

Department of Philosophy Colloquium Series

It's Just a Joke: Thinking Online Politics with Jorge Portilla



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**Thursday,
February 2nd
4p.m.**

**Watson Hall
Room 517**



In this talk, I argue that the philosophy of Jorge Portilla can help us understand the current social and political conditions of the United States. In particular, I draw from Portilla's account of *relajo* and his writing on community as horizon. I argue that Portilla's account of the person who engages in *relajo* accurately describes the character of individuals posting on various online spaces, particularly 4chan. Integral to Portilla's analysis of *relajo* is a disavowal of agency and a recognition of the affective forces that lead individuals to participate in these spaces: the disavowal of one's agency does not mean that one stops having desires and resentments. A continuous disavowal of one's agency and one's responsibility to account for these affects places one in a position where one's agency can be hijacked and reoriented towards other goals. Hence, Portilla provides us with an analytic framework for understanding how a website that encourages nihilistic humor can be commandeered toward extremist politics.

Everyone Welcome!

For accessibility requirements, please contact philosophy@queensu.ca

Please note that all in-person attendees must conform to the Queen's vaccine policy:

<https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/administration-and-operations/covid-19-vaccination-requirements>