

FROM COLONIAL TO DECOLONIAL PEDAGOGY: FROM SAHAGÚN TO FREIRE ¹

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I should begin this essay—and I italicize the word to underscore the fact that it is a first attempt—by confessing that I am no expert on “Latin American Philosophy of Education”. I did write an article on liberation pedagogy, but that was a very circumscribed article.² I am thus a novice among novices. What I do have is some knowledge of the history of Latin American philosophy, in particular the philosophy produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I accepted the invitation to speak at the inaugural symposium of the Latin American Philosophy of Education Society in order to challenge myself to do some additional research. What I am about to present here, then, is less a formal essay and more a research agenda.³ Since we are at the beginning of an enterprise, it makes sense to sketch a map of the territory to be covered. This tentative map will have to be revised in light of the ground covered as we proceed. I will divide the essay in two major sections. In the first, I will offer a chronology or periodization of the evolution of Latin American thinking about education.

- 1 → I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the organizers of this First Annual Symposium of the Latin American Philosophy of Education Society: David Backer, Ana Cecilia Galindo, Melissa Rodriguez, Arianna Stokas, and Jason Wozniak. I would also like to thank Rochelle Green and Allison Merrick for their invitation to give a keynote address at the Third Annual Phi Sigma Tau Awards and Induction at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock, where I had the opportunity to talk about these ideas again and to get very useful feedback. Finally, I also want to thank and acknowledge the comments, suggestions and reactions from the three anonymous reviewers of an earlier draft. I tried to incorporate as many of their recommendations as I could without doing too much violence to a text that is still very incipient and exploratory.
- 2 → Eduardo Mendieta, “Educacion Liberadora” in Guillermo Hoyos Vásquez, eds. *Filosofía de la Educación—Enciclopedia Iberoamericana de Filosofía* (Madrid, Trotta, 2008), 341 - 355.
- 3 → An indispensable resource has been the work I helped co-edit with —CONTINUES

As I proceed with this periodization, I will highlight some key figures, which I would have wanted to discuss in greater detail if I had had more space. In the second section I will foreground some themes that I will suggest are unique to and distinguishing for Latin American philosophy of education.

PERIODIZING LATIN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

I identify at least seven periods in the history of the evolution of Latin American philosophy of education. What follows is a brief discussion of each period.

1 / PRE-COLOMBIAN OR PRE-CONQUEST

We need to begin by acknowledging that Latin American philosophy of education is older than 500 years, as it has its roots in the pre-Colonial, pre-conquest time. Before Christopher Columbus discovered America many autochthonous peoples with highly advanced civilizations lived in the continent: The Aztecs, the Incas, and the Mayans. We have fairly substantive records from the Aztecs and Incas. For instance, we can approach Nahuatl pedagogy through the works of Miguel León-Portilla (1926-), in particular his still indispensable *La filosofía náhuatl estudiada en sus fuentes*, which was translated as *Aztec Thought and Culture*.⁴ Chapters four and five

Enrique Dussel and Carmen Bohórquez, *El Pensamiento Filosófico Latinoamericano, del Caribe y 'Latino'* - (1300-2000) (México, D.F. Siglo XXI, 2009). In this volume, the essay "La filosofía de la Pedagogía" by Jorge Zúñiga Martínez was extremely useful. I have also used the marvelous two volume anthology ed. Adriana M. Arpini, Clara A. Jalif de Bertanou, *Diversidad e Integración en Nuestra América: Independencia, estados nacionales e integración continental (1804-1880)* vol. I (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2010), and Adriana M. Arpini, Clara A. Jalif de Bertanou, *Diversidad e Integración en Nuestra América: De la modernización a la liberación (1880-1960)* vol. II (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2011).

