

Jose Vasconcelos, White Supremacy and the Silence of American Pragmatism

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English Abstract

In this paper, I examine the Mexican philosopher Jose Vasconcelos's critique of Madison Grant's arguments on race and white supremacy. Most Americans probably do not recognize the name Madison Grant. Yet, he was almost single handedly responsible for entrenching some of the most virulent racial animosity in the United States. Grant was the foremost proponent of the white supremacist "Nordic theory" that held that white Europeans were responsible for most of the world's civilization and, in particular, the founding of the United States. My hope is to position Vasconcelos as an important voice in the American conversation on race relations. Those who are familiar with Vasconcelos know him as a Mexican educator and essayist; but Vasconcelos lived in the United States for more than 20 years and became familiar with its political culture and social norms such that I maintain we ought to include him in an extended pantheon of American philosophers. In this paper, I sketch out Vasconcelos's views on the social construction of race and the corrupting effects of white supremacy on North American liberal democracy. Moreover, I believe Vasconcelos identifies the connection between white supremacy and global imperialism in a way that few American philosophers of the time made explicit. He also offers a practical political strategy for struggling against both.

Resumen en español

En éste artículo, analizo la crítica del filósofo mexicano José Vasconcelos de los argumentos de Madison Grant sobre la raza y la supremacía blanca. La mayoría de los estadounidenses probablemente no reconocen el nombre de Madison Grant. Sin embargo, él tuvo mucho que ver con consolidar la más virulenta animosidad racial en los Estados Unidos. Grant fue el principal defensor de la supremacía blanca con la "teoría de los países nórdicos" la cual contiene que los europeos blancos eran los responsables de la mayor parte de la civilización del mundo y, en particular, la fundación de los Estados Unidos. Lo que espero es establecer a Vasconcelos como una voz importante en la conversación de América sobre las relaciones raciales. Los que conocen a Vasconcelos lo conocen como un educador y ensayista mexicano, pero Vasconcelos vivió en los Estados Unidos por más de 20 años y se familiarizó con su cultura política y las normas sociales de tal manera que yo sostengo que deberíamos incluirlo en un panteón extendido de los filósofos estadounidenses. En éste trabajo, trazo el punto de vista de Vasconcelos sobre la construcción social de la raza y los efectos corruptores de la supremacía blanca en la democracia liberal norteamericana. Por otra parte, creo que Vasconcelos identifica la conexión entre la supremacía blanca

y el imperialismo global de una manera que pocos filósofos americanos de la época hacen explícito. También ofrece una estrategia política práctica para luchar en contra de ambos.

Resumo em português

Neste artigo, examino a crítica feita pelo filósofo mexicano José Vasconcelos aos argumentos de Madison Grant sobre raça e supremacia branca. Provavelmente, a maioria dos estadunidenses sequer reconhece o nome Madison Grant. No entanto, ele foi quase o único responsável por crivar parte da mais virulenta animosidade racial nos Estados Unidos. Grant foi o principal proponente da “teoria Nórdica” da supremacia branca, a qual sustentava que os Europeus brancos foram responsáveis pela maior parte da civilização do mundo e, particularmente, a fundação dos Estados Unidos. Espero situar Vasconcelos como uma voz importante no debate estadunidense sobre relações raciais. Aqueles que estão familiarizados com Vasconcelos conhecem-no como educador e ensaísta mexicano; Vasconcelos, porém, viveu nos Estados Unidos por mais de vinte anos e conheceu suas normas sociais e cultura política, de modo que sustento que deveríamos incluí-lo num ampliado panteão de filósofos dos Estados Unidos. Neste artigo, delinheiro suas concepções sobre a construção social da raça e os efeitos destruidores da supremacia branca sobre a democracia liberal Norte Americana. Além disso, creio que Vasconcelos identifica a ligação entre a supremacia branca e o imperialismo global de uma maneira que poucos filósofos estadunidenses daquela época explicitaram. Ele também oferece uma estratégia política prática para lutar contra as duas coisas.

