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Amy Reed-Sandoval and Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda, eds. Latin American Immigration Ethics

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Amy Reed-Sandoval and Luis Rubén Díaz Cepeda, eds. *Latin American Immigration Ethics*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2021. 300 pp. \$100 Hardcover, \$35 Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8165-4273-4 (hardcover) and 978-0-8165-4272-7 (paperback).

Given the ongoing debates regarding migration in the Americas, Europe, and other parts of the globe, the insights of this anthology on Latin American immigration ethics are timely. The contributors are all scholars in the area of Latinx or Latin American studies. Although more political theory than political theology, the arguments put forth in this work provide fertile ground for subsequent exposition and critique in terms of contemporary theology. The hefty price of the book may deter individual purchases, but academic libraries should include this volume in their holdings.

After an initial methodological section, the remaining essays are in sections dealing respectively with South America, Mexico and Central America, and the United States. This volume is a valuable resource for upper level undergraduate and graduate seminars in political theory or philosophy. In turn, as much as region- and country-specific essays will be of interest to particular scholars, this work's primary merit is that it prompts us to reexamine assumptions about migration through a different set of lenses—that of the migrant.

Several notable themes reverberate through the volume. First, insights from notable scholars such as Anzaldúa, Arendt, Dussel, Foucault, Levinas, and Kymlicka are critically assessed in a way that does not culminate in pat endorsements of either liberal democracy, capitalism, or especially Eurocentric hegemony. For example, Mendoza challenges liberal egalitarian constructs of who is a citizen and who is not from a “no borders” (51) approach. Second, rather than seeing political geographic boundaries as set in stone and reinforced by literal walls—as captured in the Rabinovich essay comparing the Mexican, Palestinian, and

Saharawi cases—in fact, “the world [is] composed of regimes of motion” (54). Therefore, an inclusive immigration could be realized through a fluid recasting of transnational politics. Third, Nascimento and Griesse’s essay on Brazil and Villarroel’s essay on Chile especially accent how hierarchies of class, race, and gender are inscribed in current immigration policies. Fourth, the essays by Wolf on Venezuela and Colombia, Cepeda on Central America, Pereda on Mexican migrant *corridos*, and Gallegos on translation dynamics, especially drawing upon Levinas’ work, either articulate a dialogical politics or accent how migrants, in solidarity with social justice organizers, can proactively resist being treated as objects rather than dignified persons. Fifth and finally, the volume envisions a transborder egalitarian politics, especially in Reed-Sandoval’s essay on Oaxacan migrants whose political community transcends prevailing borders and Mendieta’s emphasis on birth rather than ancestral citizenship. Specifically, this vision deconstructs the distinction between original and host countries of migrants and seeks to eradicate hierarchical hegemonies regarding who is a citizen.

Overall, this volume is a valuable contribution to liberation philosophy’s engagement of migration and politics in general. Still, as much as these scholars strive to articulate immigration ethics from the standpoint of the migrant, one wonders whether a lot of migrants would grasp the volume’s arguments. The Cepeda, Pereda, and Gallegos essays are most successful in this regard.

At the outset of the volume, Reed-Sandoval and Cepeda, drawing from Dussel, seek a politics that eliminates “economic and social inequities in search of the common good” (39) and challenges the dominant outlook of “us vs. them” competition in human relations. It is questionable, though, how much this volume charts a path toward this end in terms of personal agency and institutional structure.

In terms of agency, what is going to bring about the *metanoia* that will enable advocates of Levinas's engagement of the other to have a constructive conversation with Trumpistas who advocate "I win, you lose"? The Wolf and Cepeda essays are most successful in giving concrete illustrations. In terms of structure, what political institutions would need to be recast to foster the immigration ethics presented in this volume? Nascimento and Griesse's discussion of the "new multicultural plurality" (108) in Brazil's 1988 constitution and Mendieta's discourse on how the 14th amendment in the U.S. Constitution provides a vehicle to counter Huntington's apologetics for White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant nativism are noteworthy. However, the volume as a whole does not articulate a comprehensive process to address agency and structural dynamics, such as Bretherton does in his recent work on consociational democracy. Toward this end, a final concluding chapter synthesizing the themes of the volume and projecting future research directions would have been helpful.

Indeed, insights of the current volume beg for a more elaborate articulation of liberation immigration ethics in terms of political theology and pastoral ministry. The thinkers, themes, and examples covered provide a treasure chest for further incisive critique, such as been done recently by Nichole M. Flores vis-à-vis Nussbaum and Rawls in her *Aesthetics of Solidarity*.

A final note: years ago, at an ACHTUS session dealing with my *Mestizo Democracy*, an interlocutor pointedly asked me whether it would be more valuable to focus on class differences rather than the text's primary focus on racial/ethnic/linguistic differences. But as much as the current anthology accents vividly the disparities of class wrought by colonialism and neocolonialism in Latin America, several of the contributors bring home the point that the more Indigenous and African one's heritage is, the more likely one will find oneself marginalized and find oneself, in Arendt's terms, stateless. To borrow from Cornel West, "race matters."

The task before us, whether as political theorists or political theologians, is to articulate and put into action a normative framework that can foster a democratic transnational civil society rather than the xenophobic and exploitative civil religion of Christian nationalism put forth by “pseudo-preachers” such as Donald Trump and his counterparts in Brazil and other locales in the Western Hemisphere. *Latin American Immigration Ethics* is a noteworthy contribution to this task.

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