- 4 → Miguel León-Portilla, *Aztec Thought and Culture: A Study of the Ancient Nahuatl Mind* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1963). León-Portilla's work is indispensable to any kind of research agenda on the world views, literature, poetry, law for the Aztecs and Mesoamerican Amerindians in general.

of this classic are particularly significant because León-Portilla describes Nahua philosophical anthropology, and consequently, the Nahua views about pedagogy. With respect to the Incas, we have the *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* of Garcilaso de La Vega, el Inca (1539-1616).⁵ The first part of this work is particularly important as it offers an analysis of the structure of the Inca state, as well as extensive discussions of Inca society and culture. These primary sources need to be complemented with the study of Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta's (1525-1604) *Historia eclesiástica indiana*⁶, and Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's (1499-1590) *Historia general de la cosas de Nueva España*.⁷ The sixth book of Sahagún's History is full of treasures about Nahua philosophy, in particular morality and pedagogy.

2 / CONQUEST AND EVANGELIZATION

The period of the conquest and evangelization needs to be studied not only because of its dark underside, but also for some of the fascinating pedagogical experiments that were undertaken, which had some positive consequences. To this period belongs the founding of the *Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco* in 1536, where the children of the Aztec nobility were sent to study. There they learned Nahuatl, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Spanish. They also learned about their culture as well as that of Europe. This school aimed to prepare Indian clergy but also statesman that would represent the Aztecs before Spanish culture and conversely, Spanish culture before the Nahua culture. The *Colegio de San Ildefonso* was founded in 1551, and became a major educational institution for Aztec nobility as well as the new Criollo elites. This school still exists in the heart of Mexico City, not far from *el Zócalo*. Other important educational institutions from this period are the so-called *República de hospitales*, or *hospitales* established by Vasco de Quiroga (1470-1565), where indigenous people pursued their education in

5 → Garcilaso de La Vega, El Inca, *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* (México, D.F.: Editorial Porrúa, 2006).

6 → Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica Indiana* (Madrid: Atlas, 1973).

7 → Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de la cosas de Nueva España* (México, D.F.: P. Robredo, 1938).

the traditions of their culture, along with evangelization. Some key figures of this period are Sahagún, Vasco de Quiroga, Bartolomé de las Casas (1484-1566), Juan Baltasar Maciel (1727-1788) and José Agustín Caballero de Rodríguez (1762-1835). Sahagún and Las Casas are particularly important because they took it upon themselves to document indigenous culture as faithfully as possible in order to better understand how to create cultural bridges between Amerindian and European cultures. In fact, much of what we know today about the ethics, politics, and economics of the indigenous peoples of the Americas we owe to the work of the Dominican, Jesuit, and Franciscan priests who set out to evangelize the new world. This evangelization, as genocidal as it turned out, was also a process of the self-education of European colonizers about the cultural accomplishments of Amerindians.

The work of Las Casas is an unexplored mine of knowledge about the indigenous cultures of the period. We know Las Casas primarily through his *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* but Las Casas produced many other treatises on what would be the proper way to evangelize the Amerindians. I want to bring to your attention his incredible *De unico vocationis modo* (1537)⁸, in which Las Casas rejects the use of all violence as a means to evangelize and in essence develops a rationalist and enlightened pedagogy that values the religious views of Amerindians. True evangelization can only happen through rational assent, but in order to bring this assent, reasons have to be provided in terms that are intelligible to Amerindians.⁹

3 / COLONIZATION AND SCHOLASTICISM

For the most part, the period of evangelization and conquista was followed by about two hundred years of colonization and what I called scholasticism, because once Spanish and Portuguese

8 → Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Only Way* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

9 → See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

power was imposed and the Jesuits were expelled, there began the imposition of scholastic methods of education following European models. The early cosmopolitan and dialogic efforts to educate the Amerindians were abandoned for the model of cultural imposition—here it would be relevant to note that these cosmopolitan and dialogic efforts may have been eclipsed during this period, but they certainly have remained enduring themes across the history of philosophy of education in Latin America. Most of the teachers in the newly established universities were of European extraction and most of the books produced in the *Nueva España* aimed at replicating and reproducing European knowledge in the New World. I used the qualifier most because there is an exception, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651-1695), a self-taught scholar of Christian theology, a major poetess, and also an untapped source of thinking about education, especially as it pertains to Amerindians and women. Over the last half a century, fortunately, there has been a serious effort to recover her work and undertake major studies of the different dimensions of her original thinking.¹⁰

