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# Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy

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Bernardo J. Canteñs, Editor

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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The spring 2009 issue of the Newsletter contains Hugo Moreno's essay "The Analogical Tradition of Hispanic Thought," which was the 2008 winner of the APA Prize for the best essay in Latin American Philosophy. Moreno's essay argues that nondiscursive philosophical texts (e.g., poetry, drama, and fiction) are an essential part of Hispanic thought, and that the rift between these literary genres and philosophy precludes a genuine understanding of Hispanic philosophy. Moreno focuses on Hispanic contemporary analogical metaphysics, exemplified in the works of J. L. Borges's *Ficciones*, Octavio Paz's *El mono gramático*, and María Zambrano's *Claros del bosque*. He argues why these works should be considered philosophical and as constituting a central part of the analogical tradition of Hispanic metaphysics, which conceives Being as a mystery not to be resolved but renewed through a fresh sense of "agapeic astonishment." According to Moreno, for these thinkers, the goal of metaphysical speculation is not truth but aesthetic coherence.

The previous issue of the Newsletter (fall 2008) included several articles that explored the relationship between German and Latin American philosophy. This issue includes several articles, along with commentaries, that explore the relationship between American philosophy and Hispanic philosophy. First, Rosa Mayorga's "Hispanic Philosophy, American Pragmatism and Cuba" critically analyzes Antonio Armas Vasquez's interpretation of American Pragmatism, arguing that Vasquez's thesis that pragmatism was devised by the United States as a political strategy with the intention to control Cuba is based on a gross misinterpretation of the fundamental principles of American Pragmatism. Cantens' comments on Mayorga's analysis explore further the interconnection between Dewey's Pragmatism and social-political philosophy. Second, Jaime Nubiola's "Charles Peirce and the Hispanic World" highlights Peirce's relationship with and limited understanding of Hispanic culture. Nubiola's objective is to draw attention to the mutual ignorance between the Hispanic and American philosophical traditions, as well as to show that there are common themes, such as the connection between thought and life, which are worth examining. Cantens' comments on Nubiola's essay advances the thesis of common themes by elaborating further the importance of the connection between thought and life for Dewey's philosophy. Third, María J. Frápolli's "New American Pragmatism and the Pragmatist Truth" begins by briefly discussing the influence of pragmatism in contemporary Spanish philosophy. She goes on to provide an analysis of a

pragmatic conception of truth that adjudicates between the radically different versions espoused by Susan Haack and Richard Rorty. She argues that by clarifying the conceptions of meaning and criteria, and the confusion between truth and truths, it is possible to derive a new understanding of truth that vindicates elements of both Haack's and Rorty's conceptions of truth.

This issue includes two book reviews. The first is by Renzo Llorente of *Latinos in America: Philosophy and Social Identity* by Jorge J.E. Gracia (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008). The second is by Grant Silva of *Cesar Chavez and the Common Sense of Nonviolence* by Jose-Antonio Orosco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

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The Editor of the Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues serves in an ex officio capacity on this Committee.

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## ARTICLES

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### *The Analogical Tradition of Hispanic Thought*

**Hugo Moreno**

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It is frequently said that philosophy is akin to literature, or even indistinguishable from it. This idea is usually associated with the Continental tradition, and more specifically with the

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hermeneutical tradition of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida. However, several philosophers from the Anglo-American tradition have also expressed this notion, including Santayana, Whitehead, Wittgenstein, Murdoch, Danto, Cavell, Nussbaum, and Rorty. Although there are many crucial differences among them, all of these philosophers share something in common. As Rorty notes regarding Heidegger and Wittgenstein, they “became caught up in the quarrel between philosophy and poetry which Plato began, and [ . . . ] ended by trying to work out honorable terms on which philosophy might surrender to poetry” (Rorty 1989, 26).

In the Spanish-speaking world as well, many leading philosophers in the first half of the twentieth century participated in the modern rapprochement of philosophy and literature. Among these were Vasconcelos, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, Vaz Ferreira, and Astrada. In fact, it is often said that a considerable portion of Hispanic philosophy is not just similar to literature, but that it is literature. Although those who originally proposed this idea (e.g., Unamuno, Zambrano, Gaos, and García Bacca) saw the literary character of Hispanic thought as a trait worth commending, most Hispanic philosophers over the past sixty years have tended to regard this feature as a drawback that needs to be overcome. As a result, contrary to what has occurred in mainstream Western philosophy and literature circles, most contemporary Hispanic thinkers have, to paraphrase Rorty, ended up trying to work out honorable terms on which philosophy might overturn poetry.

The compromise has been to consider only one genre of literature—namely, the essay—to be an integral part of Hispanic thought. The nonexpository genres, such as poems, dramas, short stories, and novels, while still regarded as thought provoking, are not deemed genuine works of thought.

What I will show in this essay is that, by excluding nondiscursive literature from the canon of Hispanic thought, contemporary historians and theorists are disregarding some of the most original texts of the Hispanic philosophical tradition. The purpose of this paper is threefold: 1) to defend the notion that philosophical literature is an integral part of Hispanic thought; 2) to argue that this literature belongs to the analogical tradition of Western thought; 3) to describe the main characteristics of the analogical tradition of Western metaphysics to which texts like J. L. Borges's *Ficciones*, Octavio Paz's *El mono gramático*, and María Zambrano's *Claros del bosque* belong.<sup>1</sup>

The idea that some works of art are also works of thought is quite common in contemporary philosophy and literary criticism. Among the texts most frequently cited are plays (e.g., by Sophocles, Shakespeare, Calderón, and Goethe), poems (by Dante, Hölderlin, Mallarmé, Pessoa), novels (by Cervantes, Dostoevskiy, Woolf, Proust), and short stories (by Kafka, Borges, Lispector, Cortázar). What remains controversial is whether or not philosophical literature is philosophical thought.

Many philosophers and literary critics have no problem granting that some literary texts embody sophisticated philosophical ideas, and sometimes even an entire philosophical system. Similarly, if the author of a literary text is a consecrated figure in the history of philosophy, or has received formal training in philosophy, the philosophical character of the text is not usually called into question. The best known cases are texts by Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Unamuno, and Sartre. However, if the author in question is a poet, a fiction writer, or a dramatist who is not a philosopher by training, most readers do not tend to consider his or her texts to be truly philosophical.

Clearly, an author need not have attained a certain level of formal education in philosophy for his or her writings to be philosophical. One must examine the texts themselves. However, there are no universally recognized criteria that can

help us distinguish a philosophical from a literary text (Judovitz 1987; McCormick 1987). The main reason is that philosophy and literature are not mutually exclusive categories. A text can be both literary and philosophical. Another reason is that there are no universally valid definitions of philosophy, synchronically or diachronally. Up until Plato's time, “the word *philosophēin* (and its cognates) meant ‘intellectual cultivation’ in the broad sense; it did not refer to a specialized discipline or mode of wisdom” (Nightingale 2004, 77). Moreover, between the third and the thirteenth century of our era, philosophy and poetry were used interchangeably in the Latin world (Curtius 1973, 209–13). In fact, at least up until the sixteenth century, the difference between philosophy and poetry in Europe was less than clear. For example, Ernst Cassirer's anthology of philosophy in the Renaissance contains excerpts from Petrarch's *The Ascent of Mount Ventoux* and Luis Vives's *Fable about Man*, both of which are undoubtedly literature, but not positively philosophy in the way most people understand this term today.

Some might argue that the difference between philosophy and literature in the modern era is much clearer than in the past. However, as Jorge Gracia points out, the “poetic tradition” of Western philosophy has enjoyed an uninterrupted history since antiquity (Gracia 1992, 6–9). Although this tradition played a minor role in the history of Western philosophy up until the late eighteenth century, since then it has gained considerable ground, and today it is one of the two major tendencies in Western philosophy (Gracia 1992, 6). Admittedly, those who, like Alfred Ayer, subscribe to the analytical tradition tend to see metaphysics as little more than “misplaced” poetry (Ayer 1936, 44). However, this only goes to show that a major portion of contemporary philosophy continues to be closely associated with poetry. This is especially the case in the Hispanic world, where it is often said that “Hispanic philosophy is not found in treatises, but in literary texts” (González García 2000, 73).

As observed earlier, contemporary philosophers have interpreted this idea to mean that Hispanic philosophy is found in essays. Today the proposition that it is also found in poetry, fiction, and drama might seem far-fetched to some. However, up to the first half of the twentieth century, this conception of philosophy was still popular in the Hispanic world, and most of those who embraced it did not think of the essay as the genre that best expressed and embodied Hispanic philosophy. For instance, in Unamuno's view (1976, 248–71), the text that best exemplifies Hispanic philosophy is Cervantes's *Don Quijote*, whereas in Juan D. García Bacca's opinion (1945, 219–317), it is Calderón's play *La vida es sueño*. María Zambrano, on the other hand, expresses a preference for mystical literature in general, and poetry in particular (1950, 1996). Gaos favors the essay, but he also recognizes that Hispanic “aesthetic thought” encompasses all literary genres, including *literatura de imaginación o ficción* (1993, 60–61).

Philosophers frequently maintain that philosophy is reasoning. Perhaps this explains why some Hispanic philosophers—not willing to dismiss literature in its entirety—have looked favorably upon the essay, but not upon poetry, drama, or fiction. Of all the literary genres, the essay is undoubtedly the most appropriate format for making a logically sequenced argument that can be supported with verifiable information. Another important reason that Hispanic philosophers have accepted the essay as a medium of expression is the fact that Ortega y Gasset used it and defended its use in philosophy.

But it needs to be stressed that essays are literature and that not all of philosophy is argumentation. There are also nondiscursive modes of philosophical thinking. Two examples are what Wilmon Sheldon calls “affective” and “conative”

thinking which correspond to the discourses of the mystic and the existentialist (1954, 602). Another example is what David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames call “first problematic” or “analogical” thinking which I will briefly explain below (1995, xvii, 112-41).<sup>2</sup>

In my view, the philosophers who use poetry, drama, and fiction as a medium of philosophical expression belong to the analogical tradition of Western thought. This tradition is closely related to, but different from, what Gracia calls the poetic tradition of Western thought (1992, 6-9). The analogical and poetic traditions are similar in that the thinkers who belong to these traditions agree that achieving an understanding of ultimate reality requires an intuitive or an aesthetic approach (via experience or metaphor), rather than a cognitive one (via perception or inference; Gracia 1992, 6-7; Rorty 1991, 13). They are different in that the texts that form the analogical tradition tend to be nonexpository, whereas those that form the poetic tradition tend to be expository (Gracia 1992, 7). Additionally, the analogical tradition is composed of poet philosophers and philosophical writers, whereas the poetic tradition comprises philosopher poets and literary philosophers. Finally, because “in modern Western philosophy all the principal types of argument—analytic, dialectical, and analogical—have been rationalized,” Western philosophers in general tend to use analogy “critically, for rational ends” (Hall and Ames 1995, 129). Poet philosophers and philosophical writers, by contrast, use analogy strictly for poetico-philosophic ends.

Alfred Whitehead famously stated that “the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato” (Whitehead 1936, 63). Using the metaphor of the footnote privileges the role of the philosopher as scholar, in that it suggests that all philosophical writing is academic in nature. But replacing “footnotes” with “poetic answers,” in the sense that Rorty uses the latter term (1991, 9), provides a more apt general portrayal of the analogical tradition of Western philosophy. A more felicitous characterization of the analogical tradition can be obtained through further modifying Whitehead’s formulation, by saying that philosophical writings are not footnotes but a series of poetic replies to Homer.<sup>3</sup> As Hall and Ames point out, “In Greek culture, the first problematic is exemplified by the nondiscursive myths and similes first employed by Homer; by the ‘many-worlds’ views of thinkers such as Anaximander; and by the conventionalist perspective of the Sophists” (1995, 115-16). Among the modern representatives of the first problematic that stand out are “poetic ironists” such as Yeats, Mann, Joyce, Shaw, Beckett, and Borges (Hall 1982, 226).

In my view, nondiscursive philosophical texts (such as poems, exempla, plays, spiritual guides [Zambrano 1950 59-81], novels, short stories, and vignettes) belong to the analogical tradition. In the Hispanic world this is a diverse tradition that spans seven centuries and cannot be adequately discussed within the confines of this essay. Instead, I will focus on a particular segment of this tradition, namely, contemporary analogical metaphysics. I do so because although contemporary Hispanic literature has been a fertile ground for metaphysical inquiry, this phenomenon remains unaccounted for in the history of Hispanic thought.

In the West, a number of philosophers have shown that modern literature, and particularly poetry, addresses the question of being.<sup>4</sup> Heidegger’s readings of Hölderlin and other modern German poets are exemplary but not uncommon. In fact, over the past twenty-five years or so, a new field of study that explores the literature-philosophy interface has emerged.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, it tends to focus on the relationship between French, German, and English philosophies, literatures,

and literary theories. As often happens in the discipline of philosophy, in this emerging interdisciplinary field Hispanic texts and thinkers tend to be either unknown or ignored, with the exception of Cervantes and Borges.<sup>6</sup> As a first step in the process of identifying some of the texts that belong to the analogical tradition of Hispanic metaphysics, I will summarize the key characteristics of analogical metaphysics.

A caveat is necessary regarding my interpretation of the analogical tradition vis-à-vis Rorty’s understanding of the Heideggerian or poetic tradition (Rorty 1991, 9-26). Although my conception of the analogical tradition (like Hall’s theorization of first problematic thinking, upon which it is based) is informed by Rorty’s philosophy, I do not subscribe to Rorty’s bias against metaphysics and Platonism. Neither do I agree with Rorty that poetic thinking is equivalent to the “heideggerian answer” (1991, 9). Although Heidegger’s influence in the contemporary poetic tradition of philosophy is pervasive, there are other interpretations of the relationship between philosophy and poetry that I find more fruitful and convincing, such as those offered by Whitehead, Santayana, and William Desmond. Nor do I subscribe to the Heideggerian viewpoint that Western metaphysics has been completed, or that it needs to be overcome. I agree with Desmond that even though “Heidegger sees himself as freeing thought from the prison-house of ‘theory’ [ . . . ] his invocation of the poet as the namer of the holy places us back in the neighborhood of the religious festival, hence closer to the meaning resonating in the ancient word, *theoria*” (Desmond 2003, 266).<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, when I speak of metaphysics I refer to the quest for *theoria qua* mystical insight to which Plato alludes in the Seventh Letter.<sup>8</sup> By analogical metaphysics I mean poetry as Whitehead uses the term in *Modes of Thought*, namely, as the articulation of *theoria*. In contrast to philosophy, which Whitehead says “rationalizes mysticism” via “the introduction of novel verbal characterizations, rationally coordinated” (174), poetry analogizes mysticism via the introduction of new, aesthetically ordered verbalizations of the ineffable.<sup>9</sup>

It is also important to counter Rorty’s misconception of *theoria* as “the attainment of a God’s-eye view” and “as a process culminating in [ . . . ] contemplation of what is vorhanden [present-at-hand]” (1991, 12). In order to do this, I will first explain Desmond’s concept of “agapeic astonishment” (Being 1995, 8-13) and how it relates to the act of beholding. Agapeic astonishment is equivalent to what Plato calls *thaumazein* (Being 1995, 8). It emphasizes the fact that, in the act of beholding, the subject is emphatically not “taking hold of something—as in the German *begreifen*, where ‘conceiving’ suggests a taking hold of, grasping, seizing.” Instead, “beholding is a being beholden to the other for the marvel of its givenness” (1995, 10). This “something” that astonishes us is therefore not an object at all. Rather, astonishment “comes to us from a depth of otherness, the otherness of being itself, that we cannot claim to control, or completely to encapsulate in our subsequent concepts” (Being 1995, 4). According to Desmond, beholding is primarily a “‘beholding from,’ which is intimated by the classical notion of *theoria* or contemplation—understood as a noninterfering vigilance towards being-other” (Being 1995, 10).

Like Plato, Hispanic poet philosophers and philosophical writers believe that the ideal of human existence is contemplation (Hall 1982, 40). They also concur with Santayana that the purpose of life is attaining insight, and that the good of attaining insight is joy (1936, 373-74). Although they realize that at the end of the road there is insight, they also know that it is an infinite, labyrinthine road.

The thinkers who belong to the analogical tradition of Hispanic metaphysics conceive of Being as mystery. For them, the goal of philosophical speculation is not to solve the mystery of Being—for mysteries are to be experienced rather than dispelled—but to renew our sense of agapeic astonishment. The moment they claim they have reached understanding or comprehension of the mystery of Being is the moment they stop being poets and metaphysicians.

Perplexity in philosophy is generally perceived in negative terms, as something insufferable that must be overcome (Desmond 1995, ix-xi). As Desmond points out, since Aristotle there has been a tendency in philosophy to understand “the desire to learn [ . . . ] as a drive to determinate intelligibility, which on being achieved dissolves or kills the initial perplexity that launches the quest” (Being 1995, 19). By contrast, analogical metaphysics embraces perplexity.

Accordingly, in their metaphysical speculation, most analogical thinkers do not seek truth. Rather, they aspire to reconcile the plurality of things and beings in an aesthetically coherent whole. They seek what Hall calls “aesthetic” rather than “logical” order (1982, 123-35). Their speculations are founded on analogical thinking. Philosophical writers engage in metaphysical speculation via fabulation, figuration, and ironism. In all of these instances the role of the imagination is, of course, vital. Sometimes they engage in hermeneutical and dialectical types of reasoning, but these serve aesthetic rather than purely rational purposes.

Hispanic poet philosophers and philosophical writers are world-disclosing thinkers. They conceive of philosophical narratives as “poetic achievements” (Rorty 1991, 9). In general, they approach texts as sources of metaphors. They choose them for their aesthetic qualities and use them for aesthetic purposes. Unlike scholars, they do not limit themselves to one section of the library. For them, every text is potentially a source of reflection and metaphor, and a possibility for gaining insight and experiencing beauty.

One of the key metaphors in Hispanic analogical metaphysics is the labyrinth. The labyrinth is a metaphor of the “acosmotic” multiverse, as Hall and Ames call the many-worlds myriad of things (1995, 183). As suggested above, in the West this tradition goes back to Homer. The classical texts that belong to this tradition arguably include Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*, Chaucer’s *House of Fame*, and Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*. In contemporary Hispanic analogical metaphysics, the labyrinth assumes a variety of shapes: for example, a forest (in Zambrano), a jungle (in Paz), as well as a book, an encyclopedia, a library, a room, a mirror, and various other shapes (in Borges).

Another key characteristic of analogical metaphysics qua *theoria* is that it manifests what Desmond calls “an ontology of singularity that is unremittingly attentive to the this as this” (1995, 47). But a fundamental tension between poetry and philosophy remains. Just as poetry is “incorrigibly particular and concrete” (Brooks and Warren 1976 68), philosophy is incorrigibly general and abstract. The perennial dilemma of philosophy is how to attain universality without sacrificing particularity, how to achieve unity without subsuming uniqueness. Poetically inclined philosophers have been especially troubled by the violence that abstract thought commits against the particular and the unique. They are drawn to attaining the universality that philosophy promises, yet they are also as passionate as other poets about not sacrificing the uniqueness of each particular thing in the world, or instant, or experience in life.

In sum, the literature-philosophy divide that persists in Hispanic thought keeps us from better appreciating and understanding the significant contributions of literary authors

to this tradition. It is therefore crucial to re-evaluate the bias against literature that continues to exist in Hispanic philosophy circles.

