



México Interdisciplinario / Interdisciplinary Mexico

ISSN 2193-9756



## ARTÍCULOS iMEX

vol. 2, 2022

Editores: Yasmin Temelli / Hans Bouchard

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### Explaining Latin America to the Yankees: University lectures by J. Vasconcelos and G. Freyre from the perspective of critical metaphor analysis and discourse analysis

(pp. 102-123; DOI: 10.23692/Articulos\_iMex2.4)

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#### **Abstract:**

Negative perception of *mestizaje* and mixed population was decisively challenged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Latin American intellectuals began to exalt their countries as a privileged space of physical and cultural contact. Among the best-known advocates of this privileged experience of miscegenation in Latin America were the Mexican writer and philosopher José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) and the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987). In their works, they shifted the focus from miscegenation as racial mixture to the notion of *mestizaje* / *mestiçagem* as productive of multivalent, creative culture. This contribution views this positive shift in part as an attempt of the predominately white intellectual elite to reimagine the empirical reality of miscegenation in their countries. At the same time, the historical emergence of a nationalist concept of *mestizaje* in Latin America cannot be separated from its relations with the United States. From the perspective of critical metaphor analysis and discourse analysis, this contribution explores how both authors make use of the metaphor of *mestizaje* retooling it as a principally aesthetic and political category in their lectures at the U.S. Universities of Chicago and Indiana respectively.

**Key words:** *mestizaje*, miscegenation, metaphor, J. Vasconcelos, G. Freyre

Received (19.06.2022)

Reviewed (20.07.2022)

Published (05.09.2022)



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Website:

Editores iMex:

Redacción iMex:

[www.imex-revista.com](http://www.imex-revista.com)

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**Explaining Latin America to the Yankees: University lectures by J. Vasconcelos and G. Freyre from the perspective of critical metaphor analysis and discourse analysis**

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**1. Introduction**

The concept of *mestizaje* is undoubtedly one of the great intellectual creations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Latin American essayists managed to shift the focus from miscegenation as racial mixture, negatively viewed in the colonial times and associated with a pathology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the notion of *mestizaje* / *mestiçagem* as a symbol of unity and multi-accented culture. This is due to the works of Latin American intellectuals that *mestizaje* as a colonial reference to ethnic origin or physical characteristics obtained its modern metaphorical extension turning to a semiotic category of meaning (Miller 2004: 7; Catelli 2020: 42, 54). This category underwent an interesting evolution from the physical to aesthetic and then political discourse. A new image of Latin America as a privileged space of physical and cultural contact very quickly found its symbols and metaphorical illustrations in intellectual language. This new post-colonial language was able, because of its metaphors, to turn *mestizaje* into one of the most pervasive nationalist discourses on culture that affected the intellectual climate in the Americas and beyond.

The shift towards a positive conception of interethnic mixture can be understood in part as an attempt of the predominately white intellectual elite to reimagine the empirical reality of miscegenation in their countries and to refurbish it with optimism about the future of Latin America. The political and intellectual climate of the 1920s and 1930s where their works originated was shaped by the ideas of cultural fusion and homogenization resulting from mutual contact and cooperation between ethnic groups and cultures (cf. Martínez-Echazábal 1989: 35). Arguments about a "natural" synthesis, "fusion", "amalgamation" or "merging" covered up the 19<sup>th</sup> century rhetoric about 'inferior races' and cultures. We speak about an ideological 'covering up' because a rich imagery and utopianism of authors' argumentation, as we will see, are still heavily tempered by conventional notions from the 19<sup>th</sup> century discourse on human hybridity,

such as references to 'proximate' and 'distant races', ranking of the human species, praising of whiteness, and aesthetic eugenics<sup>1</sup>. Exemplifying Latin American ambivalence towards racial matters, this new discourse may be taken as representative of a racialized cultural narrative that offers an alternative, that is, an imagined foundation of national culture, the cult of *mestizaje*.