American philosophers in the early twentieth century are, with some exceptions, notoriously silent on the issue of race in their philosophical works.[1] Very few figures in classical American philosophy countered the theories of scientific racism, for instance, even though many engaged in examinations of scientific methodology. In this essay I examine the work of Mexican philosopher Jose Vasconcelos. In the late 1920s Vasconcelos offered a critique of Madison Grant’s arguments on race and white supremacy. Most Americans probably do not recognize the name Madison Grant, yet he was almost singlehandedly responsible for entrenching some of the most virulent racial animosity in the United States. Grant was the foremost proponent of the white supremacist “Nordic theory” that white Europeans were responsible for most of the world’s civilization and, in particular, the founding of the United States. Those who are familiar with Vasconcelos know him as a Mexican educator and essayist, but Vasconcelos lived in the United States for more than twenty years and became very familiar with its political culture and social norms. My immediate aim in this essay is to position Vasconcelos as an important voice in the American conversation on race, one that adds philosophical criticism of scientific racism. As a result of this contribution I

suggest that Vasconcelos should be included in an extended pantheon of American philosophers who reflect on the meaning of American culture and society.[2]

The Long Shadow of Madison Grant

Born into a prosperous and prominent New York family in 1865, Madison Grant was well known as an advocate for environmental conservation and wildlife management. He helped found the Bronx Zoo, several national parks, and numerous environmental organizations that protected redwood trees and American bison. However, his concern with saving animals, plants, and trees from extinction also extended to what he considered the human “races” threatened by other invasive “species.” In 1916 he published *The Passing of the Great Race*, arguing that the existence of the “Nordic race,” which he considered responsible for much of modern civilization, faced a formidable threat from supposedly weaker and inferior races that were crowding it out of its habitats. In the United States this meant immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe outnumbering Anglo Americans.

At the time Grant’s race theories were not considered marginal or fringe ideas. In fact, his views captured the interest of national political leaders who were debating immigration policy.[3] Congress considered him such an expert on social policy matters that it appointed him chair of the committee charged to inform representatives about immigration reform. *The Passing of the Great Race* served as a foundational text for federal lawmakers, many of whom studied passages of the book during this debate. Grant’s committee ultimately produced a report that recommended immigration restrictions that were based on the national origin of immigrants. Congress adopted these quotas into the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924. Immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe were severely restricted from entering the United States, while there was little change in the number of immigrants from Northern and Western Europe. The bill’s long-term effect ultimately led to a significant increase in the number of immigrants considered white. This demographic surge helped solidify the connection between American national identity and white ethnicity throughout most of the twentieth century. [4] Indeed, many acknowledged that this was the bill’s intent. At the time prominent sociologist Henry Pratt Fairchild pronounced the Johnson Reed Act to be “one of the most influential and far reaching pieces of legislation ever enacted in human history” because it had the effect of preserving “this country first of all as a white man’s country, and second, as a country inhabited by persons belonging to that particular mixture of white racial elements which we commonly refer to as ‘English’ or now as ‘American.’”[5]

At the same time that he was helping to draft immigration restrictions, Grant consulted with state legislators in Virginia about racial classification laws that later became a model for many segregation statutes throughout the South. With his aid, Virginia passed the infamous 1925 Racial Integrity Law, otherwise known as the “one drop” rule. This law classified an individual as “colored” if that person had any nonwhite ancestry whatsoever, and increased the ranks of those individuals who could be

segregated from white society. It also prohibited interracial marriage in the commonwealth. This law stayed in place until the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional some forty years later in the famous case of *Loving v. Virginia*.

Around this same time, Grant's work garnered international attention as well. He was said to be proud of a letter he received from Adolph Hitler in which the Nazi leader praised Grant's writings as his personal gospel.[6] In fact, *The Passing of the Great Race* was entered into evidence at the Nuremberg Trials against Nazi leaders at the end of World War II. Thus Grant not only helped to craft the legal framework that solidified a white dominant demographic majority in the United States and helped set in place elements of the dehumanizing regime of Jim Crow segregation throughout the country, but he laid some of the theoretical underpinnings that inspired the Holocaust as well.