#### Endnotes

1. This paper is part of the introduction of my manuscript in progress entitled: *The Analogical Tradition of Hispanic Thought: Literature and Philosophy in the Writings of J.L. Borges, Octavio Paz, and María Zambrano*.
2. For a more thorough explanation of both first and second problematic thinking see Hall, *Eros*, 113-251.
3. I have taken this cue from David Hall’s modification of Whitehead’s phrase; Hall states, “The safest characterization of Plato’s philosophical speculation is that they are a series of footnotes to Homer” (“Whitehead, Rorty, and the Return of the Exiled Poets,” *Whitehead’s Philosophy: Points of Connection*, ed. Janusz A. Polanowski and Donald W. Sherburne [Albany: State U of New York P 2004], 83).
4. “In the period that opens up just after Hegel, a period in which philosophy is most often sutured either to the scientific condition or to the political one, poetry assumed certain of philosophy’s functions [ . . . ] These poets [whose poems address the question of being and time] did not decide to take the place of philosophers; they did not write with the clarified awareness of having assumed these functions. Instead one must imagine that they were submitted to a kind of intellectual pressure, induced by the absence of free play in philosophy, the need to constitute, from within their art, that general space of reception of thought and the generic procedure that philosophy, sutured as it was, could no longer establish” (Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Norman Madarasz [Albany: State U of New York P 1999], 69).
5. See, for instance, the journal *Philosophy and Literature*; Ole Martin Skilleas, *Philosophy and Literature: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2001); Jorge J. E. Gracia, Carolyn Korsmeyer, and Rodolphe Gasché, eds., *Literary Philosophers: Borges, Calvino, Eco* (New York: Routledge, 2002); M. W. Rowe, *Philosophy and Literature: A Book of Essays* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Simon Haines, *Poetry and Philosophy from Homer to Rousseau: Romantic Souls, Realist Lives* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); Floora Roukonen and Laura Werner, eds. *Visions of Value and Truth: Understanding Philosophy and Literature* (Helsinki, Finland: Acta Philosophica Fennica, 2006); David Rudrum, ed. *Literature and Philosophy: A Guide to Contemporary Debates* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Pablo Lazo Briones *La frágil frontera de las palabras: ensayo sobre los (débiles) márgenes entre filosofía y literatura* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 2006).
6. To be sure, a number of studies devoted to a variety of Hispanic authors have been published in Hispanic literature journals and essay compilations. Nevertheless, most of these studies examine the philosophical literature of these authors as isolated cases, and always in relation to Western philosophy. With the exception of Zambrano, García Bacca, and Gaos, the philosophers and literary critics who have studied Hispanic literature as philosophy have, on the one hand, taken for granted the literature-philosophy distinction and, on the other hand, assumed that philosophy is Western philosophy. More specifically, what these studies tend to argue is that the text of a particular Hispanic author embodies—and sometimes anticipates—a particular philosophy, for instance, that of Heidegger. This is not the place to engage in a thorough critique of this sort of interpretation. But for the purposes of this essay it needs to be said that these interpretations are reductive in that they diminish the philosophical dimension of literary texts to that of illustrating—or prophesying—the philosophy of others. This is problematic on both philosophical and political grounds.
7. Another philosopher who shares Desmond’s viewpoint with respect to the role that *theoria* plays in Heidegger’s philosophy is W. H. Walsh; see *Metaphysics* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), 82-83.

- 8 “I hear too that [Dionysius] has since written on the subjects in which I instructed him at that time, as if he were composing a handbook of his own which differed entirely from the instruction he received. Of this I know nothing. I do know, however, that some others have written on these same subjects, but who they are they know not themselves. One statement at any rate I can make in regard to all who have written or who may write with a claim to knowledge of the subjects to which I devote myself—no matter how they pretend to have acquired it, whether from instruction or from others or by their own discovery. Such writers can in my opinion have no real acquaintance with the subject. I certainly have composed no work in regard to it, nor shall I ever do so in future, for there is no way of putting it in words like other studies. Acquaintance with it must come rather after a long period of attendance on instruction in the subject itself and of close companionship, when, suddenly, like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the soul and at once becomes self-sustaining” (par. 241 b-d, 1588-89).
- 9 See David Hall’s rortian interpretation of Whitehead’s conception of philosophy as “poetry,” and his understanding of “aesthetic order,” respectively, in Hall, “Whitehead” 89-90 and Eros, 123-35.

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## *Hispanic Philosophy, American Pragmatism, and Cuba*

### **Rosa Mayorga** Virginia Tech

In a letter to his nephew Peter Carr, Thomas Jefferson provides advice on the studies the young man should undertake for a well-rounded education. He includes the following

2 Spanish. Bestow great attention on this, & endeavor to acquire an accurate knowledge of it. Our future connections with Spain & Spanish America will render that language a valuable acquisition. The antient history of a great part of America, too, is written in that language.<sup>1</sup>

More than two hundred years ago, Jefferson, to his great credit, recognized the importance of bridging the cultural gap between, what today we refer to as, the Hispanic and the Anglo traditions.<sup>2</sup> However, as we all know, deep rifts of understanding persist to this day; the history of the philosophy of this hemisphere is only one example of the continued and unfortunate mutual incomprehension of the two traditions.

Jorge Gracia has addressed the issue of Hispanic philosophy and its reception (or lack thereof) by the rest of the world from the sixteenth century to the present.<sup>3</sup> He argues that several historical events (the discovery of the New World and the problems that needed to be sorted out, the Reformation, the rise of humanism and skepticism) combined with Iberia’s strong ties to the Roman Catholic Church, led Spanish intellectuals to close ranks and look inwards instead of outwards for intellectual development, a state of affairs which ultimately led to their isolation from mainstream European philosophy. The Iberian peninsula’s eventual decline as a world power also contributed to the fact that the extraordinary contributions of Hispanic thinkers during the Golden Age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been largely forgotten today.

Jaime Nubiola has addressed the other side of the coin of this situation: “a surprising fact in the historiography of the Hispanic philosophy of this century is its almost total opacity towards the American tradition.”<sup>4</sup> He notes, for example, the almost total neglect in the Hispanic world of the Hispanic-American thinker George Santayana, and the missed affinity between central questions of American pragmatism and

relevant Hispanic thinkers of this century, like Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, etc. The reasons for this opacity are probably as varied as the different countries comprising Iberia and Latin America, and have much to do, as may be surmised, with their particular histories and politics. In this paper, I will continue this last train of thought, and provide a rather striking example of this “opacity” or miscomprehension by one particular Latin American country regarding one particular philosophical movement, that of American pragmatism. As the title indicates, I will be speaking on Cuba. And, in this instance at least, it will be obvious that the discussion of American pragmatism is clouded, unfortunately, by history and politics.

Eversince 1959, when Cuba first came under the rule of the Castro regime, there has been very little cultural, intellectual, or any kind of exchange, between it and the U.S. Cubans’ access to most of the world beyond the island is severely limited: what goes in and out of the island, whether it is information or people, is strictly controlled by the state,<sup>5</sup> which has been economically dependent on, and therefore closely allied with, the Soviet Union/Russia and other communist countries for almost fifty years. My comments in this paper are based on three manuscripts: two articles and a book on pragmatism in Cuba, all published there, ranging in date from 1987 to 2006.<sup>6</sup> These documents came to me via fellow pragmatists who in turn received these indirectly from Cuban sources. Based on the bibliographies of these current works, it is my impression that these are the latest, if not the only, studies on pragmatism and Cuba written by Cubans on the island.

In his 1987 article “Introducción al pragmatismo en Cuba” (“Introduction to Pragmatism in Cuba”) for *Revista Cubana de Ciencias Sociales* (Cuban Journal of Social Sciences) and in his 2004 book *El pragmatismo en Cuba* (Pragmatism in Cuba), Antonio Armas Vasquez<sup>7</sup> theorizes that crucial events in Cuba’s history between 1895 (the commencement of the war of independence from Spain) to 1959 (the official takeover by the Castro rebellion), are directly related to the promulgation of pragmatism as a philosophy in Cuba by the United States. Through social and pedagogical reform as well as publicity and marketing campaigns, Armas argues, the U.S. sought to exert its complete control over the young nation in order to fulfill its own capitalist and imperialist agenda. Armas proposes to answer the following questions:

In dealing with a philosophy with profound roots since its origins in the North American tradition and the needs of a developing capitalism, we are led to ask, in the time of the hindered [Cuban] republic: what relation could exist between a “pure” philosophy article and an educational program? Between a psychometric test and a class in middle school? Between the political program of the Conservatives and Liberals, the economic policy propagated by the governments in place, and the publicity campaigns and marketing? (Armas 1987, 51)<sup>8</sup>

Armas’s basic thesis is the following answer to these questions:

It is not possible to understand the diversity of the philosophical problems of the time...unless we become aware of the determining factor of capitalist production needs which demanded a “suitable” alteration of the Cuban political superstructure in line with the new needs of development and the characteristics of the ties of dependence with respect to the U.S. ...We could therefore confirm that pragmatism spread in Cuba not by a proper calling card, but rather by various coinciding currents, schools

of thought, theories, and through the ever present propaganda of North American imperialism. (1987, 40, 51)<sup>9</sup>

The rest of the book tries to argue, with particular examples, how Cuban life was guided and controlled by the U.S., sometimes outwardly, sometimes in more subtle ways, by a continuous and constant bombardment of ideas, techniques, organizations, social projects, cultural manifestations, policies, (scientific and economic), with the intention of restructuring the base of a new social system and to consolidate a new culture based on the Anglo-Saxon one. Pragmatism as a philosophy provided the methodology for this, Armas argues, since its strides in psychology, education, and sociology served to become “a notorious influence” in integrating better the aspirations of the U.S. in spreading its system of ideas.

Before presenting historical examples of how Cubans were affected by pragmatism, Armas proposes to explain pragmatist theory in the first part of the book in order to relate it to his claims regarding its influence during this period in Cuba’s history.

He rightly identifies pragmatism’s origins with Charles Peirce and William James. However, Peirce is mentioned only in passing; the most that is said about him is that one of his contributions was to focus on semiotics<sup>10</sup>; indeed, in the bibliography, none of Peirce’s works are listed, nor any of the works of Peirce scholars. On the other hand, Armas has more to say about James, Dewey, and Mead (listed in the bibliography are five of Dewey’s works, two of James’s, and Mead’s *Self and Society*).<sup>11</sup> With two or three exceptions in Dewey’s case, however, there is no mention of secondary philosophical sources for these other pragmatists either.<sup>12</sup>

According to Armas, Dewey considers that “the proof of the truth of a proposition is its practical usefulness, which explains the purpose of thought guiding action. ...In this way, the effect of an idea is more important than its origin” (2004, 11).<sup>13</sup> Armas’s point, which he will argue throughout the book, is that it is easier to manipulate people’s behavior if truth is made to be relative to function, practicality, action. Traditional values, grand ideas, long-held beliefs, are to be submitted to a test; if they are not useful, they are to be discarded, regardless of origin, he claims. Armas will then use this interpretation of Dewey to try to say that it is “the source for the worst conservative policies of the U.S. associated with a lack of morals in its political behavior in the international arena” (2004, 11).<sup>14</sup>

Dewey’s instrumentalism is explained as “interpreting thought as a method for confronting difficulties, especially in new situations.” According to this, then, thought consists “in the formulation of plans and schemas of direct actions; its objective is to augment experience and to resolve problems.” From this point of view, ideas and knowledge are again “merely functional processes, that is to say, they are important only insofar as they are useful elements during the development of experience” (Armas 2004, 13).<sup>15</sup> Armas sees these reductionist attempts as undermining existing conceptions of knowledge and values, paving the way towards a general relativism and improving the odds for acceptance of new norms and values in sync with capitalist interests.

Dewey’s interest in reforming the theory and practice of education is interpreted by Armas as providing the methodology for achieving this aim. Hence, Dewey’s concern with pedagogical reform, and “changing the emphasis from the institutional and the bureaucratic to the personal reality of the student” (2004, 13).<sup>16</sup> This instrumentalism and functionalism directly influenced not only pedagogy, but the sociology and psychology of the time, Armas claims. Experimental psychology, for example, “manifested itself with great force directed towards the conduct of the student and its control” (2004, 72).<sup>17</sup>

...[Pragmatism] saw itself linked more and more to the didactic methods of the development of child psychology, in particular and most especially in an active relation with the currents of other sciences like social psychology and sociology, with new pedagogical ideas that aspired to take into account the personality of the student with the objective, whether conscious or no, of manipulating him better... (2004, 32)<sup>18</sup>

What other scholars consider Dewey's "substantive" conception of democracy, which views its citizens' participation in a democratic community as an essential constituent of a proper human life,<sup>19</sup> for which education is an integral part, is seen by Armas again as especially in the service of capitalism's subjugation of the Cuban people:

...it was the job of "instruction" to provide to the mind certain ideas or notions...the main purpose was to humanize capitalism by theoretically creating an active base of support from its citizens for its policies. (2004, 32)<sup>20</sup>

The link between pragmatism, politics, psychology, and sociology can be seen, according to Armas, "in that it has a specific social theory which serves to define social conduct, its essence, and its control and direction, by valuing personal success, the value of individual work, the economy of means, ... a supposed hedonistic human nature, private initiative," which go hand in hand "with the capitalist production process" (2004, 20).<sup>21</sup>

William James and George Herbert Mead are seen as co-contributors to the reconstruction of psychology and sociology for capitalist purposes. With James, Armas claims, there developed within pragmatism "more and more an irrationalist or anti-intellectual movement, which led towards a subjective tendency...what is useful is true (2004, 82-83)<sup>22</sup>...truth is whatever anyone thinks it is" (2004, 23).<sup>23</sup> Again, Armas claims all this was used to undermine existing values in order to create new norms and values through education in sync with capitalist interests.

Mead is seen as contributing to the focus on studying the interaction between society and the individual (2004, 76).<sup>24</sup> In studying society as an organized and directed activity in which individuals form their behavior and collaborate with one another, Armas sees Mead as developing a methodology that underlined the claim that "society forms reason and personality (the I) and that both act back on society, complementing each other at these two levels" (2004, 78).<sup>25</sup>

...James...Dewey, and Mead, formed the principal direction that gave particular sense to the study of reason with diverse sociological implications. Its most famous exponent, Mead, in not paying attention to accumulated reason in man, put emphasis in its formation, with which he places in a central place the postulate that society and the personality can only exist in the case that the child's reason be developed; from here emerges all that is educational. (2004, 77)<sup>26</sup>

This "philosophy of instrumentalism" penetrated "techniques of influencing consumers through marketing and public opinion studies, as well as social communication, medicine, and politics..." (2004, 80)<sup>27</sup>...all presented as scientific studies...with a statistical base...which strived to project an objective image through rigorous quantitative analysis" (2004, 80).<sup>28</sup> After all, Armas concludes, "for them the decisive question was not always the content of knowledge, but rather for what ends it was used, and who controlled it" (2004, 81).<sup>29</sup>

The reason behind all this intrigue, Armas claims, is that the U.S. saw an opportunity in the new underdeveloped nation which had just come out of Spanish colonization in 1898. As a consequence of the growing demands of capitalist production, there emerged a "recognition of the necessity of finding new forms of organizing factories, and production in general..." (2004, 32)<sup>30</sup> funded by "capital from monopolies"... (2004, 67).<sup>31</sup> The connection between psychology and sociology proved to be valuable for this enterprise, Armas notes. "The massive North American capital needed to secure itself through diverse ways through political treaties, and changes in administrative and judicial systems of the new nation" (2004, 24).<sup>32</sup> Given Cuba's socio-economic development at the time, Armas argues, capitalism's needs also demanded a "from a high up, interdisciplinary modernization process with the purpose of controlling the individual, sustained by a political superstructure subject to North American imperialism" (2004, 32).<sup>33</sup>

Armas then provides historical evidence as proof for his thesis. He relates that in 1900 Harvard funded travel to 1,273 Cuban teachers from all social classes, including blacks, for a seminar. He interprets this as just one attempt to "Americanize" the teachers by teaching them English, as well as inculcating the stereotypes prevalent at the time of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxons and the inferior character of the Latin "races," as well as the solidarity towards Cuba by the majority of the North American population (2004, 48-49).<sup>34</sup> By 1916 he cites, there was a steady stream of professionals being formed in Harvard and other universities.

In this early period, when the "national conscience" began to develop, we are told that an increase of "cultural colonialism" could be seen in the introduction of "deformed" textbooks in the schools, propaganda about the virtues of the American way of life, racial discrimination, etc., all part of a process for the control of all aspects of Cuban life (1987, 42-43).<sup>35</sup> Alfredo Aguayo's (the renowned Cuban educator) translation of Dewey's works and his support of pedagogical reform is provided as an instance of this open "apologia" of American democracy. There soon followed, Armas relates, curriculum reforms at the pre-university and university levels. Enrique Jose Varona, another pioneer in educational reforms, included the subjects of psychology, logic, and ethics to be taught in the pre-university years, and substituted English and French for Latin and Greek. Also at the pre-university and university levels, the subjectivist and irrationalist versions of pragmatism were introduced to the new generation, Armas alleges, especially through the study of James's philosophy (2004, 37).<sup>36</sup> Both Aguayo and Varona, Roberto Agramonte, a philosopher, as well as Tomas Estrada Palma, Cuba's first elected president, and other famous émigrés who spent some time in the U.S., are described by Armas as tainted with the corrupting influence of the capitalist neighbor to the North (2004, 38).<sup>37</sup>

Armas gives about a hundred pages of such examples. Any apparent incongruities within his account of pragmatism are partly explained by the fact that there is a "'positivist' tendency of pragmatism towards the scientific and experimental" as well as the "irrationalist part which gave importance to intuition, sentiment, and instinct, as formal parts of knowledge." The reason for these different strains is explained in the following way:

This is why the justification of a neocolonial status and its development was not promoted from the U.S. as one system of principles and ideals, completely transparent, but rather through ideas and molded contradictory states of mind, in declarations, orders, economic and social programs, of apparent diverse origins. But all equally imposed, in the hands of



the intervening government and the governments that continued this, which in life put in practice the pragmatic principles, both exoteric and esoteric, of American inspiration. (2004, 38)<sup>38</sup>

Armas's interpretation of Cuba's history in light of pragmatism is at best imaginative, but inaccurate and misrepresentative at worst. Now there is no doubt that the United States was very involved in Cuban affairs at the time. The Maine incident, the Platt Amendment, and several direct interventions in Cuban politics are ample evidence of this. There was even talk, both before and after the founding of the republic, of annexing Cuba to the U.S. And Armas is certainly not the first (nor will he be the last) to misunderstand the claims of pragmatists. Indeed, it is a common misunderstanding that pragmatists focus exclusively on what is practical, with no consideration to ideologies, principles, etc.<sup>39</sup> But it is quite a different matter to maintain that pragmatism was devised as a plan to support capitalist needs and utilized covertly by politicians, as well as sociologists, psychologists, educators, and philosophers, in order to control all aspects of Cuban life, as Armas endeavors to prove in his book.

