

1-1-2010

The Axiological Turn in Early Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos in Epistemology, Value, and the Emotions

Grant J. Silva

Marquette University, grant.silva@marquette.edu

Published version. "The Axiological Turn in Early Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos in Epistemology, Value, and the Emotions" in *Philosophic Values and World Citizenship*. Eds. Jacoby Adeshei Carter and Leonard Harris. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2010: 31-56. Reproduced by permission of Rowman & Littlefield. © 2010 Rowman & Littlefield. [Publisher link](#). All rights reserved. Please contact the publisher for permission to copy, distribute or reprint.

Three

The Axiological Turn in Early Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos on Epistemology, Value, and the Emotions

Grant Silva

Alain Locke (1885-1954) and José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) are philosophical anthropologists.¹ Philosophical anthropology is the study of the *anthropos* from a perspective that not only relies upon history, society, culture, biology and abstract thought, such that humans are believed to be the producers and products of the relationship between these, but philosophical anthropology attempts to formulate holistic understandings of the human as a complex being whose self-image is part of its own constitution and growth. The possibility of growth, in conjunction with the plasticity of human nature, forces a philosophical anthropologist to explore the subjective dimensions of these potentialities.² Thus, philosophical anthropology engages the rational aspects of the human mind, the historical dimensions of society and culture, in addition to subjective elements of experience (such as the emotions, values and feelings) in order to arrive at a complete understanding of the human. In this light, the philosophico-anthropological work of Locke and Vasconcelos can be viewed as responding to the positive science and anthropology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³ In particular, Locke's work takes on the racist biology of his day and the inadequate theories of value in his time. It is my contention that he ex-

plores the latter to resolve several issues in the former, or at least this is one way of viewing the relationship between Locke's axiology and racial theory. Vasconcelos's work attempts to unsettle the main tenants of Comtean-inspired Latin American positivism, which abandoned metaphysical intellectual pursuits for a social philosophy that advocated educational reform, mechanical industrialization and foreign investment, all on a social-Darwinist account of progress.

The fields of study that Locke and Vasconcelos are responding to and invested in owe much to the invention of modern science.⁴ At first, "modern" or "modernity" is a term that designates a period of time in human history and affairs, i.e. that pertaining to Western Europe at some point after the medieval ages, the Italian Renaissance and the colonization of America (right through to the Enlightenment). European colonial projects must be mentioned in this regard since the contact with various peoples in different parts of the world provided the perspective that made possible the separation of the "modern" from the "savage," "pre-modern," "medieval" and (subsequently) "post-modern."⁵ Once aware of their progress, the further accumulation of human knowledge became the primary goal subsequent thinkers. "Modernity" thus transformed from a period of time to a stage in human history, an idea that incorporates and depends upon a developmental historicist attitude and the hierarchical categorization of humanity as a whole.

The first section of this essay provides a historical account for what I will call "the humanism of modern reason." While providing novel takes on method and analysis, the epistemological criteria established by philosophers like René Descartes, Immanuel Kant and Auguste Comte constructed a humanism privileging the rational enlightened subject. Concerned with explaining observable fact, the scientific and philosophical thought of the modern era disregarded the normative import of values, emotion or feelings. Philosophers viewed these as the by-product of the passions, inclination or simple irrational impulse; they were not a source for scientific knowledge on account of their relative nature and tendency to serve as impediments to objectivity. It is within the positive philosophy of late nineteenth century that a stage theory of human development became synonymous with modern scientific advancement. The anthropology of the same era later "naturalized" the differences between people through the idea of race. "Progress" (or lack thereof) became fixed to the behavior patterns assumed to be part of an individual's personal and cultural existence.

Locke's axiology and social theory are the subjects of the second section. Influenced by European axiologists and American pragmatists, his views provide an alternative to the value theories of his era, given that Locke is critical of positivist and pragmatist understandings of value. In addition, the social dimensions of value cannot be dismissed by fears of relativism, if anything studying values in Locke's nuanced manner provides the epistemological tools necessary for understanding human cultural differences. Vasconcelos's criticism of rationalist philosophy and his ideas on metaphysics constitute the third section. Con-

sidered a "non-rationalist," Vasconcelos's philosophical system responds to Latin American positivism which put forth "order and progress" over and against metaphysical abstraction. As Vasconcelos contends, this eliminated the importance of aesthetics and values, an act that undermines crucial ways in which humans interpret the world. Bringing the two together in a way that offers some interesting insights into the philosophical study of the human, besides also showing how Locke can lend a hand to Vasconcelos's ideas on race, the last section (four) concludes this essay by presenting the consequences of these American axiological explorations upon human culture and society.

In light of (1) the dismissive attitude towards feeling and emotions, (2) the humanism of modern reason and (3) the creation of progress-oriented sciences, this essay suggests that the works of Locke and Vasconcelos constitute an "axiological turn" in American philosophy. These individuals articulate alternative humanisms that assuage cultural differences, disabuse past acts of domination and cultural prejudice while also reflecting the variety of human ways of knowing. Besides the erudite and scholastic reasoning that motivates their ideas, these thinkers attempt to improve human understandings of value and aesthetics for the sake of ameliorating social/cultural relations and what Vasconcelos calls "spiritual" life. Both Locke and Vasconcelos believe that human feelings and emotions are inherently connected to the production of knowledge. Any adequate understanding of human ways of knowing must explore these aspects of the mind and not disregard them as too subjective or relative.

The Humanism of Modern Reason

Although metaphysical treatises are abundant in modern thought, theory of knowledge or epistemology plays a central role in this tradition. One possible reason for this depends upon a defining characteristic of modernity: the concern with and supposed awareness of human progress. In this framework the development of scientific knowledge became linked to the study of knowledge itself. The assumption here is that improvements to the enterprise of the acquisition of knowledge would entail that the products of these pursuits become more "certain." However, improving epistemological standards for inquiry necessitated a restructuring of the subject enacting these philosophical and scientific analyses. Seeing how this meant that the subject was to become part of inquiry, the science of modernity articulated a theory of humanity (a self-reflective examination) as connected to the furtherance of knowledge. One of the implicit goals of the modern project, when viewed as a whole, is the creation of a humanism grounded upon reason or rationality.⁶ This understanding of the human being in turn became the yardstick for comparing the cultures of the world and the foundation for the sciences that explained these differences in the first place.

As held by many Latin American philosophers, the origins of modernity—or, if one chooses, the catalyst that brought modernity into its full fruition—is

the encounter with America.⁷ From the Latin American perspective, "reason" serves as the last bastion for a worldview that encountered a land mass not recorded in its main text (the Bible) or acknowledged by papal/feudal institutions. Put differently, reason is where modern philosophers turned when attempting to formulate novel foundations for knowledge when dogma, revealed religion or the passions and inclination could no longer be trusted.⁸

Two pivotal texts that correspond to two main phases of modernity are Descartes' *Discourse on Method* and Kant's essay "What is Enlightenment?" Written at the end of the Scholastic age, Descartes' *Discourse* articulates a method for the obtainment of knowledge. Seeking to maintain favor with the Church but seeing its epistemological inadequacies, Descartes articulates a procedure by which certainty becomes possible, the famous *cogito ergo sum* being the result of the application of this method. Clarity and distinctiveness constitute the standard for rational thought, both of which provide a type of certainty modeled after that found in mathematics (self-evidential, demonstrative proofs). For Descartes, one arrives at the foundations for philosophical truth by not adhering to "appetites" or "teachers" but by starting from a position of skepticism and doubt.⁹

Similarly, Kant's answer to the question "What is the Enlightenment?" is: "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another." He continues, "Have courage to use your own understanding!"¹⁰ For Kant's enlightened autonomous subject, dogmatism and inclination are improper sources for knowledge (this extends beyond moral knowledge as well). Along these lines, his *Critique of Pure Reason* outlines the various aspects of the human mind that provide for a possible transcendental basis for experience (this will be crucial for Vasconcelos's criticism). Although for him reason is not strictly confined to the human realm, since Angels and God also possess it, Kant never ceases to place humanity's highest achievements alongside of a strict rational nature. In "Speculative Beginnings of Human History," he writes, "mankind's earliest history reveals that its exit from that paradise that reason represents as the first dwelling place of its species was nothing but the transition from the raw state of a merely animal creature to humanity, from the harness of the instincts to the guidance of reason—in a word from the guardianship of nature to the state of freedom."¹¹ It is the Latin American positivists, as I will show below, who expand this notion of freedom and take it to imply institutional reform.