Vasconcelos on Racialism and Racism

Vasconcelos directly confronted Grant's racial theories in his book *Indologia: An Interpretation of Iberoamerican Culture* in 1926. Vasconcelos begins by questioning aspects of Grant's racialism. I follow Kwame Anthony Appiah in defining racialism as:

the view...that there are heritable characteristics, possessed by members of our species, which allow us to divide them into a small set of races, in such a way that all the members of these races share certain traits and tendencies with each other that they do not share with members of any other race. These traits and tendencies characteristic of a race constitute, on the racialist view, a sort of racial essence; it is part of the content of racialism that the essential heritable characteristics of the "Races of Man" account for more than the visible morphological characteristics—skin color, hair type, facial features—on the basis of which we make our informal classifications.[7]

As an example of this view, Grant offers the idea that there are race types that determine much about an individual's development, especially physical stature. He writes, for example, that Northwestern Europeans are generally taller than Europeans found in central or southern Europe.

Vasconcelos does not repudiate racialism altogether. As he makes clear in his most famous work *La Raza Cosmica/The Cosmic Race*, published around the same time as *Indologia*, he believes that there are at least four different groups of humanity that can be classified according to different racial-cultural essences.[8] However, unlike Grant, he does not believe that racial characteristics are fixed, unalterable, or unaffected by environmental factors. Indeed, the thesis of *La Raza Cosmica* is that a more enlightened era in human development will be the result of the four different branches of the human family mixing into new racial-cultural configurations. Hence, in response to Grant's claim that the descendants of English settlers in the United States are taller and therefore more fit and physically superior to other immigrant groups

because of their racial heritage, Vasconcelos holds that the more likely explanation for these differences in stature is simply that the English arrived first and “took advantage of the richness of North America to create living conditions which permitted them to cultivate their bodies with sport and, above all else, to free them from excessive physical labor.”[9] More recent immigrants of the era, such as the Poles and Italians, simply did not have the opportunities for rest and recreation to improve themselves physically. Vasconcelos’s intuition is that “physical differences are not so much the result of ethnic origins, but more precisely the social conditions in which a race lives.”[10]

Josiah Royce was one of the very few prominent American philosophers of this time to enter into an examination of scientific racism; he arrived at a position similar to that of Vasconcelos.[11] In his 1908 essay “Race Questions and Prejudices,” Royce warned readers that the scientific investigation of racial types at the time was very imprecise and liable to be used in ideological ways to support racist presuppositions about white supremacy. Instead of concentrating on physical characteristics and their differences, he chose to examine different community interactions between racial groups, focusing particularly on race relations in the American South and those in Jamaica. He suggested that social conditions in Jamaica were better because the British had allowed black citizens more opportunity for self-rule, whereas blacks in the United States were politically and socially subjugated. In Jamaica blacks were allowed to become civil servants in the colonial government and take responsibility for the maintenance of social order. Black Jamaicans could not be easily categorized as uncivilized, lazy, criminal, or any other stereotypes commonly applied to blacks in the American South. These differences in terms of social organization suggested to Royce that racial characteristics were less important in determining a whole range of physical and social phenomena. He concluded: “In estimating, in dealing with races, in defining what their supposedly unchanging characteristics are, in planning what to do with them, we are all prone to confuse the accidental with the essential....We are disposed to view as a fatal and overwhelming race problem what is a perfectly curable accident of our present form of administration.”[12]

Grant’s response to these kinds of arguments is that environmental factors may influence racial characteristics, but race is the final determining element of what individuals and communities are capable of becoming: “The tall Scot and the dwarfed Sardinian owe their respective sizes to race and not to oatmeal or olive oil.”[13] For Vasconcelos, the counterexamples are far too numerous to believe in this kind of racial causal determinism, and he offers his own evidence. For instance, he maintains that if one compares the indigenous groups that have remained semi autonomous landowners in Mexico, such as the Yaqui, with those that have been more thoroughly subjugated by the Europeans and driven away from their ancestral territory in central Mexico, one will clearly see differences in stature and social characteristics. He adds that the Yaqui would surpass or at least match the average height of people from Scotland, but Grant would certainly not conclude that the Yaqui are superior to the Eastern Europeans and

on par with the Nordics in terms of intelligence and civilization.[14] The absurdity of ranking these racialist classification in this manner reinforces Vasconcelos's Roycean view that it is environmental factors such as political and social relationships, particularly of the administration of land and the promotion of individual liberty, and not racial properties that create prosperous communities and healthy individuals: "Beauty and ownership, at least of small property, go together; for that reason we, the condemned socialists, want everyone in the world to have property so that everyone in the world can be beautiful." [15]