This contribution focuses on two major advocates of this privileged experience of miscegenation in Latin America, the Mexican writer and philosopher José Vasconcelos (1882-1959) and the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987). Vasconcelos' essay *La raza cósmica* (1925) is regarded among critics as "'a landmark' responsible for fuelling the revalorization of mestizaje in the Americas" (Martínez-Echazábal 1998: 33). Gilberto Freyre's work, particularly his *Casa grande y senzala* (1933), is widely recognized as one of the most original and important interpretations of Brazil with regard to the issue of race relations (cf. Oliveira 2017: 341). For our analysis, we have chosen, however, Vasconcelos' and Freyre's lectures held in English at North American Universities, Vasconcelos' lecture 'The Race Problem in Latin America' at the Chicago University from 1926 and Freyre's lectures 'Ethnic and social conditions in modern Brazil' and 'Brazilian foreign policy as conditioned by Brazil's ethnic, cultural, and geographical situation', held during his time as a visiting professor for the Patten Foundation at the Indiana University in 1944. We are well aware of the linguistic particularities of the undertaken analysis due to the English language of the lectures whose authors, however, were native in Spanish or Portuguese respectively. Unfortunately, it is unknown to us whether the texts were translations, but as far as we know from their biographies, both authors mastered well English.<sup>2</sup> Compared with their foundational works, *La raza cósmica*

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<sup>1</sup> Albeit scientifically erroneous, eugenics with its foundational notions of 'racial improvement' and 'planned breeding' gained a worldwide popularity during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Through a prejudiced and incorrect understanding of genetics and heredity laws, eugenicists believed that they could perfect human beings and eliminate social ills by methods such as involuntary sterilization, segregation and social exclusion. Cf. Eugenics and scientific racism.

<sup>2</sup> Gilberto Freyre started learning English at the age of eight. At the age of eighteen, he enrolled at the University of Baylor, Texas, where he published his first articles in English, and two years later, in 1920, he continued his studies at the University of Columbia, New York, from which he graduated in 1922. Freyre maintained intellectual connections to the United States, being awarded extraordinary professorship by the University of Stanford, California, and the University of Michigan. His English lectures held in 1944 at the University of Indiana were promoted by the Patten Foundation and published the following year both in New York (ed. Knopf) and in Mexico (ed. Fondo de Cultura Económica, with an introduction by Alfonso Reyes). In 1946, the same New York's editorial published his *Casa-grande & senzala* in English, under the title *The masters and the slaves*. A Portuguese translation of his lectures by O. Montenegro was published in 1947, in Rio de Janeiro (cf. Nery da Fonseca 2011: 643-653).

José Vasconcelos entered an English-language primary school in Eagle Pass, Texas at the age of seven. During his political career, he often sought exile in the US. Thus, in 1911, pursued under the regime of Porfirio Díaz, he relocated his law office to Washington, D.C. After his withdrawal from Mexican public life in 1917, Vasconcelos worked as corporate lawyer across the US until his return home in 1920. Between 1926 and 1928, he travelled as university lecturer across the United States and lectured on political as well as academic topics, among others at the University of Chicago in 1926 (cf. 'José Vasconcelos Papers', Biographical Note, Benson Latin American Collection, the University of Texas at Austin).

and *Casa-grande & senzala*, the lectures exhibit a plenty of parallels in the imagery, rhetoric and argumentative lines. Like in their principal writings, both authors enact in their lectures a paradigmatic quest for otherness foregrounding particularly racial otherness. We have chosen these English texts, rather neglected by the scholarship, following a global question of interest with regard to *mestizaje*-discourse. It is worthy of remark that it was constructed and popularized not only in Spanish or Portuguese, the languages of Latin America, but also in English, and was addressed not only to the interested public in authors' home countries but challenged a more or less suspicious North American audience during a time when eugenic thought influenced public debate.