I would like to draw attention to the dismissal of the senses as a source for certainty within Descartes ideas and the rejection of inclination and heteronomy in Kant's philosophy. In establishing these novel foundations for knowledge, these philosophers parallel their two scientific counterparts, Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton, both of whom broke with dogma to pursue a science founded on laws of reason generated by observation. For Descartes and Kant, metaphysics and epistemology could not be furthered unless built upon the vantage point of

individuals who can objectify their subject matter and establish fact. These facts allow for the formulation of rational principles and objective knowledge—the type of knowledge any person can access using the proper procedure or method. The focus on method creates a type of knowledge that makes sense to a particular person, i.e. modern man. The rejection of the senses and inclination thus anticipates the dismissal of human values and feelings (which will be crucial for Locke's critique).

It is within the work of the French philosopher August Comte that human reason as the establisher of fact becomes most apparent. Comte considered Francis Bacon to be an individual of high-esteem since the latter argued that "there can be no real knowledge except that which rests upon observed facts." Comte continues, "This fundamental maxim is evidently indisputable if it is applied, as it ought to be, to the mature state of our intelligence."¹² Comte's central idea is that of "positive philosophy," the full constitution of which began with Bacon, Descartes and Galileo, all of whom broke with the dogmatic, theocratic and superstitious impositions of scholasticism while trying to provide alternative (better) accounts for natural phenomena through the use of reason, argumentation and fact.¹³ Comte's philosophy is indebted to Kant's system given that the former accepts the latter's opinions about the true nature of things. Put differently, Comte concerns himself with attempting to explain and describe observable phenomena, putting aside the question of whether or not this explains "things-in-themselves."¹⁴

Positive philosophy consists of a three-fold stage of human history. Writing at the height of human development, or so he believed, Comte argues that no idea can be understood outside of the history of it; one must study the human mind in a developmental manner, paying attention to its historical growth.¹⁵ The necessary starting point is the theological stage, the "simplest." The main concerns of this stage are the inner nature of beings and the final cause (*telos*) of observed phenomena. Here, supernatural agents (gods or deities) are said to interact with the world causing these phenomena. The metaphysical stage, the second, is a transitional period where the workings of the world are credited to abstract forces rather than the gods; "nature" or "mind" take the place of "God." The third stage is the scientific or positive stage, the fixed and definitive state of the human mind. This stage abandons the idea of ultimate causes or final ends and attempts to discover the actual laws of phenomena through the use of reason and observation. Here, the positivist concerns herself with the explanation of fact: the explanation of the relationships between different verifiable actions and events (in short phenomena) that have taken place.¹⁶ Comte writes, "we do not pretend to explain the real causes of phenomena . . . we try only to analyze correctly the circumstances of their production, and to connect them by normal relations of succession and similarity."¹⁷

Although most advances in positive science had taken place in the natural sciences, little to nothing was done in the social sciences during Comte's time (he called this "social physics"). For him, a social science would complete the system of natural science by formulating laws about the working of human so-

cial relations—this goal gains Comte the title “the father of sociology.” Comte thought that human social networks and the political institutions that house these are based on ideals and beliefs. Solidifying the bases for these beliefs is the job of the positivist. Charles Frankel writes, “Comte’s controlling assumption was that institutions rest on morals, and that a stable morality rests on the general acceptance of a unified and stable body of beliefs.”¹⁸ History proves important in this framework because of its explanatory power in regards to the most current social conditions: they are a product of past human affairs. At the same time, the future takes on new meaning given that improving the foundational beliefs of a society can affectively change human institutions and morality. As the Latin American positivist, José Victorino Lastarria, reminds, changing foundational beliefs requires a certain type of will power: “human events are natural phenomena linked to each other and dependent upon human action and will.”¹⁹ Thus, out of Comte’s social philosophy emerges a proto-social Darwinism. This point of view renders morality, values and beliefs as functional products of human social relations at the disposal of those wishing to manipulate (improve) human life.

By arriving at the proper understanding of humanity and formulating laws to decipher the principles that govern social life, the positivists free themselves from the servitude of mental immaturity. There is a liberating quality accompanying the realization of positive law since it allows for the proper understanding of the human condition, making positive action or “progress” possible. Gabino Barreda, a liberal advocate for positivism in Mexico, articulates the freeing effects of positivism and the need for order in the following manner: “Liberty is commonly represented as a faculty of doing or seeking anything whatsoever without subjection to law or to any force which might direct it; if such a freedom could be achieved, it would be immoral and absurd because it would make all discipline and, consequently, all order, impossible.” He continues, “Far from being incompatible with order, liberty consists, in all phenomena, both inorganic and organic, in submitting fully to the laws which determine those phenomena.”²⁰ Barreda’s notion of limited freedom, not to mention the social Darwinism later attached to this perspective, prefigures the ways in which Latin American positivists submitted to despotic rule.

In Latin America, given the history of colonialism, forced Scholasticism and poverty, positivism offered a means by which order and progress could be achieved. Rather than debate the true causes of the impoverished and subjugated Latin American condition, nineteenth century positivists embraced institutional reform (social order) and scientific education (the progress of knowledge) as the best way to change their circumstances. Notice how this parallels Comte’s acceptance of Kant’s bifurcated metaphysics and then the move to a more practical social philosophy concerned only with verifiable phenomena. Comparing themselves to modern European culture and the “Colossus to the North” (the United States), many Latin American thinkers enacted public reforms promoting prac-

tical education as a means rectifying the perceived inferiority of Latin American people.²¹ Justo Sierra, the great Mexican educator, furthered these ideals by adding to them Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest; he also demanded industrial development as a means of economic strengthening.²² Besides creating the policies permitting the two-decade long dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (causes of the 1910 Revolution), this opened up Mexico to neo-colonial interests that quickly monopolized natural resources and national infrastructures. This had drastic consequences for the poor, the sick and people of indigenous culture who were deemed as slowing down the advancement of Mexican (and Latin American) society.

In Latin America, positivism eliminated metaphysical, religious and non-factual aspects of human thought from philosophical conversations; they were not based on principles derived from empirical and rationalist science nor would they resolve any of the problems of the region. Vasconcelos's philosophy is a return to metaphysical, aesthetical and ethical analyses in order to provide for a more comprehensive philosophy of life that is reflective of the cosmos. However, as Risieri Frondizi reminds, after positivism all theory wades in the wake of practice (a wake that has left ripples in all of Latin American philosophy).²³ Thus, Vasconcelos critiques the idea of social progress for the sake of moral, aesthetic and spiritual progress—a point that hints to his role as a philosophical anthropologist. Like Locke who held a high appreciation for art and culture, Vasconcelos demonstrated a similar disposition in providing the initial funds used to sponsor Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Given that humans are endowed with a mind that leans towards the more beautiful things in life, aesthetics was a subject of great importance to him. However, Vasconcelos also appreciated aesthetics since it helps to express what civilizations find meaningful in the world. Rationality is thus only one component to human search for meaning.