After making his list of the different physical characteristics of the European races, Grant then goes on to suggest that these racial characteristics also correspond to social and class distinctions among Europeans: "No one can question the race value of stature who observes on the streets of London the contrast between the Piccadilly gentleman of Nordic race and the cockney costermonger of the old Neolithic type." [16] These distinctions of race and their class and moral correlations are plainly obvious to most people, Grant maintains, which explains why popular literature depicts heroes "as tall, blonde, honest" while the villain is a "small, dark and exceptionally intelligent individual of warped moral character." [17]

Using Appiah's terminology again, we could say that here Grant's racialism leads him to racism, the belief that different racial characteristics justify different value and ethical evaluation.[18] For Vasconcelos the obvious class and cultural standards that Grant associates with the Nordics, and points to as proof of their inherent superiority, are really the proof of their domination and cultural imperialism over others. As Vasconcelos put it in his 1926 lectures on Mexican society at the University of Chicago, the "aspiration toward the white standard of beauty may be only one of the consequences of the fact that the white race is predominant in the present era of history." [19] In other eras and places, the white standard has not been so revered. Obviously the development of social or moral norms might have taken a different turn if Africans had dominated the globe, Vasconcelos postulates; our beauty standards would then surely be different as well. He writes sarcastically: "My pain is not having been the lover of Karsavina, the Russian ballerina [who was know for her fine, pale, skin]: and when I call life to account, I will protest that above all else, but it doesn't blind me to the point of not being able to conceive of the possibility of a grand black aesthetic." [20]

Yet the objection that there are other possible worlds with different racial configurations and social outcomes is not convincing to Grant. Race is the necessary causal agent in moral and social development, and it is plainly obvious with a glance at human history. The most notable social disasters, on the other hand, were a result of allowing other races to wield political and economic power. For example, the Spanish lost their power after they started to mix with the indigenous people of the Americas, and France collapsed when its Nordic aristocracy was overwhelmed by less-worthy European groups during the Revolution. It is the evidence of this nobility, their actual accomplishments, that demonstrates the superiority of Nordic civilization over the mere

potential of other races: “The Nordics are, all over the world, a race of soldiers, sailors, adventurers and explorers, but above all, of rulers, organizers, and aristocrats....The Nordic race is domineering, individualistic, self-reliant and jealous of their personal freedom both in political and religious systems....Chivalry and knighthood and their still surviving but greatly impaired counterparts are peculiarly Nordic traits.”[21]

Vasconcelos responds to the pomposity of this claim by exposing the reality behind the construction of the European aristocracy. Noble titles were not always bestowed on people in recognition of their inherent honor or superior deeds. According to Vasconcelos, they were in large part awards given to the friends, associates, clients, and sycophants of the dominating classes: “In France, the pimps of the Louises were called counts and marquises. In Spain today, there is someone who resembles the chamberlain, whose old function was to attend to the nightly bedroom needs of the king. Other, very illustrious, titles were given to those who put on and took off the shoes of His Majesty.”[22] Again, Vasconcelos seeks to demonstrate that many of the concepts we have come to associate with superiority, power, and magnificence are but social categories created by those in power to awe and stupefy those who are dominated. They are certainly not names that necessarily identify a type, or describe someone of dignity or other prominent social value. Vasconcelos condemns the uselessness of Grant’s Nordic aristocracy in an attempt to demystify the supposed superiority of their achievements for modern society, and reminds us that our social organization today depends on other forms of achievement not captured by the theory of racial hierarchy: “We have better reason to bestow titles of nobility on the descendants of the inventor of the toilet, because his ingenuity has liberated a good part of humanity from a nuisance that was before most embarrassing. The ‘democratic’ nobility that we could organize from the creators of modern plumbing would be, without a doubt, worth much more than those pigs of Versailles, who knew little of bathing other than the fright they might suffer some night if they fell drunk into a park fountain near their palace.”[23]