Latin American intellectuals aimed at initiating a cultural dialogue with the U.S. and Europe where Mexico and Latin America aspired to become equal or even privileged creators of world culture (cf. Leinen 2000: 88). This discourse was, however, greeted with distrust in the United States, where Vasconcelos, for instance, was accused in nationalism and xenophobia. As Kutzinski (1993: 139) remarks, "tropical" people were viewed by most North Americans through the lenses of social Darwinism<sup>3</sup> and racism. At the same time, an emotional problematization of national identity in Latin America owed much to the opposition to U.S. policy and its prevailing racial perspective. Following Kutzinski (1993: 13), we depart from a hypothesis that the historical emergence of a nationalist concept of *mestizaje* in Latin America, including its local manifestations, cannot be separated from relations with its northern neighbour. Vasconcelos and Freyre are quite illustrative in this respect. In Vasconcelos' argumentation, competition and conflict are underlying source domains for metaphors, the idea of Ibero-Americanism being opposed to North-Americanization. Although Freyre, on the contrary, dispenses with historical and political differences between Brazil and the United States and advocates the idea of Pan-Americanism, he still regards the U.S. as a point of reference and comparison (cf. also Oliveira 2017: 343). Narratives of *mestizaje* are marked by political agendas and, to a certain degree, they may be viewed as a kind of political discourse, which makes them particularly attractive for discourse analysis. An interesting feature that marks both discourses of political nature and discourses on *mestizaje* is their extensive and explicit use of metaphors that serve to express systems of belief, to communicate social

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<sup>3</sup> The theory of so-called social Darwinism, elaborated by the British philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer, is based on the notion of society as a social organism analogous to a biological organism. Thus, applying the principle of natural selection to society, this theory legitimized the social hierarchy and the predominance of an elite. The distinction between civilization and savagery was regarded as natural and unchangeable. Opposed to scientific positivism and empiricism, social Darwinism reevaluated the concept of ideals and emotional intuition and held that civilizing achievements represent a true progress only when turning away from exclusively mechanistic understanding.

objectives, and to persuade the audience of the rightness of particular ideas (cf. Charteris-Black 2004: 67).

Our analysis focuses on two specific aspects:

- (i) how the *mestizaje*-concept is retooled as an aesthetic and political category, and
- (ii) how racism and conviviality do coexist in conceptualizations of *mestizaje* in the texts of both authors (cf. Wade 2018: 10).

Methodologically, the contribution approaches these questions from the perspective of critically oriented discourse analysis that especially addresses cognitive processes and semantic categories like metaphor involved in text production and text interpretation (cf. Hart (ed.) 2011; Hart / Lukeš (eds.) 2007). In our analysis of metaphor, Lakoff's and Lakoff / Johnson's approach would be central, but we follow the investigation line that incorporates the cognitive paradigm and ideological perspective and thus explores persuasive potential of metaphor (mis)used in rhetorical and argumentative language (cf. Núñez-Perucha 2004; 2011; Charteris-Black 2004). We consider metaphor as an important cognitive mechanism encoding ideological conceptualizations of socio-political and socio-cultural phenomena since it helps to construct a particular world view attributing a particular set of values to events and situations (cf. Hart 2011). Focusing on metaphorical language in the works of both very influential Latin American *mestizaje*-authors, we pay a particular attention to the production aspect of metaphor, rather neglected in cognitive metaphor theory (cf. Kövecses 2020: 93). Metaphor choice may be seen, according to Charteris-Black (2004: 249), as an author's conscious and overt selection of one linguistic form to communicate an idealised vision of the social world and to make a discourse persuasive. Here, we are interested in the hiding function of metaphor (Lakoff / Johnson 1980: 10-11), which enables us to take a critical stance towards the use of metaphorical language.