Locke's ideas likewise argue against the legacy of reason-based fact-driven philosophy that dismisses the importance of value in human knowledge. In addition, he takes on a type of social philosophy that attempts to naturalize human differences on racial grounds.²⁴ Specifically, Locke's criticisms develop as a response to eugenics, racial determinism and the science of racist biology, all of which incorporate developmental and essentialist attitudes about human beings. Taking anthropological science on its own terms, Locke suggests that the criteria for racial classification are "arbitrary."²⁵ The facts about race, then, are *uncertain* and not self-evident. Moreover, the "value" driving this field was a depreciation of diversity and a desire to keep humanity separated on cultural and racial levels.²⁶ Locke continues his criticism of the scientific dependence on facts in a more forceful manner by challenging the idea that facts can be derived independent of value at all. According to Locke all facts are derived from values; the latter he understood to be grounded in human feelings, thus his famous claim, "humans are indeed rational, they are emotional first"—a point that resonates with the philosophy of Vasconcelos.

Together, Locke and Vasconcelos explore what are sometimes called the "non-rational" aspects of human thought. Their ideas, however, do not establish mere epistemologies of feelings nor do they completely disregard human rationality. In this both thinkers come close to William James's thoughts in "The Sentiment of Rationality." There, James argues that what we recognize as rationality consists of a set of feelings that mark something as sensible. Trying to describe the experiential or phenomenological aspects of rationality, James writes that it is like "a strong feeling of ease, peace, [and] rest" in addition to the transition from a feeling of perplexity and stress to relief and pleasure.²⁷ While Locke extends this very thought in his own work on values and the feeling-qualities that support them, Vasconcelos creates an epistemology that requires the type of fluctuations in character and feeling which James describes above. For these two thinkers the subjective elements of experience should not be discounted or obviated from the pursuit of knowledge due to any lack of objectivity—in fact, as Locke maintains, objectivity is only possible given these differences.

The Diversity of the Human Experience: Locke's Critical Value Relativism

All philosophies, it seems to me, are in ultimate derivation philosophies of life and not of abstract, disembodied 'objective' reality: products of time, place and situation, and thus systems of timed history rather than timeless eternity.²⁸

Locke, *Values and Imperatives*

In his book *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that respecting the differences between cultures while also recognizing the common humanity of all people is crucial to navigating through the turmoil embedded in current world affairs and social relations. Appiah considers this respect and recognition part of the "cosmopolitan attitude," a non-hierarchical way of viewing human differences that promotes tolerance and universality. Upon reflection, however, the line between cosmopolitan ethics and ethical relativity is hard to identify, especially when one must respect the torture of innocents or female circumcision (his examples). For Appiah, true cosmopolitans discuss moral differences in the hopes of enlightening a person or people. Besides potentially violating the cosmopolitan ideal of respecting local autonomy—since one is seeking to disabuse a morally suspect view on behalf of responsibilities that all humans supposedly owe one another—it is often the case that when ethics are in debate some people simply think they are right. Ultimately, Appiah's text revolves around the question of value relativism.²⁹

While it is an empirical matter to purport that values are relative to cultures and even persons, how to make normative judgments or critique particular ac-

tions given this fact remains a question. This problematic can be explained as the possibility of justifying values (or ethical behavior) without reference to metaphysical absolutes or universal ontological presuppositions.³⁰ In anticipation of this intellectual trend, Locke was correct in thinking that "the gravest problem of contemporary philosophy is how to ground some normative principle or criterion of objective validity for values without resort to dogmatism and absolutism . . . intolerance and mass coercion." This dilemma is worsened when one remembers, as Locke points out, that "common man . . . sets up personal . . . [,] private and group norms as standards and principles, and rightly or wrongly, hypostasizes [*sic*] them as universals for all conditions, all times and all men."³¹

In short, Locke has an answer to the dilemma that Appiah never resolves. Rather than an objectivist position (which places values out in the world, often along metaphysical bases) or a strict subjectivist view (which reduces values to matters of taste or personal desire) Locke sought to establish a middle ground between subjectivism and objectivism, between universalism and relativism—between heaven and hell, some might say. Locke did not agree with the way that American philosophers like William James or John Dewey considered values, ideas and beliefs as the mere by-products of human interaction with the world.³² Although these philosophers considered emotions and feelings in their axiological work, Locke held that "they placed too much emphasis on consequences and not enough on preferences and attitudes."³³ He writes, "Human behavior . . . is experimental, but it is also selectively preferential, and not always in terms of outer adjustments and concrete results. Value reactions guided by emotional preferences and affinities are as potent in the determination of attitudes as pragmatic consequences are in the determination of actions."³⁴ In this sense, Locke's understanding of values focused on innate psychological and emotional preferences that shape the process of valuation. Note that at times Locke does think that a cautious empirical science, aware of its limitations and inability to provide complete value-neutral facts, could create a type of universalism. However, Locke is clear that a variety of ways of life have to be referenced since the values at the heart of this cautious empiricism would be functional universals, i.e. those common values derived from human interactions with the world.³⁵

Locke's axiology accounts for values from a functional, psychological and phenomenological perspective. What appear to be value absolutes or universals derive their normative character from "feeling-references" and "value-modes." These arise in response to stimuli that affect humans in certain ways, generating visceral reactions that captivate an individual. Values are emergent qualities of experience typified by rational decisions; they are ways of responding to the world that rely on human emotion and feeling-based orientations. Prior to general evaluative judgments—considerations about whether something is "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," etc.—four fundamental feeling-qualities are referenced (exaltation, tension, acceptance or agreement, and repose or equilibrium). These pre-rational feeling-qualities designate "value modes" which assign a range of possible patterns of valuation. As Ernest D. Mason explains, "Locke has in mind the quality or essential nature of the value in question, that is,

whether or not a value is construed to be ethical, aesthetic, religious, economic, etc."³⁶ These in turn determine the range predicates utilized to express how an object affects a person—the secondary act of evaluation, i.e. the expression of a value. The role of human rationality in this process, if there is one at all, is the attempt to make sense of how we *feel* in response to some phenomena, object or situation. Again, this is a view of rationality similar to that advocated by James (as explained above). To become consciously aware of a "value" requires reflection upon an affective process already underway. This is a phenomenological point that stresses how our rational evaluative judgments only secondarily engage a dialogue between our body and visceral reactions to stimuli.³⁷

Locke makes the following epistemological point: while the *substance* of values is unfixed, since values can differ between humans and change over time, the *process* of valuation is a general human phenomenon determined by the workings of human psychology itself. No matter how influential social or natural surroundings may be in the creation or passing on of values, there will be significant influence arising out of human psychology. This makes objective value experiences possible in the same manner that Kant's categories of the mind (in addition to space and time) create the possibility for the objective organization of experience. Johnny Washington writes, "Kant postulated the twelve categories of the mind, together with the formal conditions of space and time, to explain the conditions under which we organize our experience, in accordance with these *a priori* forms. Similarly, Locke postulated the four categories of feelings largely to explain the ways in which we organize our valuing experience."³⁸ Locke writes, "The basic qualities of values should never have been sought in logical classes, for they pertain to psychological categories. They are not grounded in types of realms of value, but are rooted in modes or kinds of *valuing*." He continues, "the value-mode establishes for itself, directly through feeling, a qualitative category which, as discriminated by its appropriate feeling-quality, constitutes an emotionally mediated form of experience."³⁹

Learning how to respond to our feeling-references and value modes can be taught or conditioned by lived experience or even cultural traditions. Given that the actual production of "values" (i.e. how we form axiological expressions of our feelings) is a result of social conditioning and individual experience, we learn how to value through culture.⁴⁰ Cultures, in this sense, are patterns of valuation that are consistent across groups of people—note that they are in no way static or unanimous. This is in part why a legitimate science of human value is possible only by referencing various cultural groups.⁴¹ For instance, since all humans adhere to the same set of feeling-references when caught in the process of valuation (though end-values differ), certain environmental and social scenarios engender predominant feelings that express fundamental human values. These are times when value predicates ("good," "bad," "beautiful," "ugly," etc.) are blatantly obvious and causally linked to the types of feelings they foment—though Locke is not advocating any sort of value essentialism, he just thinks that

as humans it is not impossible that we share similar responses to things. Locke refers to these as "cultural cognates," cross-cultural values that can only be empirically determined by engaging with other ways of life.

