementioned models allow us to examine the problem from different perspectives, all of which can help us understand the nature of oppression against women in other parts of the world and provide us with valuable conceptual instruments to fight the gender bias that exists in philosophy in Mexico. However, my intentions here are more

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<sup>5</sup> Carol Gilligan. *In a Different Voice* (New York: Harvard University, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Buckwalter, Wesley and Stephen Stich. *Gender and Philosophical Intuition* (September 27, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1683066>.

<sup>7</sup> Louise Anthony. “Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why Are There So Few Women in Philosophy?” *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 43, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 227–255.

constrained: I will use Miranda Fricker's<sup>8</sup> concept of 'epistemic injustice' in its *testimonial form* to carry out an ethical revision of the histories of philosophy written between 1943 and 2016. I will also demonstrate that discrimination against women in any field, but perhaps even more in philosophy, is not a matter foreign to philosophy or a 'technical glitch,' but instead is an ethical issue that should be addressed philosophically because of its epistemic consequences for the philosophical community in Mexico.

### **Towards an Ethical Critique of the Histories of Philosophy in Mexico**

Throughout my own career as a student of philosophy in Mexico, I often heard the argument that, given the economic, social, and educational conditions that prevailed in Western civilization for centuries, it was reasonable to assume that the contribution of women would be smaller—in quantity and quality—than that of their male counterparts. According to Katz and Goldin,<sup>9</sup> there was a sharp increase in college attendance or women after the 1960s. Before that, it was explicitly said, or implied, home was the place of women.

However, as soon as I started studying the subject, I was faced with a continuum of women philosophers from ancient times to modern age:<sup>10</sup> between Diotima of Mantinea (circa 400 BC) and contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum, the most conservative list includes at least 250 names of women such as Hypatia, Teresa of Ávila, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Émilie Du Châtelet, Mary Wollstonecraft, Lou-Andreas Salomé, Rosa Luxemburg, Susanne Langer, Edith Stein, Simone Weil, Julia Kristeva, etc. Perhaps this

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<sup>8</sup> Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice. Power & the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). In her book, Fricker analyses two forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice, when a subject is denied the possibility to transmit to others knowledge through communication (as when a jury does not believe in a witness only because of the color of their skin), and hermeneutical injustice, where the hermeneutics, which is what enables us to find a meaning to our social experiences, is structurally affected by prejudice acting in a collective consciousness (like when a homosexual subject tries to find sense of a social experience in an environment where, for example, homosexuality is interpreted as a perversion). Testimonial and hermeneutical injustice are two ethical aspects of our most common epistemic practices.

<sup>9</sup> Goldin, Claudia and Lawrence F. Katz. The power of the pill: Oral contraceptives and women's career and marriage decisions. *Journal of Political Economy* 110(4): 730-770.

<sup>10</sup> See Mary Ellen Waithe, ed., *A History of Women Philosophers* (Norwell: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987), and Nancy Tuana, ed., *Re-reading the Canon: Feminist Interpretations of Plato* (University Park: Penn State University Press).

is why the 2006 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,<sup>11</sup> edited by Borchert, included an entire chapter about Feminist Philosophy and added several non-feminist women philosophers to other sections of the book. It took forty years to accomplish this act of historical justice. Borchert's rectification was an attempt to correct a *distorted* view of history, which raises the following questions: was Edward's oversight deliberate? Had he behaved in an unethical way?

Perhaps we can find an answer to this questions by making an analogy and analyzing Justice Charles Gray's verdict in an interesting case of British law: David Irving's claim that the author Deborah Lipstadt and her publisher, Penguin Books, had libeled him a "denier" of the Jewish Holocaust in Nazi Germany in one of her books. Justice Gray ruled in favor of Penguin Books and Lipstadt, which caused Irving to be discredited as a serious historian because it proved that the writer had misrepresented historical evidence and manipulated it to foster his own personal convictions. Irving's argument that he had never "intentionally or voluntarily" tried to misrepresent historical evidence did not work; to err is human, but there is a clear difference between a mistake and a deliberate manipulation of facts.