Race, Democracy, and Imperialism

As one might expect from his valorization of aristocracy, Grant was not a supporter of democracy as a political ideal. Grant believed that democracy as a way of organizing political leadership and power involved a “standardization of type and a diminution of the influence of genius” because universal suffrage “tends toward the selection of the average man for public office rather than the man qualified by birth, education, and integrity.”[24] According to Grant, elevating the ordinary person to political power meant derailing social progress, since such individuals are obsessed with only their own particular needs and interests and rarely with the interests of the whole community: “Vox populi, so far from being Vox Dei, thus becomes an unending wail for rights and never a chant for duty.”[25] Even worse calamities faced nations such as the United States that enfranchised racially inferior immigrants as democratic citizens.[26] Grant warned that the United States faced a domestic danger from “alien races” that were unfit by their “habit of mind and inheritance to uphold a form of

government, traditions, and institutions which their mentality ignores.”[27] Grant believed that newer immigrant groups were trying to force the United States to shift from a republican to a more democratic model in which their specific cultural and group perspectives would become matters of public interest. This effort toward a culturally pluralistic America, as envisioned by thinkers such as Horace Kallen or Randolph Bourne, would only lead to a “tyranny of the mob,” according to Grant, rather than a reasoned approach to policy matters for the common good.[28]

Vasconcelos handles this objection by countering that it has been aristocracy and other forms of elite tyranny that led to many social failures. Like John Dewey, Vasconcelos sees democracy as a way of life dedicated foremost to the liberation of individual human potential.[29] Other forms of ruling, including aristocracy, inevitably amount to a system of domination by an individual, or a small group working for its own interest: “The tyrant or the dominant class always becomes corrupt with power and maintains domination over the masses in a way that impedes all forms of individual or social development.”[30] According to Vasconcelos, Grant simply selectively ignores historical accounts that suggest that certain progressive ages of humanity “correspond with the existence of political regimes that partake in the idea of democracy, which is the free expression of individual genius and the rule of the best people elected by the majority.”[31] In an interesting interpretive twist, Vasconcelos argues that the success of the Spanish invasion of the Americas was not due to the Nordic heritage of the conquistadors at all. Instead, it occurred because the soldiers and explorers were products of living under *fueros*—municipal charters granted by the monarchs of Spain that allowed small cities and towns to develop their own unique sets of laws and liberties.[32] Thus the Spain of the conquistadors was not entirely a despotic monarchy, but one that allowed limited self-rule and gave some subjects an opportunity to learn how to organize themselves and appreciate a protodemocratic way of life that fostered their resourcefulness. Similarly, ancient Athens, India during the rule of Ashoka, the Italian Renaissance republics, and even the early United States are, for Vasconcelos, all examples of progressive societies, creative democracies in Dewey’s sense, because they instituted some form of popular governance and created conditions that allowed new forms of interaction among people, releasing their abilities through new forms of cooperation.

For Vasconcelos the greatest threat facing American society is not the deluge of immigrants. He scornfully points out that what really worries the ruling New England Brahmins, such as Grant, is that their incompetence and social futility will be unmasked by the immigrants, who may turn out to be better bankers, writers, artists, and workers than they are.[33] Vasconcelos warns that the greater concern for American society is the growing power and corrupting influence of bankers and corporate managers on democratic politics. Vasconcelos accuses these groups of encouraging political leaders to launch imperialist ventures around the world in order to satisfy their greed and narrow economic self-interest. He notes that the history of Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries hardly reveals a United States that is teetering on the

edge of destruction because of racial contamination. Instead, the United States had become a mighty imperial power, overwhelming Mexico, Cuba, and then Puerto Rico and the Phillipines between 1846 and 1898. Its political orientation turned from a republic concerned with preserving political liberty toward becoming a global superpower and maintaining its overseas holdings through military might. It is this transformation that Vasconcelos believes to be more harmful to the well-being of American society:

