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Humanism in the Americas

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter provides an overview of select trends, ideas, themes, and figures associated with humanism in the Americas, which comprises a diversified set of peoples, cultural traditions, religious orientations, and socio-economic groups. In acknowledging this rich tapestry of human life, the chapter emphasizes the impressive variety of developments in philosophy, the natural sciences, literature, religion, art, social science, and political thought that have contributed to the development of humanism in the Americas. The chapter also features modern usages of humanism that originated in the English-speaking world in the nineteenth century. In this context, humanism is best viewed as a contested site in which its meanings, usages, and rhetorical power reflect a wide range of ideological allegiances that include positive and negative connotations. The complex, layered processes of colonization that are a part of the history of the Americas will also inflect the varied usages and connotations of humanism.

Keywords: anti-positivism, colonialism, democratic values, ethics, human exceptionalism, modernity, postcolonialism, secularism, supernaturalism, white supremacy

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of select trends, ideas, and themes associated with humanism in the Americas. Comprising the totality of the continents of North and South America, the Americas make up most of the land on the Earth’s western hemisphere, extending from the northern lands of Canada and Greenland in the Arctic Circle, to Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of Argentina and Chile near the Antarctic. With a variegated range of climate, vegetation, and landscape, the Americas feature a diversified set of peoples, cultural traditions, religious orientations, and socio-economic groups sharing a mass of land for over a billion inhabitants, of which two thirds reside in the United States, Mexico, and Brazil.

Complex, layered processes of colonization are a part of the history of the Americas, which will inflect the varied usages and connotations of humanism. With various levels of success, Spain, Portugal, England, and France extended colonizing activities in what would later become the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean Islands. Arriving in the fifteenth century, Europeans began to subjugate and displace the indigenous Americans, who have continued to face successive waves of massacres, violent dispossession, and genocide. The forced importation of Africans as slave labor to work on white plantations is another part of this colonizing legacy. The peoples inhabiting what we now call Latin America (South America in addition to Mexico, Central America, and the islands of the Caribbean) also experienced a version of conquest and colonization by the Spaniards and Portuguese from the late 15th through the 18th century and beyond. Historical markers for the decolonization of the Americas (the American Revolution in the 1770s, ending with the Spanish-American War in the late 1890s) have not erased the ongoing legacy of colonization and settlement by Europeans. Finally, waves of immigration from around the world, including recent immigrants fleeing political violence and economic collapse, help create the kaleidoscope of diversity that currently make up the Americas.

Attempting to offer a definitive account of humanism within this rich tapestry of human life is challenging, if not futile. Additionally, an impressive variety of developments in philosophy, the natural sciences, literature, religion, art, social science, and political thought have contributed to the development of humanism in the Americas. This fact is true for the history of humanism in general and in other settings beyond the Americas. As Tony Davies notes in *Humanism, the New Critical Idiom* (2008), conceptions of humanism have evolved throughout the centuries as the term has been adopted for a variety of purposes and with meanings running “from the pedantically narrow to the cosmically vague.”[1] I follow Davies’s lead in suggesting that humanism is best viewed as a contested site in which its meanings, usages, and rhetorical power reflect a wide range of ideological allegiances that include positive and negative connotations.

Davies’s discussion of nineteenth-century developments in the invention of the human is also important for my purposes, providing the historical backdrop for comprehending the general themes of humanism in the Americas that I address in this chapter. He notes that since its earliest usages in the mid-nineteenth century English speaking world, humanism has helped to articulate, in one sense or another, the revolutionary processes of modernity, structuring key concepts and debates in politics, science, philosophy, religion, aesthetics, and education. These developments and events include “the political energies and instabilities unleashed by the American and French revolutions of the previous century; the explosive acceleration of capitalist production, with its spectral antagonist, the industrial working class; the expansion of the great European nation states, in the competitive scramble for economic and political hegemony, into imperial powers with a vast extramural proletariat of subjugated peoples; and the dilapidation of Christianity as a resource of moral authority and national ideology.”[2]

The emergence of modern humanism in this historical context underscores a paradigm shift in which the category of the human itself can no longer be universalized. As Davies notes, the French naturalist, de Gobineau associates humanism with the privileged status of a certain racial group (Teutons) and the unaccountable mastery of individual genius. De Gobineau's view can be contrasted with that of the young Karl Marx for whom humanism underscores the necessity of revolution and the dream of a humanity emancipated from inequality and exploitation. Important, too, is the vision of Matthew Arnold, whose invocation of an irenic humanistic culture would help adjudicate and unify the divisive anarchy of politics and class. Finally, freethinkers such as T. H. Huxley, who coined the term "agnostic," and Charles Bradlaugh, founder of the National Secular Society, valued humanism for its potential to "cast out the last tenacious delusions of Christian superstition."[3]

These varied approaches to addressing the complex notion of the human illuminate an important theme that will be found in future expressions of humanism: "the conviction of the unwavering centrality of the 'human itself.'"[4] Informed by Davies's historical and cultural analysis, I contend that humanism in the Americas cannot be fully understood apart from an awareness of the complex processes of modernity. Not only did these conditions open up new conceptual spaces that supported a central focus on the human, they did so in ways that make recognizable to twenty-first century readers the provisional and historic character of all humanistic thought.

General Humanistic Principles

Generally speaking, the development of humanism in the Americas have revolved around a basic set of concerns related to the special status of humans, the value of theistic belief systems, the role of religion in human life, ethical mandates, and the best or most reliable forms of knowledge that inform or support notions of who or what humans are in the grand scheme of things.[5] Richard Norman suggests there is no definitive set of beliefs called humanism but many humanisms. I agree, and further contend that acknowledging this multiplicity of perspectives is crucial within the context of the Americas. In the established literature on humanism, most historians have omitted the accounts, theories, and variety of humanisms by women, blacks, and various communities of color. Here the work of Anthony Pinn is important. In *When Colorblindness Isn't the Answer: Humanism and the Challenge of Race* (2017) and other works, Pinn has addressed the insights and experiences of black humanists, or the articulations of humanism by people of color in the Americas, in response to particular class, gender, and race-based concerns and insights.[6]

The working definition of humanism given by Stephen Law in *Humanism: A Short Introduction* (2011) seems capacious enough to address these concerns. For Law, humanism is a worldview, or set of assumptions, that include the following:

- Science and reason are invaluable tools we can apply to all areas of life, or nothing is immune from rational inquiry.

- Humanists assume atheistic or agnostic positions, or skepticism toward the theistic claims.
- Humanists affirms this life is the only one we have.
- Humanism entails a commitment to the existence and importance of moral value. The ethical aspect is crucial in establishing humans as moral agents without reliance on supernatural concepts such as God or other metaphysical religious terms.
- Humanists affirm individual moral responsibility instead of reliance on some external authority.
- Humanists affirm the meaningfulness of life without grounding it in some central theistic claims.
- Humanists affirm secularism, when understood as favoring an open, democratic society in which the state takes a neutral position with respect to religion, protecting the freedom of individuals to follow and espouse or reject and criticize, both religious and atheistic beliefs.[7]

In what follows, I trace some of these principles of humanism within the context of the Americas, situating them within particular cultural contexts, historical periods, and distinct movements. In doing so, I focus on three major themes: (a) humanism as narratives of human uniqueness and exceptionalism; (b) humanism's relationship to traditional religion, supernaturalism, and theistic claims; and (c) humanism as a vehicle for liberation, informed by social-political views of human fulfillment. With this approach, I emphasize that the figures, concepts, and movements I describe will not be exhaustive of the many humanisms in the Americas. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide such detailed information.[8] Rather, the general aim is to sketch in broad strokes the divergent and layered meanings of a concept that have been part of the entangled worldviews, histories, and socio-political aims that constitute the Americas.

Humanism as Narratives of Human Exceptionalism

In his discussion of the Italian Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's view of humanity, Richard Norman provides insight into earlier forms of humanism that suggest human exceptionalism. In his 1486 oration, "On the Dignity of Man," Pico constructs a narrative of the human as a marvel, worthy of wonder, and occupying an elevated and unique status among creation. Steeped in Christian mythology, Pico has God addressing the human:

> We have given to thee, Adam, no fixed seat, no form of thy very own, no gift peculiarly thine, that thou mayest feel as thine own, have as thine own, possess as thine own the seat, the form, the gifts which thou thyself shalt desire. A limited nature in other creatures is confined within the laws written down by Us. In conformity with thy free judgment, in whose hands I have placed thee, thou art con-

> fined by no bounds; and thou wilt fix limits of nature for thyself. I have placed thee at the center of the world, that from there thou mayest more conveniently look around and see whatsoever is in the world … Neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal or immortal have We made thee. Thou, like a judge appointed for being honorable, art the molder and maker of thyself; thou mayest sculpt thyself into whatever shape thy dost prefer. Thou canst grow downward into the lower natures which are brutes. Thou canst again grow upward from thy soul's reason into the higher natures which are divine.[9]

This passage is illuminating for a number of reasons. It features the quality of intelligence that has become synonymous with modern views of human distinctiveness, as well as the specific aims and aspirations of humans to mold themselves. In the oration, Pico also urges humans to use their freedom to distance themselves from their "animal desires, and to aspire to the condition of the angels, by cultivating the intellect for the study of philosophy and theology and thereby drawing closer to God."[10] Humans are also placed at the center of the world in order to observe and assess the rest of it. Finally, there is the unique status of the human as being adrift in the universe, suspended between our relationship to deity and our connection to the rest of nature.

There are many ways of understanding and assessing these qualities of the human. One of the most common narratives that has shaped the dominant philosophies and value systems of the Euro-American intellectual tradition centers on human exceptionalism, or the general disposition that humans occupy a special status in the universe. These assumptions have been transmitted not only through traditional religious ideologies, but also through a humanistic lens. What exactly was special about humans and why humans played a particular role in their own development, however, varied from one humanistic thinker to another. During the early twentieth century, most forms of humanism (whether identified as atheistic, religious, and secular) recognized "something importantly special and distinctive about human beings," continuing the general impetus of Pico's Renaissance expression.[11] However, these newer formulations did so without traditional theological entrapments; they often used scientific ideas or other forms of rationalism to advance some version of human distinctiveness.

While retaining some of Pico's emphasis on human freedom and the cultivation of creative and intellectual faculties, some twentieth-century religious humanists rejected the mythopoetic features (God and angels). For example, during the 1920s, a fertile time in the growth of humanistic thought, Roy Wood Sellars (1880–1970) articulated a religious humanism that showcases the unique capacities of humans to live and flourish as citizens of a shared world. Sellars was born in Seaford, Ontario and lived in Canada until he entered the University of Michigan in 1899, where he returned to teach and remained for approximately 40 years. In his published work, Sellars argued that humans must learn to recognize creation as "a going concern" in which their contributions to the further emergence of the universe is essential.[12] Sellars distinguished this orientation from those

found in traditional religions that viewed creation as complete; in the latter, a person's task is to merely understand the pattern in order to follow it.

Sellars also held that religion must be "brought to the world disclosed through science," emphasizing humans' capacity to create and enhance their situation in life.[13] According to Sellars, religious thought historically has been pre-scientific and hence mythopoetic; however, he argued that the universe demonstrated by science provided no evidence of supernatural realities. Rather, we inhabited one in which human values should be cherished by both the individual and society. In his 1922 publication *Evolutionary Naturalism*, Sellars also describes the religious impulse in *humans as* "one of the most admirable … in human nature."[14] He often described humanism's commitment and aim as offering a basic revision on the human outlook and a revaluation of values.

Sellars described his religious humanism as naturalistic humanism in emphasizing its rejection of supernaturalism. For him, modern naturalism is evolutionary at its core; with this evolutionary bent, Sellars also featured agential causality as a central component of his naturalism. He also described humanity as a causal agent in which the process of valuation operates differently from cognition, and entails different ingredients and criteria. For Sellars, agential causality emerges at a certain level of evolution and organization in which self-awareness and reflective deliberation are important. As he writes, "there is no pushbutton 'free-will' but the capacity to judge and work out standards."[15] Accordingly, Sellars described an emergent capacity of the human brain to develop new judgments and standards that make a causal difference in behavior.[16]

Sellars's emphasis on evolutionary imagery provides a key for understanding how humanism in the Americas grew and shifted, depending on the role science would play in accentuating the uniqueness of the human. Humanist truths about the natural world were supported by scientific method through such methods as experiential verification, thereby establishing criteria for falsification. This epistemological orientation helped to shape the humanist ethic that was also evident in Sellars's conceptual framework. For him, humans were the sole source of fulfilling their own goals, one of which was maximizing human fulfillment and minimizing suffering. No supernatural source was necessary for establishing truth and morals.

During the same general period, John Dewey (1859–1952) shared Sellars's positive view of humans as naturally intelligent. Dewey was a philosopher and psychologist who held teaching positions at the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago, and Columbia University. His fame as a philosopher of education and his monumental contributions to educational theory have often overshadowed the importance of his humanistic ideas. Dewey, in particular, focused on the human capacity to rise above genetic instincts and private perspectives as individuals work together for common goals and strive toward an ideal future. For Dewey, this happens best in what he calls a comprehensive community of beings.[17] As did Sellars, Dewey emphasized a naturalistic worldview, replacing organized Christianity with secular humanism, which he described in terms of our relations to one another and the values contained in those relationships. In *A Common Faith*, Dewey

writes: “Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been the common faith of mankind. It remains for us to make it explicit and militant.”[18]

Dewey also formulated the notion of religiousness to distinguish it from the institutionalized, creedal forms of religion that re-inscribed confessional truths of supernatural origins. For Dewey, openness to the processes of continued rigor and inquiry yields a religious orientation or attitude that trusts the natural interactions between humanity and its environment will generate more intelligence and knowledge; enactment of this religiousness is also dependent on the proper use of scientific methods to probe the mysteries of the natural world. He asserts:

> The essentially unreligious attitude is that which attributes human achievement and purpose to man in isolation from the world of physical nature and his fellows. Our successes are dependent upon the co-operation of nature. The sense of the dignity of human nature is as religious as is the sense of awe and reverence when it rests upon a sense of human nature as a cooperating part of a larger whole. Natural piety is not of necessity either a fatalistic acquiescence in natural happenings or a romantic idealization of the world. It may rest upon a just sense of nature as the whole of which we are parts, while it also recognizes that we are parts that are marked by intelligence and purpose, having the capacity to strive by their aid to bring conditions into greater consonance with what is humanly desirable. Such piety is an inherent constituent of a just perspective in life.[19]

Although Dewey’s naturalism eschewed supernaturalism, he did not let go of religious language—a decision that would become a point of contention against him from both traditional religionists and atheists and other secular humanists. For example, in an gesture that caused more confusion than enlightenment for many, Dewey urged people to keep using the God-construct, as the term connoted community, ideals, or whatever it was that made people strive to do their best, not a supernatural being.[20] These philosophical assertions from Dewey preceded the United States entering the Cold War, religion becoming entwined with patriotism, and the term “God” being added to the currency and the Pledge of Allegiance.

A central feature of Dewey’s pragmatic naturalist humanism was freedom, a concept that has traditionally been aligned with unique human qualities. Writing during the 1930s, Dewey became increasingly concerned about dangerous developments in American social and political life that jeopardized the intellectual freedom of inquiry, the political freedom of freethought, and the moral freedom of idealism. Contrasting his philosophic system to older, classical models represented by thinkers like Descartes, Dewey was persuaded that older ontological fixed systems imposed needless constraints on human flourishing. As James Gouinlock suggests, Dewey wished to liberate human conduct from such constraints, aiming to show humans might thrive and prosper within the vicissitudes of the environment by learning how to function with nature’s processes of change—with *becoming*, in traditional terminology.[21] In an essay entitled *Freedom*, Dewey writes:

> In ultimate analysis, freedom is important because it is a condition both of realization of the potentialities of an individual and of social progress. Without light, a people perish. Without freedom, light grows dim and darkness comes to reign. Without freedom, old truths become so stale and worn that they cease to be truths and become mere dictates of external authority. Without freedom, search for new truth and the disclosure of new paths in which humanity may walk more securely and justly come to an end. Freedom, which is liberation for the individual, is the ultimate assurance of the movement of society toward more humane and noble ends.[22]

While advancing democratic values, Dewey also taught that education must center on children, in whom the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtues the future of humanity continued progress rested. He wrote: " … the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he is the center about which they are organized."[23]

Dewey's naturalistic approach to reason, freedom, and democratic values were dependent on an atheism that many conservative Christians deplored. In the later culture wars between a growing Christian conservative movement in the United States from the 1970s onward, Dewey's ideas were major points of contention. Many religious conservatives also replaced the evils of communism with that of secular humanism. In *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (2012), Daniel K. Williams devotes a section of Chapter 7 entitled "Culture Wars in the Carter Years" to "Concerns about 'Secular Humanism' in Education."[24] In discussing an interesting shift among evangelicals and fundamentalists in constructing a secular humanist conspiracy, Williams observes: "Yet when social conservatives became concerned about changes in school curricula in the late 1960s, they decided that objectionable programs such as sex education and values clarification classes might be an attempt by the National Education Association and, in the words of conservative Catholic journalist John Steinbacher, John Dewey's 'coterie of sycophantic followers' to 'make good little Humanists out of the kids.'"[25]

In a brief piece written in 2011, Andrew Hartman also discusses the influence such figures as Francis Schaeffer, Rousas John Rushdoony, and Timothy LaHaye had on the religious right in the late 1970s and 1980s. Their popular writings aided the Christian right's argument that the public schools were in violation of the First Amendment because the schools had established an official religion: secular humanism. Their basic argument was interesting: although atheistic, secular humanism exemplified all the features of an established religion and thus the public schools, steeped in the tenets of secular humanism, violated the religious freedom of Christians.[26]

Postmodern Humanistic Discourses: Twenty-First Century Perspectives

Since the latter part of the twentieth century, some forms of humanism have come under attack within academic circles with the rise of what is often called post-humanism and the set of critical perspectives associated with the new materialism. These specialized debates and critiques often focus on a tradition of liberal humanism viewed as both limited and problematic for various reasons. Among their most sustained critiques is that modern humanistic philosophies tend to overestimate the autonomy of human animals, positioning us outside of complex, myriad nature and rendering invisible our inextricable connection to other life forms and material processes.[27] Furthermore, in targeting problematic forms of anthropocentricism and the re-inscription of exceptional human nature within this model of liberal humanism, these newer theoretical perspectives contend that it has generated a facile environmentalism in which nonhuman natural processes are often accorded value according to their usefulness to humans.

The majority of the critiques in the Americas are also associated with newer approaches to naturalism, which I describe here as the new materialism. New materialist perspectives include recent developments in feminist theories, animal studies, posthumanism, and vegetal studies—all of which offer expanded (or new materialist) views of the human and the animated nonhuman world.[28] These perspectives have contributed to ongoing efforts of decentering the human, and providing new bases for envisioning different personal and biopolitical futures. Timothy Morton's work provides one example of this type of posthumanist thinking in light of his critique that notions of human exceptionalism must be addressed in light of ecological concerns and theorizing within the Anthropocene. His *Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People* (2019) explores the separation between humans and non-humans from an object-oriented ontological perspective, arguing that humans need to radically rethink the way in which we conceive of, and relate to, non-human animals and nature as a whole, going on to explore the political implications of such a change. Morton challenges humanists to be attuned to what he calls "the fact of our existence in a biosphere, the 'symbiotic real' from which we have been 'severed'. Humans are discrete beings, but deeply interrelated with, and reliant on, other beings (viruses, bacteria, other animals)."[29]

Donna Haraway's feminist materialism is another example of a critical humanistic stance that challenges some aspects of modern humanism. Although she is known as a materialist feminist with Marxist leanings, Haraway's ideas reveal a break with older notions of humanism even as she re-invents the human—all while unmasking the persistent forms of anthropocentricism that lurk in many feminist, ethical, and philosophical articulations. In her *Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway writes:

> The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted if not turned into amusement parks—language tool use, social behavior, mental events, nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal. And many people no longer

> feel the need for such a separation; indeed, many branches of feminist culture affirm the pleasure of connection of human and other living creatures. Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are a clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture. Biology and evolutionary theory over the last two centuries have simultaneously produced modern organisms as objects of knowledge and reduced the line between humans and animals to a faint trace re-etched in ideological struggle or professional disputes between life and social science.[30]

In bringing together the creative intersections of science, animal studies, and material feminism, Haraway has confronted a colonizing legacy that also depends on the dominant cultural fantasy of human exceptionalism, which anchors humans on one side of the Great Divide, away from all other species. This premise assumes that the human alone is not a spatial and temporal web of interspecies dependencies. Countering the popular myths of the self-made individual in the United States, Donna Haraway addresses humanity's intricate entanglement with other material processes in another work:

> I love the fact that human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with the genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such, some of which play in a symphony necessary to my being alive at all, and some of which are hitching a ride and doing the rest of me, of us, no harm. I am vastly outnumbered by my tiny companions; better put, I become an adult human being in company with these tiny messmates. To be one is always to become with many.[31]

Haraway's conceptual efforts to blur the traditional ontological line between humans and other organisms has also been represented by some advocates of religious naturalism and pragmatic naturalism. In the works of Donald Crosby, Ursula Goodenough, Jerome Stone, Michael Hogue, Loyal Rue, and Carol Wayne White, ethically oriented religious naturalists have consistently resisted the aims of traditional humanism that have posited humans outside of myriad nature and eclipsed the interrelatedness of all natural processes.[32] As with the case of Morton and Haraway, some will argue against including these perspectives under humanism. However, I think these critical perspectives expand what is traditionally identified as humanistic discourse; in the process, they have also challenged contemporaries to continue thinking intelligibly about the category of the human within the Anthropocene era.[33] With varying degrees of emphasis, they offer the important awareness that humans are part of an inextricable network of natural processes that make the very category of the human itself intelligible. They also emphasize many of the ideals of humanistic thinking in rejecting traditional supernaturalism, emphasizing human agency, and evoking an ethics of responsibility with the use of scientific methods.

Among the various religious humanisms represented in this body of language is Michael Hogue's *American Immanence: Democracy for an Uncertain World* (2018), which creatively explores issues of sovereignty and race within the Anthropocene age, all while offering a powerful indictment of contemporary social, political, economic, and environmen-

tal realities.[34] Hogue's focus on this tradition of American immanence as the starting point for addressing a political theology can be seen as a type of religious humanism. With it, he rejects the logics of a metaphysics of inside and outside, and rather seeks to draw out the radically democratic, ecological, and the political potential implications of the pragmatic naturalist, radically empirical, and process relational lineages of American immanence. In Hogue's rendering, this tradition approaches moral values as emergent, provisional and negotiated rather than antecedent, absolute and imposed. This tradition also rejects the symbol of God as unitary, sovereign, supernatural, and metaphysically transcendent, but clears the way for symbolizing the divine and sacred as diffused, vulnerable, natal, and immanent. By affirming the wonder and sublimity of the diverse expressions of creativity and agency in the universe, this tradition of American immanence lures humans toward more vital and more resonant ways of being in the world, more existentially and spiritually enlivening modes of life.

Carol Wayne White's religious naturalism has also suggested that for many blacks oriented towards naturalism, humanism, and social justice, a thorny but important issue arises: the traditional exclusivity of the category itself, or what some of us have recognized as lacunae in conceptualizing the human. The theoretical violence perceivable in how the category of the human has been constructed has been acutely recounted in feminist, liberationist, and postcolonial critiques. Their persuasive critiques stress that the normative human subject has been primarily conceptualized as, and associated with, the lived experiences of white males of European descent, into whose ranks African Americans and other minoritarian subjects have not traditionally been admitted. In short, all human subjects have not traditionally been included in what is "properly" human.[35]

Humanism, Theism, and Religion

Whether expressed in secularist philosophies, religious humanism, or featuring the use of scientific thought and naturalism, humanists have consistently dismissed the value, intelligibility, and meaningfulness of the concept God in human life. These articulations specifically reveal modernist processes of thought that have freed individuals from relying on traditional religious explanatory power for assessing human origins, worth, and aims, particularly in light of empirical and scientific methods that often inform humanistic knowledge claims. With varying degrees of radicality, atheistic thinkers, free thinkers, secular humanists, and religious humanists have emphasized human efforts shorn of any supernaturalism or transcendental ordering of existence. Furthermore, what is notable about this theme of humanism is its shared conviction among humanists of various racial, ethnic, class, and social-economic status.

The God-Hypothesis and Cognitive Science

A more recent conceptual apparatus that has aided the humanistic rejection of theistic belief as an antiquated notion is cognitive science. With this interweaving of humanistic aspirations and scientific methods, some humanist scholars are ascertaining new, deeper

ways of asking who we humans are, of asking about human purpose and meaning, and of asking about the value of human life—basic questions that are as old as some of our earliest stories, religious sentiments, and philosophies. For these humanists, these ancient questions are now part of current rational efforts to understand who we are and our world through scientific means, thereby creating an exciting, critical juncture for humanists. They follow the dictates of Susan Haack, who has suggested that science represents the "most remarkable amplification and refinement of a [characteristically] human talent, the capacity to inquire."[36]

Cognitive Science Research (CSR) offers forms of argumentation emerging from such thinkers as Matthew Alper, who considers humans to be religious animals whose brains are hard-wired for "God," even as he asserts that no God exists, and that the "spiritual" is really the "scientific."[37] Elsewhere, in reference to certain metaphysical religious affirmations, Todd Tremlin contends that supernatural beings are merely mental conceptions that human brains acquire, represent, and transmit, as a result of the evolutionary process. As the natural products of human evolutionary psychology, "gods" can be explained scientifically as successful ideas.[38] Further, from an anthropological perspective, Pascal Boyer has argued that recent scientific developments reveal in humanity a central metaphysical urge—an "irredeemable human propensity toward superstition, myth and faith, or a special emotion that only religion provides," which, he believes, stands at the root of all religion.[39] The key assumptions underlying these forms of CSR often lead to what some would identify as the impoverished conclusion that religious claims are primarily and best understood in psychoanalytical or biological terms, or that religion is ultimately a residual (albeit ineffectual) evolutionary mechanism operating in humanity that *must* be overcome.

Christian humanists often target the dogmatic reductionism, ahistoricism, and subtle universalism evident in the dismissal of religion on such terms, rejecting wholesale the negative determinations about religion that posit in problematic, universal ways its abnormality or irrationality. Many humanists, on the other hand, have attempted to wrestle with the enduring power of religious claims, specifically, supernaturalism, in other ways. Sellars's work as a humanist is important to note here. In 1932, in collaboration with Raymond P. Bragg, leader of a Chicago-based Humanist group, Sellars produced the *Humanist Manifesto I* of 1933. They conceived the document as the statement of a new *secular religion* designed to replace the old religions that had been founded on claims of supernatural revelation, or on fear and helplessness. *Manifesto I* also opposed an acquisitive and profit-motivated society, envisioning a mutually cooperative worldwide society committed to the rational resolution of problems.[40] Among the thirty-six signatories were Edwin Burtt of Cornell University, and John Dewey and John Hermann Randall of Columbia University; others who signed the document were also professors from the University of Chicago and Columbia University, and about half were Unitarians. According to Alan Charles Kors, all current forms of humanism around the world have their origins in the *Humanist Manifesto I* of 1933. In the United States, these include such major organizations as the Council for Secular Humanism; the American Humanist Association; the American Ethical Union; the Society for Humanistic Judaism; and HUUmanists (formerly the Fellowship of

Religious Humanists), the affiliate organization for humanists within the Unitarian Universalist Association.[41]

The Manifesto I contains a complete and thorough denial of God, describing humans as masters of their fate and assuming that formulated ideals are achievable. Among its key principles are the following, as originally stated:

> (a) Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.
>
> (b) Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.
>
> (c) In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer, the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in the heightened sense of personal life and in a co-operative effort to promote social well-being.
>
> (d) The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate … . A socialized and co-operative economic order must be established.
>
> (e) Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no [*sic*] longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man [*sic*] is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power of its achievement.[42]

With the publication of *The Manifesto I* and its uncompromising rejection of supernaturalism, the more variegated and diffused usages of humanism in the Americas were often subsumed under secular humanism.

Secular Humanism as a Comprehensive Worldview

Unabashedly *nonreligious*, secular humanism rejects all belief in a realm or beings imagined to transcend ordinary experience. Secular humanism also grew in the twentieth century as a result of the work and writings of Paul Kurtz (1925–2012), founder of the Council for Secular Humanism and *Free Inquiry* magazine, a publication of the Council. On the current website of *Free Inquiry*, Kurtz is given credit for defining secular humanism as a *lifestance* or a *eupraxsophy*, which is a body of principles suitable for orienting a complete human life.[43] The principles outlined on the site also include the Enlightenment principle of individualism, which celebrates emancipating the individual from traditional controls by family, church, and state, increasingly empowering individuals to set the terms of their own life.

Additional information describes secular humanists as upholding an epistemological stance that affirms nature (the world of everyday physical experience) is all there is, and that reliable knowledge is best obtained when we explore nature using the scientific

method. It features naturalism as negating supernatural entities like God, and advocating access to reliable knowledge via the natural world and the impartial review by multiple observers. In the final analysis, secular humanists do not see their framework as a merely negative, reactive response to theistic and supernatural affirmations, but rather an affirmation of certain values, aims, and visions of life.[44] With its sense of being *comprehensive*, as in touching every aspect of life, including issues of values, meaning, and identity, this emerging notion of secular humanism anticipates some of the conceptual and epistemological orientations of new materialists that will dominate intellectual conversations in the twenty-first century.

In collaboration with Edwin H. Wilson, Kurtz composed *The Humanist Manifesto II* in 1973 with the aim of updating the first document. *Manifesto II* begins on a more sobering note, indicating that the first manifesto seemed too optimistic in light of the harsh realities brought about by a world war, Nazism, and some negative consequences of science. The opening statement also describes developments that a new generation of secular humanists must contend with that *Manifesto I* did not recognize: "The beginning of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and social outlook. In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation."[45] Notwithstanding these problems and a sense of living in uncertain times, *Manifesto II* continues with an air of cautious optimism that humans can still work toward positive change.

More recently, as part of its open-ended series, the secular humanist organization has constructed another document that supersedes *Manifesto II*. Key principles in this third iteration emphasize participatory agency in positively transforming the world and achieving personal fulfillment without appeal to supernaturalism. The following passage indicates the spirit of the humanist organization to change constantly with the times: "Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity. The lifestance of Humanism—guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience—encourages us to live life well and fully. It evolved through the ages and continues to develop through the efforts of thoughtful people who recognize that values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance."[46]

In seeing the evolution of secular humanism through these various manifestos, it is important to consider Joseph Blankholm's point that historically secularism, humanism, and secular humanism are closely related terms that have been fought over for a long time and used in a variety of ways, both in the Americas and elsewhere.[47] Blankholm also provides a helpful understanding of the history of secularism, which he traces to George Jacob Holyoake, a British freethinker in the 19th century. Holyoake coined the term "secularism," and during his time constructed a comprehensive approach to secularism as a code of duty pertaining to this life. During Holyoake's time, "freethinker" was an umbrel-

la term for a variety of positions affiliated with religious and political dissenters: atheists, rationalists, spiritualists, and socialists. Founded on considerations purely about humans, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable, secularism for Holyoake was encapsulated in three essential principles: “1. The improvement of this life by material means. 2. That science is the available Providence of man. 3. That it is good to do good.”[48] In a later text, Holyoake viewed humanism as one of the four leading ideas of Secularism, along with moralism, materialism, and utilitarian utility; he kept humanism subsumed, however, under Secularism, which related to the “present existence of man, and to action, the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life—having for its objects the development of the physical, moral, and intellectual nature of man to the highest perceivable point.”[49]

Holyoake’s ideas helped to shape humanistic ideas and developments in the Americas in the early part of the twentieth century, such as the Free Religious Association (FRA), which foreshadowed later established humanist groups in the 1920s. Established in 1867, the FRA grew out of the American Unitarian Association, in response to certain Unitarian leaders’ decision to adopt an explicitly Christian platform. More radically based Unitarians, such as Octavius Brooks Frothingham, William James Potter, and Francis Ellingwood Abbot, established the FRA as an umbrella term for a wide range of religious perspectives the featured the principles of free inquiry and individual discernment.[50]

Free Religion, Ethical Societies, and Religious Humanism in Jewish Culture

The FRA influenced the work of Felix Adler (1851–1933), founder of the New York Society for Ethical Culture in New York City, which was a key antecedent of religious humanism in the early twentieth century.[51] Adler held the chair of political and social ethics at Columbia University from 1902 to 1933, and was also a rationalist, popular lecturer, religious leader and social critic. In his early career, the German-born Adler preached at Temple Emanu-El, where his father served as one of New York’s most prominent rabbis. His concern over the tensions and visions created by dogmatic creedal approaches to religion led him to create an institution focusing on an ethics of transforming lives for the better. This legacy of “deed over creed” remains with the Society to the present day.

Under Adler’s leadership, the Society initiated projects aimed at improving conditions for the under privileged and impoverished communities in New York City. Members of the Society staffed clubs, libraries, gymnasiums, job training programs, a kindergarten, a mothers’ club, educational classes, and two employment bureaus, which evolved into independent organizations like The Hudson Guild, Henry Street Settlement and the Neighborhood Guild.[52] The Society also provided several prominent Americans with a platform to speak out about civil rights, including Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, and James Weldon Johnson. In 1909, leaders of the Society signed a petition calling for the creation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Adler also

served on the first Executive Committee of the National Urban League, beginning in 1910.[53]

Adler's ideas would also exert great influence on Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881–1983), one of the major figures in contemporary Jewish thought and founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism. Kaplan's major contribution to Jewish theology is his theory of transnaturalism. The purpose of this theory is to develop a philosophical theology that avoids what Kaplan considers to be the entrapments of both supernaturalism and reductive naturalism.[54] For many, Kaplan's model of Jewish thinking in the twentieth century represents a form of religious humanism.

Humanism as Acts of Liberation and Revolutionary Activism

This particular aspect of humanism represents a critical stance within the humanist camp in furthering the early Marxist reading of dominant narratives that are experienced as the limits of reason, when reason is understood as value-free, rational inquiry. It also emphasizes Stuart Hall's argument that disseminating ideas always entails processes of encoding and decoding. In this context, there is an astute historicism that unmasks the universalism associated with the dominant discourse, generating various strategies of decoding for purposes of freedom and resistance to oppression. I associate this form of humanism with postcolonial discourses and analyses, as evident in this insight from Colin McFaren and Peter Lankshear: "In order to reclaim their right to live *humanly*, marginalized groups must not only theorize and analyze but also confront, in praxis, those institutions, processes, and ideologies that prevent them from, as Paulo Freire puts it, 'naming their world.'"[55] In short, for many individuals whose lives are systematically marginalized and devalued, the appeal to the ongoing necessity of resisting oppression and injustice is through the language of humanism. I discuss this form of humanistic thought within specific cultural contexts of Latin America and the United States.

Humanism in the Latin American Setting

Humanism in Latin America is much more difficult to identify than it is in the United States and Canada. However, one can trace certain humanistic themes within the writings and activism of select thinkers seeking to alleviate widespread poverty and suffering, as well as the chaos and identity crises, that arose in Latin American countries in the wake of freeing themselves from colonial rule. The colonial period in Latin America spanned three centuries, from Columbus's arrival in 1492 to approximately 1810, when Argentina and Colombia declared their independence, igniting the fires of revolution that were soon to sweep the region.[56] During the early 19th century, European positivism—inclusive of Auguste Comte's and Spencer's distinctive teachings—also held sway in Latin America. Meri Clark notes, "In the early 19th century, European positivism asserted that human society could be perfected through the acquisition of knowledge based on scientific study. Positivists rejected religion and metaphysics as pre-scientific thought and main-

tained that human thought would surpass these."[57] Many Latin American leaders, educational reformers, and intellectuals enthusiastically embraced positivism, believing such scientific study would not only aid them into investigating the causal elements of social injustices, but also in eliminating them. In Brazil, for example, positivism was intimately with the keywords of "order and progress" promoted by Comte himself and applied by the governing elites.[58]

The earlier optimism from 1850 onward, however, was not shared by a later generation of Latin American intellectuals who became dissatisfied with some of positivism's implications and wary of its ability to deliver on its promises. These younger Latin American theorists, leaders, and intellectuals began envisioning conceptions of freedom that targeted the ill-effects of positivism. Guillermo Hurtado notes: "The anti-positivist movement in Latin America was a cultural phenomenon of continental dimensions whose participants included distinguished thinkers such as Alejandro Korn and Coriolano Alberini in Argentina, Raimundo de Farias Brito in Brazil, Enrique Molina in Chile, Jose Vasconcelos and Antonio Caso in Mexico, Alejandro Deustua and Francisco Garcia Calderon in Peru, and Jose Enrique Rodo and Carlos Vaz Ferreira in Uruguay."[59] For our purposes, the Ateneo de la Juventud, an anti-positivist group comprising young Mexican intellectuals, philosophers, and writers, deserves mention, as there is a discernible humanistic element within its efforts to revitalize Mexican culture within the wider context of the Mexican Revolution (1910). These younger Mexican intellectuals sought to reverse an earlier trend of promoting positivism—an effort already taken by an earlier group formed around the magazine *Savia Moderna* in 1906.[60]

Prominent members of the Ateneo de la Juventud included Antonio Caso, Alfonso, Reyes, Jose Vasconcelos, Diego Rivera, Julio Torri, and Pedro Henriquez Urena, all important figures in Latin American philosophical and intellectual history. In spite of the differences among them, they all shared an interest in addressing the cultural disarray and loss of a shared identity felt among Mexicans as a result of the leadership of Mexican President Porfirio Diaz (1830–1915), whose long dictatorship was called the Porfiriato (1877–1880, 1884–1911). In this setting, positivism was directly associated with Diaz's dictatorship.[61] Hurtado reminds us that members of Ateneo held a number of positions regarding the imminent revolution, yet this fact does not diminish the political dimension of their ideas in opposition to positivism.

Antonio Caso presented a series of lectures in 1909, setting forth "an *historical* vision of positivism with the aim of clarifying how much of this doctrine was salvageable and how much needed to be superseded."[62] One particular target for the Ateneo was a Spencerian-based evolutionary framework that described human life as primarily governed by natural laws. Expanding on ideas from Henri Bergson, Arthur Schopenhauer, Fredrich Nietzsche, and José Enrique Camilo Rodó Piñeyro, the group resisted the determinism inherent in Spencer's account and constructed conceptions of humans as moral, willing, free, and creative subjects. As Hurtado observes: "For the Ateneo, reality included the spirit and hence the possibility of full liberty, even the freedom to change the established social and

moral order, sacrificing individual interests for the sake of the common good. In the context of 1910, the thought of the Ateneo was indeed subversive."[63]

In his writings, Caso also rejected the positivist views of humanity as being moved by selfish calculation, of morality as being accountable by the laws of nature, and of the universe as governed by deterministic laws.[64] For Caso, moral actions did not emerge from the rational observation of universal norms, but rather from feelings of charity toward others. His philosophical theory challenged a strict materialist view of humans, replacing it with one that features humans willingly and freely acting charitable toward each other with the common good in mind.[65] In this respect, Caso's views can be viewed as an emancipatory ethics, or type of religious humanism, for his contemporaries. In describing Caso's humanism, John Haddox asserts: "To replace the Porfiristic view of man as an economically determined, egoistic being driven by a raw and brutal craving for power, Caso offered the view of man as a being capable of heroic, self-sacrificing love. This love, which is unique to man, can be realized only in freedom."[66]

With the collapse of the Porfiriato, Caso's energies were also devoted to restoring a national consciousness to a generation of Mexicans. One of his aspirations was a sense of unity (racial, cultural, and social) that had become thwarted by what he perceived as divisions between their private and public interests—he sought to revolutionize the moral and social order of Mexico.[67] Caso became the leading figure of Mexican philosophy in the first decades of the 20th century. He created the Department of Philosophy in the National University of Mexico, influencing several generations of philosophers and serving as a moral and intellectual leader. His example illuminates certain aspects of humanistic thought in Latin America as intimately connected to an important question regarding philosophy: how does one write philosophy—for whom and for what purposes?

Other forms of humanism in Latin America can be found in the literary field. In *Black Literature and Humanism in Latin America*, Richard L. Jackson traces the roots of Afro-Hispanic literature from the early twentieth-century *Afrocriollo* movement—the Harlem Renaissance of Latin America—to the fiction and criticism of black Latin Americans today.[68] According to Jackson, this movement was generated by black Latin Americans facing a crisis of identity against the bulwarks of colonialism and white supremacy in their own lands. Exploring what he calls literary Americanism in Latin America, Jackson highlights the writings of Carlos Guillermo Wilson (or "Cubena") and Quince Duncan in Central America, Nelson Estupiñán Bass in Ecuador, Jorge Artel and Juan Zapata Olivella in Columbia, and the Afro-Columbian Manuel Zapata Olivella.

These writers "exemplify important tendencies in developing recent Afro-Hispanic fiction, namely black pride and an increasing identification with Africa as well as with literary Americanism, class solidarity, and Third Worldism. Foremost, however, is that these writers share with each other and with other Afro-Latin authors a legacy characterized by a quest for human rights and freedoms."[69] Jackson describes the humanism represented by this canon of literary creativity as follows: "In black literature in Latin America, moral persuasion, subjective identification, and such themes as freedom, liberty and justice re-

flect social and humanistic concerns. Like all great literature much black literature in Latin America is written to 'protest some aspect of the human condition.'"[70] In speaking out for human rights through their creative reach, these six authors "represent very well the humanistic quest that characterizes black literature and black life throughout the Americas."[71]

Socio-political inflections of humanistic thought are also evident among activists belonging to some of the international humanist chapters found in Latin America. As suggested earlier, historically, humanism has not been as visible or strong in Latin America as it has been in other part of the Americas (Canada and the United States). One primary reason is the overwhelmingly strong presence of confessional Catholicism and Protestantism in many countries (e.g., Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica), which makes the idea of positive human values outside of a religious framework novel to many of the inhabitants. The website of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), however, shows that 2017 was a crucial year for the growth of the humanist movement in Latin America. From one report, the growth is evident: "Our Growth and Development plan focused on Latin America as its priority region for the year, and the effects of this regional focus are clear. In just 12 months the IHEU has doubled its membership in Latin America, rising from 7 to 14 Member Organizations, in 9 countries or territories: Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Suriname."[72] The website also suggests there has been an increasing interest in the humanist worldview, and a higher awareness of the importance of secularism as a common political principle.[73]

In a June 2018 blog entry, Giovanni Gaetanni (Humanists International growth and development officer) corroborates this report of the rising number of secularists and humanists in the region. While stating that *Humanistas Guatemala* is the only humanist organization in Latin America at that time to have a paid staff, he happily reports the following: "I met with many new secular activists and organizations, from Mexico all the way down to Argentina, passing from countries like Honduras and Costa Rica, where Humanists International has not previously had any Member Organizations but where I now believe we will soon see fresh applications for the very first time."[74] Gaetanni also reports that the new adherents "rightly conceive humanism as a positive and independent lifestance, which cannot be reduced to 'opposition to religion.'"[75]

Another recent development is the Latinx Humanist Alliance, which is an affiliate of the AHA (American Humanist Association). This group was founded to advance the interests of the Latinx humanist community and to server as an advisory council to the AHA. Along with the Black Humanist Alliance, the LGBTQ Humanist Alliance, and the Feminist Humanist Alliance—all Social Justice Alliance groups—the Latinx Humanist Alliance seeks to facilitate social justice activism among, expand the visibility of, and foster safe spaces for Latinx Humanists.[76]

Juhem Nararro-Rivera, a contemporary scholar addressing the creative interstices of race, politics, religion, and humanism, has been vigilant in speaking about the growing number of Latino humanists. Born in Puerto Rico, Navarro-Rivera currently serves as a

Senior Fellow at the Institute for Humanist Studies, as well as on the editorial boards of *Secularism* and *Nonreligion and Secular Studies*. In his writings, Navarro-Rivera has challenged the stereotypical view of Latinos as primarily resistant to secularism, and he has championed the growth of secularism among people of color, and specifically among Latinos.[77] As an activist-scholar, Navarro-Rivera has also focused attention on the role white supremacy continues to play in shaping humanistic discourses. He writes: "People of color, religious or secular, live in a world where whiteness is the dominant identity. Their struggles and their identities are often defined by their interactions as subordinates in this social order. … Thus if the secular movement wants to base its politics in terms of facilitating an inclusive secular identity, it needs to rethink how it will approach and reach out to the new secular population."[78]

Black Humanism, Atheism, and Humanistic Thinking in the United States

In the United States, many tensions between groups and the unrealized potential of all individuals remain visible. It is now generally known that the political leaders (all male) that contributed to the structure of the democratic government of the United States endorsed lofty humanistic ideals from Enlightenment thought that often conflicted with their personal convictions and lives. Thomas Jefferson and other US politicians employed humanistic ideals in their arguments for establishing certain truths as "self-evident," such that the then generic "man" was endowed with unalienable rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and that governments existed precisely to secure those preexistent rights. At the same time, the fuller histories have shown that many of the framers of the constitution did not believe in racial or gender equality. This point leads to an important insight referenced earlier: whereas most white humanists in the modern era rejected theism, its language and imagery on the general grounds of its unintelligibility in light of scientific findings, many humanists of color (whether identifying themselves as religious humanists, atheists, or secular humanists) rejected traditional theistic claims on the grounds of racial injustice they experienced.

In their quest to end racial oppression and thwart the processes of dehumanization embedded in white supremacy, black humanists in the United States have had to abandon their allegiance to traditional religion, and specifically theism. Christopher Cameron has traced the growth of atheism among African Americans back to the nineteenth century when the nation retreated from the promised reconstruction and then established Jim Crow laws. Cameron further observes that "this growth also coincided with the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s. Urbanization, technological advancements, and growing opportunities for education promoted secularism among black intellectuals such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen and Richard Wright. This secularism included atheism but also a commitment to improving human life through reason rather than faith. The Renaissance did not precipitate black atheism so much as foster the rise of an increasingly self-conscious secular community."[79] Cameron also describes the growing visibility of what he calls the new black atheists. Led by influential author Sikivu Hutchinson and Mandisa Thomas, founder of the Black Nonbelievers, the new

black atheistic movement has been driven by the conviction that religion hurts the black community in its institutionalization of sexism, misogyny, and anti-GLTB sentiments. As Hutchinson notes in *Moral Combat* (2011), "for many black atheist women, atheism's appeal lies in its deconstruction of the bankrupt mores, values and ideologies that prop up patriarchy, sexism, heterosexism, racism, white supremacy, imperialism and economic injustice."[80] Other national groups, such as Black Atheists of America and Black Nonbelievers Inc., as well as local groups like Black Skeptics Los Angeles have since come into existence. While it has not self-identified strictly as a humanist movement, the Black Lives Movement (BLM) shares affinities with the new black atheist movement. The BLM moniker has expanded to become an umbrella term for diverse groups, each of which has its own local character and aim. These organizations are of varying sizes and take different approaches. Altogether, they form a spectrum of gender identity, sexuality, region, age, class and political belief. Conflict does arise, as some members expressed in 2017 article: "We are not always in full agreement, as we have competing ideas and we will undoubtedly upset each other in the process of making difficult decisions. We are here because we believe that our victories in service of black people are bigger and better when we win together.[81] All of the groups are united in bringing forceful attention to the unresolved problem of white supremacy in the United States and globally. The BLM movement is distinctive in prioritizing a referendum that unabashedly declares the sacrality of black humanity. Addressing a rally in October 2014, Ashley Yates, a Ferguson activist and cofounder of Millennial Activists United, describes the reason that the focus on black humanity has been used as a catalyst for political action.

> And at the very core of this is humanity—Black Lives Matter. We matter. We matter. Black lives matter because they are lives. Because we are human. Because we eat. Because we breathe. Because he [Michael Brown] had a dream, because he made rap songs, they may have had cuss words in them. Yeah. He was human. And when we neglect to see that we end up where we are today.[82]

Yates's words are instructive. She describes the very materiality of black lives and the intrinsic value that must be afforded them, which I believe the overall movement is advancing in its various ways. Specifically, I am suggesting that BLM should be seen as more than another important protest movement against myriad social injustices; its platform and principles help generate a conceptual space for further exploration of humanistic values related to how we come to terms with life itself. Consider, for example, co-organizer Opal Tometi's description of the movement: "We wanted to affirm to our people that we love one another, and that no matter how many times we hear about the extrajudicial killing of a community member, we would mourn, and affirm the value of their life."[83] Tometi's rendering of BLM focuses on blacks as agents of history, not mere objects of circumstance, who have a profound sense of love for each other, for life, and blackness.

BLM has unabashedly embraced these values while declaring its continuity with the aspirations of past black movements that have resisted the dehumanizing forces of whiteness. One key tenet asserts: "Our continued commitment to liberation for all Black people means we are continuing the work of our ancestors and fighting for our collective free-

dom because it is our duty."[84] This principle conveys the depth and magnitude of black liberation that the BLM movement seeks. To better comprehend the holistic nature and theoretical force of this aspiration, I present a brief overview of influential, modernist processes of racialization that provide an important historical backdrop for BLM. The moral outrage and existential distress of the BLM platform cannot be fully appreciated without such historical contextualization.

In *The Origins of Black Humanism in America* (1988), Juan Floyd-Thomas offers another dimension of black humanistic traditions. He chronicles and assesses the life, work, and writings of black Unitarian leader Ethelred Brown (1875–1956), offering an overlooked dimension of both humanism in general and black religious thought, more specifically.[85] Brown was born in Jamaica, British West Indies and moved to the United States in 1910. According to Floyd-Thomas, Brown's work within the Harlem Unitarian Church (HUC) "his approach to Black humanism was informed by and subsequently influenced various structure systems of belief/unbelief, such as progressive social reform, liberal Christian theology, Marxist political economic theory, Black nationalism/pan-Africanism, and racial integrationism."[86] Floyd-Brown sees Brown's legacy opening the door for later black Unitarian leaders like Norm Allen, Jr. and Mark Morrison-Reed. In 1989, Norm Allen, Jr. founded the African Americans for Humanism, one of the first explicitly secular organizations for blacks. As a subdivision of the Council for Secular Humanism, AAH was established primarily "as an educational organization that promotes humanist values such as critical thinking, humanist ethics, church/state separation, and an appreciation for scientific methods of investigation."[87]

Early Intellectual Framers of Black Humanism: Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. DuBois, and James Baldwin

In the early and mid-twentieth century, Anna Julia Cooper, W. E. B. Du Bois, and James Baldwin promoted various forms of humanistic thinking that demonstrated the ways in which radical affirmations of blacks' humanity become a crucial vehicle for something more fundamental than traditional transcendental theism: life-affirmation. As a collective, their voices contribute to a rich legacy of intellectual black humanism that is drawing the attention of many scholars for a number of reasons. In the collection of essays, *A Voice from the South*, Cooper writes not merely as a pious Christian, but also as a religious humanist.[88] In "The Gain from a Belief," Cooper uses processional imagery for human life to challenge the skepticism and positivism of various European philosophers who saw humanity as nothing more than a conglomeration of cells best explained by scientific empiricism. Cooper rejects this reductive materialism in favor of a loftier view of humanity, or in a " … sublime conception of life as the seed-time of character for the growing of a congenial inner-self to be forever a constant presence."[89] Rather than focus on narrow, moralistic precepts, or on abstract standards of virtue, Cooper asserts "life must be something more than dilettante speculation. And religion (ought to be if it isn't) a great deal more than mere gratification of the instinct for worship linked with the straight-teaching of ir-

reproachable credos. Religion must be life made true, and life is action, growth, development – begun now and ending never."[90]

In "What Are We Worth?," Cooper also describes black Americans as dynamic, malleable entities capable of transformative growth, contingent on society providing the proper conditions and forms of cultivation for its maturation.[91] Employing naturalistic metaphors alongside religious ones, Cooper characterized humans as evolving beings with the inner-determination to fulfill themselves. In doing so, she contributed to a discourse of human perfectibility that was also found in the influential writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and other nineteenth-century visionaries.[92] Cooper's brand of perfectionism (or her sense of an inner directionality operating within humans and all natural processes) conjoined individual, national, and universal aspirations within the context of multiple oppressions in the United States. The measure of human progress for Cooper was reflected in how well "each and every" Americans could live in the absence of unjust racial, gender, class prejudices, and of other expressions of xenophobia and cultural imperialism.[93] With her processual imagery, Cooper argues that various forms of inequality are ill-informed social constructions that are not inherent to the natural strivings and agential activities within all humans. Cooper's conception of human life as the emergence from a greater matrix of natural forces, and with the potential to self-actualize, compelled her to identify the problematic distortions of racial differentiations based on standards of superiority and inferiority. In "What Are We Worth?," she identifies the insidious forms of "negrophobia," which kept white Americans entrapped in self-delusions of superiority.[94]

In the same era, Du Bois's conceptualization of life behind the veil of race and the resulting "double-consciousness"—a sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others—conveyed his aspirations for Americans of African descent to look anew at themselves, and to re-invent themselves.[95] Du Bois also outlined the various means by which Americans of African descent, doubly constituted by two impulses (or experiencing a conflicted sense of self), have sought to create and sustain for themselves their own harmoniously grounded humanity—in short, to be authors of their own destinies. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois consistently characterizes blacks as beings with an innate desire for subjectivity. This desire is one of the hallmarks of existential humanism, as it is that capacity in humans that allow us to make our claim on life. Du Bois makes clear to the reader that blacks have been incessant dreamers of ontological integrity. The implication is that even when enslaved, African Americans' designation as objects in dominant white culture was held in tension with their ardent desire for transcendence. To be subjects of history in the classic Sartrean sense was the goal, and this meant their devotion to a noble human ideal—freedom—elevated to divine status. In "Our Spiritual Strivings," Du Bois observes, "Away back in the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment; few men ever worshipped Freedom with half such unquestioning faith as did the American Negro for two centuries."[96]

The ongoing inspiration Du Bois provided to his contemporaries was inextricably tied to his image of African Americans as centers of value whose self-generating genius and potency had become obfuscated by the veil. Furthermore, Du Bois's appreciation of the rich

semiotic significance of religious symbolism augmented his sense of blacks' rights to fullness of life vis-à-vis their accountability of their own humanity. His conceptions of a self-determined black humanity governed by a sense of purposive living countered the impotent, impoverished view of blacks as objects controlled by white charity and paternalism. In public speeches and personal correspondence, Du Bois's anti-metaphysical views and socialist sensibilities also have him emphasizing human ingenuity within the context of raced living in the United States. In a 1956 letter to Herbert Aptheker, he writes:

> I assumed that human beings could alter and re-direct the course of events as to better human conditions. I knew that this power was limited by environment, inheritance and natural law, and that from the point of view of science these occurrences must be a matter of Chance and not of Law. I did not rule out the possibility of some God also influencing and directing human action and natural law. However, I saw no evidence of such divine guidance. I did see evidence of the decisive action of human beings.[97]

In the mid-twentieth century, at the height of the civil rights era in the twentieth century, James Baldwin poignantly described blacks' experiences of marginality in North America. In a country besieged by white supremacy, he tried to capture the acute sense of displacement felt by African Americans with the creative use of the "bastard" epithet. Conjoining the personal and the political, Baldwin rhetorically expanded the term bastard to convey blacks' harried existence in the "New World" and to evoke an ethical quandary for white Americans. In the absence of embodied authenticity and relational integrity, Baldwin's bastard metaphor revealed the pathology inherent in many whites' refusal to embrace their familial kinship with blacks. With this term, Baldwin also raised a critical question to the America of his day: whether hope for its future could possibly exist in light of distorted forms of relationality. Baldwin's very use of the bastard term symbolized the moral paralysis he saw embedded in an American psyche suffering from a great lie perpetuated by white supremacy. With a critical awareness of experiencing oneself, one's people, one's culture as not quite genuine—as irregular, inferior, or of dubious origin—Baldwin spoke of cultivating a special attitude, [a] special place in this scheme."[98]

While not denying the reality of cultural, historical forces, Baldwin also declared that humans are always so much more than what our cultural markers claim for us. As he realized, "I had to claim my birthright. I am what time, circumstance, history, have made of me, certainly, but I am, also, much more than that. So are we all."[99] For Baldwin, claiming one's heritage is part of a more complex process of actualizing oneself as one relates to others, aspiring to achieve and experience one's humanity without falling prey to the damaging effects of a binary system that demarcates some humans as more, others as less. This self-reflexive step is an important facet of his racialized humanistic discourse. With emotionality intensity reverberating in his writings, Baldwin conjoined the private and the public, the personal and the political, to describe a transformative embodied love that brings awareness of our common humanity. This embodied love evokes the Sartrean notion of intersubjectivity: recognizing the humanity of the other before oneself confronts one's subjectivity in the most immediate way, both limiting and enabling what one could

possibly choose in any given context. This intimate encounter of knowing and being known by another brings with it a new awareness of seeing others differently and experiencing one's humanity as both free and bound.

The embodied love Baldwin evoked also imbued traditional religious terms with new, fresh, expanded meanings. His radical view of love was "something active, more like a fire, like a wind," not an empty abstraction describing a passive stance before some authorial figure outside of oneself.[100] With this humanistic bent, Baldwin rejected the traditional otherworldly eschatological discourse of fear and damnation featured in the holiness tradition of his youth, replacing it with an emphasis on the concrete dynamics of living here and now. Likewise, salvation is that which humans must do to save each other; for Baldwin, the most crucial aspect of salvation is its rootedness in human actions and efforts. The contingencies of life and concreteness of human experiences require redemptive actions from humans themselves. In Baldwin's thinking, humans displace the traditional supernatural deity and enact transformation in their lives, redeeming themselves from impoverished, erroneous views of their shared humanity. For example, after insisting on necessary changes to the dominant configuration of raced living in America, Baldwin ended a 1960s speech with the following words about the United States: "It will not be transformed by an act of God, but by all of us, by you and me. I don't believe any longer that we can afford to say that it is entirely out of our hands. We made the world we're living in and we have to make it over."[101]

Recent Developments in Black Humanistic Thinking

In his piece entitled "One Percenters:" Black Atheists, Secular Humanists, and Naturalists," William Hart argues that, broadly speaking, those belonging to this group viewed "human nature and destiny (necessity and historical contingency) through an anthropological rather than a theological lens. As three perspectives on the same phenomenon, they are the dialectical other of theism and conventional forms of religion. In all three cases, negating theism does positive productive and creative work, energizing a different kind of affirmation."[102] Hart includes in his essay the theories, activism, and ideas of a range of black activists, theorists, and visionaries to show the range of positions associated with one percenters. Among these are Hubert Harrison, widely known as "the father of Harlem radicalism," the famed poet Claude McKay, the West Indian Hodge Kirnon who immigrated to United States in 1908 and became an activist, feminist author Siviku Hutchinson, and prominent scholars like William R. Jones and Anthony B. Pinn. While critiquing the various types of one percenters, Hart essentially concludes that atheism, secular humanism, and naturalism are not an ethics or a politics. He writes: The connection between one's identity as a one percenter and a specific ethical-political orientation must be an intentional act. This orientation is forged through the life you live, the choices you make, the associations you maintain or abandon, and the allies and the enemies that you cultivate."[103]

Hart also notes that Anthony Pinn has been influential in advancing the existential, conceptual, and social relevance of black humanism. His work addresses the complexity of factors that give rise to the varieties of humanism in the Americas, and humanism's vexed, complicated, and ongoing relationship to religious ideas and claims.[104] One recent text, in particular, fits with the general direction of my discussion in this final section: *When Colorblindness Isn't the Answer: Humanism and the Challenge of Race* (2017). While addressing the colorblindness of humanistic orientations, Pinn retrieves and describes the persuasive power of a legacy of humanist thinking and sensibilities by blacks and other communities of color unknown to most European-centered communities. These histories show red, black, brown, tan, and yellow bodies as lovers of life and vital centers of value, asserting something more fundamental than transcendental theism: life affirmation.

In closing this discussion of humanism, it is noteworthy that the various voices, themes, and figures I have touched on amplify Pinn's important observation that humanism "comes in many shapes and sizes, and is expressed using a variety of cultural codes and grammars."[105] In short, humanism in the Americas comprises diverse peoples producing, reproducing, and transmitting historically produced meanings across a wide range of semiological and hermeneutical practices. In the different cultural contexts, what merits the dignity of being called a human varies, as well as the best method for justifying, securing, and sustaining human value, freedom, and dignity.

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Notes:

(1.) Tony Davies, *Humanism: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3.

(2.) Ibid., 19.

(3.) Ibid.

(4.) Ibid., 20.

(5.) Richard Norman, *On Humanism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 7.

(6.) For a sampling, see Anthony Pinn, ed., *What Is Humanism and Why Does It Matter*? (Durham: Acumen, 2013); Anthony Pinn, *When Colorblindness Isn't the Answer: Humanism and the Challenge of Race* (Durham, North Carolina: Pitchstone Publishing, 2017); Anthony Pinn, *By These Hands, A Documentary History of African American Humanism* (New York: NYU Press, 2001); Norm Allen, ed., *African American Humanism: An Anthology* (New York: Prometheus 1991); Norm R. Allen, *The Black Humanist Experience: An Alternative to Religion* (*New York: Prometheus Books*, 2002); Juan M. Floyd-Thomas, *The Origins of Black Humanism in America: Reverend Ethelred Brown and the Unitarian Church* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); William D. Hart, "One Percenters": Black

Atheists, Secular Humanists, and Naturalists, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 112 (4), 2013: 675–696; Sikivu Hutchinson, *Moral Combat: Black Atheists, Gender Politics, and the Values Wars* (Oregon, IL: Infidel Books, 2011).

(7.) Stephen Law, *Humanism: A Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 7. These general principles are among those listed on the various humanist associations in the Americas, including Canada's Humanist Website. See https://www.humanistcanada.ca/about/humanism

(8.) Much of humanistic culture, activity, and intellectual debates has been centered in the United States, and that will be reflected; however, I also try to showcase its presence in other parts of the Americas, with necessary limitations, of course, whenever possible.

(9.) Richard Norman, *On Humanism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

(10.) Ibid., 4.

(11.) Ibid., 57.

(12.) Roy Wood Sellars, "Accept the Universe as a Going Concern," *Religious Liberals Reply*, ed. Henry Wieman, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947).

(13.) Roy Wood Sellars, *The Next Step in Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 44–45, 222.

(14.) Roy Wood Sellars, *Evolutionary Naturalism* (Chicago: Open Court, 1922), 5; see also his discussion in *The Next Step in Religion*, 26.

(15.) Roy Wood Sellars, *Principles of Emergent Realism*, compiled and edited by W. Preston Warren (St. Louis; MO: W. H. Green, 1970), Foreword, v–ix; see also chapter 15.

(16.) Ibid.

(17.) John Dewey, *Essays, A Common Faith* (Terry Lecture Series) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 85–86.

(18.) Ibid., 87.

(19.) Ibid., 25.

(20.) Ibid., 52.

(21.) James Gouinlock, "Philosophy and the Conduct of Life: Dewey's New Paradigm," *Free Inquiry* 30, no. 3 (April/May 2010): 1.

(22.) John Dewey, "Freedom," in *Implications of Social-Economic Goals for Education: A Report of the Committee on Social-Economic Goals of America* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1937), 105.

(23.) John Dewey, “The School and the Life of the Child,” chapter 2 in *The School and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1097), 52.

(24.) Daniel K. Williams, *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press; 2012).

(25.) Ibid., 134.

(26.) Andrew Hartman, “Is Secular Humanism a Religion?, Blog for Society for U.S. Intellectual History, February 25, 2011. Accessed June 2019 from https://s-usih.org/2011/02/is-secular-humanism-religion/.

(27.) Concomitant with this ecological view are ethical sensibilities in which humans project our own notions of ourselves as the measure for valuing other parts of nature. According to this worldview, for example, whales and dolphins are worthy of human sympathy because they reflect our focus on cognition and autonomy, whereas other parts of nature (dung beetles and fungus) are unworthy of our regard, or not so valuable to humans.

(28.) See, for example, Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Diana Code, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (Ann Arbor: MPublishing—University of Michigan Library, 2012); Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press 2002); Elizabeth Wilson, *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Wilson, “Gut Feminism,” in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 15, no. 3 (2004): 66–94; Cary Wolf, ed., *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Cary Wolf, *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

(29.) Timothy Morton, *Humankind: Solidarity with Non-Human People* (Brooklyn: NY: Verso Books: 2019), 4.

(30.) Donna Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto (Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149–181.

(31.) Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 3–4. See also Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Experimental Futures) (Durham: N.C.: Duke University Press Books, 2016).

(32.) For a sampling of current works, see Ursula Goodenough, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Loyal Rue, *Religion Is Not about God: It Is About Us* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Chet Raymo, *When God Is Gone, Everything Is Holy* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2008); Jerome Stone, *Reli-*

gious Naturalism Today: The Rebirth of a Forgotten Alternative (New York: State University of New York Press, 2008); Donald Crosby, *The Thou of Nature* (New York: State University of New York, 2013); Michael Hogue, *The Promises of Religious Naturalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010); Michael Hogue, *American Transcendence* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2018; Carol Wayne White, *Black Lives and Sacred Humanity: Toward an African American Religious Naturalism* (New York: Fordham Press, 2016).

(33.) The Anthropocene concept was first coined by the chemist and Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen in 2000, and has become associated with the notion that humans have so transformed geological processes at the Earth's surface that we are living in a new epoch. The term has since spread not just within the scientific disciplines, but also across the humanities and through the media into public consciousness. Within humanistic thought, it has become rich multivalent term that has brought renewed focus on how we conceptualize agency, understand human-nature relations, and attempt to provide plausible responses to the challenges of climate change.

(34.) Michael Hogue, *American Transcendence* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2018.

(35.) See Carol Wayne White, "Stubborn Materiality: African-American Religious Naturalism and Becoming Our Humanity," in *Entangled Worlds: Science, Religion, and Materiality*, edited by Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 249–273; Carol Wayne White, *Black Lives and Sacred Humanity: Toward an African American Religious Naturalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

(36.) Susan Haack, *Defending Science—Within Reason: Between Scientism and Cynicism* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007), 344.

(37.) Matthew Alper, *The "God" Part of the Brain: A Scientific Interpretation of Human Spirituality and God* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2006), 92–93, 207–224. Other provocative perspectives include those of Richard Dawkins, who suggests that the predisposition of humans to believe in God is due to the fact that we, like computers, tend to do what we are told. In his discussion of the child brain, for example, Dawkins argues that it has been preprogrammed by natural selection to obey and believe what parents and other adults tell it; for Dawkins, this is generally a favorable thing. He adds, however, that the child brain is also susceptible to infection and mental viruses, especially when it fastens upon the inferior or worthless religious ideas of charismatic preachers and other adults. In other words, for Dawkins, the underside of this phenomenon is that ineffective and deficient ideas (that is, religious ones) can be passed down from one generation to another.

(38.) Todd Tremlin, *Minds and Gods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7–8.

(39.) Pascal Boyer, *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 298.

(40.) “Humanist Manifesto I,” American Humanist Society website: https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto1/ Accessed May 2019.

(41.) Gordon Gamm, “Introduction: The History of Humanism,” *Free Inquiry* 32, no. 3 (April/May 2012), 23.

(42.) The Manifesto, 1933.

(43.) *Free Inquiry* website, https://secularhumanism.org/what-is-secular-humanism/ Accessed May 2019.

(44.) *Free Inquiry* website, https://secularhumanism.org/what-is-secular-humanism/ Accessed May 2019.

(45.) American Humanist Association website: https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/ Accessed May 2019.

(46.) “Humanism and Its Aspirations: Humanist Manifesto III, a Successor to the Humanist Manifesto of 1933,” The American Humanist Association website: https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/ Accessed June 2019.

(47.) Joseph Blankholm, “Secularism, Humanism, and Secular Humanism: Terms and Institutions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 689–705. See also Joseph Blankholm, “The Political Advantages of a Polysemous Secular.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53, no. 4 4 (2015): 775–790.

(48.) G. J. Holyoake, *The Origin and Nature of Secularism* (London: Watts, 1896), 34–35, cited in Joseph Blankholm, “Secularism, Humanism, and Secular Humanism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, ed. Phil Zuckerman and John R. Shook (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 690. According to Blanchard, Holyoake’s view of religion is drawn from its modern etymological sense, as in “binding” one to duty, morality, and humanity. As such, Holyoake’s religion defined an ethics established through the bonds one has with others. Religion imbues the everyday with meaning and points to deeper truths, but it does not contradict what science learns about nature. Holyoake remained sensitive to religions polysemous and the nuances of its complicated relationship with Secularism, understanding that in some senses “religion” could describe his Secularism, and in other cases, the two were opposed. Secularism itself, as coined by Holyoake, was further distinguished from secular instruction, with the former relegated to a worldview that should not be taught in schools, and the latter identified as a pedagogical strategy that is devoid of the moral claims made by theology and Secularism.

(49.) Ibid., 692.

(50.) Ibid. In the Americas, the American Ethical Union, an umbrella term for the various US-based ethical societies, became a founding member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), the organization that now represents the global humanist movement.

(51.) Ibid., 694.

(52.) New York Society for Ethical Culture website: https://ethical.nyc/history/ Accessed June 2019.

(53.) Ibid.

(54.) Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism without Supernaturalism* (New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1978). See also Mordecai Kaplan, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion*, introd., Mel Scult (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994).

(55.) Peter McFaren and Colin Lankshear, *Critical Literacy: Politics, Praxis, and the Post-modern* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 146.

(56.) Susana Nuccetelli, *Latin American Thought: Philosophical Problems and Arguments* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002), 138.

(57.) Meri L. Clark, "The Emergence and Transformation of Positivism," in *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*, ed. Susana Nucccetelli, Ofelia Schutte, and Octavio Bueno (Malden: MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 53.

(58.) Ibid., 54–56. Clark highlights the prominence of positivism in four Latin American countries: Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and Colombia.

(59.) Guillermo Hurtado, "The Anti-Positivist Movement in Mexico," in *A Companion to Latin American Philosophy*, ed. Susana Nucccetelli, Ofelia Schutte, and Octavio Bueno (Malden: MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 82.

(60.) Ibid., 83.

(61.) Jorge J. E. Gracia and Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, eds., *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century: The Human Condition, Values, and the Search for Identity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 17.

(62.) Hurtado, "The Anti-Positivist Movement in Mexico," 84.

(63.) Ibid., 91.

(64.) Jorge Gracia and Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert, eds., *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century: The Human Condition, Values, and the Search for Identity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 17–18.

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