The examples of Irving and Edwards both indicate that historians—even very prestigious historians—sometimes allow their own bias to interfere with an objective analysis of the facts. Underrepresentation of women in the histories of philosophy in Mexico can in some cases be attributed to unintended ignorance, but in others it is the result of a conscious and deliberate testimonial injustice against women. Therefore, we need to critically review the histories of philosophy in Mexico from an ethical perspective.

For example, in the already quoted *Historia de la filosofía en México*, Samuel Ramos did not include any women, not even Paula Gómez Alonzo, who was the author of the *first* graduate thesis to have ever been published by the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras [School of Philosophy and Literature] of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (U.N.A.M.),<sup>12</sup> where both Ramos and Gómez Alonzo were teachers. Printed in 1933 with the suggestive title "La cultura femenina" ["Feminine Culture"], it is of course not impossible, but only very unlikely that Ramos was unaware of his colleague Gómez Alonzo's accomplishment.

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<sup>11</sup> Donald M. Borchert, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2 edition. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Reported by Graciela Hierro in "Paula Gómez Alonzo." *Setenta años de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* [Seventy Years of the School of Philosophy and Literature]. (1994): 371-372. UNAM, México, 1994.

But twenty years later, in 1963, Gómez Alonzo was excluded again, from *Estudios de historia de la filosofía en México*,<sup>13</sup> [“Studies of the History of Philosophy in Mexico”], with essays by an all-male team: Miguel León-Portilla, Edmundo O’Gorman, José M. Gallegos Rocaful, Rafael Moreno, Luis Villoro, Leopoldo Zea, Fernando Salmerón, and Abelardo Villegas. This book was intended to be an extensive overview of the history of philosophy in Mexico,<sup>14</sup> but the only woman philosopher mentioned was Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Other women philosophers were neglected, like Rosario Castellanos, who in 1950 had published *Sobre cultura femenina*<sup>15</sup> [“On Feminine Culture”], and there was no mention of any of José Gaos’ outstanding pupils, such as Victoria Junco, who published *Algunas aportaciones al estudio de Gamarra o el eclecticismo en México*<sup>16</sup> [“Some contributions to the study of Gamarra or Eclecticism in Mexico”] in 1944, Monelisa Pérez-Marchand, who published *Dos etapas ideológicas del Siglo XVIII*<sup>17</sup> [“Two Ideological Periods of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century”]) in 1945, Carmen Rovira, who published *Eclécticos Portugueses del Siglo XVIII y Algunas de sus Influencias en América: México, Ecuador y Cuba*<sup>18</sup> [“Portuguese Eclectics of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and Some of Their Influences in America: Mexico, Ecuador and Cuba”]) in 1958, Rosa Krauze, who published *La filosofía de Antonio Caso*<sup>19</sup> [“The Philosophy of Antonio Caso”]) in 1961, or Vera Yamuni, who published *El mundo de las mil y una noches*<sup>20</sup> [“The World of One Thousand and One Nights”]) in 1961.

As we can see, it’s not that there weren’t any women philosophers, but that their intellectual production—that is, their investigations, their topics of research, their proposals, their reflections, and their published works—were not given the same value as those of

<sup>13</sup> Multiple authors. *Estudios de historia de la filosofía en México*, UNAM, México, 1963.

<sup>14</sup> The essays included are: “El pensamiento prehispánico” [“Pre-Columbian Thought”], “América” [“America”], “La filosofía en México en los siglos XVI y XVII” [“Philosophy in Mexico in the 16th and 17th Centuries”], “La filosofía moderna en la Nueva España” [“Modern Philosophy in the New Spain”], “Las corrientes ideológicas en la época de la Independencia” [“Ideological Currents in the Independence”], “El positivismo” [“Positivism”], “Los filósofos mexicanos del siglo XX” [“Mexican Philosophers of the 20th Century”], and “El liberalismo mexicano” [“Mexican Liberalism”].

<sup>15</sup> Rosario Castellanos, *Sobre cultura femenina* (FCE, México, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Victoria Junco Posadas, *Algunas aportaciones al estudio de Gamarra o el eclecticismo en México* (U.N.A.M., 1944).

<sup>17</sup> Monelisa Lina Pérez-Marchand. *Dos etapas ideológicas del siglo XVIII* (El Colegio de México, 1945).