Locke argues that there are two roles relativism plays in this refined science of value: (1) relativistic philosophy curtails the arbitrary passion for unity and conformity, and (2) relativism helps to promote peace in that various points of view are to be respected.⁴² Relativism provides these by not abandoning individual loyalties to traditions but promoting those loyalties in a certain way.⁴³ Locke's nuanced notion of relativism is nonhierarchical and attempts to foster a sense of commonality amongst people by reminding all of their individual biases and connections to their culture.⁴⁴ Once people see that relativism leads to tolerance and respect while dogmatism leads to what Locke calls secular disunity, "ideological peace" becomes more apparent.⁴⁵ In addition, value disagreements are not only expected but also desired. Calling this view "critical relativism," Locke implies that diversity in thought (i.e. how we use our rational abilities to make sense of innate dispositional attitudes), diversity in values (amidst cultural cognates) and diversity in ways of responding to environmental factors (both social and natural) lead to a variety of possible expressions of human life, none of which is better than another but equally representative of the human condition.

Values are thus derived from the same basic reality though they reflect modes of experience that are "particularized expressions" of an ongoing relationship with the world. They should not be totalized and their concrete formulations should reflect an individual's engagement with the world.⁴⁶ He writes that "there is little sense and less need to set facts and values over against each other as antagonistic orders; rather should we [*sic*] think of reality as a central fact and a white light broken up by the prism of humans nature in a spectrum of values."⁴⁷ Although for Locke this is meant as a metaphor on the human condition, it in many ways describes the metaphysics that Vasconcelos has in mind.

A Mestizo Nondualism: Vasconcelos's Formulation of the One and the Many

The job of the philosopher is to organize, with partial truths, a concurrent and single system, capable of insertion into life, in an interior and essential way. To achieve such unity abstraction [alone] does not suffice [*no basta*] nor is it legitimate either to pretend to not know of generalizations and abstractions; one needs to combine all of the ways of knowing: the rational, the sensual, the emotional, the transcendental; all of the bound disciplines of knowledge conform to hierarchies and affinities whose discovery and creation is precisely the specific work of the philosopher.

Vasconcelos, *Treatise on Metaphysics*⁴⁸

In *History of Philosophy in Mexico*, Samuel Ramos argues that Vasconcelos's system is the work of an imaginative individual. Admitting that there are many truths lurking inside of Vasconcelos's corpus, Ramos believes that when reading his work one gets the feeling that they are in the grips of a poet or artist rather than a philosopher.⁴⁹ This has led many, including John Haddox, to write, "Vasconcelos is truly a poet with a system."⁵⁰ There are few individuals as complex and controversial as Vasconcelos. His philosophy depends upon the reconciling of differences, the overcoming of heterogeneity. Although deceased for almost a half century, scholars are still trying to make sense of Vasconcelos's own life of contradictions. Loved, hated, respected and scorned, he lives on in the conversations and minds of many people.⁵¹ For various reasons, this section will focus on Vasconcelos's metaphysics and social theory, two areas that sometimes force an engagement with controversy, i.e. his appeal to Western standards of beauty and his "bourgeois *mestizaje*."

Vasconcelos was a member of the *Ateneo de la Juventud* ("The Youth Forum"), a group of intellectuals critical of the positive philosophy of Mexico and the Diaz regime. As Luis A. Marentes writes about the philosophers of the *Ateneo*, "Theirs was a spiritual and aesthetic quest for a value system beyond the pragmatic and crass materialism of the *científico* elite, which justified its privileged position on a social Darwinist belief in the survival of the fittest."⁵² Another important member of the *Ateneo* was the "anti-rationalist" Antonio Caso, who, like Vasconcelos, was influenced by the "vitalism" of the French philosophers Henry Bergson.⁵³ Bergson held that a strict naturalist account of evolution was inadequate in explaining the fact that species mutation seems to be moving in a definitive ("telic") direction. However, "definitive" is not meant to express a fatalist point of view nor are organisms simply the product of the interplay between genes and environment. Life is a representation of the *élan vital*, the vital impetus. The *élan vital* is an unyielding process of becoming that favors complexity and novelty over devolutionary processes or stagnating simplicity. Life overcomes the possibility for the downward unpredictability of evolution through "appetency" or a type of desire which creates a future certain to be more complex yet undetermined.⁵⁴ Appetency is the source for Vasconcelos's take on emotion, desire, beauty and love.

According to Haddox, if there is a word that can be used to describe Vasconcelos's entire philosophical project it is "living."⁵⁵ Vasconcelos considered life to be the dynamic interplay of heterogeneous parts that ultimately boil to electromagnetic forces. Life, in this sense, could not be captured by an epistemology aspiring towards objective, unchanging truth; the world is alive and both rational and non-rational, human ways of knowing must respond in like. Fittingly, Vasconcelos provides an epistemology that corresponds to an understanding of the world as in flux. Since the human spirit desires to freely know the world, without utilitarian, calculative and manipulative intentions, an adequate way of

knowing is needed to bring about "the cosmic age." He called this view the *aesthetic monism*.

Vasconcelos's metaphysics is rather convoluted: a non-dualist idealism that holds reality to be comprised of several levels that ultimately reveal a rich rhythmic radiant energy. The first level is comprised of atoms and subatomic waves. The electromagnetic variations and forces found here are sometimes expressed as "light" or "energy." The second stage is that of "coordinated heterogeneity." This stage consists of compounds or elements that are the combination and continuance of differing atomic particles. The third stage is that of the living cell that unites along asymmetrical bases to create animal species and plant life. The highest level of development here is the human being. This is because humans have consciousness, a "living act that permits it to *coordinate the different elements of knowledge* that come to one through the various instruments of knowledge." Vasconcelos continues by noting that these elements are "the senses, intelligence, will and feeling." Human spiritual and intellectual progress is necessary in this framework given that it is meant to "realize" this world—this spiritual advancement engenders a new level of reality (the fourth stage).⁵⁶

To account for the façade of distinction is the job of the philosopher, especially the philosopher concerned with coordination, i.e. the interplay and interrelatedness of various aspects of life. Seeing how reality is essentially a rhythmic pulse of energy, Vasconcelos's aesthetic monism attempts to refine the aesthetic qualities needed for such a project. He writes, "All that is life in the world is constructed esthetically, artistically." Vasconcelos continues, "the thesis of the esthetic *a priori* . . . consists in maintaining that just as the mind has categories of space-time, of genus and species, it is also endowed with special forms of understanding applicable to the esthetic phenomenon, forms which clarify beauty, and these forms are rhythm, melody and harmony."⁵⁷ Not only are human beings drawn towards objects of beauty, which is to say we prefer aesthetically pleasing things to displeasing ones, but we are endowed with instruments that help us to *find* beauty in the world—in a nominal sense, humans articulate "beautiful" relationships between heterogeneous objects that do not exist without human realization. These are acts of creation.