Pragmatism is even faulted for the lack of originality of Cuban philosophers at the time:

...that is why we do not find "original" philosophers in Cuba, it is not just due to the absence of figures with intellectual stature...in philosophical tasks, nor to a coincidence of a marked epigonistic tendency in fashion in the period in Latin America as well, but rather to the material conditions of the historical period that tended to the consolidation of imperialism, forcing us to live a life in Cuba as if it were a life in the U.S., but on two different planes: one was a great power, the other a neo-colony. (1987, 49)<sup>40</sup>

Pragmatism had been growing inside ourselves not so much as through a school of thought but rather through the power of American tradition, which served its developing capitalist economic relations, and which germinated specific ways of connecting philosophy and politics in the continent under the same official pragmatic orientation. This is why, as a result, the "theoretical disorientation" or what is similar, the much-discussed thesis of the originality (or not) of Latin American thought, is related, in part, to this "secular" gestation. (1987, 52)<sup>41</sup>

What is missing in Armas's account is that there is no mention of the fact that, since 1959, all aspects of Cuban life have been under the control of communist philosophy as imposed by the Soviet/Russian influence on the island. The state completely controls the individual's life—there is no private enterprise, food is rationed, all children must attend labor farms periodically, religion is highly discouraged (at one time prohibited), every block has a "Committee of Defense," which monitors the comings and goings of all the neighbors, there is no free access to travel to or from the island, all information coming or going and within the island, including what is taught in school, is screened, etc. Yet there is no recognition of the enormous impact this foreign ideology has had on the life of every Cuban. Of course, a possible reply could be that since Armas's work covers the pre-Castro period he need not mention this. However, it is obvious that Armas sees the world through Marxist-colored lenses; he interprets the history of the time in terms of class struggles, and with the appropriate Marxist terminology. I cite several examples:

This period was characterized by the clashes of the working classes, but these do not generally triumph over violent government repression. The results were due in a large part to the lack of unity and consciousness of the proletariat class. ...The lack of...one unionized organization explains...the extent of ground that the imperialist ideology penetrated... (1987, 42)<sup>42</sup>

In general it could be said that the limitation in this system of philosophical principles is its unawareness of the importance of social conflict, which is seen as a process external to the social system. ...There was much road to cover before arriving at the Theory of Conflicts, as we conceive of it today in academic circles... (2004, 14)<sup>43</sup>

...in Cuba this had an effect on works that prepared for the defense of liberal bourgeois ideals (2004, 33)<sup>44</sup>...[resulting in] a lukewarm bourgeois democratism that found itself a prisoner of its class obligations (2004, 35)<sup>45</sup>...[with the] contradictions inherent in all developing processes and at its core the antagonism of classes. (2004, 37)<sup>46</sup>

This background in Marxist doctrine, combined with (I suspect) a lack of sufficient literature on the subject is the basis for Armas's misapprehension of classic American pragmatist theory. This opacity is nowhere more evident than in his analysis of a comment made by a renowned Cuban scholar in the 50s:

Agramonte himself when referring to pragmatism not as a "system of philosophy, but as a method, a path," suggests the idea of representing to us pragmatism's place in Cuba as a "social theory" and with a sociological function which would have several stages. This was the next step in the process of continuity-change of imperial domination. (2004, 59)<sup>47</sup>

Anyone acquainted with Charles Peirce's work would recognize that Roberto Agramonte was referring to Peirce's statement that pragmatism should not be considered a philosophy in itself, but rather "a method of attaining vitally distinct conceptions...of reaching a clearness of thought."<sup>48</sup> Armas, however, misses this point, and interprets Agramonte's comment, as he does in many instances throughout the book, as more evidence supporting his thesis of the pragmatist imperialist conspiracy for control of Cuba.<sup>49</sup>

In the appendix to the book, however, Armas mentions one praiseworthy aspect of pragmatism. First, he makes sure to disassociate this aspect from classic American pragmatism:

Pragmatism was not invented in the United States in the same way that spiritualism or romanticism does not have its origins in France or Spain. (2004, 163)<sup>50</sup>

He distinguishes between "North American" pragmatism and a humanist, globalized kind. As a matter of fact, he claims, "[m]any, especially Europeans...and many Marxist philosophers, do not consider the reflections of North American pragmatists as sufficiently important or serious" (2004, 153).<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, he explains, pragmatist theories "were shared also by many liberal thinkers," so that, if rescued "from conservative thinkers," they "have possibilities...[for] the age in which we live now" (2004, 153).<sup>52</sup>

Armas sees promise for this new kind of pragmatism, especially in trying to determine the role of technology:

The problem of means and ends, in terms of their balance, today has new relevancy, because the changes that are occurring in Western culture, have a pragmatic stamp that animates them. New cultural contents bring new problems of procedures or implementations, or maybe even new human reactions in the face of new expectations that arise and which demand a New Anthropology: (2004, 164)<sup>53</sup>

This “humanist” take on technology, “which looks beyond material aspects and relates it to changes in culture and human history,” is part of “the tradition of Ortega y Gasset, Heidegger,” and, according to Armas, “is continued in the U.S. by Larry Hickman, Don Ihde, Paul Durban, Carl Mitcham” (2004, 164).<sup>54</sup> Therefore, Armas concludes,

Pragmatism should not be understood as an academic exercise, nor based only on what is in philosophy books. It is above all an instrument for a critical reconstruction of daily practice... (2004, 155)<sup>55</sup>

But most important of all for Armas is the fact that “[t]his concept of technology... [with] many implications of a pragmatist origin... do [es] not necessarily clash with our Marxist conception of social development” (2004, 167).<sup>56</sup> Armas does not seem to object to using pragmatism to reconstruct the daily lives of Cubans, as long as it is done with a Marxist agenda. One can only hope that this “critical reconstruction” of which Armas speaks will include a more open society for the Cuban people in the very near future, sans any kind of agenda, and that this more open society eventually will lead to a better understanding, in all aspects, between Cuba and the United States.

#### Endnotes

1. Merrill Peterson, ed. *Thomas Jefferson Writings* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1984).
2. I am using “Hispanic” as many do, to encompass what some refer to as “Latino” as well. Of course, “Anglo” means to incorporate the British as well as (North) Americans.
3. See, for example, his “Hispanic Philosophy: Its Beginning and Golden Age,” in *Review of Metaphysics* 46 (March 1998): 475-502, among others.
4. See his “C.S. Peirce and the Hispanic Philosophy of the Twentieth Century,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 24/1 (1998): 31-49. Also, his *Peirce y el mundo hispánico* (Pamplona: Eursa, 2006).
5. Cubans have little access to the Internet, for example. “Cuba is not concerned with the individual connection of its citizens to the Internet,” said deputy minister for Computer Science and Communications, Boris Moreno, on Friday [May 17, 2008]. “We use the Internet to defend the Revolution and the principles we believe in and have defended all these years,” added Moreno, quoted by the official Prensa Latina news agency. Please see the report by AFP (Agence France-Presse) at <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gbs2d7rh33vYKZ6hp3xAwhA4BXvQ>.
6. Due to time and space constraints, I will only examine Armas’s works. The second article I mention is “El pragmatismo en la bibliotecología cubana de la República” (“Pragmatism in Cuban library science at the time of the Republic”) by Maylín Frías Guzmán and Zoia Rivera, available at [http://bvs.sld.cu/revistas/aci/v17\\_6\\_08/aci03608.htm](http://bvs.sld.cu/revistas/aci/v17_6_08/aci03608.htm). This paper shares many of Armas’s views regarding the role of pragmatism in Cuba, specifically in the formation of the library system during the same period that Armas covers in his works.
7. El pragmatismo en Cuba was published by Sociedad Cubana de Investigaciones Filosóficas in March 2004. Armas is Professor of Philosophy in the Medical Sciences Department in Cienfuegos, and investigator in the Institute of Philosophy in the Academy of Sciences in Cuba.

8. “Con una filosofía que tiene profundas raíces en la tradición norteamericana y las necesidades del capitalismo en desarrollo desde sus orígenes que nos lleva a preguntarnos durante la república mediocrata: ¿qué relación podría existir entre un artículo filosófico “puro” y un programa de educación? ¿Entre una prueba psicométrica y una clase en la enseñanza media? ¿Entre el programa político de los partidos Conservador y Liberal, la política económica propugnada por los gobiernos de turno y las campañas publicitarias o el marketing?” All translations from the original Spanish to English are mine (Armas 1987, 51).
9. “No es posible entender la diversidad de los problemas filosóficos de la época... si no nos atenemos a que el carácter determinante de las relaciones de producción capitalista exigieron en Cuba una “adecuación” de la superestructura política acorde con las nuevas necesidades de desarrollo y las características de los lazos de dependencia con respecto a E.E.U.U.... Podríamos afirmar, por lo tanto, que el pragmatismo se difundió en Cuba no con una carta de presentación propia, sino por medio de variadas corrientes coincidentes, escuelas, teorías y la propaganda siempre presente del imperialismo norteamericano” (Armas 1987, 40, 51).
10. “...la obra de Peirce, que entre sus aportes tuvo el de cambiarle el objeto a la semiótica” (...Peirce’s work, which among its contributions was the changing of its object to semiotics) (Armas 2004, 18).
11. Dewey’s: *El hombre y sus problemas* (*Man and his Problems*), *El interés y el esfuerzo en la educación* (*Interest and Effort in Education*), *La busca de la certeza* (*The Search for Truth*), *Pedagogía y filosofía* (*Pedagogy and Philosophy*), *Reconstrucción de la filosofía* (*Reconstruction and Philosophy*). James: *Psicología* (*Psychology*), *Pragmatismo* (*Pragmatism*). Listed also are Richard Rorty’s *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Sidney Hook’s *The Metaphysics of Pragmatism*, and a translation of Josiah Royce’s *Modern Idealism* (*El Idealismo moderno*).
12. I refer to Larry Hickman’s *John Dewey’s Pragmatic Technology*, Gerard Deledalle’s *L’idée d’expérience dans la philosophie de John Dewey*, and Jorge Manach’s *El pensamiento de Dewey y su sentido Americano*, all listed in the bibliography.
13. “John Dewey planteo asumir la prueba de la verdad de una proposición de acuerdo con su utilidad práctica, lo que se explica por el propósito del pensamiento de guiar la acción” (2004, 11).
14. “Hoy día muchas personas asocian el pragmatismo de origen norteamericano a sus peores políticas conservadoras, asociadas a la falta de valores morales del comportamiento político de ese Estado en la arena internacional” (2004, 11).
15. “...los instrumentalistas consideran el pensamiento como un método de enfrentarse a las dificultades. ...Según esta percepción el pensamiento consiste en la formulación de planes o esquemas de acciones directas o de respuestas e ideas no expresadas. ...Desde este punto de vista, las ideas y el conocimiento solo son procesos funcionales, es decir, sólo tienen importancia en la medida en que sean elementos útiles durante el desarrollo de la experiencia” (Armas 2004, 13).
16. “Su trabajo y sus escritos influyeron significativamente... manifestados en el cambio del énfasis de lo institucional y burocratizado a la realidad personal del alumno” (2004, 13).
17. “En el campo de la pedagogía se manifestó durante toda una etapa con gran fuerza la psicología experimental dirigida a la conducta del alumno y su control...” (2004, 72).
18. “... se vio vinculada cada vez más a los métodos didácticos con el desarrollo de la psicología infantil, en particular y muy especialmente en una activa relación con las corrientes de otras ciencias como la psicología social y la sociología, con nuevas ideas pedagógicas que aspiraban a que se tuviera en

- cuenta la personalidad del alumno aunque con el objetivo, consciente o no, de manipularlo mejor” (2004, 32).
19. Dewey claims, “Democracy and the one, ultimate, ethical ideal of humanity are to my mind synonyms” (EW1:248), and that democracy is “a truly human way of living” (LW11:218). For a proposed pragmatist theory of democracy that is less “deep” than Dewey’s, see Robert Talisse’s *A Pragmatist Philosophy of Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 2007).
20. “... la “instrucción” tendría la tarea de suministrar a la mente algunas ideas o nociones hasta formar una base de la cual el ciudadano pudiera servirse... cuyo rasgo principal era tartar de humanizar el capitalismo a partir de apoyarse en los ciudadanos para teóricamente crear una base activa de la política” (2004, 32).
21. “...en ella se pueden identificar...:
- El éxito personal
  - El valor del trabajo individual
  - La economía de los medios (incluyendo los intelectuales)
  - Una supuesta naturaleza humana hedonista
  - La iniciativa emprendedora privada
- ... que son consustanciales al proceso de producción capitalista” (2004, 20).
22. “Dentro del desarrollo...del pragmatismo...se dio cada vez con mayor fuerza un movimiento abiertamente irracionalista, el que por distintas vías representan una tendencia subjetivista aun mayor...encontraron mayor afianzamiento en la línea de William James” (2004, 82-83).
23. “De modo que el pragmatismo asume desde sus antecedentes una variante “irracionalista... la verdad es lo que le parece a cualquier persona” (2004, 23).
24. “...Mead elaboraría conceptualmente las relaciones entre personas...” (2004, 76).
25. “...la sociedad forma la razón y la personalidad (yo) y que ambos a su vez actuaban sobre la sociedad, lo que permite luego la complementación de estos dos niveles” (2004, 78).
26. “...James...Dewey y G. Mead formaron la principal dirección que dio un sentido particular al estudio de la razón con diversas implicaciones sociológicas. Su más destacado exponente, Mead, al no prestar atención principalmente a la razón acumulada en el hombre, puso énfasis en su formación, con lo que colocó en un lugar central al postulado de que la sociedad y la personalidad pueden existir solo en el caso de que la razón del niño se desarrollara; de ahí que emergiera ante todo la apariencia educacional” (2004, 77).
27. “Se hacía cada vez más evidente que con el control del mercado capitalista norteamericano en Cuba... penetraron las técnicas para influir en los consumidores mediante estudios de marketing y opinión pública; además de la comunicación social, la medicina y la política” (2004, 80).
28. “Se implantaron numerosas técnicas que se presentaban como ciencias, cubiertas con una base estadística, donde cierta pseudo-concreción se esforzaba por reflejar una imagen objetiva mediante un análisis cuantitativo riguroso” (2004, 80).
29. “Después de todo para ellos la cuestión decisiva no era siempre el contenido del saber; sino para que fines se utilizaba y quienes lo controlaban” (2004, 81).
30. “Se comenzó a ver mas relacionada la psicología con la pedagogía como consecuencia de las necesidades del desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas del capitalismo monopolista de Estado y de las consiguientes demandas que las exigencias técnicas planteaban. De esa manera se dio respuesta a un nivel cualitativamente distinto de la producción fabril: producción en cadena, electrificación, quimización, etc. los que junto con la remodelación de los mercados, planteaban a la educación nuevas necesidades” (2004, 32).
31. “Como consecuencia de las demandas de las relaciones de producción capitalistas...dado por el capital monopolista...en la necesidad de fundamentar nuevas formas de organización del trabajo fabril...” (2004, 67).
32. “...con la irupción masiva del capital norteamericano, se concretó la necesidad de asegurarlo por diversas vías mediante tratados políticos, cambios en el sistema administrativo y jurídicode la naciente república, y muy especialmente en un sistema de normas y valores nuevos que se reflejó más nítidamente por intermedio de la educación” (2004, 24).
33. Para Cuba en lo económico-social ello debía lograrse, dado el bajo nivel de desarrollo de sus fuerzrs productivas, “desde muy arriba” en un proceso controlado de modernización sustentado en una superestructura política sujeta al imperialismo norteamericano” (2004, 32).
34. “...“el viaje a Harvard fue una experiencia compleja donde se mezclan tramas de diferentes signos: los designios imperialistas de “americanizar” a los maestros mediante un proceso de aculturación que pasaba por el aprendizaje masivo del inglés; los estereotipos racistas en boga en la epoca, sobre la superioridad anglosajona y el character inferior de las “razas” Latinas, los sentimientos solidarios hacia Cuba de una buena parte del pueblo norteamericano...” (2004, 48-49).
35. En los años veinte se comienza a profundizar la conciencia nacional, se desarrolla extraordinariamente el pensamiento democrático y antimperialista... En este periodo, se acentuaría el colonialismo cultural, que se manifiesta en el incremento de la introducción de textos deformados en las escuelas, la propaganda sobre las bondades del modo de vida norteamericano, la discriminación racial, etc., por lo que, en resúmen, se produce un desprestigio creciente de los programas políticos nacionales ante las crisis económicas. ...La filosofía estadounidense no se detenía en la justificación de ideales “democraticos”, por una “eficencia social”, un desarrollo activo de la personalidad” o una “ecología humana” equilibrada. Con ella se marcho hacia una estabilización que en Cuba se asocia con la consecución de un proceso por el control de la vida en todos los ordenes... (1987, 42-43).
36. The “positivist” tendency of pragmatism towards the scientific and experimental was counterbalanced with the “irrationalist part which gave importance to intuition, sentiment, and instinct, as principal forms of knowledge” (2004, 37). “...otras variantes del irracionalismo que recababan la importancia de la intuición, el sentimiento y el instinto, como formas principales del conocimiento” (2004, 37).
37. “Se podría apuntar al respecto... el rol relevante de las personas emigradas. Ellas recogieron durante su exilio una carga de influencia del país receptor; en su mayoría de Estados Unidos. El propio primer presidente Tomas Estrada Palma durante su largo exilio había fundado un colegio en Estados Unidos, Enrique Jose Varona por su parte emigró... recibiendo un conjunto de influencias aun no estudiadas...” (2004, 38).
38. “Es por ello, que la justificación del estatus neocolonial y su desarrollo no se vio promovido por un sistema de principios o ideales armónicos y educacionales, transparentados mecánicamente desde Estados Unidos, sino mediante ideas y estados de animo contradictories plasmados, en declaraciones, consignas, programas económicos y sociales, de aparente origen diverso. Pero impuestos por igual, a manos del gobierno interventor y los gobiernos que le continuaron, los que hicieron vivir en la práctica los principios pragmáticos tanto exotericos como esotericos de inspiración norteamericana” (2004, 38). And—“This concerns a rather diffuse conglomerate of efforts realized by pragmatic philosophy which results sufficiently imprecise to be able to discern the degree of theoretical influence; but nevertheless its extent confirms for us that distinctive trait of this philosophy characterized by its conciliatory flexibility in giving room to so many variants” (2004, 92). “Se trata de un conglomerado un tanto difuso de esfuerzos realizados por la filosofía pragmática, el que resulta lo suficiente impreciso