4 / LIBERAL AND CATHOLIC

What I called the “Liberal and Catholic period” corresponds to the period beginning in the nineteenth century with the process of independence from Spain. This is the period of the development of Latin American nations with their respective political and cultural traditions. Thus, this is the period in which the colonial education system gets to be either dismantled or marginalized. Evidently this was a difficult task because most of the education at the time was led by the church and religious orders. Therefore one of the key tasks of this period was the development of a secular schooling system. Some key figures of this period are Félix Varela Morales (1788-1853), who wrote *Educación y patriotismo*, an important text that had influence

10 → See Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana, or, the Traps of Faith* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), especially the “Epilogue: Toward a Restitution”.

throughout Latin America.¹¹ We also have José María Luis Mora (1794-1850), who wrote *El clero, la educación y la libertad*.¹² To this period belongs Andrés Bello (1781-1865), one of the most influential Latin American educators of all time.¹³

Along with Varela, Bello essentially produced the manual for the development of a distinct Latin American philosophy of education that linked literacy, oratory, to public deliberation and civics. In general, the pedagogues of this period argued for the right to public education. The task of forging a new nation that would sever all links of material dependence from Spain, and especially sever all chains of mental slavery, required that education be a right of citizens, and not a privilege of a particular class, or economic status. The new democratic nations, with their newly minted constitutions, required that patriotic and public education of civic virtue be combined with moral education. Someone who is often forgotten from this period is Simón Rodríguez (1771-1854), who was Simón Bolívar's (1783-1830) teacher, but who also saw the need to reform the Spanish language as a precondition for the development of civic spirit and public culture that would support the development of patriotism and political autonomy. The task of forging a sovereign people required the formalization of a public language; literacy was indispensable to the emergence of a deliberating public, which would lead to a sovereign nation.

5 / POSITIVISM AND THE RISE OF THE CIENTÍFICOS

The period I have called “Positivism and the Rise of the *Científicos*” already tells us what it is. To call this a “positivist” period, however, may be misleading, because it makes it sound as though what happened was the mere importation of Auguste Comte's (1798-1857) philosophical doctrine of positivism, when

11 → Felix Varela Morales, *Educacion y Patriotismo* (La Habana: Publicaciones de la Secretaría de educación, Dirección de cultura, 1935).

12 → Jose Maria Luis Mora, *El Clero, la educación y la libertad* (México: Empresas Editoriales, 1949).

13 → See Andrés Bello, *Selected Writings* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). This volume, part of the extremely useful Library of Latin America, edited by Jean Franco, contains an excellent selection of Bello's writings on education.

in fact Latin American positivism was an acculturation of French ideas.¹⁴ In any event, Latin American positivists had great impact, particularly in Mexico and Argentina. They guided the modernization of the recently established nation states. Their impact was most noticeable in the modernization of the administrative aspects of the Latin American states, and above all in education. They took up the task of Bello, Varella and Rodríguez and applied to them a “scientific” approach. This meant that schools would educate not only in civics, morality, and history, but also in the natural and social sciences. School had to become more than colleges for loyal citizens. Political autonomy also required a scientific mentality—that is a mentality that demands empirical evidence and that would analyze social problems and challenges as scientific problems. Los científicos were in fact social engineers. A key figure of this period was Gabino Barreda (1820-1881), who wrote *La educación positivista en México*.¹⁵ We also have Eugenio María de Hostos (1839-1903), Justo Sierra (1848-1912), José Varona (1849-1933), José Ingenieros (1877-1925), who had a positivist stage that gave way to a socialist and latinamericanist stage—incidentally, Ingenieros wrote *El hombre mediocre*, which can be read as a positivist pedagogical text.¹⁶ We also have Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884), who was instrumental in the establishment of the modern Argentinian—and Latin American in general—university. Alberdi was also one of the precursors of what we can call a self-avowed Latin American philosophy. We cannot of course fail to mention Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888), who is known for his *Facundo o Civilización y barbarie*¹⁷, but who also wrote an important pedagogical treatise titled *De la educación popular*.¹⁸ Barreda and Hostos are unique because they forcefully argued that