<sup>18</sup> María del Carmen Rovira. *Eclécticos portugueses del siglo XVIII y algunas de sus influencias en América* (México, Ecuador y Cuba. El Colegio de México, 1958).

<sup>19</sup> Rosa Krauze. *La filosofía de Antonio Caso* (U.N.A.M, 1985).

<sup>20</sup> Vera Yamuni. *El mundo de las mil y una noches* (U.N.A.M., 1961).

their male counterparts. Even more disturbing is the apparent normalcy of it all; no one protested against the injustice, not even the women who had been excluded. Was it common knowledge that philosophy was no place for women? This is the conclusion of the intellectual biography of José Gaos, which was written by historian Aurelia Valero.<sup>21</sup> She portrays the specific mentality of the times, that which another Mexican philosopher, Guillermo Hurtado, has called a *climate of ideas* as a way to depict the intellectual atmosphere of a determined era in history.<sup>22</sup> Valero points out that, in his text “La mujer en la Historia” [“Women in History”], Gaos:

assumed the premise that the female gender did not belong, in its own right, with the personalities that had shaped the fate of humanity. They had participated, surely, in the development of common history, but only in their role as an anonymous and invisible agent. How else, he wondered, could women have willingly accepted to remain subdued, to the point of seeing themselves erased from records, archives, and books? Gaos himself explained this, not as an intrinsic weakness in women’s nature, but due to their “character,” that is, in the context of a more modern scientific approach.

Gaos himself had taken these ideas from Manuel García Morente, who, in an essay published in 1929, “El espíritu filosófico y la feminidad,”<sup>23</sup> [“The Spirit of Philosophy and Femininity”] had questioned the absence of women from philosophy. This, he said, could not be casual:

... There is no doubt that if women have not been philosophers until now, it is because *they have not wanted to...* *There has got to be something in the structure itself of the female soul that impedes women from developing a taste and a desire for the exercise of philosophical meditation.*<sup>24</sup> [Emphasis added]

The idea was the dominant viewpoint; even Paula Gómez Alonzo echoed García Morente’s thoughts when she wrote:

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<sup>21</sup> Aurelia Valero Pie. *José Gaos, una biografía intelectual 1938-1969* [“José Gaos, An Intellectual Biography. 1938-1969”] (El Colegio de México, México, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Guillermo Hurtado. *La Revolución creadora. Antonio Caso y José Vasconcelos en la Revolución mexicana* [“The Creative Revolution. Antonio Caso and José Vasconcelos in the Mexican Revolution.”] (México, U.N.A.M., 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Manuel García Morente. “El espíritu filosófico y la feminidad” in *Revista de Occidente, Tomo XXIII*, (Madrid, 1929, 291-292).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

Men's are invention and creation in all its forms: the arts, science, industry, etc., have received valuable contributions only from men. This is one of the consequences of the absence of a feminine culture. Woman will not create, in the noble psychological sense of the word, until she has elaborated an intellectual field of her own. In art, in literature for example, women have not produced works of great human value in the likes of the Iliad, the Divine Comedy, or Faust.<sup>25</sup>

But if, as we have seen, there is a continuum of women in the history of thought and philosophy, why did García Morente, Paula Gómez Alonzo, and José Gaos defend their lack of recognition? Let us remember the testimony of Linda López McAlister: the works of women were not studied in academia, and their names were not included in the histories of philosophy. Women philosophers were denied recognition, and their voices were silenced. This is how academics, and the historians of philosophy, subjected women to epistemic injustice in its testimonial form.

Today, despite the massive incorporation of women to the academia after 1960, the Student Movement of 1968, the fight for equal pay in the 1980s, the 'Third Wave' of Feminism in 1990, and even the outbreak of the Movimiento Zapatista de Liberación Nacional in 1994, the practice of epistemic injustice in Mexico remains practically unchallenged. This can be verified in the chronological list below, which highlights the underrepresentation of women philosophers:

1. Ramos, Samuel. *Historia de la filosofía en México*<sup>26</sup> ["A History of Philosophy in Mexico"]. 1943. Men included: approximately 350; women: 0.
2. Multiple authors. *Estudios de historia de la filosofía en México*<sup>27</sup> ["Studies of the History of Philosophy in Mexico"]. 1963. Since this book is a compendium of works, I will only take into consideration those authors included in the article by Dr. Fernando Salmerón, "Los filósofos mexicanos del siglo XX" ["Mexican Philosophers of the 20th Century"]. Men included: 26; women: 1.
3. Ibargüengoitia, Antonio. *Suma filosófica mexicana en sus hombres y en sus textos*<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Paula Gómez Alonzo. "La cultura femenina," U.N.A.M.—Dirección General de Bibliotecas. Tesis Digitales. The translation into English is mine.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel Ramos. *Historia de la filosofía en México*. (U.N.A.M., Biblioteca de Filosofía, México, 1943).