Remember the enthusiasm...the liberatory and creative power that spread out over the continent, the America of George Washington and Daniel Webster, the America of Franklin and Lincoln, that established American constitutional law and reaffirmed the rights of man, the separation of the three powers of state, and the supreme aristocracy of human dignity; compare the valor of that America, which was a model and precedent for our societies, with the America of the shady imperialists of today, and you will see that it is not only us, but the North Americans themselves that are threatened by that dark power that undermines democracy and replaces the norm of love with the norm of conquest.[34]

Thus Vasconcelos finds Grant's writings on white supremacy to be more than merely poorly reasoned rants from a social class concerned with its withering social influence, but something worse: they are ideological justifications for global American hegemony by greedy elites who seek to rob the developing world of resources and plunge it into political disorder and dependency.

One of the few American Pragmatist voices at this time drawing the strands of race and imperialism together in a similar manner was W. E. B. Du Bois. In his 1920 collection of essays, *Darkwater*, Du Bois identified white supremacy not as an aberration of European culture but as a formative element in its civilization and power in the modern world.[35] White supremacy was the way Europe justified its colonial adventures and, in the United States, the instrument by which elites could keep their grip on power by dividing immigrants with promises of prosperity as long as they turned on the darker-skinned members of society. Du Bois mentions the race riot of East St. Louis, Illinois in this regard. The white workers in this industrial city along the Mississippi River were whipped into a frenzy by labor leaders, corporate bosses, and local government into believing that African Americans were depressing their wages and taking away jobs. Finally, in 1917, these white workers essentially drove out over 5,000 African American laborers and their families by burning their neighborhoods to the ground. Du Bois did not consider this an isolated incident; race hatred, he argued, conveniently brewed in every industrial center whenever an excuse was needed to thin the ranks of the labor pool and keep the powerful in place.[36]

Du Bois predicted an end to global white supremacy but only through a major confrontation that he imagined would dwarf the levels of destruction unleashed in World War I: "It is nothing to compare with that fight for freedom which black and brown and yellow men must and will make unless their oppression and humiliation and insult at the

hands of the White World cease.”[37] Many people, however, both black and white, were put off by Du Bois’s apparent call for race war in *Darkwater*. [38] Vasconcelos calls for a struggle against global imperialism as well, but his analysis is more nuanced than Du Bois’s description of a Manichean battle between white and colored people. He holds that American imperialism is a function of “illegitimate” elites, corporations and bankers, using the political machinery of a great nation to further their own self-interest. These American political and economic rulers have conspired with populist leaders and military strongmen in Latin America to keep ordinary people out of power in exchange for American access to natural resources in the developing world.

Instead of a confrontation between a monolithic, morally suspect, white world and colored, victimized, humanity, Vasconcelos pleads for a nonviolent transnational political organizing among the citizens of North and Latin America. His hope is that ordinary people can work across borders and see their common interest in confronting the corporate, military, and political elites that conspire to corrupt American politics and subjugate Latin America:

The problem becomes one of education, that is to say, a problem of enlightenment and persuasion. With education and persuasion we seek to convince our people, God knows when, that they should not tolerate dictators, or assassinations, or abuse by those who exercise power. Through education and persuasion we seek to convince the North American voter, God knows when, that he should not grant power to those politicians who do not know how to put a stop to invading corporations that, under the appearance of business and progress, sow the seeds of future acts of vengeance against the best interests of North America.[39]

Conclusion

In this essay I have sketched Jose Vasconcelos’s position on Madison Grant’s scientific racism in order to present him as an important philosopher and social critic who attempted to unmask an ideology that posed as scientific knowledge and lent support to the American infrastructure of institutionalized racism and, eventually, one of the greatest human rights tragedies of the twentieth century, the Holocaust. I have demonstrated how Vasconcelos’s views complemented those of the few American philosophers of the time, namely Josiah Royce and W. E. B. Du Bois, who dared to speak out against scientific racism in their work. However, I also suggest that Vasconcelos’s proposal for overcoming the social and political effects of this ideology in both North and Latin America shares democratic aspirations with the work of John Dewey, and is more realistic than the revolutionary uprising against global economic empires envisioned by Du Bois. These points of contacts should recommend Vasconcelos’s work to American philosophers. We ought to be reminded, however, that Vasconcelos did not write as an outsider to American society, but as someone who was educated as a youth in the United States and lived and lectured within it for over twenty years.

The importance of Vasconcelos's critique of Madison Grant is more than merely historical. Grant's ideas continue to influence American society even today.[40] His name appears readily and is revered on white supremacist Web sites, and *The Passing of the Great Race* is available for downloading on many of them. More importantly, however, his legacy lives on in organizations that he and his associates founded, such as the Pioneer Fund, that continue to support research on genetic differences and racial disparities. The Pioneer Fund has also donated enormous amounts of money to anti-immigration groups, and to legislative campaigns such as California's Proposition 187 in 1994, that would have denied most public services, including public education and emergency health care, to undocumented immigrants. Clearly, then, the ideas and organizational infrastructure that Grant developed have not been entirely discredited. In calling for a grassroots effort to build a deep and creative democracy among the people of North and Latin America, Vasconcelos offers a vision of cooperation for human rights and economic justice that is sorely needed in a world still saturated with nativist suspicion and talk of the clash of civilizations.

Notes

[1] See Frank Margonis, "John Dewey, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Alain Locke: A Case Study in White Ignorance and Intellectual Segregation," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 174-95; Eddie S. Glaude Jr., "Tragedy and Moral Experience: John Dewey and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," in *Pragmatism and the Problem of Race*, ed. Bill Lawson and Donald Koch (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 89-123.

[2] Jane Duran has previously suggested some intersection between Vasconcelos and American Pragmatist thought, particularly with John Dewey; see "Vasconcelos, Pragmatism, and the Philosophy of Race," *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (fall 2001): 82-84.

[3] Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America 1900-1940* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001), 46-47.

[4] See David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 144.

[5] Henry Pratt Fairchild, *The Melting Pot Mistake* (Boston, MA: Little Brown and Co, 1926), pp. 136 and 228. Fairchild was an associate of Madison Grant and in 1929 became president of the American Eugenics Society, a group founded by Grant.

[6] Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 67.

[7] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 13-15.

[8] Jose Vasconcelos, *La Raza Cosmica/The Cosmic Race*, trans. Didier T. Jaen (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 9.

[9] Jose Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, in *Obras Completas II* (Mexico City: Libreros

Mexicanos Unidos, 1958), 1199. All translations of this work in this paper are mine.

[10] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1199.

[11] See Shannon Sullivan, "Royce's 'Race Questions and Prejudices,'" in *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, expanded edition, ed. Scott Pratt and Shannon Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 20.

[12] Josiah Royce, "Race Questions and Prejudices," in *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, expanded edition, ed. Scott Pratt and Shannon Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 57.

[13] Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 28.

[14] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1199.

[15] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1199.

[16] Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 29.

[17] Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 229.

[18] Appiah, *In My Father's House*, 13-15.

[19] Vasconcelos, *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 38.

[20] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1199.

[21] Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 228.

[22] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1202.

[23] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1202.

[24] Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 5.

[25] Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 8.

[26] See Madison Grant and Charles Stewart Davison, *The Founders of the Republic on Immigration, Naturalization, and Aliens* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 26-30.

[27] Grant and Davison, *The Founders of the Republic*, v.

[28] See Horace Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States* (New York: press, 1924) and Randolph Bourne, "Transnational America," in *Randolph Bourne: The Radical Will*, ed. Olaf Hansen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 248-64.

[29] See John Dewey, "Creative democracy: The task before us," in *John Dewey: The later works, 1925-1953, volume 14*, ed. J. Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976) 224-30. For discussion, see David Fott, *John Dewey: America's Philosopher of Democracy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 65; Gregory Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 260-90.

[30] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1203.

[31] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1203.

[32] Vasconcelos, *Aspects of Mexican Civilization*, 46-47.

[33] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1204.

[34] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1278.

[35] W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (New York: Dover, 1999), 22.

[36] Du Bois, *Darkwater*, 55-56.

[37] Du Bois, *Darkwater*, 28.

[38] Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 129-31.

[39] Vasconcelos, *Indologia*, 1277.

[40] See Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009), 388-90.