14 → See my essay, “The Death of Positivism and the Birth of Mexican Phenomenology” in Gregory D. Gilson and Irving W. Levinson, eds., *Latin American Positivism: New Historical and Philosophic Essays* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 1-12.

15 → Gabino Barreda, *La educación positivista en México* (México, D.F.: Editorial Porrúa, 1978).

16 → José Ingenieros, *El hombre mediocre* (Buenos Aires: Ramon J. Roggero, 1949).

17 → Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Facundo o Civilización y barbarie* (Caracas: Biblioteca Aya-cucho, 1977 [1845]).

18 → Domingo F. Sarmiento, *De la educación popular* (Cámara Chilena de la Construcción.; Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.; Chile. Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos, 1896).

the development of public morality and civic virtue should follow from the education of reason. For both authors, virtue is determined by reason. Thus a people could not be oriented towards proper moral and civic attitudes unless their ability to reason on their own had been properly developed. The científicos influenced the anti-clericalism of the new Latin American states. Their anti-religious stance, which meant to break the chains of fideism and religious fervor, turned into derision and denigration of popular culture and religion. A brief passage from Hostos, will give readers a sense of what these científicos thought about the importance of education:

The institution in which moral consciousness is to be formed is the school, for this is the “foundation of morality.” This, in the pedagogical sphere, has as a postulate the formation of men of conscience, who are what the fatherland [patria] and humanity, or the family of nations, need. To accomplish this, the school has to educate reason, the emotions, and the will. These last two are delimited by reason. Thus, in order to educate reason, the school has to fulfill three conditions: 1) *to be fundamental*, in as much as it provides the coordinated fundamentals of every truth that is known, 2) *it cannot be sectarian* and it has to be independent of every type of dogma, and 3) *it has to be edifying* since the school has to educate in light and continuous anticipation of its proper moral objective, and of the goal it has in the life and humanity of the child. The child is the promise of man, and man the hope of some part of humanity. The school has as moral goal the preparation of consciences.¹⁹

As a counterpoint to the Latin American positivists, we have José Enrique Rodó (1871-1917). He is best known for his *Ariele*²⁰, which became the founding document of Latin American modernism, one that should also be read as a pedagogical text, if only because it argues that Latin Americans, because of their mixed Mediterranean and historical backgrounds, have a distinct cosmopolitan orientation that

19 → Eugenio María de Hostos, *Moral social. Sociología* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980), 225. My translation. Italics in the original.

could be a counterpart to what Rodó controversially named Anglo-American crass materialism.

6 / POPULAR AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The period follows from the presuppositions of the positivist period. While the positivists were radical and revolutionary in their early stages, as is evidenced in Barrada and Hostos' work, their followers became dogmatic technocrats who belittled the people. It is in part in reaction to their technocratic and oligarchic character, in particular with respect to their views about education, that a group of thinkers arose to advocate on behalf of a philosophy of education that took popular culture and needs seriously. The most eloquent of these was of course José Vasconcelos (1881-1959), who became the first Mexican minister of public education. He was also rector of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*. His most important work on education is *De Robinson a Odiseo* (1831).²¹ Vasconcelos is associated with the birth of *el indigenismo*²² and the Mexican muralist movement. However, it should be noted that Vasconcelos' indigenismo is more related to mestizaje or criollismo than what we associate with indigenismo today. Still, Vasconcelos should be studied, along with Barreda, Hostos and Bello, as one of the great philosophers of education in Latin America. He hoisted the científicos on their own petard when he demonstrated that the Mexican people could not be properly educated when most of them remained illiterate and very few of them had access to any form of schooling. He thus undertook, inspired by the early educational movements of the evangelization period, the project of bringing teachers to the providences. It was this

20 → José Enrique Rodó, *Ariel* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000 [1900]).