Metaphor is also viewed here as a discursive tool that reflects the cultural footprint of a certain epoch and of a certain speaker community. We depart from Lakoff and Johnson's claim about cultural rootedness of metaphors and consistency between societal cultural values and metaphorical systems (1980: 22-23). Following Kövecses (2020: 95) and Charteris-Black (2004: 243), we highlight the importance of context, or more precisely "the social influence of ideology, culture and history" that may account for why and how particular metaphors are chosen in a specific discourse situation. The contribution explores ways *mestizaje* is conceptualized within social differentiation processes and interpreted with regard to racial issues in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's Latin America. Keeping in mind the entrenchment of *mestizaje* into racial discourse and the tendency of *mestizaje*-discourses to essentialism and neocolonialism (cf. Miller 2004: x; Martínez-Echazábal 1998: 24; Catelli 2020: 53), it is crucial

to examine how this metaphor contributes or fails to overcome the racialized way to see, to imagine and to represent Latin American societies also in the post-colonial era. This question is also important against the background of racial discrimination and privileging of whiteness in Latin America, common during Vasconcelos' and Freyre's times but also beyond.

## 2. Constructing otherness

Focusing on the issue of how the otherness of Latin America in comparison with the U.S. or Europe was articulated by both authors, we must consider, following Irwine / Gal (2000: 39), that processes of identity formation often depend on defining the self as against some imagined Other. This Other is usually essentialized and imagined as homogenous in their attitudes and stances. Thus, we attest, especially in Vasconcelos' text, to a stereotypical image of the United States as imperialist, profit-determined and racially prejudiced. Latin America is equally portrayed in stereotypical terms. What is particular in both authors' construction of the other side of a contrast with the U.S. is that the imagery used necessarily involves racial otherness as a central component. We will start our discussion with a passage from José Vasconcelos' lecture.

(1) This difference is the origin of the policy and of the practice of what we may call the one-race standard as against the mixed-race standard. By that I mean this undeniable fact that the civilization of North America is a one-race civilization, a white-race civilization as you insist on calling yourselves sometimes even to the exclusion of other whites such as for instance the Spaniard. A white civilization that (...) does contain, millions of other racial stocks such as the Negro, but does not consider such dissimilar stock as a part of itself (...) The Negro here, as well as the Indian, is in a world apart socially and is a body that is connected only politically with the white population. (...) ...we have, in the south, a civilization that from the beginning accepts a mixed standard of social arrangement not only as a matter of fact but through law, since the Indian after being baptized became the equal of the Spaniard and was able to intermarry with the conqueror. (JV 80-81)<sup>4</sup>

If we depart from the meanings of the word 'standard' given in the OED, dating back as far as the 15<sup>th</sup> century, that is, "the authorized exemplar of a unit of measure", "measure by which something can be judged or evaluated", "a generally accepted exemplar of correctness or perfection", it becomes obvious that what is contrasted and measured here is the ideologically constructed quality of both civilizations, North American and South American. The contrast pair "the one-race standard" vs. "the mixed-race standard" illustrates that this quality is based on a racial criterion. The abstract concept of civilization itself is reified. It means that North

<sup>4</sup> All quotations from José Vasconcelos refer to his lecture 'The Race Problem in Latin America' from 1926 and all quotations from Gilberto Freyre refer to his lectures from 1944. To distinguish both authors, we indicate initial letters of their names and respective pages.

American and South American societies are treated as concrete objects or bodies, and more precisely as containers, which is evidenced by verbal and prepositional references throughout the text such as "contain", "introduce", "incorporate", "in", "to". Lakoff / Johnson (1980: 29-32) describe container metaphors as important ontological metaphors based on our experience to view ourselves, other physical objects and our natural environment in general as containers with an inside and an outside. Putting boundaries and thus defining objects enables us to quantify them and to specify substance they contain (cf. a kinaesthetic container schema in Lakoff 1987: 272-273), Lakoff / Johnson 1999: 31-32). The logic of the metaphor SOCIETY IS A CONTAINER enables us to interpret social positioning of different ethnic groups within both societies and, therefore, racial inequality characteristic for them. The U.S. is metaphorically conceptualized as a container with different sections separating "the Negro" and "the Indian" from "the white population" and "excluding other (racial) stocks", "worlds", or "bodies" that are "dissimilar" or not "white" enough. Mexico and Latin America, on the other side, are constructed as a permeable container without dividing sections that embraces all composing groups (well noted, after adjusting them to be "equal of the Spaniard"). The metaphor of societal container allows further for the following entailments (cf. Núñez-Perucha 2011: 103):

- There are "races" relevant to the society and those who not;
- Relations within the societal container are regulated by established social norms and internal principles;
- The container represents a coherent system where different groups have different, main or subordinate functions and fulfil different tasks.