According to Vasconcelos, traditional Western metaphysical theories passively try to discover the workings of reality by concerning themselves with the instruments of reason. When claims about reality are made they often reduce everything to abstractions or principles. These "generalizations," as Vasconcelos calls them, confine any positive claim to the realm of reason and the intellect by assuming facets of rationality to be the *apriori* bases for knowledge. Vasconcelos thought that this would never amount to truth (or philosophy):

The main faculties of reason often found with the Cartesians do not arrive, and never have arrived[,] at philosophy[,] it stays in scientism. There are philosophical temperaments and anti-philosophical temperaments; the rational temperaments are anti-philosophical; Wisdom is *gnosis* [esoteric knowledge] and *logos* [rationalizations]; the rationalists have always been stuck in the *logos*, and not

even taken a peek at *gnosis*. It arrives at this with eyes that do not see, with an intellect that no longer disassociates [*disocia*] but that identifies.⁵⁸

The emotions and aesthetic principles of life are the esoteric. They are the mystical aspects of human life that force an engagement with subjectivity. Human subjectivity is crucial because esoteric knowledge (*gnosis*) is revealed during individual experiences. These could be such things as pre-rational encounters with the sublime or other metaphysical elements that cannot rationally really be explained. It is worth noting that this type of knowledge and experience uphold the process of synthesis, while rational orderings (*logos*) serves as the basis for the process of analysis—something Vasconcelos does not want to discount.

For Vasconcelos the human mind consists of two main mental processes: (1) the ability to separate, analyze and distinguish (analysis or distinction), and (2) integration or re-unification, the more difficult since it relies upon creativity and the gathering of meaning (synthesis). Heterogeneity is central because when two things of differing composition are synthesized they create something new. Conversely, when two things of the same composition synthesize nothing new is created; there is no reconciliation. The word "disassociation" in the last line of the above quote is crucial because the process of "identification" does not provide knowledge but relies upon the principle of identity (where "a=a" is the standard for identity). Identification attempts to find what it already knows. To disassociate, however, is to draw a distinction where there was none before, it requires activity and not the mere verification of previously figured principles whose predictive success and explanatory power are being tested. The idea of race serves as an example of these processes: The pseudo-anthropological science of the late nineteenth century divided humans into groups based on physical and cultural differences (analysis). What reunites humans after this division will be "synthetic," it deals with parts comprised of different groups. As hinted at by this example, Vasconcelos thought that the process of synthesis, as an epistemological tool used in the realization of the cosmos, also needed to be enacted on a cultural or racial level. Vasconcelos calls this the process of *mestizaje*.

In contrast with people like Arthur de Gobineau who thought that racial mixing and racial inequality were factors that played into the development and decadence of a civilization, Vasconcelos's *Raza Cósmica* articulates a philosophy of race based on *mestizaje*.⁵⁹ While exclusive assimilative ideals, such as the United States melting-pot, purport to incorporate different groups into a pre-established collective, *mestizaje* requires reciprocity and variety, both leading to novelty. *Mestizaje* is a more nuanced understanding of "race mixing"—this idea is not just about miscegenation but cultural and custom-based fusion.⁶⁰ Let me note, however, that Vasconcelos believes in a bourgeois *mestizaje*, a "mestizaje from above" used by individuals seeking to implement social change during times of nation-building. In this sense, when heroes of *mestizaje* such as Vas-

concelos employ the idea of a coming racial synthesis (it is always off in the distance, which permits the status-quo to remain) they note the whitening or Eurocentric demand and expectation for indigenous conformity. It pays lip service to the dead Indian while ignoring the Indian in front of their eyes. This has been the source of much criticism by indigenous advocates in Latin America.⁶¹

Building on the interconnectivity that the Anglo tradition has provided (i.e. globalization), the cosmic race can only come about if Latin American culture can create the spiritual basis for human progress. To reawaken this mission is what Vasconcelos seeks to do. He writes, "Only a leap of the spirit, nourished with facts, can give us a vision that will lift us above the micro-ideology of the specialist. Then we can dive deeply into the mass of events in order to discover a direction, a rhythm, and a purpose. Precisely there, where the analyst discovers nothing, the synthesizer and creator are enlightened."⁶² Vasconcelos is "prophetic" in the sense that he reminds the Latin people of the mission that fate has bestowed upon them: to create the "synthetical race, the integral race, made up of the genius and the blood of all people and, for that reason, more capable of true brotherhood and of a truly universal vision."⁶³ In other words, the bringing about of the fourth stage of reality depends upon the blending of races (I will say more about how Locke can help resolve some of the issues that remain within Vasconcelos's race theory in the next section).

Responding against the idea that reason alone is the focal point of the human mind, Vasconcelos writes,

The job of the philosopher is to organize, with partial truths, a concurrent and single system, capable of insertion into life, in an interior and essential way. To achieve such unity abstraction [alone] does not suffice [*no basta*] nor is it legitimate either to pretend to not know of generalizations and abstractions; one needs to combine all of the ways of knowing: the rational, the sensual, the emotional, the transcendental; all of the bound disciplines of knowledge conform to hierarchies and affinities whose discovery and creation is precisely the specific work of the philosopher.⁶⁴

The abstractions (principles or generalities) derived using reason are crucial to understanding the universe. However, a strict emphasis on reason alone, "logocentrism," inadequately deals with the human being since emotions are just as influential in our daily affairs as is intellect, especially those emotions connected to beauty. In this sense the cosmic age requires the cosmic way of thinking: aesthetic monism.

Towards a Holistic American Consciousness

This section concludes this essay by presenting the social implications of the epistemological critiques provided by Locke and Vasconcelos. I show what effect these criticisms have on the ideas of progress, culture and race, in addition

to demonstrating some possible ways of viewing Locke's axiology in light of his racial theory.

Locke's epistemological work attempts to determine the nature of values in the hopes of productively accounting for them in human life. The consequences of this pursuit are of the utmost importance. As Leonard Harris notes, if values turn out to be "metaphysical in character, then it would tell us the way values cohere or were constituted like the nature of the universe. If anthropological . . . the general theory would tell us the way values cohere or constitute a foundational feature of our personhood."⁶⁵ Likewise, a broad consideration of values would illuminate what is of real importance to human life while also demonstrating the practicalities and actions needed to support, enhance or realize those normative ideals.⁶⁶ Values being the source for anything of real existential and axiological importance in life, discounting values as a mere subjective element of experience where no truth can be gained is a disservice to humanity. Acknowledging values yet ignoring the plurality of them results in much of the same.

Vasconcelos believed that humans are endowed with a desire to find beauty in the world. Human intellect is intertwined with the nature of reality since humans are endowed with the capabilities of consciously realizing and understanding it. The cosmos being non-rational and rational, human ways of knowing must respond in like. Focused on the further development of one kind of knowledge, modern philosophical systems allowed for social theories that ignored the axiological aspects of human life and created policies that rendered entire people and ways of life as obstacles to progress. Influenced by an assortment of cultures and intellectual traditions, Vasconcelos attempts to articulate holistic knowledge of the world. Yet, in his confused racial biology Vasconcelos thinks that this implies the actual mixing of people. Thus, in his philosophy of race, especially in *La Raza Cósmica*, Vasconcelos maintains that a person's culture or way of life can be determined through race. As the anthropologist, Peter Wade, reminds, it is often the case that "racial thinking is not just about dividing people into physical categories, but also about explaining their behavior."⁶⁷

Put in this manner, race is a product of the naturalization of one's relationship to culture. Locke credits this idea to de Gobineau and the social evolutionism of Herbert Spencer. Similarly, he thought that the basis for this point of view was the notion of a universal process of development as connected to a stage-theory of human progress (which as Locke notes was already discredited by his time).⁶⁸ For Locke there is no causal link between race and culture outside of historical contingency.⁶⁹ It is to the downfall of much anthropological science that this linkage was never remedied.