<sup>27</sup> Multiple authors. *Estudios de historia de la filosofía en México*, UNAM, México, 1963.

<sup>28</sup> Antonio Ibargüengoitia. *Suma filosófica mexicana en sus hombres y en sus textos* (Editorial Porrúa, México, 1967).

- ["Mexican Philosophical Summa in its Men and Their Texts"]. 1967. Men included: 36; women: 1.
4. Rovira, Ma. Del Carmen. *Una aproximación a la Historia de las Ideas Filosóficas en México. Siglo XIX y Principios del XX*<sup>29</sup> ["An Approximation to the History of Philosophical Ideas in Mexico. 19th Century and the Beginnings of the 20th Century"]. 1997. Volume I: Men included: 38; women: 0. Volume II: Men included: 32; women: 0.
  5. Ibargüengoitia, Antonio. *Filósofos mexicanos del siglo XX*.<sup>30</sup> ["Mexican Philosophers of the 20th Century"]. 2000. Men: 62; women: 9.
  6. Vargas, Gabriel. *Esbozo de la filosofía mexicana (Siglo XX) y otros ensayos*.<sup>31</sup> ["A Sketch of Mexican Philosophy (20th Century) and Other Essays"]. 2005. In fifteen articles, 7 are specifically about men, zero about women.
  7. Hurtado, Guillermo. *El búho y la serpiente. Ensayo sobre la filosofía en México en el siglo XX*.<sup>32</sup> ["The Owl and the Serpent. An Essay in Philosophy in Mexico in the 20th Century"]. 2007. There are no individual articles per author, but the book does not include any chapters about women in philosophy.
  8. Dussel, Enrique, Mendieta Eduardo, Bohórquez, Carmen. *El pensamiento filosófico latinoamericano, del Caribe y "latino" [1300—2000]*.<sup>33</sup> ["Latin American, Caribbean and "Latino" Philosophy (1300—2000)"]. 2009. In the Fourth Part, "Filósofos y Pensadores" ["Philosophers and Thinkers": men included: 198; women: 13. Specifically in the chapter "Filósofos de México" ["Mexican Philosophers"], (20th Century): men included: 22; women: 2.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ma Rovira. Del Carmen (Coordination, Introduction and Notes). *Una aproximación a la Historia de las Ideas Filosóficas en México. Siglo XIX y Principios del XX*. Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Universidad de Guanajuato, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1997.

<sup>30</sup> Antonio Ibargüengoitia, *Filósofos mexicanos del siglo XX* (Editorial Porrúa, México 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Gabriel Vargas, *Esbozo de la filosofía mexicana (Siglo XX) y otros ensayos* (Conarte, Nuevo León, México, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> Guillermo Hurtado, *El búho y la serpiente. Ensayo sobre la filosofía en México en el siglo XX*. (UNAM, México, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Enrique Dussel, Eduardo Mendieta, and Carmen Bohórquez, *El pensamiento filosófico latinoamericano, del Caribe y "latino" [1300—2000]* (Siglo XXI Editores, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> It must be noted that the book includes a chapter called "El Feminismo Filosófico" ["Philosophical Feminism] where four Mexican women writers are mentioned: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Carmen Rovira (quoted in the context of her commentary to Sor Juana), Graciela Hierro, and Margo Glantz.

9. Pereda, Carlos. *La filosofía en México en el siglo XX. Apuntes de un participante*.<sup>35</sup> ["Philosophy in Mexico in the 20th Century. Notes From a Participant"]. 2013. Some, but not all, of the essays included are dedicated to individual authors. Of these, at least twenty-six are men; women are 7.
10. Valdés, Margarita M. (compiladora). *Cien años de filosofía en Hispanoamérica (1910-2010)*<sup>36</sup> ["One Hundred Years of Philosophy in Hispanic America (1910-2010)"]. 2016. In the chapter about Mexico: men included: 63; women: 8.