- para poder discernir su grado de influencia teórica; pero, no obstante, su contorno nos confirma aquel rasgo distintivo de esta filosofía, que se caracterizó por una flexibilidad conciliadora al dar cabida tanto a variantes... (2004, 92).
39. Many philosophers, too, are to be included in this group.
40. "...por eso que no encontramos filósofos "originales" en Cuba, no responde únicamente a la ausencia de figuras de talla intelectual...para el quehacer filosófico, ni a una suerte de marcada tendencia epigonista de moda en la época que caracterizará a Latinoamérica por igual, sino a las condiciones materiales de la etapa histórica que tendía hacia la consolidación del imperialismo, haciendo que se viviera la misma experiencia en Cuba como E.E.U.U., pero en dos planos distintos: uno el de la gran potencia...y el otro, el de neocolonia" (1987, 49).
41. El pragmatismo había ido creciendo dentro de nosotros mismos no tanto por la vía de una escuela como por la fuerza de tradición norteamericana, al amparo de sus relaciones económicas capitalistas en desarrollo, que hicieron germinar en el continente formas específicas de vincular la filosofía y la política bajo un mismo modo oficial de orientación pragmatista. Por ello, a la postre, la "desorientación teórica" o lo que es su similar; la discutida tesis de la originalidad o no del pensamiento latinoamericano, obedece en parte a esta gestación "secular" (1987, 52).
42. "Este período se caracteriza por la combatividad de las luchas obreras, pero estas generalmente no triunfan ante la violenta represión gubernamental. Sus resultados se debieron en gran parte a la falta de unidad y conciencia de la clase proletaria. ...La falta de...una organización sindical única explican...un índice del terreno que la ideología imperialista penetraba..." (1987, 42).
43. "En comun pudiera señalarse que la limitación que se puede apreciar en este sistema de principios filosóficos es su desconocimiento de la importancia del conflicto social, el que ellos ven como un proceso externo al sistema social objeto de sus estudios y políticas..." (2004, 14).
44. ...en Cuba esto influyó en obras de que preparaban el terreno de la defensa de los ideales burgueses liberales (2004, 33).
45. ...tibio democratismo burgués que se vio prisionero de sus compromisos de clase (2004, 35).
46. ...contradicciones inherente de todo proceso de desarrollo y en el fondo el antagonismo de clase (2004, 37).
47. "El propio Agramonte al referirse al pragmatismo no como 'un sistema de filosofía, sino como un método, un camino', nos sugiere la idea de representamos el lugar del pragmatismo en Cuba como 'teoría social' y con una función sociológica que tendría varias etapas. Lo que fue siguiendo el proceso de continuidad-cambio de la dominación imperial" (2004, 59).
48. (CP 5.494, 1906) The reference is to Charles Peirce's *Collected Papers*, edited by Charles Hartshorne, Paul Weiss (vols. 1-6), and Arthur Burks (vols. 7-8) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931-58); passages are identified by volume and paragraph number.
49. The fact that Agramonte was awarded the American prize of "The Round Table on Teaching Social Sciences in Central America and the Antilles" is cited as evidence of this: "Up to what point did he come to develop an independent theory that would adopt a method capable of grasping the Cuban situation, is not our specific purpose here. Suffice it to say that his influences made him win American recognition in the "The Round Table on Teaching Social Sciences in Central America and the Antilles" celebrated in 1955 (2004, 60). "En qué proporciones el llegó a desarrollar una teoría independiente que adoptara un método capaz de reflejar la situación cubana, es algo que no es propósito específico nuestro. Baste decir que sus influencias le hicieron ganar el reconocimiento norteamericano en la "Mesa redonda sobre la Enseñanza de las Ciencias Sociales en la América central y las Antillas" celebrada en 1955" (2004, 60).
50. "El pragmatismo no se inventó en los Estados Unidos del mismo modo que el espiritualismo o el romanticismo no tiene un origen francés o español" (2004, 163).
51. "Por la parte europea...no ubicaban las reflexiones pragmáticas norteamericana, como producciones filosóficas legítimas o propias de un quehacer universalitario. Más bien no le concedieron suficiente importancia o seriedad...Tampoco muchos autores marxistas le adjudicaron una adecuada ubicación..." (2004, 153).
52. "...el pragmatismo si bien fue una filosofía compartida por muchos pensadores liberales, por eso el rescatarla del pensamiento conservador; antes como ahora, tiene posibilidades de ayudarnos a repensar la época en que vivimos; a pesar del empleo político que en ocasiones ha tenido como se analizó en el caso cubano" (2004, 153).
53. "El problema de los medios y los fines, en cuanto a su balance, hoy tiene mayor vigencia, porque los cambios que se están dando dentro de la Cultura Occidental, tienen un sello pragmático que los anima. Los nuevos contenidos culturales, acarrea problemas de procedimientos o de implementación; o a caso hasta nuevas reacciones humanas ante las nuevas expectativas que surgen y que hacen irrumper la necesidad de una Nueva Antropología" (2004, 164).
54. "Esta interrogación...viene de la tradición humanista de la tecnología, que la interpreta como algo más que sus aspectos materiales y que se relaciona con los cambios de la cultura y la historia humana. Se trata de una tradición que parte de algunos humanistas como Ortega y Gasset, Heidegger...y que es en la actualidad continuada en los Estados Unidos por filósofos como Larry Hickman, Don Ihde, Paul Durban or Carl Mitcham" (2004, 164).
55. "...lo que trae por consiguiente que la filosofía no sea entendida como un ejercicio académico, ni solo lo que aparece en libros de filosofía. Es antes que todo un instrumento para la reconstrucción crítica de la práctica diaria..." (2004, 155).
56. El concepto de Tecnología...tiene muchas implicaciones entre las que sobresalen las de origen pragmático, lo que no necesariamente chocan con nuestra concepción marxista del desarrollo social" (2004, 167).

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***Dewey's Pragmatism and Social-Political Philosophy: Comments on Rosa Mayorga's "Hispanic Philosophy, American Pragmatism, and Cuba"***

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Mayorga critically analyzes Antonio Armas Vasquez's interpretation of American Pragmatism in his article "Introducción al pragmatismo en Cuba" and in his recent book *El pragmatismo en Cuba*. Her critique centers on Armas's thesis that "pragmatism was devised as a plan to support the needs of a capitalist economic structure and was utilized covertly by politicians, as well as sociologists, psychologists, educators, and philosophers, in order to control all aspects of Cuban life."<sup>1</sup> Mayorga's exposition of Armas's interpretation of American Pragmatism as primarily an apologetic philosophy of American capitalism and for the imperialistic dominion of Cuba seems to point to a conspiracy theory that only can be characterized as dreadfully ethnocentric and narrow on the part of Armas Vasquez. Nevertheless, there are related issues that we might consider with some degree of plausibility.

We might, for instance, expect that the central precepts of American Pragmatism incorporate fundamental characteristics

of an American way of life, including capitalistic and democratic elements. Indeed, Dewey believed that there was no other way of doing philosophy than from one's historical and social environment. He says:

The philosophies embodied not colorless intellectual readings of reality, but men's most passionate desires and hopes, their basic beliefs about the sort of life to be lived. They started not from science, not from ascertained knowledge, but from moral convictions, and then resorted to the best knowledge and the best intellectual methods available in their day to give the form of demonstration to what was essentially an attitude of will, or a moral resolution to prize one mode of life more highly than another; and the wish to persuade other men that this was the wise way of living.<sup>2</sup>

We might even go further and claim that not to have philosophy burgeon from within the context of a particular community, and thus manifest this community's social concerns and reality is a negative sign of the state of philosophical thought and inquiry. He says:

One might rather say that the fact that the collective purpose and desire of a given generation and people dominates its philosophy is evidence of the sincerity and vitality of that philosophy; That failure to employ the known facts of the period in support of a certain estimate of the proper life to lead would show lack of any holding and directing force in the current social ideal. ...In philosophy, "reality" is a term of value and of choice."<sup>3</sup>

We might also imagine how some of the more abstract, formal writings of James and Dewey could be used interpretively to support a host of diverse political ideologies. Moreover, it is not implausible to suggest that certain philosophical ideas and doctrines stemming from American Pragmatism have been ill-used outside of their proper philosophical context by American foreign policy leaders for the direct gain and interest of the United States. These assertions seem plausible and the topic of fruitful interdisciplinary research and discussion. In addition, the interpretation (or misinterpretation) of American Pragmatism in Latin America, as well as the role of Pragmatism in the political arena of particular Latin American and Caribbean nations are topics worthy of research, as long as their investigations are pursued with political disinterest and a scientific attitude.

In what follows, I pursue the same line of inquiry taken up by Armas Vasquez and Mayorga by delving into the pivotal intersection between Dewey's Pragmatism and social-political philosophy, and I submit that for Dewey the essence of this encounter lies in applying the scientific method to the construction of values and the resolution of social problems—a feature incongruent with Armas Vasquez's interpretation of American Pragmatism.

To suggest that Dewey has a social-political philosophy is misleading, since he understood philosophy as nothing else but a kind of social-political philosophy. He rejected the traditional conception of philosophy and aspired for a philosophy of action and values, one that resisted a foundation in Aristotelian and Platonic metaphysical systems of immutable and necessary truths.<sup>4</sup> According to Dewey, these metaphysical views separate the inquiry process from the content of knowledge so that the latter is unaffected by the former. He says: "The common essence of all these theories, in short, is that what is known is antecedent to the mental act of observation and inquiry, and is totally unaffected by these acts; otherwise it would not be fixed and unchangeable."<sup>5</sup> This is what Dewey referred to as

"a spectator theory of knowledge" and its principle cause was the separation of theory from practice.

Dewey asks: "What would the effect be if the divorce [between theory and practice] were annulled, and knowing and doing were brought into intrinsic connection with one another?"<sup>6</sup> In place of "a higher realm of fixed reality" Dewey submits that we adopt a view of reality in which truth lies in the concrete lived experiences of individuals within a given society. According to this view of reality, truth is uncertain and contingent, and must be constructed in the future resolution of specific problems. The up-side to this is that these inquiries into truth can profit from the use of the scientific method.

We can view Dewey's philosophy, within the context of the Pragmatic tradition, in two radically different ways: (1) as an antithesis to Peirce's realism and his view on the separation of theory and practice, and thus as making a paradigmatic turn away from the basic, fundamental principles of Peirce's Pragmatism; or (2) as a continuation of Peirce's view of making philosophy scientific and thus as reinforcing the basic, fundamental principles of Peirce's Pragmatism. I am committed to interpreting Dewey's philosophy under the latter supposition, so that it is not his intention to undermine Peirce's realism with a relativistic theory of truth, but rather to advance the experimental method through a scientific conception of social and moral philosophy.

One of Dewey's central and most important philosophical tenets is that the scientific method should be the basis for developing a democratic society's basic moral principles and value system. Dewey believes that there are important connections between democracy and science, and that their simultaneous growth, evolution, and future progress are interpedently connected. He views social reality, including economic, religious, political, and all other public and private institutions to be amendable toward the flourishing of human life by the experimental method. He argues:

All deliberate action of mind is in a way an experiment with the world to see what it will stand for, what it will promote and what frustrate. The world is tolerant and fairly hospitable. It permits and encourages all sorts of experiments. But in the long run some are more welcomed and assimilated than others.<sup>7</sup>

Dewey envisions three positive differences that will arise by approaching social affairs through the scientific method. First, morals, values, and social justice views will become more responsive to current and future social needs, while maintaining objectivity. Dewey explains: "Change from forming ideas and judgments of value on the basis of conformity to antecedent objects, to constructing enjoyable objects directed by knowledge of consequences, is a change from looking to the past to looking to the future."<sup>8</sup> In addition to the advantage of instituting a method of thinking that will be more responsive to the current and future needs of society, Dewey believes that adopting the scientific method for the resolution of social-political issues will produce greater objectivity. He says:

But, generally speaking the idea of actively adopting experimental method in social affairs, in the matters deemed of most enduring and ultimate worth, strikes most persons as a surrender of all standards and regulative authority. But in principle, experimental method does not signify random and aimless action; it implies direction by ideas and knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

The second benefit of introducing the experimental method in social affairs is that it will eliminate subjective sources, such as "the eye of the soul," for the solution of social-political issues. According to Dewey, the institutionalization

of values and morals should be treated as hypotheses whose truths are to be determined as their effects are realized and as their future contribution to society unfolds. So, "Another great difference to be made by carrying the experimental habit into all matter of practice is that it cuts the roots of what is often called subjectivism, but which is better termed egoism." While the total consequences of Dewey's social-political philosophy cannot be guaranteed, what can be assured are these two benefits:

The nature in detail of the revolution that would be wrought by carrying into the region of values the principle now embodied in scientific practice cannot be told; to attempt it would violate the fundamental idea that we know only after we have acted and in consequences of the outcome of action. But it would surely affect a transfer of attention and energy from the subjective to the objective [emphasis added].<sup>10</sup>

Finally, Dewey argues that adopting the scientific method in social affairs will introduce regulative standards for settling opinions on such matters. It would discourage, if not completely eliminate, intolerance and fanaticism. Dewey explains:

A third significant change that would issue from carrying over experimental method from physics to man concerns the import of standards, principles, rules. With the transfer; these, and all tenets and creeds about good and goods, would be recognized to be hypotheses. Instead of being intellectually fixed they would be treated as intellectual instruments to be tested and confirmed—and altered—through consequences effected by acting upon them. They would lose all pretense of finality—the ulterior source of dogmatism.<sup>11</sup>

An authentic pragmatic social-political philosophy, therefore, is incongruent with Armas Vásquez's interpretation of American Pragmatism because he seems to interpret American Pragmatism as having essential features consisting of a particular set of principles (i.e., content). Dewey's scientific method, however, does not necessarily entail any fixed doctrines; instead, it only requires a method that can adapt to changing social-political phenomena and provide the necessary flexibility for an evolving and changing social structure. Does Dewey offer a plausible philosophical view for the organization of a democratic social-political society? Dewey would respond: "It is the nature of the method that it has to be tried."<sup>12</sup>

#### Endnotes

1. Rosa Mayorga, "Hispanic Philosophy, American Pragmatism, and Cuba," p. 6
2. John Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy." In *Pragmatism Old and New*, edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 367.
3. John Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy," p. 368-69.
4. John Dewey, "The Quest for Certainty." In *Pragmatism Old and New*, edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 387.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 393
6. *Ibid.*, p. 382
7. John Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy," p. 372
8. John Dewey, "The Construction of the Good." In *Pragmatism Old and New*, edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 411.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 412
10. *Ibid.*, p. 415
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 415-6
12. John Dewey, "The Quest for Certainty," p. 411.

## Charles Peirce and the Hispanic World<sup>1</sup>

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A surprising fact in the historiography of twentieth-century Hispanic philosophy is its almost total opacity towards the American tradition. This deep rift between the two traditions is even more striking when one realizes the almost total neglect in the Hispanic world of such an outstanding Hispanic-American thinker as George Santayana, or the real affinity between the central questions of American pragmatism and the topics and problems addressed by the most relevant Hispanic thinkers of the last century: Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, Eugenio d'Ors, Carlos Vaz Ferreira, José Ferrater Mora, etc.

Also, from the American side there is a growing number of voices calling for a deeper understanding of the real impact of Hispanic thought in American philosophy. Let us recall the late Peter Hare:

We need to look closely at the relations between the Hispanic world and the American tradition. This need is urgent for many reasons. Hispanic civilization, after all, has been present in this part of the world longer than we conventionally consider European civilization. Only the Native American population has been here longer. American intellectual historians have given little attention to the influence, direct and indirect, that early Hispanic civilization had on the development of American thought. But more important is the demographic reason that soon the Hispanic population will be the largest minority in America.<sup>2</sup>

In this wide framework, the aim of this paper is to describe this situation of mutual ignorance between both traditions, paying special attention to the figure and thought of the founder of pragmatism, Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914). In order to do this, first of all I will justify the usage of the expression "Hispanic Philosophy," highlighting its heuristic and practical value. Secondly, I will discuss some of Peirce's comments in relation with the Hispanic world. And finally, by way of conclusion, I will mention some of the connections that lie nearly hidden under the cloak of ignorance which divides the two traditions.

### 1. The notion of Hispanic philosophy

The term "Hispanic philosophy" used for the philosophical tradition of Spain and Latin America was coined by the Catalan philosopher in exile, Eduardo Nicol.<sup>3</sup> It was the Cuban philosopher Jorge J. E. Gracia, however, who recently presented a full case in favor of this term as a way of gaining a better understanding of all the philosophical thinking that has been developed over the last few hundred years in Spain and Portugal, the Spanish colonies of the New World, and the countries which grew out them.<sup>4</sup> The concept of Hispanic philosophy is particularly accurate, because it brings out the close relationship between philosophers in these geographical areas, and because the other geographical descriptions that have been used (Spanish philosophy, Portuguese philosophy, Catalan philosophy, Latin American philosophy, Hispano-American philosophy, and Ibero-American philosophy) do not do justice to, or neglect, the historical reality of the relations between them.

Nevertheless, the use of a category such as this does not imply—as Nicol believed, and with him scores of Hispanic authors in the twentieth century<sup>5</sup>—that there is some special idiosyncratic trait which characterizes all the figures who have devoted their energies to philosophy within the Hispanic world.

Instead, this name should serve to highlight the phenomenon of the real historical relationship between the philosophy of the Iberian Peninsula and that of Latin America, which other descriptions tend to neglect. The authors who form part of this tradition share neither language nor race nor nationality, but they have a common history: it is the historical reality that they share which provides the uniting factor and gives them a certain family resemblance.<sup>6</sup>

One of the features of modern Hispanic philosophy is its isolation from the main current of European thought. The process by which late Hispanic Scholasticism—Domingo de Soto, Francisco Suárez, Francisco Aratújo, and John Poinset—broke away from Europe was influenced by many different factors. One of its most regrettable consequences was the resulting ignorance in Europe of the rich creative ferment and speculative depth of this tradition with regard to the central problem of the nature of signs and their activity. John Deely has emphasized that it is in these Hispanic philosophers, rather than the modern Cartesian tradition, that we find “the first genuine awakening of semiotic awareness, that is, the first thematic understanding of the difference between using signs and comprehending their basis, and the ubiquitousness and naturalness of a phenomenon such as semiosis.”<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Peirce’s connections with the Hispanic world

A good indication of the almost complete absence of the Hispanic world from Peirce’s cultural horizons is that the only direct mention of Spain in the eight volumes of his *Collected Papers* is his usage of the English expression, of French origin, “to build castles in Spain,” which occurs in his article “A Neglected Argument for the Reality of God,” where Peirce explains the notion of “Musement.” This term indicates free, unrestrained speculation, in which the mind entertains itself to no particular end, purely playing with ideas: “The particular occupation I mean (...) may take either the form of aesthetic contemplation, or that of distant castle-building (whether in Spain or within one’s own moral training) ...” (CP, 6458, 1908).<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Peirce visited Spain briefly in 1870, and the circumstances of that journey bear witness to the wide scope of Peirce’s interests.