21 → José Vasconcelos *De Robinson a Odiseo* (España: Aguilar, 1931).

22 → *Indigenismo* was the name of the movement at the turn of the twentieth century in Mexico that aimed to reclaim and valorize the indigenous sources of Mexican culture. *Indigenismo* argued that Mexican cultural identity could not dispense with its Native American sources. Criollismo and Mestizaje are positions that claim that Mexican culture is the product of both the assimilation of the Spanish and Portugues with indigenous cultures. Mestizaje says that the Americas are product of racial mixing that has given birth to a 'cosmic' race, i.e. an ethnic-racial group that is neither solely indigenous nor solely Spanish. See Luis Villoro, *Los grandes momentos del indigenismo en México* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996 [1950]).

national effort at alphabetizing a mostly indigenous population that attracted the attention of John Dewey (1859-1952), who visited some of the ambulatory schools established to accomplish this national project of literacy. Dewey, it merits noting, came to Mexico not as authority to profess or teach from a pedestal. He came as a “learner” himself.

Another important figure of this period is Alfonso Reyes (1889-1959), who was, along with Alberdi, one of the key figures in what we can call Latin American philosophy. With Martín Luis Guzmán (1887-1976) and José Vasconcelos, Reyes established *El Ateneo de la Juventud*, an organization that then inspired the *Hiperión* Group that went on to shape figures like Leopoldo Zea (1912-2004), Emilio Uranga (1921-1988), Jorge Portilla (1919-1963), Luis Villoro (1922-2014), and Octavio Paz (1914-1998).²³ To this period and group of figures we need to include Silvio Zavala, not only because of the work he did in establishing and formalizing the *Colegio de México*, but also because of the pioneering work he did in rescuing Amerindian thought, in particular legal and political thought. Finally, we should not neglect Samuel Ramos (1897-1959), who was a member of *El Ateneo*, and a major philosophical figure that introduced hermeneutics, social psychology and existentialism to the analysis of *lo mexicano*. His work *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México*²⁴ can be read as a pedagogical treatise, and he meant it as an educational document about the future of the Mexican people. It is a piece that influenced Octavio Paz (1914-1998) and Carlos Monsiváis (1938-2010).

Someone from this period who should be rescued for our endeavor is the first winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature from Latin America, Gabriela Mistral (1889-1957). While she is mainly known as a great poetess, she also contributed to the pedagogy of the nation, with a particular attention to Amerindians and women, earning her the title “The Schoolteacher of America.”²⁵

- 23 → For a very useful overview of this group, see Carlos Alberto Sánchez, *The Suspension of Seriousness: on the Phenomenology of Jorge Portillo* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), chapter 2.
- 24 → Samuel Ramos, *El perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (Mexico: Espasa Calpe Mexicana, 1968).
- 25 → Licia Fiol-Matta, *A Queer Mother for the Nation: The State and Gabriela Mistral* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). See also the introduction by Jaime Quezada to Gabriela Mistral, *Poesía y Prosa* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1993).

7 / PEDAGOGY OF LIBERATION

The last period that I want to briefly discuss brings us to our most recent times. This is the period I have called the “Pedagogy of Liberation.” It is a period that corresponds to the Cold War, and the development of Latin American alternatives between Soviet style communism and North American Capitalism. This period also corresponds to the crisis of what we can call Criollo democracy—by which I mean a democracy of racial elites and the marginalization of racialized minorities, the rural and urban poor—and the rise of the National Security State, which led to two decades of military dictatorships throughout Latin American countries. We could say that this period carried even further the pedagogical philosophy of the popular and national integration period, as now the issue was the integration of not simply ethnic groups, but also social classes. Additionally, this period corresponds to the time when Latin American nations were undergoing some of the most rapid processes of demographic growth, urbanization and de-ruralization. Thus, whereas at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the challenge was the integration of the peasant sectors into the nation by means of literacy, now the challenge was the integration of the newly urbanized poor.

I will be brief in the following description because I think most readers are familiar with the figures that are associated with this period. Obviously, we have Paolo Freire (1921-1997) and Ivan Illich (1926-2002), but we should also include Darcy Ribeiro (1922-1997), who published *La universidad necesaria*²⁶, and Adriana Puiggrós (1941-), who published *Imperialismo, educación, y neoliberalismo en América Latina*²⁷. Someone who is often not read in this context, but who should be, is Enrique Dussel (1934-), who wrote *La pedagógica latinoamericana*²⁸, which is integral to his liberation philosophy project. I would also argue that among these liberation pedagogues we

26 → Darcy Riberio, *La universidad necesaria* (México, D.F.: UNAM, 1982).

27 → Adriana Puiggrós, *Imperialismo, educación y neoliberalismo en América Latina* (México, D.F.: Paidós, 1994).

28 → This is available online at: <http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/subida/clacso/otros/uploads/20120423090342/historia.pdf>

include Ernesto Che Guevara (1928-1967), who wrote on the forging of the socialist man, the construction of the *Nuevo Hombre*, which was the task of the revolution, involved a new education. In fact, the Cuban revolution itself became a pedagogical laboratory. I would also argue that we include Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) as a source of Latin American philosophy of education, because of his extensive ethnographic work on the African roots of Afro-Caribbean culture, in particular music and language, as well as the urban and cultural history of La Habana, one of the urban jewels of the Caribbean, in particular, and Latin American in general.²⁹

Evidently, there is also all the work that liberation theologians developed over the decades of the sixties, seventies, and eighties that not only assimilated the work of Illich and Freire, but also contributed its own insights from the religious pedagogy to a pedagogy of liberation. Here we should mention Ernesto Cardenal (1925-), *El evangelio en Solentiname*³⁰ and Juan Luis Segundo's (1925-1996) *El dogma que libera*.³¹

Before I turn to the next section, I must note that the evolution of Latin American philosophy of education has been punctuated by the dramatic events that have led to the forging of Latin America itself as a group of nation states that have struggled with their colonial past, while also retrieving their indigenous-Amerindian roots and including and acknowledging the transplanted cultures of Africa, as it has assimilated waves upon waves of European immigrants. This historical overview should have revealed that we have a very substantive corpus of pedagogues that we can begin to study within their respective periods and as forgers of a distinct Latin American philosophy of liberation: Sahagún, Morales, Mora, Bello, Barreda, Hostos, Vasconcelos, Sarmiento, Alberdi, Caso, Ramos, Reyes, Freire, Riberio, Dussel, Che Guevara, to name some of the most prominent.

KEY THEMES

29 → See Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, edited and with an introduction by Timothy Brennan, and translated by Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), and Alejo Carpentier, *El amor a la ciudad* (México: Alfaguara, 1996).

30 → Ernesto Cardenal, *The Gospel in Solentiname* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010).

31 → Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation Of Dogma: Faith, Revelation, And Dogmatic Teaching Authority* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992).

In the prior section I offered a chronology of the development of Latin American philosophy of education. In this section, I am interested in answering the question: what makes Latin American philosophy of education distinct from, let us say European or North American philosophy of education? I will argue that Latin American philosophy of education is unique in that it has a unique focus and substance, consequence of having to address the enduring challenges of the region. This philosophy of education is also the result of the reflection of Latin American peoples and nations in their process of forging and development into multicultural, multiethnic, polyglot, democratic nation states. Let me offer a list of what I take to be identifying themes of the tradition.