In the following we will look at how these entailments manifest in the lectures of both authors.

To show the inner cohesion within both North American and South American societies and their internal norms, Vasconcelos draws on a system-metaphor, underpinned by the lexical choice of *rule, method, standard, connected, system, arrangement, and law*.

(2) The Spaniards did not obey this rule of abstention [strict avoidance of matrimonial relations with the colored race] even with the Negro, the population of many of our tropical sections is largely mulatto (...) we find the Latin system of assimilation and intermarriage and mixture opposed to the Anglo-Saxon method of matrimonial taboos and pure-race standards. (JV 88)

The rigidity of the North American or Anglo-Saxon society is characterised by "rule of abstention", "method of taboos and standards" and merely formal connections between social and ethnic groups. "The Latin system" is described by Vasconcelos, on the contrary, in terms of "assimilation and intermarriage and mixture", "a mixed standard of social arrangement", "accepted through law" that aim at praising an assumed openness of Latin American and

Spanish cultural tradition. If we, however, look more precisely, we will sooner than later discover that the space within a presumably permeable container of Latin America is assigned differently to different "races".

(3) The more civilized a nation is, the more it reduces its reproduction, the tendency being to obtain an advantage in quality. But the lower, opposed breed, having no control, no hope, goes on multiplying madly; and the weight and the curse of this overpopulation is just as harmful to the elect as it is to the less fortunate. If we are ever going to stop this misery, it is necessary that the superior take pains to educate the inferior and to raise its standard. If we do not wish to be overwhelmed by the wave of the Negro, of the Indian, or of the Asiatic, we shall have to see that the Negro, the Indian, and the Asiatic are raised to the higher standards of life. (JV 100-101)

To position social actors, that is, ethnic groups, Vasconcelos appropriates the spatial dichotomy between the features 'up' and 'down'. The supposedly "more civilized nations", "the elect" and "the superior" "races" are located in an upper position, whereas the space at the container bottom is reserved for the "lower, opposed breed", "the less fortunate" and "the inferior", associated with backwardness, lack of control, low life standards, misery, and overpopulation. This part of the container is assigned to the Negro (cf. also the remark from quote (2) 'matrimonial relations "even with the negro")', alongside with the Indian and the Asiatic. Describing the social positioning and thus racial inequality through spatialization, Vasconcelos builds upon the well-established metaphorical concepts of our social world POWER / CONTROL / HIGH STATUS IS UP and BEING SUBJECT TO CONTROL OR FORCE IS DOWN; LOW STATUS IS DOWN (Lakoff / Johnson 1980: 15-16; Lakoff 1987: 435, 437). What is more, the lexical choice of "no control", "goes on multiplying madly", "harmful weight of the overpopulation", "overwhelmed by the wave" evokes a metaphorical image of an approaching mental disease (cf. "madly"), harm and danger. We can link it to a picture of a dangerous avalanche or volcano in this open container that may suddenly erupt upon the world when the white man would not "take pains" and bear his 'burden' of "educating the inferior" in order to "raise" them "to the higher standards of life". Thus, the white man's dominance, or more precisely Spanish dominance in case of Spanish America, is presented as benevolent and necessary due to the constructed inferiority of other ethnic groups. Whereas the whites or mestizos are assigned an active role in the process of advancement, the others are automatically viewed as a passive and powerless mass. We will look at how they are treated in Vasconcelos' text.