In 1861, when finishing his studies in the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard, Peirce started to work as an aide to his father, Benjamin, in the U.S. Coast Survey. In 1869 Charles S. Peirce was a member of one of the teams in Kentucky studying the total eclipse of the sun on August 7th. The observation of the solar corona and its protuberances through telescopes, and the detection of helium by use of the spectroscope, led the American astronomers to formulate new theories on the composition of the sun that were received with a certain skepticism by European astronomers. Since no other occasion as favorable was going to arise in the nineteenth century, Benjamin Peirce, the third Superintendent of the Coast Survey, obtained an appropriation from Congress to organize an expedition to observe the next solar eclipse, which was to take place at midday on December 22, 1870, over the Mediterranean Sea. To ensure the success of the project and also to help Charles’s international profile as a scientist, Benjamin sent his son to organize the preparations in Europe six months beforehand. Charles had to make adequate arrangements for two teams of observers, and was asked by his father to establish links with such eminent European scientists as Augustus de Morgan, Stanley Jevons, and others. As he would write more than thirty years later;

Philosophy is a study which needs a very protracted concentrated study before one, so much as, begins to be at all expert in the handling of it, if one is to be

precise, systematic, and scientific. I gave ten years to it before I ventured to offer half a dozen brief contributions of my own. Three years later, when I had produced something more elaborated, I went abroad and in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, learned from their own mouths what certain students at once of science and of philosophy were turning in their minds.<sup>9</sup>

Charles passed through London, Rotterdam, Berlin, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, and Pest, arriving finally in Constantinople. From Constantinople Peirce went back along the entire path of the eclipse from East to West in search of suitable locations for observatories. Peirce visited Greece and Italy, where he selected some sites in Sicily, and on October 23 Peirce left Florence to begin what he called his “Spanish hurry-skurry.”<sup>10</sup>

The highlights of his Spanish trip were probably Malaga, Granada, and Madrid. Peirce arrived in the South of Spain by boat in the first days of November. From Málaga, Charles Peirce wrote to his father Benjamin giving him news of his visit and suggesting a possible site in Marbella.<sup>11</sup> In Granada, he was greatly impressed by the Alhambra, which he visited on November 7; in his *Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898*, almost thirty years later, he was to compare mathematical hypotheses with the Alhambra decorations: mathematical hypotheses are inferior, but similar: they are “as pretty but soulless.”<sup>12</sup> On November 12, 1870, Peirce was in Madrid, as can be seen from the passport he was issued at the United States’ legation. Peirce’s visit to Spain was extremely brief, less than two weeks. In any case, Peirce did not know Spanish, and he was little more expert after his visit, as he explains in a letter to his mother from Grenoble on the 16th of November: “The Spanish speak as if they had pebbles in their mouths, which makes it very difficult to catch the distinction of their sounds.”<sup>13</sup>

In fact, Charles S. Peirce joined the group of American scientists, his wife Zina and his father Benjamin among them, who followed the eclipse in the vicinity of Catania (Sicily), even though his spectroscope was sent by mistake to Jerez, Spain, where the second group from the U.S. Coast Survey was finally stationed.<sup>14</sup> Even though the day turned out to be cloudy, with some rain, the observations made by both expeditions on December 22 were successful, and confirmed the conclusions drawn by the Americans on the basis of the previous eclipse. As Joseph Brent wrote, “this expedition was Charles’s first experience of large-scale international scientific cooperation, and it illustrated for him the importance of the community of science in reevaluating and validating its hypotheses.”<sup>15</sup>

Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and, perhaps to a lesser extent, Italy are the European countries which are mentioned most frequently in Peirce’s writings. References to Spain or other countries of the Hispanic world are scarce and on most occasions of a negative tone, in keeping with the insignificant role which these countries played in the scientific and cultural community of Europe during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> My guess is that the real influence of Juliette, his French second wife whom he married in 1883, should not be underestimated.<sup>17</sup>

The only Spaniard with whom Peirce corresponded was Ventura Reyes y Prósper (1863-1922). Reyes was a Spanish mathematician and professor of mathematics in Toledo who corresponded widely with the most well-known mathematicians of his time, whose works he wished to publicize in Spain.<sup>18</sup> Another Spaniard with whom Peirce had a close relationship was General Carlos Ibáñez de Ibero (1825-91), who lived in Paris and was the cofounder in 1866 and later president (until his death) of the International Geodesic Association.<sup>19</sup>

Peirce himself wrote two letters in *The Nation*, December 1884, discussing the “Reciprocity Treaty” signed by the United States and Spain in February of that year to regulate the importation of Cuban and Puerto Rican sugar (CN 1: 65-67, W 5: 144-148). As is well known, the situation was to lead to war between the United States and Spain: “our difficulty with Spain by the destruction of the *Maine*,” as he described it in 1902 (CN 3: 68). When the war finally came about, Peirce wrote to his first cousin, the influential Senator of Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge, offering his contribution to the war effort, in the form of a machine he had invented to code and decode messages, and voicing his prediction that the Spanish would put up little resistance in the war. This letter deserves to be quoted at length:

My dear Cabot

I take the liberty of reminding you of my strong desire to serve the country in some way at this time, and also to say more explicitly than I did that other things being equal I believe I should be particularly useful were unflurried nerves desirable in a situation of extreme danger. At the same time, I would not decline any position in which I should be of use.

I have from boyhood been taught by all our Massachusetts statesmen the U.S. ought to possess Cuba. I am sorry to say I don't believe the Spaniards will make a good fight; for as I have studied them in Spain, the whole people has been corrupted with the centuries of cruelty, injustice and rapine they have indulged in, and they have little manhood left. (...).<sup>20</sup>

Without any doubt, Charles Peirce was a son of the New England culture of his time, and the letter reflects well the great distance between the Hispanic world and the American culture in those times. In a similar vein, one may read Peirce's letter to his brother Jem:

I am entirely in favor of the war. Two years ago I thought the United States instead of recognizing Cuba, for which there was no justification, ought to have intervened in the name of civilization. Besides, I have always thought we wanted Cuba, and what I have seen of the Cubans makes me think them very superior to the Spaniards of Spain who have been thoroughly corrupted by centuries of indulgence in cruelty, injustice, treachery, and rapine. That Cuba will fall into our hands ultimately I have no doubt. Besides, I think on the whole it is clear the Spaniards blew up the *Maine*, and we ought not to let that pass simply because we cannot produce a formal proof of the fact. We did right in not making it a formal *casus belli* but still in going to war because of it. Besides that, I think it is a very fortunate thing to have a war with Spain; for we could not go on forever without a war. It might have been Germany, with which we must probably fight sooner or later; certainly we must if we are not prepared for it. Now nothing would ever wake us up but an actual war.<sup>21</sup>

The contemporary reader will be surprised by Peirce's clarity of mind about the unavoidability of a future war with Germany, which became a reality fifteen years later. In any case, both letters reflect well the deep hostility from the American side towards the Hispanic world.

On this vein, I want to take advantage of this session to reply to the review that Daniel G. Campos published a few months ago of the book *Peirce and the Hispanic World*, co-

authored with Fernando Zalamea. Campos praises our patient work of collecting all the available evidences, but he considers that my text “fails to criticize Peirce thoroughly, on the grounds of Peirce's own philosophy, when the distinguished New Englander displays his cultural prejudices in commenting on Hispanic character and culture.”<sup>22</sup> Since Peirce's philosophy might be understood as a conscientious effort of articulating theory and practice, thought and life, “Nubiola's unwillingness to criticize openly and thoroughly Peirce's cultural prejudices against Hispanics [...] strikes me as a major weakness in his study. Peirce fails to live his philosophy in this regard,” and he claims that I let Peirce's prejudiced views go “without any indication of possible criticism in terms of his own philosophy.”<sup>23</sup> Campos takes pains in reproducing in his review several of the anti-Hispanic texts of Peirce, suggesting finally that

Following Trout,<sup>24</sup> then, Peirce's prejudices against Hispanics can be understood as affective habits internalized from his socio-cultural context. He lets these views operate as practical guides for action while failing to identify, criticize, and modify these habits, in spite of his philosophy. There is no suggestion in Nubiola's text, however, that Peirce's unchecked prejudices are indeed a failure to live his philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

How to answer Campos's criticism? It is not easy to answer since his charge could be anachronically extended also to Peirce's occasional sexist and racist expressions or his opposition to the abolition of slavery. My only defense will be a quotation from a letter that Wittgenstein wrote to Ficker about his *Tractatus* which came to my memory when, while writing my book, I was puzzled about how to treat Peirce's anti-Hispanic prejudices:

My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have not written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. [...] I believe that where many others today are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it.<sup>26</sup>

I did not criticize Peirce's prejudices for a similar reason. The striking point to me is that passing silently over those obvious prejudices is just the European style, while Campos epitomizes the American style of candid explicitness with his reproach to me for not having criticized Peirce in terms of his own philosophy. European elegance is totally opposite to the open American style. Perhaps my comment tonight is an attempt to find a middle way.

Also, I want to add that the anti-Hispanic trend in the American culture has its counterpart in the anti-Americanism that has been a dominant and leading factor—and which is still active today—in Hispanic culture throughout the twentieth century, both in Spain and in the Hispanic countries of Central and South America.

### 3. Some connections hidden beneath a mutual incomprehension

As Vericat suggested, Peirce's reception in Spain has been somewhat shadowy, in the sense that his importance is openly acknowledged, but little is known about what he actually wrote.<sup>27</sup> Much the same could be said of Latin America. However, there is evidence that this is beginning to change: translations are now appearing which make a relevant amount of Peirce's vast production accessible, and in 1994 a “Grupo de Estudios Peirceanos” was founded in Navarra to coordinate and encourage the efforts of researchers from Spain and several Latin American countries; other similar initiatives are appearing



in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and other places. In the last decade a broad interest in Peirce seems to have awakened in most Spanish-speaking countries. There has been a flourishing of careful translations of Peirce, most of them published on the web under the general supervision of Sara Barrera (<http://www.unav.es/gep/Peirce-esp.html>), that make thousands of pages of Peirce's writings available to a wide audience, along with articles about Peirce and pragmatism.

Hispanic philosophy's ignorance of Peirce and of pragmatism in general, and the American pragmatist tradition's lack of knowledge of Hispanic philosophy, are probably the result of mutual cultural incomprehension in which the sociological factors which have separated these two spheres throughout the twentieth century have prevented both parties from recognizing their special affinity. It has often been said that the central problem of Hispanic philosophy in the twentieth century has been that of the connection between thought and life. In very general terms this is also the central theme of American pragmatism. Or, rather, pragmatism is a response from scientific and life experience to the typical problem of modern Cartesianism concerning the rift between rational thought and creative vitality. The Hispanic philosophers Unamuno, Ortega, and d'Ors, in a way analogous to that of the Italians Papini, Vailati, and Calderoni,<sup>28</sup> were answering this common problem in a way that was strikingly similar to their North American counterparts. Recognition of this "community" has been very slow, perhaps because of the decline of pragmatism in previous decades, because of the eternal claim to originality which characterizes the Hispanic tradition, and the typical parochialism of the North American tradition. This peculiar affinity between North American thought and the Hispanic world perhaps accounts for the great spread of the Spanish translations of Ralph W. Emerson and William James in the first decades of the twentieth century.

In recent years we have been witnessing a resurgence of pragmatist philosophy in Anglo-American culture, which is generating a transformation of analytic philosophy. One of the landmarks in this process has been the rediscovery and deeper understanding of C. S. Peirce. The growing awareness of the connections between the Hispanic and the North American philosophical traditions—formerly regarded as worlds apart—would seem to offer a better perspective for appraising the philosophical output of the past century.

Moreover, a new phenomenon has appeared in the last few years: Hispanic scholars from different countries and backgrounds have started to listen to one another and to talk to each other about Peirce and the philosophers of classical pragmatism. On the American side there is really a growing awareness of the almost total neglect that the Hispanic philosophical tradition has suffered, as the present session bears witness. The study of Peirce's person and thought may be one of the ways to overcome the typical individualistic isolation of the Hispanic philosophers, and also to close the gap between the American and Hispanic philosophical traditions.

#### Endnotes

1. An earlier and briefer version of this presentation was published with the title "C. S. Peirce and the Hispanic Philosophy of the Twentieth Century" in *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 24/1 (1998): 31-49. The present text relies particularly upon the new research published in Jaime Nubiola and Fernando Zalamea, *Peirce y el mundo hispánico. Lo que C. S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispánico ha dicho sobre Peirce* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2006).
2. Peter H. Hare, "Introduction. American Philosophy and the Hispanic World." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 24/1 (1998): 30.

3. See Eduardo Nicol, *El problema de la filosofía hispánica* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1961).
4. Jorge J. E. Gracia, "Hispanic Philosophy: Its Beginning and Golden Age." *Review of Metaphysics* 46 (1993): 475-502.
5. See Jorge J. E. Gracia and Iván Jaksic (eds.), *Filosofía e identidad cultural en América Latina* (Caracas: Monte Ávila, 1983); Marcelo Dascal (ed.), *Cultural Relativism and Philosophy. North and Latin American Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 3-6.
6. Gracia, "Hispanic Philosophy," 482.
7. John Deely, "Vindicación de la filosofía hispana: La semiótica como restauración de la cultura intelectual ibérica." *Revista de Filosofía* 27 (1994): 319; see also Mauricio Beuchot, "La filosofía escolástica en los orígenes de la semiótica de Peirce," *Analogía* 2 (1991): 155-66. Of particular interest in this context are the efforts made in recent years by Deely, Beuchot, and others to identify the links between this late Scholastic philosophy and the vigorously anti-Cartesian thought of the founder of pragmatism, Charles S. Peirce, and his followers.
8. References to Peirce's works are as follows: CP refers to *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, vols. 1-8, ed. C. Hartshorne, P. Weiss and A. W. Burks, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1931-58); MS refers to *The Charles S. Peirce Papers*, thirty-two reels of the manuscripts housed in the Houghton Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Library, Photographic Service); CN refers to *Contributions to 'The Nation'*, vols. 1-4, ed. K. L. Ketner and J. E. Cook (Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1975-79); and W refers to *Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, vols. 1-5, ed. M. H. Fisch et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982-95).
9. C. S. Peirce, "Letter to The Sun," MS 325, p. 4, c. 1907.
10. C. S. Peirce, Letter to Sarah Mills Peirce, 16 November 1870, L 341 according to the *Annotated Catalogue of the Papers of Charles S. Peirce*, by Richard S. Robin (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1967).
11. That letter is lost, but in the Harvard Archives there is a telegram and the response letter of November 16, 1870, from Benjamin Peirce, who was then in Munich, to Joseph Winlock, Director of Harvard Observatory, informing him about Charles's visit (UA V 630.12 Observatory Letters Received 1870-75, n° 48).
12. Charles S. Peirce, *Reasoning and the Logic of Things. The Cambridge Conferences Lectures of 1898*, edited by K. L. Ketner (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 284, n. 6 and MS 442.
13. In Peirce's letter of November 16 (L 341), he writes to his mother about how much he admired a statue of a half-reclining woman he saw in Madrid by an artist then living (probably *The Nymph Eurydice* by Sabino de Medina): "... is one of the most beautiful things I have seen." In that letter Peirce also describes the three purchases he made in Spain: a blanket with gypsy embroidery to keep him warm on his railway journey, an old mother-of-pearl fan, and a dozen photographs of the best paintings he had seen.
14. This latter group, directed by Professor Winlock, then head of Harvard Observatory, was made up of eleven Americans, two Englishmen, and a Spanish observer who joined them. They worked in collaboration with Captain Cecilio Pujazón, director of the Observatorio de San Fernando (Cádiz). The main site chosen was in an olive grove, a mile to the northeast of Jerez, near Seville. See F. J. González González, *El Observatorio de San Fernando, 1831-1924* (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1992), 246.
15. Joseph Brent, *Charles S. Peirce. A Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 80.
16. "Englishmen are generally so naively ignorant of what takes place in the great world of science (which does not centre in London, as they seem to imagine) that it is possible for a respectable man to publish a book there the existence of

- which depends on such ignorance as would disgrace him in Sicily or Spain" (CN I: 47, 1872).
17. Joseph Brent, Charles S. Peirce. *A Life*, 99
  18. Jesús Cobo. *Ventura Reyes Prósper* (Badajoz: Departamento de Publicaciones Diputación Provincial de Badajoz, 1991); Jesús Cobo and Jaime Nubiola. "The Spanish Mathematician Ventura Reyes Prósper and His Connections with Charles S. Peirce and Christine Ladd-Franklin." *Arisbe: The Peirce Gateway*, 2000. at <http://www.cspeirce.com/menu/library/aboutcsp/nubiola/reyes.htm>.
  19. Charles S. Peirce. *Historical Perspectives on Peirce's Logic of Science: A History of Science*, edited by C. Eisele (Berlin: Mouton, 1985), 27 and 597; Charles S. Peirce. *The New Elements of Mathematics*, edited by C. Eisele (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), vol. 3 207 and 1135. See J. M López de Azcona, "Ibáñez e Ibáñez de Ibero, Carlos," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, edited by C. G. Gillispie (Scribner's: New York, 1981), vol. 7, 1-2.
  20. Peirce letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, 1898? L 254.
  21. Peirce letter to James Mills Peirce, 7 May 1898, L 339.
  22. D. G. Campos. "Review of J. Nubiola and F. Zalamea: Peirce y el mundo hispánico: Lo que C. S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispánico ha dicho sobre Peirce." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 43 (2007): 796.
  23. D. G. Campos, "Review of J. Nubiola and F. Zalamea: Peirce y el mundo hispánico," 797 and 798.
  24. L. Trout, *Communal Inquiry in Social Justice: A Study of Peircean Affectivity*, Ph. D. Diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2005.
  25. D. G. Campos, "Review of J. Nubiola and F. Zalamea," 799.
  26. Wittgenstein letter to Ficker; undated, probably September-October 1919. B. M McGuinness (ed.), *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), 143.
  27. José Vericat. "Introducción." In C. S. Peirce, *El hombre, un signo: (El pragmatismo de Peirce)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1988), 15.
  28. William James. "G. Papini and the Pragmatist Movement in Italy." *Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1906): 337-41. For a recent general review, see *I pragmatisti italiani tra alleati e nemici*, edited by Giovanni Maddalena and Giovanni Tuzet (Milano: Albo Versorio, 2007).

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## ***Comments on Jaime Nubiola's "Charles Peirce and the Hispanic World"***

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In "Charles Peirce and the Hispanic World" Professor Nubiola calls our attention to the mutual ignorance between the Hispanic and American philosophical traditions. His primary goal is not simply to point out that such a rift exists but rather to show that it is something that ought to be overcome through on-going investigative collaborations among scholars in both traditions. His thesis is that there are important connections between Hispanic and American philosophies that are worth examining, and that the results of these investigations will have beneficial consequences for the future understanding and development of both traditions. Nubiola examines the interconnection between the Hispanic world and Peirce's philosophy from two perspectives: (1) a personal perspective and (2) a thematic perspective. I will divide my comments into these two respective areas.

### **1. Peirce's connection with the Hispanic world**

Nubiola presents a brief account of the limited contact and

understanding Peirce had of Spain and Latin America. He presents a more detailed account in his book *Peirce and the Hispanic World* (co-authored with Fernando Zalamea). This account paints an adverse picture of Peirce's views of the Hispanic world and of his understanding of Hispanic culture. The investigation and its results provide interesting sociological data that go beyond Peirce the man; they provide insight into the socio-political mindset of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New England America, at least insofar as Peirce could be taken as representative of a certain class within a certain socio-economic and political group. A negative character trait of Peirce that is revealed in Nubiola's study is his prejudiced views toward the Spanish. Daniel G. Campos has criticized Nubiola and Zalamea for not presenting a more poignant criticism of this aspect of Peirce's personality. Nubiola has responded to Campos's criticism by pointing to a difference in their approach or style: while Campos prefers to address Peirce's personal defect explicitly, he has preferred to expose it silently or implicitly. I would like to present an alternative response to Campos's criticism that simultaneously broaches a central theme of pragmatism.

The essence of Campos's claim is that Nubiola should have explicitly addressed Peirce's prejudiced views toward the Spanish because it was philosophically relevant, since it contradicts many of Peirce's chief precepts of his scientific philosophy. Campos argues that Peirce contradicts his own philosophy when he "fails to live his philosophy."<sup>1</sup> However, this conclusion is not as apparent as Campos believes. In fact, I argue that, in the case of Peirce's philosophy, Campos's claim is false.

Peirce maintained the Aristotelian distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge and the different methods of reasoning that accompanied each. He presents this distinction clearly in his 1898 Cambridge lectures:

This theoretical science was for him [Aristotle] one thing animated by one spirit and having knowledge of theory as its ultimate end and aim. Aesthetic studies were of a radically different kind; while Morals, and intellectual activity, radically foreign in its nature and idea, from both the other two. Now Gentlemen, it behooves me, at the outset of this course, to confess to you that in this respect I stand before you an Aristotelian and a scientific man, condemning with the whole strength of conviction [my emphasis] the Hellenic tendency to mingle Philosophy and Practice.<sup>2</sup>

Another example that perspicuously illustrates this division between theory and practice arises from Peirce's response to James's request to talk about things of "vital importance" in his 1898 Cambridge Lectures. Peirce insisted that things of vital importance are not relevant to theoretical reason or science, drawing a sharp line between practical and theoretical reasoning.