One of the main factors that drove Locke towards this epistemological critique is his work on race.⁷⁰ Locke dissected "the facts" about racial biology.⁷¹ Presented as the truth about human beings, the racist biology of his day would never permit African Americans and whites to live a peaceful coexistence as

equals. Inequality was viewed as an essential aspect of human relations.⁷² Locke's philosophical corpus is an attempt to rectify a modern scientific worldview that creates facts about human life that support domination and social hierarchy. He sought to disabuse the scientific rationalist view by demonstrating the ways in which certain axiomatic bases for human inquiry and knowledge rest upon particular values stemming from "imperial cultures." Imperial cultures are those that dominate the *modus operandi* of the political engagements that occur when people of different backgrounds meet, often through threat of violence.⁷³ As Nancy Fraser points out, Locke is a "critical theorist of society, specifically of the history and political economy of racism."⁷⁴ Thus, one of the brilliant aspects of Locke's work is his consistent understanding of race as a heuristic for social organization, social empowerment or cultural expression, in addition to it also being a source for oppression and prejudice.

Locke saw "race" as a social mechanism that dictates the workings of social interaction.⁷⁵ He argues that the social phenomena that race describes is very old. The ideological importance now visible in the concept of "race," however, stems from the way it was used by modern European culture to dominate cultural and political interactions with people of other ways of life. In *Race Contacts*, Locke ventures so far as to say that race was introduced during the modern-colonial period to justify acts of slavery and exploitation while curbing the ability for cultural groups to obtain the same social status as those who were in positions of power. In other words, "race" became the inheritable socio-economic baggage of one's ancestral lineage, functioning more along the lines of caste. Nonetheless, as Locke argues, these economic and social differences became "naturalized" when ways of life become fixed to phenotypical differences; cultures quickly becomes racialized in places where race serves as a guarantor of one's relationship to the modes of production and the consumption of "modern culture" or "human civilization." This qualifies modern European culture as "imperial," seeing how this group was successful at dominating the political terms for social interaction.⁷⁶ As Stewart reminds, "Locke approached race as Karl Marx had analyzed class—as the vortex of modern social relations."⁷⁷

Regarding culture, Locke thought that this was an internal process that flows from personality to personality, not objectively "in the best that has been thought and created in the world," *a la* Matthew Arnold.⁷⁸ Cultures are not homogenous static entities for Locke but complex and reflect the changing dispositions and attitudes of their members. "The self-administered part of one's education," the process of becoming cultured is the obtainment or refinement of "the capacity for understanding the best and most representative forms of human expression, and of expressing oneself, if not in similar creativeness, at least in appreciative reactions and in progressively responsive refinement of taste and interests."⁷⁹ Culture helps individuals understand who they are; learning to express oneself is an act of self-cultivation that requires social existence. Though culture is appreciated personally, it is only through association with others that culture is possible in the first place, which is why it pertains to the shared histories and patterns of valuation that people have in common. Being true to one's

culture, then, is a way of being true to oneself (the significance of this is extremely important given Locke psychological theory of value). This does not mean that culture determines humans, if anything we are in constant dialogue with our culture, allowing it to shape us and us to shape it.

Hegel makes a similar point in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. While explaining the further development of "self-consciousness," Hegel holds that the world of culture (*Bildung*) is one where existence and actuality derive from a process by which an individual "divests itself of its personality, thereby creating its world." He continues, "It is therefore through culture that the individual acquires standing and actuality."⁸⁰ *Bildung* is the act of cultivation, the refinement of certain qualities and traits that places one in unison with the shared meanings and interpretive practices of their social, intellectual, aesthetical and moral surroundings. *Bildung* thus pertains to the normative shared ideal of a group. Coming into terms with the epistemic criteria established by modern epistemology was to "develop" or become "cultured" in a specific European way. Remember, as detailed above, the progress and advancement that modern philosophers were concerned with had normative implications upon the nature of the scientific inquirer and led to developmental theories of human nature advocated by eugenicists, positivists and many anthropologists.

Human beings are thus representatives of culture.⁸¹ In an idea that parallels Locke's views on how value-objectivity is possible, he and Stern suggest, "To be properly understood, civilization should be studied in the setting of world culture. Many of the current misconceptions in regard to culture and civilization become apparent only after a consistent application of objective viewpoints resulting from the broadest possible comparison of all types of human culture."⁸²

Vasconcelos, in thinking that all people are endowed with cultural aptitudes corresponding to race, maintains the racist position. However, in some of his latter work, Vasconcelos thinks that race corresponds to civilization-type, a civilization being the history of how a group learned to deal with their environment. In a lecture delivered in Chicago (1926), Vasconcelos put forth the idea that civilizations are ways of interpreting life. He writes, "we have before us the two forms of civilization [the Anglo-Saxon and the Latin], the two manners of interpreting life, that we must try to combine in a brotherly manner if our purpose is as it should be, to create in this hemisphere a new cycle of history—the cycle of liberty, understanding, and love amongst all races and nations."⁸³ As interpretations of life, civilizations are aesthetical processes that articulate and provide meaning to human affairs. These meanings are preserved through values that humans maintain. Aesthetics, as the search for meaning, especially philosophical meaning, thus becomes an expression of human creativity. This means that humans creatively make sense of their particular existence as part of a larger collective (one's culture or even the cosmic worldview if you will). This necessitates a type of cultural authenticity (or first-person perspective) not to be found in colonial social conditions that ignore the plurality of the human experience

and instead force a coercive worldview requiring homogeneity through forced conformity and colonialism.

Locke's nuanced understanding of race can help the early Vasconcelos support this view. The ways of knowing and appreciating life that allow for the development of the "cosmic race" are not necessarily connected to particular cultures, but may very well correlate with the historical development of such peoples. What is worth holding onto in Vasconcelos's view is the criticism of a rationalist philosophy that promotes an engagement with the innate emotional and aesthetical dispositions of human beings. Since all individuals and communities are connected to civilization (in the broadest sense possible), all are trying to interpret life. In both views, that of Locke and Vasconcelos, true philosophico-anthropological "progress" takes a radical rethinking of the human mind and a rethinking of the origins and uses of "human development."

Notes

In an essay on the pragmatism of Alain Locke, Nancy Fraser argues that Cornel West's *The American Evasion of Philosophy* issues a challenge to proponents of American pragmatism by including the life and work of W.E.B. Du Bois as a part of the American philosophical canon. With this inclusion, not to mention those of a similar nature that came before it, contemporary pragmatists are asked to think not only about the work of such figures as Peirce, James and Dewey, but also such issues as "the problem of the color line." Nowadays, it is practically impossible to speak about the color line without mentioning something about that line in the sand known as the U.S. border, an all-to-real mark of identity for many Latino/as. Seeing how American philosophy tends to rely upon a method which, drawing from Fraser again, social intelligence serves as the guide for social practice, one of the important locales from where pragmatists should mine is the rich history of philosophical thought provided by Latin Americans—this includes those in the United States. It is in this light that I offer an essay on the work of Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos. Again, here is to rethinking "American Philosophy." See Nancy Fraser, "Another Pragmatism: Alain Locke, Critical 'Race' Theory, and the Politics of Culture," in *The Critical Pragmatism of Alain Locke: A Reader on Value Theory, Aesthetics, Community, Culture, Race, and Education*, ed. Leonard Harris (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 3.

1. Though I cannot put the two together it is possible that in one of Vasconcelos's extensive travels throughout the United States he might have run across Locke's work or maybe the man himself. These travels are detailed in José Vasconcelos *Obras Completas* (Mexico, DF: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957–1961) with no mention of Locke. I can place Ralph Barton Perry (Locke's dissertation advisor at Harvard) and Vasconcelos at *The Second Inter-American Congress of Philosophy*, though it was sometime after Locke graduated. Nonetheless, there remains no evidence to suggest that they had any communication. For more on the interaction of Perry and Vasconcelos see "Second Inter-American Congress of Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 9:3 (March 1949), 345–626.

2. For a brief explanation of philosophical anthropology that hinges on the idea of "plasticity" refer to Richard Schacht, "Philosophical Anthropology," in *The Cambridge*

Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 580–581.

3. For more on Locke as a philosophical anthropologist see William B. Harvey, "The Philosophical Anthropology of Alain Locke," in *Alain Locke: Reflections On A Modern Renaissance Man*, ed. Russell J. Linnemann (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1982). Philosophical anthropology was a topic of great importance in Latin America at the end of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Vasconcelos's work is an example of this). For an excellent and brief treatment of philosophical anthropology in Latin America (with accompanying texts) see Jorge Gracia and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert, *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2004), 75–87.

4. This is "science" as *scientia*: "systematic knowledge based on indubitable foundations." See the editorial note by John Cottingham in René Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, ed. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoof and Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1.

5. Proof of this attitude is apparent in the work of social contract theorists like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These individuals associate the state of nature, the supposed initial social condition of human beings, with the Americas and other colonial territories. While it is true that these thinkers question the reality of such a time in human affairs, they nonetheless view indigenous people around the world as evidence for such an idea.

6. David Hume is a modern philosopher explicitly concerned with the passions, senses, emotions and feelings, his famous line being, "Reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions." Hume does not, however, intend for this to undermine the importance of reason in his philosophy of action, especially insofar as moral reasoning is concerned. His point is that reason alone is insufficient for explaining morality (one could add the same for the passions, i.e. reason is required). On this point he is similar to the philosophers I am concerned with in this paper. The important distinction between Hume, Locke and Vasconcelos, especially insofar as the emotions, senses and passions are concerned, is that the latter two do not believe the passions to be completely subjective since (to borrow a term from Locke) "dispositional-attitudes" do exist. These are subjective tendencies or psychological states that humans objectively or categorically share, even though they are not expressed in universal values.

7. For more on the material and colonial underpinnings allowing for "modernity" see Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: The Eclipse of the Other and the Myth of Modernity*, ed. Michael D. Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995).

8. See Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 34–44.

9. Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, 13.

10. Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, ed. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), 41 (emphasis in original).

11. Kant, "What is Enlightenment?," 53

12. Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, ed. Frederick Ferré (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 4.

13. Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, 11.

14. Charles Frankel, "Positivism," in *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), 331. On this level, Comte's positivism appears to be a type of phenomenology given that his analysis of observable

phenomena requires a bracketing of metaphysical debates about things-in-themselves or "reality."

15. Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, 1.

16. Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, 2. Whereas both theological and metaphysical stage arrived at their highest phase by aiming towards simplicity (either a single supernatural being or a single great general entity/force, i.e. nature), the positive stage would end if it arrived at a general fact, but this is unattainable argues Comte.

17. Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, 8.

18. Frankel, "Positivism," 329.

19. See Leopoldo Zea, *The Latin-American Mind*, eds. James H. Abbot and Lowell Dunham (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1963), 136.

20. Zea, *The Latin-American Mind*, 226.

21. Zea, *The Latin-American Mind*, 270.

22. Zea, *The Latin-American Mind*, 271.

23. See Risieri Frondizi, "Is There an Ibero-American Philosophy?" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 9:3 (March 1949): 355

24. See Jeffrey Stewart, "Introduction," *Race Contacts and Interracial Relations*, ed. Jeffrey C. Stewart (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1992), xxii. See also Alain Locke, "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture," *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, ed. Leonard Harris (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

25. Alain Locke, "The Problem of Race Classification," in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, 164.

26. The Mexican philosopher, Leopoldo Zea, relates this depreciation of diversity to what Descartes says in the *Discourse*: "[T]here is not usually so much perfection in works composed several parts and produced by various different craftsmen as in the works of one man." See Descartes, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, 12. Put more directly, Descartes's method turns away from human diversity because of its inability to provide certainty. See Zea, *Cuadernos Americanos: Filosofía de lo Americano* (México, D.F.: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1984), 29. Zea is not alone with this idea: Isaiah Berlin argues that Giambattista Vico's criticism of Descartes's project stems from the fact that the vast differences one finds in humanity make it an impossible source for certainty. See Isaiah Berlin, *Three Critics of the Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

27. William James, *The Sentiment of Rationality* (New York: Longman, Greens and Co., 1905), 63.

28. This line coincides with what is called the "culturalist position" in the Latin American philosophical debate regarding philosophy as a universal science of thought or a culturally based mode of inquiry. The culturalists, most notably Leopoldo Zea (who himself draws from the "perspectivalism" of Jose Ortega y Gasset), hold that philosophy arises out of cultural or particular circumstance. See Gracia and Millán-Zaibert, *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century*.

29. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2006), 13.

30. Hilary Putnam's *Ethics Without Ontology* (2004) and *The Many Faces of Realism* (1987) are worth mentioning in this respect since Appiah draws from Putnam's dismantling of the fact/value dichotomy (see Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 13–33). It is also worth noting that even though his axiological work anticipates the major moves of Putnam's argument, neither Appiah nor Putnam himself mention Locke. One can perhaps credit this to the fact that Putnam is drawing from Dewey, although there remains some debate about whether this is true for Locke. Locke's unpublished essay "Value," written

sometime between 1935 and 1947, is an excellent place for comparison (See Locke, *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*). Editors' Note: "Value" is type-written in Locke's archive, however, it was published by Locke's advisor for his terminal thesis at Oxford in 1910, F. C. S. Schiller, "Value" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 12, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 232-233. The authorship is at least a question, but the content is consistent with both Locke's and Schiller's view of values.

31. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 36.

32. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 35.

33. Johnny Washington, *Alain Locke and Philosophy: A Quest for Cultural Pluralism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1986), 24.

34. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 37.

35. Locke, "Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy," 53-54.

36. Ernest Mason, "Alain Locke's Philosophy of Value," in *Alain Locke: Reflections on a Modern Renaissance Man*, ed. Russell J. Linnemann (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1982), p. 4

37. Mason summarizes Locke's understanding of the process of valuation in the following way: "The distinction between the evaluational experience and the act of evaluation, or between the original value experience and the evaluation of that experience constitutes the core of Locke's theory of value. The original value sensing is always a direct and immediate experience, and like all direct and immediate experiences, it is supposedly noncognitive. An evaluative judgment, on the other hand, is clearly and intellectual act that attempts to examine our original value experience to determine its worth. What this means for Locke is simply that the existence of end-values is not necessarily mediated by a process of evaluation or by a formal, logical value judgment. Instead, certain base feeling-attitudes normally condition these end-values prior to the intellectual act of formal evaluation. Men, says Locke, are indeed rational, but they are first of all emotional." See Mason, "Alain Locke's Philosophy of Value," 6.

38. See Washington, *Alain Locke and Philosophy*, 28. As Jacoby Carter reminds, Locke does not limit himself to just four categories of feelings. On a different note, the difference between Kant and Locke is the way in which the latter does not seek to universalize the content of values, just the form or pattern of valuation. Insofar as I am concerned, this is what Kant is asking to do as well. Kant argues that we can know that the form of moral claims will be universal, though the content might not be (one could be willing something that fails the test of the categorical imperative). See Immanuel Kant *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 26.

39. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 38.

40. Judith Green, "Alain Locke's Multicultural Philosophy of Value," *The Critical Pragmatism of Alain Locke: A Reader on Value Theory, Aesthetics, Community, Culture, Race, and Education*, ed. Leonard Harris (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999)

41. See Locke, "Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy," "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace," and "A Functional View of Value Ultimates," in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, ed. Leonard Harris (Philadelphia: Temple, 1989).

42. Locke, "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace," 69-70.

43. This is where Locke builds upon Royce's idea of "loyalty to loyalty."

44. Locke, "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace," 71.

45. Contrary to a relativist approach, for those maintaining the absolutist position unity can only be achieved through universality. The only way people can come together

is through being the same and having the same values. For Locke this generates a paradox. Absolutists arrive at unity through universality. Universality requires orthodoxy, which for Locke entails "authoritarian conformity and subordination." "Orthodoxy" is a belief agreeing with conventional standards. Orthodoxy imposed through authoritarian conformity and subordination creates dogmatism. As history shows, when dogmatism starts "inevitable schisms" usually arise because of competing views regarding who has the right point of view (this has been proven through the history of Christianity, Marxism, and more). Value absolutism thus inevitably leads to disunity. See Locke, "Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace," 70.

46. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 47–48.

47. Locke, "Values and Imperatives," 47.

48. José Vasconcelos, *Tratado De Metafísica*, in *Obras Completas* (México, DF: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1957), 406 (translation my own).

49. Samuel Ramos, *Historia de la filosofía en México* (México: Imprenta Universitaria, 1943), 134.

50. John H. Haddox, *Vasconcelos of Mexico: Philosopher and Prophet* (Austin: University of Texas, 1967), 40.

51. For a recent biographical account of Vasconcelos's life and connection to the 1910 Mexican Revolution and subsequent political turmoil see Luis A. Marentes, *José Vasconcelos and the Writing of the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 2000).

52. Marentes, *José Vasconcelos and the Writing of the Mexican Revolution*, 2.

53. With Descartes, Comte and now Bergson one gets a sense for the significance of the French influence on Latin American philosophy. Along these lines, another important "anti-rationalist" worth mentioning is Alejandro Korn. He disputed the liberating aspects of positivism because of its mechanistic nature and rejection of ethics construed in ways other than a byproduct of social relations. For a summary of Korn, Vasconcelos and Caso in the context of a discussion on Bergson, see Arthur Berndtson, "Vitalism," *A History of Philosophical Systems*, ed. Vergilius Ferm (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), 385.

54. Berndtson, "Vitalism," 383.

55. Haddox, *Vasconcelos of Mexico*, 41.

56. José Vasconcelos, "Todología" and "Philosophy Manuel," *Latin American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jorge J. E. Gracia (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1986), 55–57.

57. José Vasconcelos, "The Esthetic Development of Creation," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 9:3 (March 1949): 463–465.

58. Vasconcelos, *Tratado De Metafísica*, 396.

59. For a brief description of Gobineau see the note by Stewart in Locke, *Race Contacts*, 15 (note 6).

60. *Mestizaje* is the process of racial and cultural mixing or cultural fusion, characteristic of much of Latin America. This is not just the idea that people are mixed-race—a simplification. *Mestizaje* is the idea that cultures and people of various racial backgrounds are combining to start new cultures and new "races." Race in Latin America is different from race in the U.S. There, race pertains to culture and class rather than just "biology." So when Vasconcelos talks of racial fusing or race-mixture, it is something complex.

61. See Charles Hale, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism: The Remaking of Cultural Rights and Racial Dominance in Central America," *PoLAR* 28:1 (2005). In *La Raza Cósmica*, Vasconcelos writes, "The lower types of species will be absorbed by the supe-

rior type. In this manner, for example, the Black could be redeemed, and step by step, by voluntary extinction, the uglier stocks will give way to the more handsome. Inferior races, upon being educated, would become less prolific, and the better species would go on ascending a scale of ethnic improvement, whose maximum type is not precisely White, but that new race to which the White himself will have to aspire with the object of conquering that synthesis." See Jose Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cósmica: A Bilingual Edition* (Maryland: John Hopkins Press, 1997), 32.

62. Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cósmica*, 56.

63. Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race/La Raza Cósmica*, 20.

64. Vasconcelos, *Tratado De Metafisica*, 406.

65. Leonard Harris, "Rendering the Subtext: Subterranean Deconstructive Project," in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, 279.

66. Harris, "Rendering the Subtext," 284.

67. Peter Wade, "Race in Latin America," in *The Blackwell Companion to Latin American Anthropology*, ed. Deborah Poole (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 178.

68. Locke, "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture," 189–190.

69. Locke, "The Concept of Race as Applied to Social Culture," 189.

70. Locke's work on race theory formalized as early as 1914, although prior to this he worked with several axiologists and philosophers, i.e. von Ehrenfels, Meinong, Brentano and more, as a Rhodes Scholar. His major ideas on race were the subject of a series of lectures at Howard University in 1916 (Locke, *Race Contacts*, xix). Locke earned his doctoral degree with a dissertation on axiology in 1918.

71. Locke, "The Problem of Race Classification," 164.

72. Arthur de Gobineau, "The Inequality of Human Races," in *The Idea of Race*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000).

73. Locke, *Race Contacts*, 22.

74. Fraser, "Another Pragmatism," 3. Though he does admit that processes of inquiry result in "facts" shaped by values, the reality of race practice, and Locke's acknowledgement of it, makes him a materialist. Race is a "hard fact" about life that cannot be avoided. Contrary to the idea that class can be an appropriate means of dealing with problems pertaining to race, Locke holds that race can be an appropriate way of dealing with class based issues. Or, at the very least, understanding race properly can help illuminate the workings of class in ways not available by simply looking at one or the other alone. Similarly, Locke's refined notion of anthropology can be viewed as "radical" since it does not rest on axioms about human difference, i.e. unproven hierarchies of race based on racial inequality.

75. Because this domination was expressed along racial lines, race is at the heart of democracy. For an interesting analysis of Locke's theory of race as a product of cultural belief see Robert Bernasconi, "Ethnic Race: Revisiting Alain Locke's Neglected Proposal," in *Race or Ethnicity?: On Black and Latino Identity*, ed. Jorge Gracia (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2008).

76. Locke, *Race Contacts*, 24.

77. See Locke, *Race Contacts*, xxvi.

78. Locke, "The Ethics of Culture," 177.

79. Locke, "The Ethics of Culture," 177.

80. G.W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 297. Some have argued that the main problem of the *Phenomenology* is not history but *Bildung*, i.e. the progression and development of Spirit. See

G.A. Kelly, *Idealism, Politics, and History: Sources of Hegelian Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

81. Humans are that which "entify" or make objectively real both cultural groups and ourselves. Harris writes, "A social identity is a form of entification; entification occurs when being is predicated of a group such that it is believed to have an existence independent of the individual." Locke's theory of value fits with his views on social identity in that the latter "is a positive valuation of an interest, and affective feeling, a method of representation, and a system or process of continual transvaluation of symbols," as Leonard Harris writes (see *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, 20).

82. Alain Locke and Bernard J. Stern, *When Peoples Meet: A Study of Race and Culture Contacts* (New York: Hinds, Hayden & Eldredge, Inc., 1946), 4.

83. José Vasconcelos, "Similarity and Contrast," in *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* [Lectures on the Harris Foundation, 1926] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 22-23.