While Freyre rather idealizes and folklorizes the Indigenous, a common feature of Vasconcelos' works is the representation of indigenous people as well as the blacks as excluded from the upper part of the container related to modernity, civilization, creation, and advancement. They are associated, among others, with lack of civilized standards, common



traditions and a common language implicating their general inferiority to the Spaniards and legitimizing their defeat in military terms (cf. "gaining victories" in quote (4)). Vasconcelos seems to measure a societal quality of 'races' not only by the degree of civilizing advancement but also by the criterion of homogeneity as opposed to diversity. Therefore, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Indigenous is regarded as an inferiority sign. It seems to be a logical consequence that Vasconcelos erases them from the representative image of the Mexican population, opposing them to the mestizos and the Spanish.

(4) ...the Indian has no civilized standards upon which to fall back. He has no language of his own, never had a language common to all of the race. (...) the Spanish spirit is still gaining victories over the native Indian spirit through its language, through its religion, and its social forms of living. (...) they had no other tradition upon which to fall back. (...) the stronger mestizo element ... represented the Mexican rather than the Indian, that is to say, the Spanish American, the Indo-Spaniard who also prevails in Central America, in Peru, and in Bolivia. (JV 90)

In a similar vein, Freyre's Brazil is conceptualized as a body or container with a strong tendency towards "the incorporation of all race elements into the Brazilian community" (GF 154). Thus, Brazilian society is viewed as an open container that takes in other ethnic groups, includes them as parts of itself or absorbs them (cf. OED, s.v. *incorporate*). Furthermore, we can identify the precise type of this container. In the following passages (5) and (6), Brazil is shown as a laboratory where a successful and profitable "experiment" in racial "fusion" or "miscegenation" is carried out under presumably "democratic conditions".

(5) in Brazil: three races and cultures are fused under conditions that, broadly speaking, are socially democratic (...) Brazil stands today as a community from whose experiment in miscegenation other communities may profit. Probably in no other complex modern community are problems of race relations being solved in a more democratic or Christian way than in Portuguese America. (GF: 98-99)

(6) [Brazil] carrying on their vast experiment in ethnic and social democratization (GF: 153)

These quotes evoke two further recurring images with regard to the 'race' issue. Interethnic relations are presented as a "problem" of modern societies or an obstacle on the way towards advancement. Freyre prescribes miscegenation, especially in the form of homogenizing fusion it takes in Brazil, as the best political, "democratic" means or a religious, "Christian" method to tackle this social problem. This connection allows for the metaphorical conceptualization MISCEGENATION IS POLITICS or RELIGION, which also corroborates our idea to view discourse on *mestizaje* as a kind of political discourse. Freyre's interpretation of the references "democratic" and "Christian" must be, however, critically questioned. Similarly to Vasconcelos' imagery, Brazil is represented as a system with "composing" elements, that is, ethnic groups that are "structured" according to a primarily racial pattern. Notwithstanding the claim about

"democratic conditions", social and cultural differentiation according to a racial criterion finds various expressions throughout Freyre's text. Thus, the distinction is made between autochthonous groups, that is, the Indigenous, and "imported" groups, that is, the blacks, whereby both are further evaluated as "important" or less profitable elements of Brazilian society:

(7) ...the Brazilian Indians were nomadic in habit and taste. (...) This explains why Negroes from Africa were imported in such large numbers to Portuguese America and why their descendants are today an important element in the ethnic composition and social structure of Brazil. (GF 93-94)

Furthermore, Freyre opposes "non-Portuguese sub-groups or sub-cultures" and "Luso-Brazilian or Portuguese-Brazilian culture or 'race'" as a mainstream (119); "Brazilians with a family or individual past that has nothing to do with Africa, biologically or ethnically" and "Negroid Brazilians" (122); non-European / non-white aspects and European / white aspects of Brazilian culture (128). We will look closer at the two following passages (8, 9) concerning the black population of Brazil.

(8) Negroes are now rapidly disappearing in Brazil, merging into the white stock (GF 96)

(9) Brazil still has to face the problem of assimilating certain Amerindian tribes as well as those groups of Negroes whose culture remains largely African. (...) the general tendency among broad-minded Brazilians is to maintain, towards such Africans as well as towards Indians, a policy of slow and intelligent assimilation, in which the assimilating group may incorporate into its culture certain values of general interest or artistic importance selected from characteristics preserved by deeply differentiated sub-groups or sub-cultures. (GF 119)

Key words in these descriptions of the social position of Brazilian blacks appear to be "merging" and "assimilation" carrying the meaning of disappearance and identity loss (cf. OED). They contribute to a metaphorical construction of this ethnic group as a de-personified, passive, powerless entity which is gradually and peacefully absorbed. An active role of the black population is totally silenced, which goes hand in hand with the omission of any negative and violent aspects of interethnic relations. A more powerful entity, that is, the white mainstream culture, bears its 'burden' and carries out the assimilation and incorporation of differing groups and sub-groups with an intelligent calculation selecting only valuable features. Thus, a metaphorical conceptualization MIXTURE IS A PRAGMATIC DECISION / A METHODIC ACTION is possible. We may only speculate about an answer to the question of what would be done with "deeply differentiated sub-groups" whose features are not evaluated as being of "a general interest or artistic importance". Critically viewed, *mestizaje* as an idea of unity should be interpreted within the delineated context as UNITY IS LOSS / DISAPPEARANCE OF INDIVIDUALITY

rather than an enriching addition of different components. Miscegenation appears to be rather needed in order to overcome the negative influence of so-called 'inferior races'. This idea is underpinned by the image of pragmatic selection applied to human beings, ethnic or social groups, which evokes strong associations with elitist thinking as well as with the principles propagated in eugenics.

To sum up, we can speak, in tune with Wade's argumentation (2018: 10), about a double register in Vasconcelos' and Freyre's *mestizaje*-discourse that praises a utopian synthesis of racial and cultural differences, while racially degrading certain ethnic groups<sup>5</sup>. Spatial oppositions such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, or central-peripheral are often used in metaphorical constructions, in order, for example, to evaluate sociocultural and historical phenomena. What is interesting for us is Lakoff and Johnson's remark (1980: 14-19) that such "orientational metaphors" are rooted in as much cultural as in physical experience. We build here upon their arguments (1980: 22-23) that the most fundamental, deeply entrenched cultural values of a society are consistent with the metaphorical system existing in that society. The deployment of up-down spatialization metaphors used by both Vasconcelos and Freyre brings to light the notion of racial inequality present in the argumentation whose authors presumably argued in favour of racial conviviality and democracy. Metaphors become here linguistic indicators of their commitment to racialized discourse.

Interethnic relations are conceptualized by both authors as those of FORCE, where the whites or mestizos function as sources of guidance and a beneficial but compelling social force forwarding the other ethnic groups towards advancement and progress. Not only are those constructed as not capable of doing it themselves, they also seem to be deprived of their own voice and freedom to decide. *Mestizaje* is envisioned as an act of uniting, connecting unassembled fragments into one whole, but what both authors exactly mean by these terms seems to be an ethnic and cultural homogenization that eradicates all kinds of diversity. To better understand these representations, it is necessary to recall that cultural and ethnic pluralism typical of virtually all Latin American countries was considered during the 1920s and 1930s as politically counterproductive for the process of nation-state building and the movement towards modernization. In this political climate, monoculturalist constructs such as "the cosmic race", "the new civilization", "ethnic democracy" and paradigms of cultural miscegenation and assimilation stood for a superior and democratic people and nationhood (cf. Martínez-

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<sup>5</sup> These metaphors strangely remind of the 'whitening'-discourse from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. for ex. José Antonio Saco's ideas to ship all blacks back to Africa), which was fuelled by the "Africanization" scare, the widespread fear of slave insurrections on Cuba where sizeable black population outnumbered white residents in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Kutzinski 1993: 18).

Echazábal 1989: 38). It is probably no wonder to discover the similarity of discursive features in general and of conceptualisations of racial inequality in particular in the writings of both authors analysed here.