What can this stark difference between the method of science and practical affairs tell us about Campos's criticism? It depends on how we want to treat Peirce's claims about the Spaniards and Spanish culture. If we treat them as claims that pertain to the practical affairs of life, then Campos's criticism that Peirce's prejudiced views toward Spanish culture contradict his own philosophy is false. I believe this is the way we should interpret Peirce's claims, since I hardly believe that he meant them as serious theoretical, scientific propositions. Nevertheless, it is still the case that we may criticize Peirce for his prejudiced views about Hispanic culture, but we cannot, as Campos suggests, criticize him for contradicting his own philosophy.

## 2. Philosophical themes in Hispanic and American philosophy

Nubiola claims that “the central problem of Hispanic philosophy in the twentieth century has been that of the connection between thought and life.”<sup>3</sup> I expand on Nubiola’s reflections by arguing that this “thought-life” theme is also a central and chief concern of twentieth-century American Pragmatism, thus supplying important supporting evidence for his thesis that there are important connections between Hispanic and American philosophies that are worth investigating. I will limit my discussion to demonstrating the relevance of the “thought-life” theme for the American Pragmatist John Dewey (1859-1952).

Dewey, more than any of the other American philosophers, makes the “thought-life” theme the central task of philosophical inquiry. I would argue that Dewey’s most robust critique of the philosophical tradition is based on this central thesis. In “The Quest for Certainty” (1929) he argues the following:

Man has beliefs which scientific inquiry vouchsafes, beliefs about the actual structure and process of things; and he also has beliefs about the values which should regulate his conduct. The question of how these two ways of believing may most effectively and fruitfully interact with one another is the most general and significant of all the problems which life presents to us. Some reasoned discipline, one obviously other than any science, should deal with this issue. Thus there is supplied one way of conceiving of the function of philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Another compelling text where Dewey defines philosophy as the discipline that investigates the “thought-life” theme can be found in “Philosophy and Democracy” (1929). Here Dewey questions the tradition’s understanding of philosophy: “The problem of what after all is the business and providence of philosophy itself. What is about? What is it after? What would it have to be possessed of in order to be satisfied?”<sup>5</sup> First, he presents the traditional conception of philosophy as a form of knowledge that deals with ultimate reality, and then he goes on to present various criticisms of this definition. Dewey believes that we need a new understanding of philosophy and its task. He submits the following:

In the face of such perplexities as these there is, I think, another alternative, another way out. Put baldly, it is to deny that philosophy is in any sense whatever a form of knowledge. It is to say that we should return to the original and etymological sense of the word and recognize that philosophy is a form of desire, of effort at action—a love, namely, of wisdom; but with the thorough proviso, not attached to the Platonic use of the word, that wisdom, whatever it is, is not a mode of science or knowledge. A philosophy which was conscious of its own business and province would then perceive that it is an intellectualized wish, an aspiration subjected to rational discriminations and test, a social hope reduced to a working program of action, a prophecy of the future, but one disciplined by serious thought and knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Dewey continues, “By wisdom we mean not systematic and proved knowledge of fact and truth, but a conviction about moral values, a sense for the better kind of life to be led. ... As a moral term it [wisdom] refers to a choice about something to be done, a preference for living this sort of life rather than that.”<sup>7</sup>

I conclude with one final citation where Dewey expresses the central problem of philosophy to be the investigation of the

interrelation between thought and life: “How shall our most authentic and dependable cognitive beliefs be used to regulate our practical beliefs? How shall the latter serve to organize and integrate our intellectual beliefs? There is a genuine possibility that the true problem of philosophy is connected with precisely this type of question?”<sup>8</sup>

The thought-life theme, therefore, is essentially relevant to both twentieth-century Spanish and American philosophy. How these two traditions deal with this philosophical issue remains an important area of research that will help to render a clearer picture of the interconnections between the two traditions.

### Endnotes

1. D.G. Campos. “Review of J. Nubiola and F. Zalamea: Peirce y el mundo hispanico: Lo que C.S. Peirce dijo sobre España y lo que el mundo hispanico ha dicho sobre Peirce.” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 43 (2007): 796
2. Charles S. Peirce. *Pragmatism as a Principle and Method of Right Thinking: The 1903 Harvard Lectures on Pragmatism*, edited by Patricia Ann Turisi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 110
3. Jaime Nubiola, “Charles Peirce and the Hispanic World,” p. 7.
4. John Dewey. “The Quest for Certainty.” In *Pragmatism Old and New*, edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 389
5. John Dewey. “Philosophy and Democracy.” In *Pragmatism Old and New*, edited by Susan Haack with associate editor Robert Lane (New York: Prometheus Books, 2006), 364
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 365-66
7. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
8. John Dewey, “The Quest for Certainty,” 389.

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## *New American Pragmatism and the Pragmatist Truth*

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### 1. Pragmatism in Spain

Hispanic philosophy<sup>1</sup> is no longer what it used to be. One of the defining features of Hispanic way of thought in the last century has possibly been its isolation from the rest of the world and an individualism of which Spaniards have always been proud. Fortunately, this feature does not characterize contemporary Hispanic philosophy (at least that brand that vindicates strong links to the analytic tradition), since with the very same passion with which Spanish philosophers defended their differential traits in past centuries, are we nowadays determined to defend our place in the international scene. A proof of this interest in not-being-different is the fact that a substantial part of the philosophy produced in Spain is not produced in Spanish.

In order to understand the reception of American pragmatism in Spain, a handful of general ideas should be taken into account:

(a) Professor Nubiola has settled the issue of the mutual indifference that has defined the relationships between Hispanic and North American philosophical traditions. While this fact was entirely true of the first generation of American pragmatists—Peirce, James, Dewey—it is not so of the “second generation.” Thus, it is possible to pursue the influence of classical American pragmatism now in Spain and Hispanic countries indirectly, through the influence exerted in Hispanic philosophical communities by the philosophical offspring of the Classical pragmatists.

(b) Pragmatism is placed at the beginning and at the end of the lifetime of analytic philosophy. Neither the raising nor the particular pathway undertaken by the analytic movement could be understood without reference to the parallel development of Pragmatism. The basic claim of logical positivism, the verifiability principle, has striking similarities with the attitude towards meaning advised by the Pragmatist Maxim. American Pragmatism played a relevant role in the origins of the analytic movement in Europe; just consider the influence of William James in Wittgenstein (Goodman 2002), and the mutual influence between Ramsey and Wittgenstein (Glock 2005), and Quine and Carnap. Pragmatism is today the natural realm to which many former analytic philosophers arrive. Further circumstances that speak for the strong connections between the two movements are the philosophical evolution of emblematic analytic philosophers, such as Wittgenstein and Davidson. And today Robert Brandom, an American pragmatist disciple of another one, Sellars, defends a pragmatist post-analytic *Weltanschauung* about how meaning and content is produced. Analytic philosophy and contemporary pragmatism have outlined the shape that a relevant part of the philosophy produced in Spain presents. The influence of Quine, Putnam, and Rorty, all of them included in Haack's recent selection of pragmatists of all times (Haack 2006), is ubiquitous and undeniable. And Haack, probably the most Peircean among the living philosophers, is a referent of first level in Spanish Philosophy of Science.

(c) Pragmatism is in vogue in Spanish contemporary philosophy and the variety of research projects that include the words "pragmatism" and "pragmatics" is steadily increasing. The same can be said of meetings, workshops, and conferences dedicated to the topic. Not all events that attempt a pragmatist perspective on a topic are directly influenced by the classical American pragmatists, but undoubtedly the works of Putnam, Brandom, Haack, and Rorty already belong to our philosophical background. A proof of this ubiquitous influence is seen in the series of Meetings on Pragmatism, the first and the second organized in Santiago de Compostela (with Nathan Houser and Hilary Putnam as invited speakers), the third Meeting took place in Granada (with R. Brandom and J. McDowell) and the fourth in Murcia (with S. Haack as the main speaker). The fourth meeting focused on truth and the ethics of belief, probably the topic that lies as a background of all debates in pragmatism from classical times until now. I would like to offer some considerations about the question of truth in pragmatism.

## 2. Pragmatist Truth

What we should understand by truth is an open debate not only in contemporary philosophy but also in the realm of pragmatism, old and new. In the classic period, it was represented in the discussions between Peirce and James, and more recently it has produced lively discussions between Haack and Rorty. Haack defends, against relativism and cynicism that she attributes to Rorty, that there is one "unambiguous, non-relative truth-concept" (2008a, 16). Rorty, in contrast, rejects that the notion of truth plays any relevant role in philosophy, politics, or science (1979, 640). In spite of the apparent tension, both are genuine heirs of classical pragmatist positions, Haack of Peirce's view and Rorty of a common interpretation of James's account. My aim in what follows will be to explain how it is possible to be a pragmatist without renouncing a classical and non-relativistic conception of truth. In fact, a serious analysis of the meaning of truth ascriptions allows us to declare that both parties, the Peirce-Haack side but also the James-Rorty one, enclose their grain of truth. A correct understanding of the meaning of truth is thus very relevant, for its own sake and for the development of pragmatism.

An obvious, although not always sufficiently stressed, distinction is the one established between the level of truth and the level of truths. Truth, the notion, can be considered as clear while truths considered unreachable, or truth as empty and truths as attainable, or truth and truths as understandable and at hand, or else both levels out of reach. All these combinations are possible. Confusion between truth and truths has been a source of difficulties, and is responsible of the pragmatist practice of understanding truth as an epistemic notion and as identical with some subject-relative values, such as certainty, complete justification, or absence of contradicting information. The optimistic forecast of Peirce about the accomplishments of science in the future, as well as the pessimistic attitude of Rorty about the possibility of obtaining certainty, share this confusion at their origin. In the Introduction of her *Putting Philosophy to Work: Enquiry and Its Place in Culture* (2008a), when she distinguishes between the unity of truth and the plurality of truths, Haack asks: "Isn't this, you may wonder, too obvious to need saying?" Her answer is, "No. For gradually unraveling first the densely tangled arguments that have persuaded some philosophers that there are many truth-concepts, and others that there is no viable truth-concept at all, and then the densely tangled arguments that have persuaded some philosophers that there are no truths, or that only The Whole Truth About Absolutely Everything is really-and-truly true, can we appreciate both the simplicity of the idea of truth, and its subtleties" (2008a, 16). What Haack says is, of course, true, but still it is not the whole truth. For besides the notion of truth and the multiplicity of propositions to which the notion applies, the set<sup>2</sup> of truths, there also is an ambiguity in the abstract noun "truth" that complicates things even more. "Truth" sometimes refers to the semantic notion, and sometimes to the final and complete set of all its instances. This second sense allows James to consider truth as convergence in the long run and Peirce to look for it at the end of enquiry, a time and a place too far away to find there the semantic notion. The semantic notion is what is dimly hinted at when one assumes the unsophisticated slogan of correspondence. Some version or other of the correspondence slogan, that truth is accordance with what it is, is assumed by Peirce, James, and Dewey, and also by Haack, and all of them correctly understand that the slogan is empty.

James, Rorty's hero, is mainly interested in truths. "Our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural, of processes of leading, realized in rebus, and having only this quality in common, that they pay," James says (1906/1975; Haack 2006, 319-20). As account of truths, the epistemic perspective is completely adequate, only that it is incomplete for it leaves out the issue of the meaning of truth. Nevertheless, what James's account is not is either psychologist or relativist, since he recognizes the many ways in which the mind is not free to make up truths at will: "Between the coercions of the sensible order and those of the ideal order, our mind is thus wedged tightly. Our ideas must agree with realities, be such realities concrete or abstract, be they facts or be they principles, under penalty of endless inconsistency and frustration" (James, op. cit. p. 316). At this point James considers the two sides that, even in the epistemological perspective, the issue presents: the constructive character of the verification process, the aspect in which Rorty seems to be more interested, and also the predetermined character of the resisting reality. Accepting some kind of external constraints is necessary in order to understand truth as correspondence, even at the harmless sense of many pragmatists.

In the dispute between Haack and Rorty for the pragmatism's heritage, Haack has accused Rorty of relativism, a label that Rorty rejects. Rorty says, "Relativism' is the view that every belief on a certain topic, or perhaps about any topic, is as

good as every other. No one holds that view” (1979, 166). True, no one has defended this view as it stands. But there are related views that Rorty does defend that also deserve the title “relativism.” One of them, a kind of relativism about truths, is the view that the conversational rules are the only constraint to enquiry. Rorty says, “Let me sum up by offering a third and final characterization of pragmatism: it is the doctrine that there are no constraints to inquiry save conversational ones” (1979, 165). That there are conversational constraints to enquiry is not in dispute. Nevertheless, if by this claim one wants to defend that there is nothing in the “external world” that offers resistance to enquiry, then it is false. A second view, a kind of relativism about truth, is the thesis that truth is an empty notion. If by this claim one understands that truth does not represent a property of objects, then it is true. But if by it one wants also to suggest, as Rorty has done, that there are no objective circumstances that justify the ascription of truth to a content, then it is false. Although he is right in a general intuition that understands the ascription of truth as closer to assertability conditions than to correspondence.

The relativist brand of pragmatism, as it has been attributed to Rorty, James, and Dewey, is then an equivocal position; under the same name different theses are distinguishable. In all cases, the basic claims associated with pragmatism/relativism have an interpretation in which they are true (although quite trivial and possibly different from the one intended by its proponents) and another one in which they are false and discouraging for the philosophical enterprise. Standardly, the right (and trivial) interpretations have to do with the fact that truth is not a first order property; it does not represent a property of objects at the same level as being an English sentence or being a conservative politician. But this trivial fact doesn’t lend any support to the wrong suggestions that truth has no meaning, that the truth predicate can be ascribed to a content at will, or that truth matters neither in science nor in philosophy.

### 3. The Point

It is possible to adopt a pragmatist attitude towards inquiry—any kind of inquiry—that in the present case means towards the procedure of inquiring about truth, without assuming a pragmatist theory of truth. For a pragmatist theory of truth, as it is typically understood, possesses epistemic tones that (we consider) are alien to the notion’s meaning. Truth is not an epistemic notion, although the enquiry about its meaning is, as every enquiry, an epistemic enterprise.

The Pragmatist Maxim<sup>3</sup> advises to identify the meaning of a notion with its practical effects; following it, we consider what speakers do with words as the enquiry’s point of departure. The actions that define the communicative behavior of rational beings are our raw facts; they are the phenomena to be explained. Together with the Pragmatist Maxim, our attitude to enquiry is critically commonsensist and synechist.

We defend, with Haack, that there is one truth but many truths (2008b, pp. 43-44) and also, as it can be read in her *Defending Science* (2007), that (i) “[G]enuine inquiry is a good-faith effort to arrive at the truth of the matter in question, whatever the color of that truth may be” (2007, 96; 2008, 50) and that (ii) “Scientists are in the business of seeking true answers to their questions” (loc.cit.). Claims (i) and (ii), and simplifications of them such as (iii) truth is the aim of science or (iv) scientists seek the truth, are neutral claims regarding most of the traditional problems related to the notion of truth and its definition. In particular, they do not imply that truth is correspondence with reality or that truth is a value, either epistemic or moral. Justification is an epistemic value; truthfulness and honesty are moral values. Truth is neither; it is an intra-systemic higher-order notion with very precise tasks

to perform in the general communicative goal of the use of natural languages. Supporting claims such as (i) and (ii) does not imply either taking sides in the debate between realism vs. anti-realism. The reason for this neutrality, to say it directly, is that (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and many others of similar kind are general claims about propositions whose instances are quite trivial assertions that do not involve any of the controversial issues in epistemology.

The sentences by means of which truth is ascribed to a propositional content are known as “truth ascriptions.” The simplest kind of truth ascription is a sentence such as (v), (v) What Victoria says is true. In the language’s toolbox, truth ascriptions work as propositional variables. Out of a context, they possess linguistic meaning, i.e., they are well formed sentences of a language that convey the kind of information attached to the conventional side of meaning. What they don’t possess, out of a context, is content, i.e., the kind of information that possesses semantic and logical relevance. The sentence (v) can be used in different contexts to assert diverse contents. If uttered in a context in which Victoria has said (vi), (vi) Obama has been elected, the content of (v) is that Obama has been elected. If uttered in a context in which Victoria has said (vii), (vii) Spain is a parliamentary monarchy, the content of (v) in this context would be that Spain is a parliamentary monarchy. This is the only sense in which truth can be understood as relative or even empty, but not in the sense intended by Rorty.

Variables are necessary to express generality. General thoughts are not about any particular item but about a whole class of individuals, events, propositions, etc. To make a general claim about propositions propositional variables are required. There are different kinds of propositional variables but truth ascriptions are a distinguished one. The following sentences, (viii) and (ix), are examples of general truth ascriptions: (viii) Everything the Pope says is true, (ix) Quantum Mechanics is true. They are means of attributing truth to a general class of propositions, namely, to every proposition asserted by the Pope and to every proposition covered by Quantum Mechanics.

And the point is that the sentences (i)-(iv) are generalizations, i.e., they don’t express particular propositions but general rules. Let’s call this claim “T1,” [T1] Truth ascriptions work as propositional variables. When they include quantifiers, truth ascriptions codify general thoughts about propositions.

Which is the information transmitted by claims (i) and (ii)? What do we understand when we understand (i) and (ii)? Let’s see first which information is not transmitted by (i) and (ii). By claims such as (i) and (ii) speakers do not express “a belief of the primary sort.”<sup>4</sup> The statement “scientists are in the business of seeking true answers to their questions” does not rule out any truth definition. Similarly, the opposite claim, that (x) “Truth is not a goal of enquiry,” as made by Rorty (2000b, 262) is compatible, his author notwithstanding with a theory of truth as correspondence. Rorty’s claim rests on the assumption that truth represents the highest degree of justification, and his strategy is to stress that complete certainty is unrealizable—this claim and its contradictory are epistemic claims. Truth, Rorty thinks, is among the “impossible, indefinable, sublime objects of desire” (2000a, 2). At this point he coincides with metaphysical realists in that truth is too high an ideal to be included among human goals. This point has been endlessly debated both among epistemologists and metaphysicians. Whatever the relative merits of the contrasting positions might be, the notion of truth—which is neither metaphysical nor epistemic—is not involved. It is used, it is put to work as a tool to produce the propositional variables required to discuss such a general topic but neither its definition nor its characterization are at stake.

Scientists seek for answers that are true, it is said on (ii). They seek for answers that really represent things the way they are, answers that suppose an advancement of knowledge, that help human beings understand how the world is, answers that offer scientists an accurate representation of reality, etc. All this is correct—we might have said “true” instead of “correct” without begging the question—but these different formulations do not embody a further step in the understanding of claim (i); in no case are they analyses, not to say definitions, of the notion of truth. Instead, they are alternative ways of saying the same thing, mere rewordings of the original truth-sentence. None of the different alternatives permits a theory of truth to take off, as the history of the issue shows. Thus, our proposal is taking seriously the general principles of pragmatism and facing the real practices.