Although there has been a modest attempt to advance towards gender equity throughout the years, from the perspective of epistemic justice it has clearly been insufficient.

### The Place of Women in Philosophy in Mexico

In a study published in the *Philosopher's Imprint* about the reasons why women abandon the field of philosophy in the United States, Thompson, Adleberg, Sim, and Nahmias<sup>37</sup> argue that stereotyped individuals are often inhibited by what is called stereotype threat, which is a phenomenon that occurs when "implicit or explicit stereotypes about one's self-identified group (e.g., gender or race) influence one's performance." As a result of the perception that women are not as capable of thinking philosophically as men, women can become anxious about their performance. This apprehension can negatively impact the quality of the work of women produce, thus perpetuating the stereotype that they are less skilled than men.

According to the Statistics Portal of U.N.A.M.,<sup>38</sup> the number of women in philosophy is lower than in other similar disciplines, and the level of completion by gender has dropped for women from 52.78% in 2012 to 32.93% in 2015. This is comparable to

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<sup>35</sup> Pereda, Carlos. *La filosofía en México en el siglo XX. Apuntes de un participante*. CONACULTA, México, 2013. The men philosophers with individual entries are: J. Gaos, J. Vasconcelos, S. Ramos, A. Gómez Robledo, A. Sánchez Vázquez, L. Zea, F. Salmerón, A. Rossi, L. Villoro, J. Xirau, C. Pereyra, U. Moulines, B. Echeverría, M. Beuchot, L. X. López Farjeat, W.F. Hegel, Diego Lizarazo, A. Velasco, O. Martiarena, G. Hurtado, F. Nietzsche, K. Marx, E. Dussel; L. F. Lara, C. Lomnitz, C. Vaz Ferreira; the women philosophers are: M. Zambrano, J. González, O. Hansberg, P. Dieterlen, N. Rabotnikof, P. Rivero y L. Weinberg.

<sup>36</sup> Margarita M. Valdés. *Cien años de filosofía en Hispanoamérica (1910-2010)*. (México: FCE, UNAM, IIF, 2016).

<sup>37</sup> Morgan Thompson, Toni Adleberg, Sam Sims, and Eddy Nahmias, "Why Do Women Leave Philosophy? Surveying Students at the Introductory Level," *Philosopher's Imprint* 16, no. 6 (March 3, 2016). <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.3521354.0016.006>.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.estadistica.unam.mx/>

that of women in Physics (30.19%), Mathematics (23.33%), and Electronics Engineering (23.02%), that is, areas of study highly identified as “predominantly male.” Compare Pedagogy (90.53%), Medicine (61.94%), Law (56.83%) and Architecture (41.89%). Despite the fact that the total number of students admitted to philosophy programs in 2016 was higher than the number of students admitted in 2015, the number of women who graduated decreased overall. In 2015 there were 111, and in 2016 only 102. It is clear that philosophy remains a predominantly male field.

Furthermore, women studying for their Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy at the U.N.A.M. take courses that almost entirely ignore the accomplishments of other women philosophers in history or the present day. There is no graduate program in the field of philosophy that is centered in gender, or any courses where gender bias is discussed within the frame of methodological models. More importantly, there isn’t a graduate program in Mexican Philosophers who are also women. The ‘Centro de Estudios de Género’ [Center of Gender Studies] at U.N.A.M. cannot fill the gap. If we accept that the underrepresentation of women in philosophy is a consequence of an epistemic injustice, it seems incompatible with the objective of philosophy that it should delegate the responsibility to investigate the causes of this injustice and to provide the methodological instruments to revert it to outside institutions or disciplines.

