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Kimberly A. Ingold

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1 The book *Filosofía de los pueblos originarios/Philosophy of the Indigenous* originated after students at Ball State University in the United States traveled to Mexico in March 2019 and listened to several Indigenous philosophers share the philosophies of their communities. The bilingual Spanish-English collective edition of the book was coordinated by Raúl Trejo Villalobos and Obed Frausto with the translations having been made by Dorien Scheets and Rodrigo Díaz Cadenas. *Filosofía de los pueblos originarios/Philosophy of the Indigenous* is specifically unique from previous literature in this area because it incorporates many different authors who share the history, significance, and future of Indigenous Mexican philosophy through a bilingual lens that stresses Indigenous views.

2 The prologue, written by Ambrosio Velasco Gómez, introduces the reader to Miguel León-Portilla, a Mexican anthropologist and historian. León-Portilla learned the ancient languages of native Mexicans in order to read, study, edit, and translate their writings to Spanish so that they could become widely read and valued by both Mexican society and the world. By doing so, León-Portilla realized that, similar to the ancient European philosophical writings, the ancient Mexican philosophical writings dealt with issues relating to doubt and other topics that were commonly written and hypothesized about. Additionally, his works, *A filosofía nahuatl: Estudiada en sus fuentes* (*The Nahuatl Philosophy: Studied in its Sources*) (1956) and *Tiempo y realidad en el pensamiento maya* (*Time and Reality in the Thought of the Maya*) (1968), are recognized as being some of the most brilliant works of the 20th century because they challenge the prejudices and biases that came to America when the Europeans arrived. Even though León-Portilla showed that the ancient Mexican philosophical writings were just as structured,
thoughtful, and important as the ancient European philosophical writings, they are not universally recognized as such.

3 The next chapter titled “The Significance of Indigenous Populations,” written by Raul Trejo, focuses on the three traditional great periods in Mexican history. Additionally, this chapter examines how indigenism has been perceived over the last several centuries. The first period is referred to as the pre-classic period and lasted from 2,500 BC to 200 AD. The second time frame is called the classic period which lasted from 200 AD to 900 AD. The third is named the post-classic period which lasted from 900 AD to 1521 AD. Next, Trejo reports on how Mesoamerican history, and specifically indigenous people, have typically been viewed from the perspectives of the Spaniards, Creoles, and Mestizos. In fact, he determined that this history had been divided into three distinct moments. The first moment occurred in the 16th century and was when the Spaniard’s perspective toward indigenous people was closed off and negative. In the second moment, which took place in the 18th and 19th century, this perspective shifted to being laid back and positive. The third moment occurred in the 19th and early 20th century and was categorized as being closed off and positive.

4 The following chapter, titled “Philosophy as Transcendental Action: Perspectives from Popol Vuh”, written by Luis Madrigal Frías examines pre-Hispanic Mayan philosophy and the mythological stories shared in the Popol Vuh. The Popol Vuh is a piece of text that was originally preserved through verbal communication until it was recorded in writing during the mid-14th century. It narrates both mythology and the history of the Mayan people. In English, Popol Vuh can be translated to a phrase similar to 'Book of the Community' or 'Book of the People.' Frías discusses one mythological story, the ‘Men of Maize,’ in this chapter. ‘Men of Maize’ refers to the common Mayan belief that the flesh of the first indigenous people was made of corn, or maize. Later in the chapter, Frías explains how this idea came to be by stating that when the Creators formed men, he used mud and wood. However, because of these materials, they could not speak or feel. To create humanity in the men, corn kernels, or 'stardust,' were used to create gratitude and respect in the men. Thus, this story plays on the concept that humans and nature are interrelated and connected on a deep level.

5 The chapter titled, “Guendabiaani,” and written by Raúl Peza Salazar focuses on the concept and idea of guendabiaani. Guendabiaani is a philosophical concept developed from two words: ‘guenda’ and ‘biaani.’ The word ‘guenda’ refers to “being.” The word ‘biaani’ alludes to “light.” Thus, it can be determined that guendabiaani can be defined as a person’s state of being in which they live in harmony and unity with the light that can be found inside themselves. Guendabiaani is both a philosophical concept and an attitude. Meaning that individuals who are guendabiaani are seen as trustworthy, knowledgeable, and virtuous. Only individuals who are the most skilled, impartial, and understanding can be attributed as guendabiaani. The author of this chapter, Salazar, states that guendabiaani is a theoretical concept used to think about the soul, the mind, and the relationship between the two. These interactions help one manifest and display their emotions and feelings. Additionally, guendabiaani influences communication and can be thought of as an extension of the speaker. Thus, guendabiaani can be seen as very personal, since the speaker would be thought of as sharing their feelings and emotions via communication.

6 The next chapter, titled “The Tselatletik 70 Years After the False Consciousness of Villoro” and written by Francisco J. Sántiz, discusses Luis Villoro and his writings
addressing indigenous people. This chapter served as a humbling reminder that the indigenous people of Mexico have had their culture not just disregarded, but erased, and Villoro’s writings attempted to serve as a bridge to show the public how to overcome the false assumptions about the indigenous people since their past had been overshadowed and ignored. This is an important chapter in this book, as Villoro, the focus of this chapter, is mentioned several times prior to this specific chapter which allows the reader to better understand and comprehend the terminology and concepts discussed previously.