01

Multiculturalism. Both vertical and horizontal, or synchronic and diachronic racial, ethnic, religious, cultural differences go deep into the nation, but extend also across time. We have to begin with the differences among the many pre-Columbian Amerindian groups (Aztecs, Mayan, Incas), but also their different levels of development (highly developed cultures as opposed to nomadic tribes dispersed over large and isolated territories). These differences then were compounded by the different waves of colonizers and European waves of immigration. We can argue that questions of cultural diversity have been at the heart of the formation of Latin American cultural identity, and thus this has been a crucial issue for all Latin American pedagogy.

02

Multilingualism. A contrast may be made with the United States' relationship to English, which it received from England in what one could call its almost modern version (the version we now write and talk in), whereas Latin America developed at the same time that Spanish began to be formalized as a modern secular language. What this means is that the forging of Latin American identity was imbricated with the struggle to define and shape Spanish as a national language. It

is interesting that 1492 marks both the so-called discovery of the New World and the formulation by Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522) of a grammar of Castilian. Again, a contrast may be established between the United States and Latin America with respect to the survival of Amerindian languages. While most indigenous languages have disappeared from North America, with some rare exceptions, throughout Latin America many indigenous languages are still spoken and they remain living tongues, which are gaining speakers, not losing them. The waves of European immigrants to Latin America not only brought European languages, but also their tongues and accents percolated into different national accents and lexicons.

03

Racial and cultural domination. It is an understatement to claim that Latin America was forged in the crucible of racial formations. The history of Latin America is the history of racial oppression, as well as of racial liberation. Latin American philosophy of education has had to confront both the failure to address the endurance of racial oppression, while also celebrating, preserving, and archiving the cultures produced by resistances against racial oppression and struggles of racial liberation.

04

Nation building and the forging of citizens. The long path to modernity and modern nation states in Latin America has left its indelible register in the many waves of debate and reflection about the interdependence between education and the development of a democratic and sovereign nation committed to civic virtue and just freedom. Evidently, themes 3 and 4 are not unique or distinct to Latin American nations. All nations born on the crucible of conquest, colonization, and slavery have had to deal with these challenges. The United States itself has faced these issues. What makes them unique in the Latin American context is the ways in which indigeneity and

race have had a more lasting impact, and there have been so many different approaches and confrontations with them throughout Latin American history.

05

The challenges of the separation of Church and State. Latin America is generally identified with deep popular Catholicism, but at the same time, the process of nation building was marked by tensions with the church. Here the work of liberation theologians is particularly important as they have provided some of the best historiography on the fraught Church-State relationship in Latin America.

06

Imperialism and Neo-Imperialism. Latin America has been defined by its anti-colonial, anti-imperialistic struggles, and these struggles have left their deep scars and memories in the canons that come to be used in schools. These struggles, it could be said, have imposed a pedagogical imperative on most Latin American philosophy of education, namely the imperative that education, which is disserving of such name, is at the service of overcoming and dismantling cultures of dependence and liberation from the complex of mental and cultural inferiority.

07

Finally, I would argue that what makes Latin American philosophy of education unique is that it has from the outset, as far back as Sahagún and Las Casas, been about elaborating, unmasking, problematizing what I would call—paraphrasing Anibal Quijano (1928-)—the coloniality of knowledge. By this I mean that there is no knowledge or way of transmitting that knowledge that is not implicated in the perpetuation of some colonial, racial, imperial privilege. This means that Latin American philosophy of education is marked by a hyper-reflexivity about its concepts, aims, tools, archives, and efficacy. This hyper-reflexivity is captured in the title of one

of Freire's most influential works, *Pedagogía de la liberación*, which should be read in a double sense of a pedagogy at the service of liberation and a pedagogy for the liberation of pedagogy itself. Consequently, what marks Latin American philosophy of education is that it has always been guided by a concern with liberation and mental emancipation.

As I stated at the outset, this essay is an attempt to begin to offer a chronology and map of the territory made up by over five hundred years of thinking and philosophizing about education in Latin America. I hope to have highlighted some key names and themes that may inspire others to follow the lead. There is much work to be done. ■