All those who, for one reason or other, are in the business of seeking true answers to their questions are in the business of seeking true answers for particular questions, questions such as (xi) Which is the structure of DNA? (xii) Is there life on Mars? (xiii) How are prime numbers distributed among integers? (xiv) What is the effect of inflation on the rise of unemployment? If scientists are in the business of seeking true answers for the question of which is the structure of DNA, then they want to know (xv) whether DNA has a double helix structure, i.e., they want to know that DNA has a double helix structure in the case that DNA has a double helix structure, and that DNA does not have a double helix structure if this would have been the case. If it is question (xii) the question for which scientists are in the business of seeking true answers, they seek to know, for instance, (xvi) whether there has been bacterial life in Mars? One of the true answers for question (xiii) would be (xvii) Every even integer greater than two is the sum of two primes, if it is the case that every integer greater than two is the sum of two primes. And so on. In general, for some  $p$ , scientists are in the business of seeking whether  $p$ ; the end of their search is either  $p$ , if  $p$ , or else not- $p$ , if not- $p$ .

The European pragmatist F. Ramsey saw this point with complete clarity. Following his suggestions, the logical form of general truth ascriptions should be identified with variable hypotheticals, i.e., universal propositions; thus, a truth sentence such as science pursues truth is analyzed as (xviii) For all  $p$  (in a certain domain<sup>3</sup>), if  $p$ , science wants to be in the position to assert  $p$ . Singular truth ascriptions have, according to Ramsey, a conjunctive logical form. A truth-ascription such as “She said the truth” can be rendered in a semi-formal language with propositional variables as (xix) She said that  $p$  and  $p$ .

The thesis that we share with Ramsey is that in order to carry out the tasks performed by truth ascriptions, speakers require truth terms or their synonyms, unless the language in question is enriched with propositional variables (and in the case of general truth ascriptions, with quantifiers too). Truth terms perform in natural languages the task performed in some artificial languages by propositional variables and the quantifiers binding them. Truth ascriptions express general propositions whose content is acquired from their particular instances.

#### 4. Meaning and Criteria

An explanation of how it is possible that Peirce and Haack, on the one hand, and James, Dewey, and Rorty, on the other, stress characteristics that seem to be true about truth is that they mix up meaning with criteria, which is an alternative way of signaling the distinction between truth and truths.

The question of the criteria to ascribe truth to a particular content has a straightforward answer: An agent is entitled to assert that content  $p$  is true exactly in the same cases in which he is entitled to assert  $p$ . Let's call this claim [T2], [T2] The

criteria of the application of truth to a content are identical to the assertion criteria for this very content.

What is then the level at which the discussions about realism and anti-realism, relativism, fallibilism, and dogmatism emerge? When does the discussion about constraints, conversational, physical or metaphysical, take place? A correct, although not very specific, answer is: at the level of assertion. The debates realism vs. anti-realism and fallibilism vs. dogmatism belong to different domains; to metaphysics, the first; to epistemology, the second. The debate about constraints is transversal, it belongs to semantics, epistemology, and metaphysics. The metaphysical debate of realism vs. anti-realism has two poles; one of them is the general philosophical question of whether there is a ready-made world independent of mankind; the other pole has to do with the debate about whether the fundamental nature of meaning is representation. Independently of the answers we give to them, one thing is clear: nobody rejects the possibility of assertion, nobody rejects the utility of language to express propositional contents. This minimal acknowledgement of the role of some uses of language is enough to “ascend” a level, or to move to a second step and endorse the content of an assertive act in an explicit manner by means of a truth ascription. The situation is as follows:

Act of assertion 1:

Speaker A: Obama was elected

Speaker B: What speaker A has said is true

Act of Assertion 2

Speaker A: Science has proved the immortality of the soul

Speaker B: What speaker A has said is true

Act of Assertion 3

Speaker A: Every even integer is the sum of two primes

Speaker B: What speaker A has said is true

Truth-ascriptions only appear once an act of assertion has occurred. Then, (singular) truth ascriptions behave as a means to endorse the content of the previous act. Of course, this can be done justifiedly or unjustifiedly, but the misuse of a resource is something that should be explained by its meaning. In the same sense in which a theory of the artwork has to account for good and bad pieces, a theory of the meaning of truth has to explain its incorrect usages. In both correct and incorrect uses, the meaning and role of the truth ascription is invariant.

Endorsement of particular or general contents, or of general rules, is the activity that explains the meaning of truth terms. This activity is independent of the theoretical debates about the ultimate nature of reality. And it is also independent of the epistemological debate of when and under which circumstances one is justified in accepting a content as a safe piece of knowledge. Be it as it may, truth comes afterwards. The epistemological difficulty stands at the level of particular contents, in one case, or at the level of the theory, in the other: If a truth ascription is used to endorse a not-quantified content, as in (xx), (xx) Victoria said that she was at home last night, and she was at home last night, the epistemological difficulty lies in determining the filters or tests that the content needs to have passed to be safely asserted. Once this difficulty is left behind, their endorsement by means of a truth ascription does not add any further epistemological constraints to the assertion level.

The situation in the case of theories is basically the same. Think of real scientific practices; once a scientific community relies on a theory and uses it in their experimental and inferential processes, lending to it explicit support by means

of a truth ascription, such as (xx), does not add any further epistemological trait.

In sum, truth is a higher order notion that has complex syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects. There is just one notion of truth, applicable to common life and astrophysics, to mathematics and ethics, but many truths. And the lack of ambiguity of the truth notion is independent of the degree of certainty that human beings are able to attach to particular propositions. It is possible to be fallibilist about truths while conceding to the notion a precise meaning and role. The precise meaning of truth has to be found, as the Pragmatist Maxim advises, in the use that real speakers make of it in real communicative exchanges.

#### Endnotes

1. I use the expression in the sense explained in Prof. Nubiola's, who in turn inherits it from Jorge Gracia and Eduardo Nicol.
2. The term "set" is used here in an informal sense. Strictly speaking, there cannot be the set of all truth. It is an inconsistent multiplicity that gives rise to Cantor paradox if considered as a unity. See Grim 1991.
3. Peirce answered the question of meaning in the following way: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (Peirce, CP 5.2, 1878/1902).
4. Ramsey (1929) used this expression. He applies it to general propositions such as, "All men are mortal." Of this proposition Ramsey says that "[i]t expresses an inference we are at any time prepared to make, not a belief of the primary sort" (op. cit., p. 146). Truth-sentences as the ones analyzed in this paper express general propositions, too.
5. Science is not interested in every content that can be rendered in propositional form. It is not interested in particular contents, contents such as whether I ate fish yesterday, for instance. Nor even in any general content. Presumably, it is not interested in the dietetic habits of blond people who vote conservative.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *Latinos in America: Philosophy and Social Identity*

Jorge J. E. Gracia (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing 2008). xv+ 252 pp.

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Jorge Gracia's new book, *Latinos in America: Philosophy and Social Identity*, constitutes a sequel of sorts to his earlier text, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective*, published in 2000. Like the earlier book, *Latinos in America* provides a lucid and insightful analysis of various problems that arise from philosophical reflection on Latino ethnic identity (more or less conflated with Hispanic ethnic identity in *Hispanic/Latino Identity*). Unlike the earlier book, *Latinos in America* includes both a sustained engagement with critics and alternative viewpoints and, on the other hand, extensive consideration of a number of practical issues (e.g., linguistic rights and language-education policy, or affirmative action for Latinos). These features of *Latinos in America* make it an excellent companion to *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, and a valuable introduction to some of the most interesting and important questions confronting any serious philosophical exploration of "Latino identity."

*Latinos in America* has three main sections, each of which comprises three chapters. The first of these sections, "Latino/a Identities," is the philosophically densest and richest part of the book, and includes discussions of the nature of identity, the problem of individuation, and the status of ethnic labels. Much of this section of the book (particularly in chapters two and three) presents replies to criticisms aimed at Gracia's earlier statements of theses defended in *Latinos in America*. As some of the most basic criticism tends to dispute the very existence of a "Latino Identity," Gracia begins, naturally enough, by challenging certain assumptions which, he claims, distort our thinking about "Latino identity."

According to Gracia, there are two assumptions, expressed in the form of dichotomies, which generate misunderstandings in connection with attempts to specify or delineate Latino identity. The first of these dichotomies is the generalism or particularism dilemma: there must be either one general Latino identity, or many particular Latino identities. The

second dichotomy involves the dilemma of essentialism or eliminativism: either there exists an essential set of properties corresponding to an ethnic identity, or there is no such set. That is to say, either there is a set of necessary and sufficient conditions that determines membership in the group of Latinos, so that all and only those who bear the properties would qualify as Latinos, or there is no such set (5). For Gracia, these are false dilemmas. The essentialism vs. eliminativism dilemma arises, according to Gracia, from “a misguided notion of identity” (12) and thus involves a false dichotomy; and this implies, in turn, that the generalism vs. particularism dilemma likewise embodies a false dichotomy. For if one rejects essentialist notions of identities and instead conceives of them, as Gracia does, as “flexible, contextual, historical and relational” (16), the non-existence of any essential set of criteria for group membership does not necessarily imply that there is nothing like a Latino group identity. And if there is such a thing as Latino identity despite the fact that there are no essential properties constitutive of this identity, then the nature of Latino identity will be non-exclusive, and so i) many particular Latino identities will be possible and ii) the existence of many particular Latino identities will not necessarily turn out to be incompatible with the existence of a general Latino identity.

What, then, is the specific, non-essentialist view of Latino identity that Gracia proposes? Adapting the concept of identity developed in his earlier work, Gracia argues for a view that he calls “the Familial-Historical View of Latino Identities.” On this view, ethnic groups, such as Latinos, Mexicans, or Dominicans, are best conceived as constituting extended historical families whose members have no identifiable properties, or set of properties, that are shared by all the members throughout the existence of the familial groups, but that the historical connections that tie them give rise to properties which are common to some members of the groups and, in context, serve to distinguish them from other social groups (18).

Put more simply, “History generates relations that in turn generate properties among Latinos and serve to unite us among ourselves and to distinguish us from others in particular contexts” (19). Whatever its overall plausibility, this notion of Latino identity may seem to invite certain objections concerning individuation, and Gracia duly replies to a couple of criticisms on these grounds. The most interesting objection, raised by Anthony Appiah, involves a charge of circularity. The claim, as summarized by Gracia, that “‘Latino history individuates the Latino ethnos,’ is circular because a reference to the ethnos is already contained in the subject of the sentence” (36). In other words, to claim that we can know that a set of individuals belong to the same group because these individuals share a common group history is circular, for we can only say that individuals share a common group history if we already know that they belong to the same group. In his reply, Gracia convincingly demonstrates that Appiah’s argument involves an equivocation with regard to the phrase “history of an ethnos,” which admits of three different construals (the ethnos’s history subsequent to its constitution as an ethnos, “the history within which the ethnos becomes constituted,” and the history prior to the constitution of the ethnos [36]), and that Gracia’s view necessarily proves circular only if we assume the first construal of “history” (the history that occurs after the constitution of an ethnos cannot be the history that individuates—constitutes—the ethnos).

In the final part of the first section, Gracia considers the merits of “Latino” and “Hispanic” as ethnic labels for the ethnos with which he is concerned. Whereas in his earlier book, *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, Gracia advocates the use of “Hispanic” for the Hispanic/Latino ethnos, in *Latinos in America* he defends “Latino” as the more suitable term. Responding to Linda Martin

Alcoff’s recent arguments in defense of the use of “Latino” and against the use of “Hispanic,” Gracia acknowledges that the term “Latino” has a distinctive regional connotation (Latin America) and, in addition, connotes something “backwater, marginal, unimportant, and poor” (57). Accordingly, one can construct a political argument for the use of ‘Latino’ that does not apply to the use of ‘Hispanic’. “...If ‘Latino’ has a regional connotation which also involves marginality, lack of importance, and so on, then there is a place for it in political discourse insofar as its use brings to the fore the disadvantaged condition of a certain group of people and helps in the development of an effective political strategy to address their grievances” (58).

“Latino” is therefore preferable to “Hispanic” as an ethnic label because “Latino” has a political value or utility that “Hispanic” lacks.

The second section of the book, “Latinos/as in Society,” examines political and professional questions. In “Marketplace: Survival and Flourishing,” the first chapter of this section, Gracia offers some interesting observations on philosophy as a career, along with some very sobering reflections on the profession as it exists in the United States. He also analyzes some of the social, cultural, and attitudinal barriers to the advancement of Latinos within professional philosophy in the U.S. For example, it is Gracia’s contention that “in order to satisfy the requirements imposed by the American philosophical community, Latino philosophers must become Eurocentric and also give up on breadth and accessibility” (93). In the following chapter, “Affirmative Action: Meaning and Justification,” Gracia makes the case for some type of affirmative action for Latinos. While Gracia concedes that no case can be made for affirmative action for Latinos on the basis of a claim to reparation or because of a need to ensure equal opportunity, he does believe that a justification can be found by appealing to the right to “participation in the life of the nation” (106). The final chapter in Part II, “Linguistic Rights: Language and Children,” consists mainly of an incisive critical analysis of Thomas Pogge’s argument for English-first education in the United States, which, as Gracia shows, is at bottom quite weak.

The last major section of the book, “Latino/a Philosophy,” combines various metaphilosophical inquiries with a discussion of the sociology of American philosophy. In the chapter titled “Philosophy: Latino vs. American,” Gracia develops his conception of Latino philosophy as an “ethnic philosophy,” i.e., the philosophy of an ethnos. “[I]n ethnic philosophy,” Gracia writes, “what is important is the identity of an ethnos and what is considered philosophy for that ethnos. ...Latino philosophy is precisely the philosophy of the Latino ethnos understood as the overall group to which all Latinos belong whether living in the United States or Latin America, or as a part of that ethnos” (147). In “Canon: Place and Future,” Gracia considers the exclusion of Latino philosophy from both the Western and world philosophical canons (as understood in the United States). Gracia suggests three reasons for this exclusion: the fact that “Latino philosophy is not perceived as exotic enough” (168); the rather negligible economic and political significance of Latin American nations in the world; and, finally, the composition of the U.S. population (since “people tend to be interested in themselves...and until recently the percentage of Latinos in the United States was small” [168]). He also proposes “10 initiatives that could help to incorporate Latino philosophy into the philosophical canon in the United States” (174), ranging from the preparation of more translations of works in Latino philosophy to curriculum development and additional training for philosophers. The book’s final chapter, “History: Role and Approach,” examines Latinos’ own views of Latin American philosophy and philosophers, and defends



the claim that Latino philosophy has not achieved greater recognition among philosophers because “its historians have treated it non-philosophically and therefore as philosophically uninteresting” (188). After describing three defective approaches to the historiography of philosophy practiced in Latin America (which he identifies as the “culturalist,” “ideological,” and “doxographical” methods), Gracia proposes “the framework approach” as a more promising alternative. Unlike the methods criticized by Gracia, this approach emphasizes, among other things, conceptual analyses and definitions of philosophical issues, surveys of arguments for and against the solutions to philosophical problems, and the analysis of criteria to be used in the evaluation of these solutions (202-207).

As should be clear from the preceding summary, *Latinos in America* covers a great deal of ground and, on the whole, does so with great skill and verve. Moreover, Gracia displays an impressive command of the literature informing numerous debates on issues pertaining to “Latino identity,” and although he presents arguments that are accessible to a general reader, philosophers familiar with the topics addressed in *Latinos in America* will find many pages of the book challenging and instructive. In my remaining remarks, I will briefly note some of my own concerns regarding one topic from each of the book’s three major sections.

Let me begin with Gracia’s justification for preferring the label “Latino” over “Hispanic” owing to the political advantages of the former. Whether or not “Latino” does indeed have “political advantages” for the reasons that Gracia cites—the term’s regional connotation, and the fact that it conjures up something “backwater, marginal, unimportant, and poor”—the fact is that this label also has political disadvantages, or is at least politically problematic, for reasons that both Gracia and Alcoff—whose work prompted Gracia to embrace the label “Latino”—seem to overlook or ignore. According to Gracia, Alcoff’s most straightforwardly political argument against the use of “Hispanic” holds that “in evoking Spain, the term draws attention away from present-day United States colonialism, which is the real one we must fight today” (52). Alcoff apparently maintains, then, that “Hispanic” creates a certain confusion or mystification, politically speaking. Even if we grant this claim, the fact remains that the use of “Latino” likewise creates confusion or mystification, politically speaking, insofar as it serves to obscure the vast socio-economic differences among Latinos themselves, differences whose political significance will in many instances far outweigh that of Latinos’ ethnic kinship. Let us not forget that there are lots of Latinos implicated in the oppression of other Latinos. This is obviously the case in Latin American nations, in which class stratification mostly involves divisions among Latinos and the resulting oppression is of an intra-Latino nature; but it is likewise true to some degree within the United States. (One might also plausibly argue that at least some Latinos in the U.S. benefit from U.S. exploitation and oppression of Latinos in Latin America.) In short, the oppression of Latinos is not primarily ethnic-national in character, but rather economic, and the source of oppression is not, strictly speaking, “the United States” (or non-Latino groups within the U.S.), but rather certain socio-economic arrangements embraced by both the U.S. government and many Latin American governments. For this reason, the use of the label “Latino” may also perpetuate the very sort of mystification that Alcoff rightly wants to avoid. While Gracia rejects Alcoff’s arguments against the term “Hispanic,” he accepts the claim that the use of “Latino” offers certain political advantages, yet overlooks the fact (as does Alcoff, as far as one can tell) that use of the label also involves the political disadvantages that I have noted.

A second problem arises from Gracia’s justification for affirmative action for Latinos. Gracia insists that affirmative action for Latinos cannot be justified on the basis of a claim to reparation or the absence of equality of opportunity, given that i) many Latinos have not suffered discrimination, ii) the discrimination that some Latinos have endured is by no means comparable to the discrimination to which African Americans have been subjected, and iii) to the extent that some Latinos have suffered discrimination, it is difficult to demonstrate that they have been subjected to such treatment because they are Latinos. Consequently, there is no blanket justification for affirmative action for Latinos (103, 106). At the same time, Gracia contends that a case for affirmative action for Latinos can be made on the grounds that all citizens (and perhaps all resident aliens) have a right to “participation in the life of the nation.”

Gracia’s arguments against the first two justifications for affirmative action for Latinos seem quite persuasive. The trouble is that these arguments prove too much, since they also serve to invalidate the justification for affirmative action deriving from a putative right to “participation in the life of the nation.” After all, many Latinos have been able to “participate in the life of the nation.” To the extent that Latinos have been excluded from such participation, their exclusion has hardly been comparable to the exclusion endured by African Americans and, in any event, it is difficult to demonstrate that those Latinos who have been excluded from participation in the life of the nation have been excluded because they are Latinos.

Let me conclude with a brief comment concerning Gracia’s conception of Latino philosophy as an “ethnic philosophy.” This conception of Latino philosophy is certainly appealing in some ways and is, furthermore, highly original. It is odd, however, that Gracia neglects to argue for its merits vis-à-vis the most plausible rival conception of Latino philosophy, namely, the view proposed by Susana Nuccetelli. For Nuccetelli, Latin American philosophy—which seems roughly equivalent to what Gracia terms “Latino” philosophy—is best conceived of as a kind of applied philosophy (like, say, medical ethics or philosophy of economics). As a variety of applied philosophy, Latin American philosophy consists of philosophical work on problems or themes that are peculiar to Latin America, or which at least have taken on a Latin America-specific character as a result of arising in, and expressing, the socio-historical context of Latin America (see her *Latin American Thought: Philosophical Problems and Arguments* [Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002], 246-47). Nuccetelli’s view has much to recommend it, and therefore inclusion of some criticism of the “applied” view would have made Gracia’s case for an ethnic conception of Latino philosophy that much more persuasive.