7 The following chapter, titled “Maize and ch’ulel” by Manuel Bolom centers on corn, or maize, and the symbolism it portrayed in ancient Mexican culture. Bolom states that, when looking at ears of corn, those in the house of Don Nicolás and Doña Antonia choose the ears that have hope and light, or kuxul. Once the best ears of corn are chosen, the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ seeds are separated. Seeds considered ‘bad’ are those that have a dark coloring and have little opportunity for germination. The ‘good’ seeds are then placed into a basket and water or brandy is blown over the seeds. This procedure is done as a symbolic gesture that is meant to give encouragement to the seeds. The seeds are then measured and planted in the darkness which is significant because the seeds are thought to then travel to the underworld to be born with their ch’ulel. The corn then grows and is thought to be able to contemplate the comets, stars, sun, etc. While this may seem like a strange concept to those not raised in Mexican culture, it is a unique and meaningful story for those who are raised around the concept and can be intrinsically connected to many Midwestern Americans’ childhoods, including myself.

8 “Svu’el, sjam smelol xchi’uk o’ntonil: Power, Wisdom, and Essence” by Roberto Pérez Sántiz is the next chapter in this book. Sántiz begins the chapter by explaining the three fundamental principles of svu’el. These three principles are smelol, mantal, and ochel ta rason. Smelol involves wisdom, reflection, and reasoning while mantal is the execution of smelol. Ochel ta rason is the process of entering into harmony or balance. Smelol includes two concepts, ch’ulel and o’nton u o’ntonil. Note how ch’ulel is brought up again similar to its relation to maize, but is not directly related to that concept in this chapter. Ch’ulel can be conceptualized as knowledge and rationality and is only applicable to human beings. This concept of ch’ulel is what the entire Mayan system of social values was built upon, making it an important concept in Mexican culture. O’nton u o’ntonil can be conceptualized as the essence of life itself. In fact, all living beings have o’nton u o’ntonil, not just humans. The Mayans saw o’nton u o’ntonil as necessitating dignity and respect. These two concepts, ch’ulel and o’nton u o’ntonil, are intertwined because while all people have the potential to reach ch’ulel, one can only reach it through the cultivation of o’nton u o’ntonil.

9 The next chapter is titled “The Philosophy of a Migrant: Perspectivist and Wandering Translations” and is written by Obed Frausto. Frausto shares his experiences at Ball State University and the study abroad trip to Mexico that inspired the creation of this book. This chapter explains three central ideas belonging to the philosophy of the migrant that Frausto has come to learn throughout his time in the United States. The first central idea is that ‘We are all migrants.’ This belief originates from the geographical evidence that all humans evolved in a specific location, and thus migrated to and from a variety of other areas. The second central idea is for ‘Citizens of the world [to] join the cosmopolitan perspective.’ Cosmopolitan means that all people are different and each person can learn from one another because our differences enrich us
as a collective whole. The third and final central idea is that ‘We are between borders.’ Frausto describes that while it is important to acknowledge our cultural, racial, and ethnic origins, humans must also be open-minded in regard to other people. Meaning that humans are always between, or in the middle of, a border.

In one of the book’s final chapters titled “Conversation with a Kashlan,” Rodrigo Díaz Cadenas describes the importance of allowing indigenous people to speak their truth along with being active listeners to their voices. Cadenas states that, instead of allowing white individuals to share the stories of indigenous people, the indigenous people are now ready to share their own stories - as they should. Next, he explains to the reader that many indigenous communities in Mexico are producing individuals who are earning PhDs and Masters degrees, and thus sharing their voice with the world. In fact, these individuals are actively translating, rather than describing, their philosophy and understanding of the world with a larger audience. By doing this, people are able to learn about different cultures that they might not understand or be aware of. Cadenas finishes his chapter by mentioning how valuable and important language is in helping share one’s beliefs, views, experiences, opinions, and thoughts. This chapter is exceptionally important for readers because it is incredibly relevant given the current political and cultural climate.

The final chapter is titled, “Language as Epistemology: The Corpus of Knowing,” by Dorien Scheets. This chapter mainly focused on the importance of knowledge and language along with how these two concepts are closely related. Language is used to describe and express the ways in which a person interprets their individual experiences in the world. Some languages, such as Spanish, are often gendered. Gendered languages are thought to directly impact stereotypes, inequalities, and notions of femininity and masculinity for those who speak it. This proves that language has the ability to shape one's general understanding and cultural beliefs.

Filosofía de los pueblos originarios/Philosophy of the Indigenous is an important book that shares numerous perspectives regarding Indigenous philosophy from the south of Mexico. Specifically, this bilingual book highlights Indigenous voices and their beliefs through discussions on the importance of community and our connection with the earth.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY
