

***Toppling the melting pot: Immigration and multiculturalism in American Pragmatism*, Jose-Antonio Orosco, Indiana University Press, 2016. P. 166, Paperback \$25.00, Hardcover \$70.00, E-Book Price: \$9.99. ISBN: 978-0253023056**

By Jesus Jaime-Diaz

Contemporary ideologies in relation to immigration continue to voice echoes of traditions from the past. Particularly of concern is nativist reactionary discourse that attempts to entrench itself as the dominant master narrative of belonging within the nation-state. José Antonio-Orosco, in *Toppling The Melting Pot: Immigration and Multiculturalism in American Pragmatism*, suggests alternative venues in problematizing such dogmatic nativist demands aimed at undocumented economic refugees. Orosco takes upon a *Pragmatist* position by drawing upon the principles of multicultural democracy. In doing so, he utilizes a frame of thought from social thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, John Dewey, Josiah Royce and Jane Adams. Orosco deconstructs the monocultural metaphorical yoke of the melting pot as it continues to impose itself upon the psyche of the nation-state as the norm for unquestioned patriotism, nationalism and citizenship. The melting pot ethnic integration first came into national discourse in 1908 (p.3). In theory, the metaphor assumes that different groups forfeit their culture, language and identity and come together in order to create a common culture. References often made to President Teddy Roosevelt, and his beliefs on Americanization where immigrants would submit to indoctrination through Anglo-conformity. This would be done through speech, political ideas and principles (Roosevelt, 1894).

Although, a popular idea racialized minoritized groups were largely excluded from the process, thus creating a melting pot with a distinctively Anglocentric flavor (Healey, Stepnick and O'Brien, 2018). Excluded from the narrative in the pillars of nationhood were slavery, genocide, colonization and the deculturalization of racialized minoritized groups through various social structures reinforced through notions of racial superiority (Springs, 2016). The history of oppression was minimized in forming a fallacious historical narrative of national unity, which has manifested racism through patriotism (Warren, 2020). Such beliefs have been sustained by a blind patriotism that involves uncritical support for one's home country (Hornsey, 2007). Such beliefs have largely fed nativist reactionary ideology as the one representing "true Americans." It has been said that when injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty. It entails speaking truth to power with whatever limited privilege we have amassed, and enacting civil disobedience through our freedom of conscience (Thoreau, 2016). As activist scholars we should embody the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi through the Theory of *Satyagraha*, or non-violent resistance where non-violent techniques are enacted for social and political change (Klitgaard, 1971). Orosco topples the monocultural metaphor of the melting pot in seven chapters:

In *Three Models of The Melting Pot* (12-21), Orosco explains the Anglo-saxon ideology espoused by political scientist Samuel Huntington and the subsequent cultural wars unleashed by neo-nationalist views in the rejection of the melting pot, as the US never has never been a multicultural society. Orosco explains three overviews of the melting: 1. *Anglo-saxon Conformity Model*, where he states that such a model has historically been upheld as the fixed cultural prerequisite for acceptance in U.S. American national identity for immigrants, through abandonment of old world cultural markers and submitting to new values. 2. *The Fusion Model* states that U.S. American identity is not a salient entity but a fluid mosaic. Immigrants eventually discard their native identities through diverse interactions within their host community. 3. *The Americanization Model*, imposes assimilation where immigrants discard their cultural entities through the process of Americanization in which they assume a prescribed standard of US American identity.

Orosco in the next chapter, *Cultural Pluralism and Principles of Pragmatist Solidarity* (22-38), uses the work of Horace Kallen, whom critiqued each model, and John Dewey's principal of cultural group flourishing. Kallen asserted that the realities for immigrants in the US is more realistic to being *asimilao* than being assimilated. Kallen argued that all three metaphors of the melting pot are unrealistic, hypocritical and unethical. Orosco mentions Kallen's first aim at the melting pot, where he argued that the early English and Dutch settler colonialist came to the Americas with completely different motivations than contemporary immigrants. Settler colonialist were set upon preserving their communal way of life. They did not come with the intention of leaving behind their cultures or assimilating into the native people's way of life---a contradiction. Orosco explains that John Dewey's views on individual freedom and cultural pluralism are cherished foundations of US democracy (p.23).

In furthering problematizing the monocultural metaphor of the melting pot, Orosco examines the work of social critic Louis Adamic in his chapter *From Plymouth Rock to Ellis Island: Louis Adamic and Cultural Flourishing* (39-55). Orosco states that Adamic was aware that supporters of the Anglo-conformity model were not mere buffoons (p.40). Such protagonist understood white supremacy and the benefits of privilege, power and difference through social stratification. Orosco affirms that such ideologies are used to honor groups who have upheld and sustained ideologies normalized through settler colonization. Adamic further suggested that the Anglo-saxon metaphor injures the moral dignity of minorities by stripping them of their cultural foundations for a meaningful life. Adamic asserted that the idea of acceptance toward difference is not about imposing contradictory expectations of US democracy but is about recovering the ideas on preserving one's communal way of life.

In, *W. E. B. Du Bois and the Black Cultural Contribution to US Deep Democracy* (pp. 56-70), Orosco turns to the works of W.E.B. Du Bois and the idea of racial contribution to democracy. Du Bois suggested that African Americans collectively have a utopian vision that can press the US in becoming a richer society than settler colonialism imposed (p.7). Du Bois mentioned that cultural pluralism was acquired

through the historical experience endured by African Americans through oppression and subordination within a white supremacist society. The struggle of African Americans in winning recognition for basic human rights provided the US with a valuable cultural contribution in the realization of democracy. DuBois further suggested that democratic governance should be grounded upon the principle of moral dignity for the individual (p.65).

In, *Josiah Royce's Deliberative Democracy for Multicultural Conflict and Education* (pp. 71-91), Orosco mentions the nativist legal attacks against *raza* studies in K-12 education in Tucson, Arizona. Orosco employs the writings of Josiah Royce at the beginning of the twentieth century. Royce believed that U.S. Americans were overall concerned with the general quality of their lives. Royce critiqued the history of the U.S. American west and highlighted the nervous temperament associated with difference. He mentioned how California settlers began to be fearful of the effects of their own unrestrained freedom. He stated that as communities developed throughout the west, order was sustained by people investing their talents and wealth upon their communities. For example, the community of San Francisco became a culturally vibrant spot that encouraged emigration from the east. Westerners joined together to develop schools, land grant colleges and universities (p.73).

Orosco draws upon the work of Jane Adams to scrutinize the resentment towards immigrants in, *Aliens and Neighbors: Jane Addams and the Reframing of the Undocumented Immigration Debate* (pp. 92-102). Addams believed that antipathy towards immigrants is not a common sentiment in US American society, but a manifestation of deeply internalized cultural insecurities which causes U.S. Americans to harden their hearts against those perceived as different (p.93). Addams understood hospitality as a foundational US tradition deeply rooted within our democratic heritage. Addams suggested as one antidote to nativism the example of William Penn, the Puritan founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. Penn believed in national self-righteousness, and acted in surprising and exceptional ways given the context of settler colonialism. As the leader of the colony, Penn modeled hospitality towards Native Americans who were considered violent and 'savage'. Penn believed in treating the most vulnerable of people with decency, and providing resources for their eventual integration into the community (p.95).

The book ends with holistic ideals for US democracy. First, in *Cesar Chavez and the Pluralist Foundations of US American Democracy* (pp. 103-115), Orosco states that Cesar Chavez during his career was actually opposed to undocumented immigrant and open borders. Chavez supported efforts to identify, track down and discourage undocumented immigrants from crossing over into the U.S. This often put him at odds with leaders in the Chicano Movement (Alaniz & Cornish, 2008). Orosco further states that Cesar Chavez's eventual position was that irregular migrants deserve amnesty because of the civic and moral obligations of U.S. democracy (p.103). Secondly, Orosco affirms that Cesar Chavez believed that immigration would benefit the US positively by way of enriched cultural contributions to the diverse mosaic of the nation. Chicana/o

scholars have continued to support such holistic ideals of Cesar Chavez as having embodied hope in people with his call to resist all that is unjust and unfair. He inspired people to commit to social change through non-violence in pursuing equality and fairness for the vulnerable and dispossessed of society (Maldonado, 2000; Mendez-Negrete, 1994).

Discussion and conclusion

In *Toppling The Melting Pot: Immigration and Multiculturalism in American Pragmatism*. Jose-Antonio Orosco conceptualizes in his writings the ideas of *Pragmatist* thinkers with the hope that US Americans abandon notions of Anglo-conformity and Americanization through exclusionary metaphors such as the melting pot. Orosco further advises that we turn to the works of *Pragmatist* philosophers in humanizing the experiences that undocumented economic refugees endure by violent and external forces such as NAFTA (Simon, 2018). It is exemplified that as a civil society we reconsider our views for those whom seek to survive against their socio-political and economic will.

This book should be considered in the cultivation of a critical consciousness in the fields of philosophy, ethnic studies, communication, history, anthropology, sociology and education. There are times in history where we must go against the grain and make sacrifices to address historical wrongs (McCormick, 2007). We must continue to look to the past and draw from traditions of struggle (Trasciatti, 2018). Additionally, we must learn from those who left their legacy encapsulated in a courage of consciousness to confront the dehumanization of the most vulnerable (Vargas, 1997). Through such examples we will blossom with passionate hearts of fire to empower people in the spirit of social justice for the common good of humanity (Tafolla, 2003).

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