In any event, more work needs to be done before we can fully endorse either of these two conceptions of Latino philosophy; and in the end we may, of course, come to the conclusion that we ought to reject them both (perhaps because what we really need is a conception of Latino philosophy that is “ethnic” as well as “applied”). Yet, whatever conception of Latino philosophy ultimately prevails, there can be no doubt that *Latinos in America* makes a major contribution to advancing our understanding of the key philosophical issues raised by the problem of Latino identity.

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## ***Cesar Chavez and the Common Sense of Nonviolence***

Jose-Antonio Orosco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008). 143 pp.

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### **1. Introduction**

In *Cesar Chavez and the Common Sense of Nonviolence*, José-Antonio Orosco seeks to incorporate Cesar Chavez into mainstream social and political thought. Given Chavez's life and work, this goal necessitates a subsequent blurring of the line between political theory and activity, an act which seats Chavez alongside of many Latin American thinkers in the wake of Comtean positivism. Placing the Mexican-American farmworker into the tradition of nonviolent political protest, Orosco presents Chavez as an iconoclastic thinker; i.e., an individual who works and lives according to ideals that try to change society for the better. In this sense, Chavez is a community intellectual who articulated, refined, and embodied these ideals in the first place (5-6).

This review will first sketch the terrain of Orosco's account of the major moments in Chavez's life and thought. Doing more than providing an overview of the union leader's speeches and letters, Orosco challenges the reader to rethink the complexities behind Chavez's actions by presenting his criticism of a variety of intellectuals and social ideas: e.g., Churchill's criticism of nonviolent protest; Fanon and Guevara's calls for revolutionary struggle and practice; the idea of property damage as civil unrest or disobedience; as well as the institutional and social patterns endorsing a culture of exclusion, oppression, and violence. According to Orosco, Chavez's great politico-philosophical contribution (and also the motivating force behind his social action) was a profound and nuanced understanding of nonviolence, "the common sense of nonviolence" (3).

Second, this review will question the recurrent theme of sacrifice, penitence, and self-knowledge apparent in Chavez's theory of nonviolence. My aim here is to question the performative and sometimes gruesome aspects of Chavez's actions, in addition to rethinking the consequences and moral implications of his type of nonviolent protest. With the explicit goal of making visible pain and suffering, does the kind of sacrifice associated with something like fasting constitute or depend upon a type of violence, albeit a violence to the self? Chavez's reason for hunger strikes and long marches was the desire to engender a level of discomfort allowing for further understanding of the pain and suffering felt by the victims of exploitation.<sup>1</sup> Does this not maintain that suffering is a necessary condition for human consciousness (on a critical reflective level)? On this point Chavez's stance is similar to that of G.W.F. Hegel and Sigmund Freud. However, as Orosco points out, Chavez's understanding of suffering is connected to Mexican understandings of penitence, hence "the masochism of Mexicanidad." And though the questions I have can be directed towards nonviolent theory in general, they force one to consider Chavez as more than just a political activist or union organizer: They present the reader with Cesar Chavez, Latino philosopher.

### **2. A Cultural "Revolution"**

The political philosophy of such figures as Thomas Hobbes assumes a philosophical anthropology founded on axioms undergirding much Western political thought: humans as

violent, competitive, self-interested beings subject to a scarcity of goods and in need of governance.<sup>2</sup> Although a philosophy of non-violence and any political action based on this theory challenges this view, the difficulties that arise from the attempt to make peaceful social organization the basis for human life seemingly prove the Hobbesian humanism. Cautiously avoiding the traps of identity politics and banking on the "commonsensical" aspects of Chavez's thought, Orosco argues that the nonviolent life requires an understanding of human social organization that does not rest upon political power as the exercise of domination, but a commitment to justice understood as the alleviation of oppression through self-sacrifice.

From the onset of his book Orosco is keen to point out that there is an unprecedented concern (or even fear) of the growing Latino/a population in the United States. He stresses that many advertisers, politicians, and cultural critics are beginning to focus attention on this emerging population (1). And though such a large group of people is no more united than the rest of the country, some hold that there is reason to believe that a growing fractious collective is on the rise.<sup>3</sup> These suspicions are part of a cultural attitude that requires negativity, exclusion, and polarization. The thought can be expressed through the following sentiment: "We are Americans, our values represent the core American way of life...they are not of our way of life therefore they are not American." For Chavez, this attitude was apparent in treatment of Mexican farmworkers as a transitory labor force undeserving of respect. Moreover, the subsequent dehumanization of these people allowed for the establishment of a sub-working-class who can be dealt with in any manner necessary—personal and institutionalized forms of violence (e.g., institutional racism) often being the most apt.<sup>4</sup>

Chavez's encounters with nativist social prejudice and the endemic racism of the mid-twentieth century inspired his awareness of the need for social justice (19). Anticipating the political power that an emerging Hispanic population would hold, Chavez saw oppressive social structures and racist practices as an attempt to delay this power. Fittingly, one of the main goals of Orosco's text is to show how Chavez and La Causa represent a collective effort to unify farmworkers through a sense of historical agency. This is social organization through a self-determination that looks past the immediate goals or setbacks of a movement while considering future injustices (6). This unification ensures the type of empowerment that combats the oppressive conditions under which many workers lived, in addition to providing a network that would challenge the racist attitudes of white America.

Although figures like Huntington, Hanson, and even Chavez himself see this self-determination as the awakening of a sleeping Hispanic power-block, Orosco argues that Latino/as do not represent a unanimous, ominous collective but a heterogeneous group seeking inclusion into the American dream (21-22). However, if Chavez is banking on the idea that people in similar positions of oppression share analogous demands for justice, then there is room for argument with Orosco about the last point. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that Chavez attempted to provide Latino/as with a sense of civic responsibility and democratic participation while striving to engender a culture of peace inside of the United States. His direct goal was not to change the policies of U.S. society, although changes were required insofar as the system itself is prejudicial. More important was the transformation of the culture that supports and provides the values of this country, since Chavez is of the opinion that these values are misplaced or wrong (this being the subversive or revolutionary aspect of La Causa) (44). Following this line of thought, it is safe to argue that Chavez understood the formal policies of a nation as responding to the culture that supports or warrants its necessity.

Given that his goal was to change the culture of U.S. society, which in consequence would reformulate the nation, his objective could be called “trans-national.”<sup>5</sup> This trans-national approach is the basis for Orosco’s criticism of Churchill’s critique of nonviolent political protest and the narrow traps of identity politics found in some Chicano politics. For example, Orosco shows how Churchill thinks nonviolent political theory mistakenly assumes the moral high ground when choosing not to engage in revolutionary military combat, as if moral superiority is enough to persuade a state to stop its oppressive tactics (35). Presenting what amounts to Chavez’s critique of this line of reasoning, Orosco writes that there are three conceptual mistakes which support the pro-violence view: (1) the understanding of political authority as ultimately the exercise of violence (the myth of violence), (2) the lack of vision into the real potency of moral criticism, and (3) the inability to recognize that the immediate goal of nonviolent theory is not the overturning of the state (37-44). Focusing on the last, Orosco writes, “Chavez speaks of developing power not for the immediate purpose of overthrowing the state but for creating alternatives to mainstream political and economic institutions that will be the focal points for engaging people in activities to learn democratic skills and abilities for self-determination” (44).

Along the same lines, Chavez’s criticism of the type of identity politics found in narrow Chicano nationalism pushes a “trans-national” agenda. Stopping racist behavior and formulating an authentic sense of self is crucial for Hispanic, Latino/as, Chicano/as, etc. However, the positing of an identity construed in strict oppositional terms—situations where, as Orosco writes, “Chicano/a identity derives its content primarily by defining itself against, or by rejecting, white mainstream culture” (81)—does nothing to combat the underlying structures and causes of oppression. Moreover, as I tried to convey above, it revels in the same pattern of thought that motivates nativist ideology. This is not to say that all Chicano nationalism lacks a structural component nor is this a homogenous movement. But, as the author writes, “[m]erely challenging mainstream America’s racism, as narrow ethnic nationalism did, might diminish the resources of cultural violence that lend support to structural violence; but that strategy would not, by itself, dismantle the institutions of power that marginalize and discriminate against people of color” (85).

Likewise, as the chapter on “structural violence” or institutional prejudice shows, focusing solely on policy changes or specific public practices does not venture far enough to dispel the cultural prejudices that spark racist (and thus violent) institutions and ways of life (72). Building on the work of Johan Galtung and Jürgen Habermas, Orosco argues that “cultural violence,” oppressive behavior that results in what can be called structural or institutional violent acts (i.e., the necessary assimilation of one group into another for reasons based upon the fear of becoming a bilingual or multicultural society), can still occur in settings where little or no personal violence is taking place.

In this manner the progressive element of La Causa becomes obvious, especially when Orosco uses Chavez’s words to convey the idea that the movement “doesn’t have to be experienced twice” (22). Put differently, the farmworkers’ struggle, which in this sense is more than just a movement for farmworkers, does not begin from scratch with every generation. Building upon past achievements, a culture of peace requires a rethinking of “time” (a point which I will return to later) and continual dialogue towards a more just society (23). Placing Latino/as and migrant workers of a variety of backgrounds into the American imaginary as affective contributors to this

conversation, this progressive minded dialogue synthesizes the oppositional points of view that sometimes appear intransigently locked in the bitter confines of identity politics, another point that supports Chavez’s reasoning for the de-centering of race as the basis for La Causa (85).

Though there remains some tension in Orosco’s portrayal of Chavez as a reformist who sought to create social change by changing the values that are said to historically define the “American” mentality (i.e., assimilative, pro Anglo-Protestant hegemonic beliefs), a culture of peace does not come as a result of cultural imposition or aggressive take over. The supporters of La Causa are not attempting to override American culture by overt aggressive tactics or overwhelming numbers. On the contrary, Chavez’s culture of peace begins in the relaying of social injustices, an act that requires not only affective communication but also personal encounters with suffering. Undergirded by a humanism differing from that espoused in traditional pre-political violent social relations, the encounter with suffering is not self-alienating or exclusive, but receptive towards foreigners and the difference they bring.

### 3. The Masochism of Mexicanidad

For Chavez, the liberation of the oppressed members of a society should serve as the impetus of self-realization. The most famous line that expresses this idea is often quoted,

When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So it is how we use our lives that determines what kind of men we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice. To be a man is to suffer for others. God help us to be men.” (91)

Also the basis for a new masculinity, since Chavez thinks that too many young men are influenced by a commercially driven culture that promotes the exercise of power as an act of domination,<sup>6</sup> the idea of self-sacrifice is a form of self-realization grounded in the liberation of the other. This humanism requires a willingness to combat social injustice and share in the suffering of the oppressed members of society. However, to sacrifice oneself to those in need requires familiarity with what the other is going through: commiseration.

At the heart of Chavez’s many marches and long fast was the hope that intentional suffering would inspire a sense of reflection that allows one to understand unjustified pain. For Orosco, this type of asceticism is grounded in Mexican culture and folk-wisdom (24). This being “the Masochism of Mexicanidad,” a fixation with suffering often seen in Mexican religious practice and worship,<sup>7</sup> there is a performative and ritualistic aspect to these public expressions of sorrow. Reverence for Christ and the Passion are also present in penitential suffering.

For those exploited like the farmworkers, those who labor but only receive inadequate monetary compensation, their marches and days without food are meant to provide a cleansing that allows for insights into one’s condition: self-knowledge (25-29). In this setting a culture of peace provides the type of reflection that not only generates a profound demand for justice but also challenges the idea that through war self-reflection becomes possible. As Orosco points out, the self-awareness often credited to moments of war are not as helpful in the realization of self-consciousness as one might think. This is the basis for the criticism of Fanon and Guevara available in the text, considering that these revolutionaries prescribe to an idea that self-determination includes the violent

overthrow of unjust political situations; the self-numbing that allows for the dehumanization of the enemy limits any possible experience of the self since it requires a removal or quieting of moral sense (47-48).

It is through suffering, then, that the exploited gain themselves back, self-recognition. However, Chavez's theory of the self as connected to suffering relates to two ideas from the history of philosophy: (1) the way in which angst and toil furthers the progression of self-consciousness in Hegel's master/slave dialectic, and (2) the development of the self in conjunction with an awareness of suffering in Freud's later work. My concern here is that Chavez's pattern of thinking shares an understanding of human consciousness (on a critically reflective level) often espoused in relations of oppression, alienation, and sometimes violence.

For Hegel, especially in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where he tries to provide an account of how objective knowledge of the world is possible, the move from sense-certainty to self-consciousness requires the realization that one does not live in a solipsistic world but a place inhabited by other (self-) consciousnesses. Initially these others serve as objects through which self-realization is possible.<sup>8</sup> When this realization occurs a social pattern tends to develop, it rests upon the necessity of abolishing the alien aspects of others in order to discover the self in them—an act that denies their alterity (Hegel, p. 167). This is Hegel's master/slave dialectic, a life-and-death struggle that thrives on the tension generated by opposition. Here, the progress of Spirit's self-consciousness requires domination. However, as it is well known, an inversion takes place and the slave ends up being the one with the real sense of self, i.e., the real ability to arrive at self-discovery (Hegel, p. 193). The means through which this is done are the toils of labor; the ability to endure work and suffer hardships as a slave brings the type of recognition furthering self-consciousness. The slave finds himself/herself in the world through labor—a type of suffering.

Likewise, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, while providing a pathology of the inclusive or "oceanic" feeling endorsed by representatives of religious traditions, Freud argues that the initial detachment or formulation of the ego arises out of our first instances of pain and suffering.<sup>9</sup> The realization of the split or partition between one's self and the world around them (our alienation from the world around us) is caused by the desire to appease the various means through which displeasure arises. In this scenario our sense of self is not possible without the frustration that arises from realization that the world does not automatically respond to our needs. Our needs only become apparent through suffering. Maturing and becoming a full member of society implies the proper sublimation of desires via the constrictions of social relations, e.g., the reality principle. However, this process requires the type of self-examination that necessitates suffering in the first place.

When Orosco writes, "Besides evoking the cultural symbolism of the procession, Chavez intended the Sacramento March to be a time for the farmworkers and other marchers to model the penitent and suffer from fatigue, heat, and thirst in order to induce self-reflection," (27) does he not place Chavez in line with the previous thinkers? To argue that people need to feel pain in order to self-reflect or gain the type of awareness that awakens one's moral sensibilities is to think that moral reasoning is impossible without suffering. In addition, if taken to their extreme, do the possible outcomes of a hunger strike (i.e., starvation) amount to self-inflicted violence? If starvation is not the goal, but the goal is to force a moral circumstance, what is it that makes this situation moral? It is the fact that someone's well-being is at stake. Chavez's actions personify this fact; the actions of the growers are killing, harming, or hindering people,

and Chavez must go through his protest to make this visible. But again, does this not require the threat of death, even if it is self-inflicted? To say that peace requires sacrifice, and that this sacrifice is violent or harmful towards oneself, is to really say that peace requires violence, but not the type aimed towards others.

Thus, Chavez's long marches and fast are performative acts requiring the (possible) presence of death to highlight a moral situation. Using Chavez's words, Orosco writes, "He believes that when people see these symbols of sacrifice they will be moved to help in some fashion. 'When you sacrifice you force others to sacrifice. It's a powerful weapon. When somebody stops eating for a week or ten days, people come and they want to be part of that experience'" (105; emphasis added). In no way do I seek to challenge the goals of La Causa. As a philosopher I am only interested in what philosophical or theoretical insights I can infer from Chavez's actions. This is especially true in light of his views on moral reasoning.

Deliberation, communication, and peace being crucial to Chavez's ideals, human social organization and the political structures that come to support it are drastically different in a framework where power is joint exercise of affective communication (25). Individuals working together require the ability to live peacefully. Living peacefully is not that difficult when people work together to bring it about. Building on the work of Hannah Arendt, Orosco argues that rather than having "power over" (governance as domination), "power with" is the recognition of the shared goals of a community (93).

In this sense rather than argue that we live in uncertain yet critical times, i.e., moments of crises, Orosco holds Chavez to be quite sure of the goals he seeks to realize. Not being an advocate of crisis time, which uses the fear of social catastrophe as a motivator for social change, Chavez was quite confident that justice and truth would prevail (106). "Sooner or later," he thought, "truth is going to be exposed. ... Mankind has never been able to deal with the suppression of truth" (107). Though there are possible eschatological and certain teleological aspects to this train of thought, such that one can speculate whether or not a concern with a final judgment or day of reckoning is present, the message is quite clear: peace and social justice take time. In other words, peace requires patience, the literal definition of which is the quality of enduring suffering.

#### Endnotes

1. See Jose-Antonio Orosco 2008, 23-27.
2. Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 74-78.
3. See Samuel Huntington's *Who Are We? The Challenges to American National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), and Victor Davis Hanson's *Mexifornia: A State of Becoming* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2003), for more on this growing fear of immigration and national dissolution.
4. Orosco provides the following comment by a grower: "We protect our farmers here in Kern County. They are our best people. They are always with us. They keep the country going. ... But the Mexicans are trash. They have no standard of living. We herd them like pigs" (Emphasis Added) (Orosco 2008, 80).
5. Aware of the complexities that surround this term, I use 'trans-national' in the sense that Chavez's project exceeds or ventures beyond the goal of reconstituting the nation. Hence the prefix 'trans.' Perhaps a more appropriate term could be 'meta-national' (in the fashion of meta-ethics or metaphysics), since it is safe to say that the cultural or social atmosphere of a people supply the necessary and sufficient conditions for the possibility (and need) of a country in the first place. But I am sure that this is another paper altogether.

- 6 “Chavez wants a man to be someone who is willing to sacrifice himself and his well-being for the benefit of others, not by fighting or using physical strength but by taking the pain of others upon himself, feeling it, through nonviolent practice and discipline” (Orosco 2008, 91). For more see Orosco 2008, 88-89.
- 7 For some, this masochism has its roots in Indigenous practices of Mesoamerica (Orosco 2008, 28).
- 8 G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). (See section “B” of “Self-Consciousness”; pp. 174-77 and the subsection titled “Lordship and Bondage” in particular.)
- 9 Sigmund Freud. *Civilization and Its Discontents* (New York: Norton & Company, 2005), 39-41.

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## SUBMISSIONS

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### Call for papers

The fall 2009 issue of the APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues will be open to any topic on Hispanic/Latino philosophy. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Electronic submissions are preferred. All submissions should be limited to 5,000 words (twenty double-spaced pages) and must follow the APA guidelines for gender-neutral language and The Chicago Manual of Style formatting.

### Call for book reviews

Book reviews in any area of Hispanic/Latino philosophy, broadly construed, are welcome. Submissions should be accompanied by a short biographical summary of the author. Book reviews may be short (500 words) or long (1,500 words). Electronic submissions are preferred.

### Deadlines

June 15, 2009

Please send all articles, book reviews, queries, comments, or suggestions to:

Editor: Bernie Cantens  
Moravian College  
Department of Philosophy  
1200 Main Street  
Bethlehem, PA 18018  
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### Formatting Guidelines

The APA Newsletters adhere to The Chicago Manual of Style. Use as little formatting as possible. Details like page numbers, headers, footers, and columns will be added later. Use tabs instead of multiple spaces for indenting. Use italics instead of underlining. Use an “em dash” (—) instead of a double hyphen (--).

Use endnotes instead of footnotes. Examples of proper endnote style:

- John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 90.

### Future Topics

Spring 2010: Ethnicity and Race (Deadline: January 15, 2010)

Fall 2010: Any topic on Hispanic/Latino philosophy (Deadline: June 15, 2010)

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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