### **Notes for the Creation of New Criteria in the Equal Inclusion of Women in the History of Philosophy in Mexico**

In his book *En torno a la filosofía Mexicana*<sup>39</sup> [“About Mexican Philosophy”], José Gaos said that it was an injustice to deny the existence of a Mexican philosophy, and that a much needed reparation could only be done “by restoring the truth, insofar said reparation is a part of the restoration as a whole: that of the joint effort of Mexican philosophers and historians of philosophy.” Philosophy and the history of philosophy in Mexico go hand in hand. For Gaos, the truth of philosophy in Mexico—and in any other place, we might add—is found in this dialectical spiral. In doing philosophy, the history of philosophy is made, and, in doing history of philosophy, philosophy is made. However, if the history of philosophy has a gender bias, the philosophy that is made will reproduce that same gender bias. It is like riding a merry-go-round; you may be moving, but you’re not going anywhere. There is no doubt that there is philosophy created by women in Mexico. The underrepresentation of female authors is inexcusable when we consider their academic, professional, and bibliographic merits. But if their works are not taught in the

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<sup>39</sup> José Gaos. *En torno a la filosofía mexicana*. Primera Ed. Alianza Editorial Mexicana (S.A. México 1980).

academy and their names are not included in the histories of philosophy in Mexico, then how can we break the cycle of ignorance?

I will use an analogy to illustrate a similar case of epistemic injustice in its testimonial form. In his *Historia de la filosofía en México*, Ramos rejected the idea that the indigenous people had contributed in any way to the development of universal philosophy. As a reaction to this Eurocentric vision, Mexican philosopher Miguel León-Portilla published his doctoral thesis *La filosofía náhuatl: Estudiada en sus fuentes* [the literal translation is “Náhuatl Philosophy: As Studied in its Sources”]<sup>40</sup> in 1959, which started a movement of reevaluation of our roots that showed the importance of incorporating cultural diversity to the history of Mexican thought. It should be noted that he had to look for it in “its [own] sources,” as the material he needed for his work could not be found in the traditional sources. Similarly, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century one can find an abundance of women, from Paula Gómez Alonzo to Graciela Hierro, who dedicated their efforts to exploring the place of women in philosophy, and tried to incorporate gender diversity into their work. But just as with Pre-Columbian indigenous thought, the epistemic gap in the intellectual production of Mexican women philosophers will have to be filled by looking into non-traditional sources, such as testimonies, art, newspaper articles, and interviews, when it can’t be found in traditional sources such as academics, and the histories of philosophy in Mexico. For example, two unorthodox sources include “Las filósofas mexicanas” [“Mexican Women Philosophers”] (Francesca Gargallo<sup>41</sup>) and “Entrevistas a Filósofas Mexicanas” [“Interviews to Mexican Women Philosophers”] published in the newspaper *Milenio* (Fanny del Río<sup>42</sup>). In addition, as I conclude this section, I would like to make the following proposals as an effort to overcome the gender inequity that still prevails in Mexican philosophy. Please note that these proposals are all within reach of most of the Mexican philosophical community:

1. To critically confront the histories of philosophy used in the academic curricula where women are underrepresented. One way to do this can be by examining the selection criteria and determining if there are women philosophers, whether Mexican or foreign, which have been excluded unfairly from the text.
2. Exhort the authors of the histories of philosophy in Mexico to explicitly state

<sup>40</sup> Miguel León Portilla. *La filosofía náhuatl: Estudiada en sus fuentes* (UNAM, 2006). The book has been translated into English as *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind*.

<sup>41</sup> Francesca Gargallo’s Blog, <https://francescagargallo.wordpress.com/ensayos/feminismo/feminismo-filosofia/las-filosofas-mexicanas/>

<sup>42</sup> The electronic links to the interviews can be found in the References

their criteria for selection in their books.

3. If one is a teacher, include in the academic curricula of philosophy the study of both Mexican and foreign women philosophers, in order to promote an objective assessment of the contribution of women to philosophy and lead to the creation of a space to think, discuss, and generate an identity for women in the panorama of Mexican intellectual history. If one is a student, demand the teachers to do this.
4. Again, if one is a teacher, include in the academic curricula some specific courses on gender disparity in philosophy in order to encourage the analysis of methodological instruments with which to study the causes of underrepresentation of women in academics and in the history of philosophy. If one is a student, demand the teachers to do this.

The proposals above are an invitation to the philosophical community in Mexico to face the challenge of rectifying a distorted vision of our history of ideas that has undermined our historical self-awareness and done an injustice to the role of women in the production of philosophy in Mexico.

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