### 3. Metaphorical framing of mestizaje

(10) ... the so-called pure-race theory is nothing but the theory of the dominating people of every period of history. (...) hybridism in man, as well as in plants, tends to produce better types and tends to rejuvenate those types that have become static. If we go through history we find that after a period of adaptation the results of the renewal of blood are always beneficial. (JV 85)

As previously mentioned, both Vasconcelos and Freyre interpret miscegenation or ethnic "hybridism" as an important social advantage of Latin America. To make this abstract concept more comprehensible, Vasconcelos draws on the metaphor (RACIAL) MIXTURE IS A CREATIVE / PRODUCTIVE ACTION (cf. "produce better types"), something that automatically brings to the fore the positive value of AN ACTION as opposed to A NON-ACTION, that is, in Vasconcelos' terms, to be "static" and conservative according to the "so-called pure-race theory". This construction exemplifies very well the metaphorical concepts formulated by Lakoff (1993: 18) PURPOSEFUL ACTION IS MOVEMENT (cf. "tends to produce", "tends to rejuvenate"), MAKING PROGRESS IS MOVEMENT FORWARD, LACK OF PROGRESS IS LACK OF MOVEMENT (cf. "become static"). Miscegenation is conceptualized both as a means and as a result of a "beneficial" action, which is underpinned by the qualities 'better', 'young', 'active' and 'new' that are usually evaluated as positive in our society and evidenced by the metaphorical concepts MORE / YOUNG / ACTIVE / NEW IS UP.

Alongside with this mechanistic metaphor of action, Vasconcelos proceeds to explain the concept of racial mixture by means of the comparison with the natural world:

(11) On the other hand we are unstable, and this I believe can be easily understood by the biologist, as we are a new product, a new breed, not yet entirely shaped. (JV 93)

Metaphors of nature enable here some deeper inferences. First, they keep human representations to the bare minimum. Vasconcelos speaks about ethnic groups in terms of items or "elements" in his catalogue of natural forces and technological imagery of a building, container or laboratory. Human beings are rather depersonalized and depicted as a "product" of connection, blending or mixing of components, merging, combination, fusing, intermingling, joining, adaptation, complementing, assimilation, breeding, all these processes usually being applied to material things or flora and animal world. Thus, the mestizo is described in terms of a successful creation, a harmonious unity of differences, or a new experiment. What is striking here is that

these processes, even 'disappearing' and 'loss of individuality', carry an absolutely positive connotation, possible negative aspects being totally erased.

Furthermore, the values of profit and control, originally applied in relation to nature and conventionally positively connoted are transferred now to the social arena. Hybridism of plants is normally a procedure conducted and controlled by a man to improve particular qualities of certain plants for humans' advantage. If we apply this concept to ethnic groups, then hybridism would mean the improvement, rejuvenation and renewal of people. In light of this reasoning, it becomes clear why Vasconcelos reserves special attention to the construction of an extremely positive image of the mestizo as a "new race". In order to show how it is better than so-called "pure white races", he highlights qualities such as intelligence, creativity, broad-mindedness, openness, unbiased nature, friendliness, ability to comprehend, multifaceted nature (metaphorically alluded to by the figure of a watercourse with many channels), thirst for knowledge, sensitivity, and emotionality.

(12) From a purely intellectual point of view I doubt whether there is a race with less prejudice, more ready to take up almost any mental adventure, more subtle, and more varied than the mestizo, or half-breed. (...) the mestizo will produce a civilization more universal in its tendency than any other race of the past. (...) our people are keen and are apt to understand and interpret the most contradictory human types. We feel the need of expressing life through many channels, through a thousand channels; (...) A plurality of emotion, an almost mad desire to try all and to live life from every point of view and every manner of sense experience – we are perhaps more truly universal in sentiment than any other people. (JV 92-93)

Deploying the combination of biological-mechanistic metaphors, Vasconcelos views the mestizo from a double perspective: biologically, it is an element interrupting an ancestor line, from a mechanistic-technical perspective, it is a connecting construction that even enables the time crossing conceptualized by Vasconcelos in terms of movement through space (cf. the verbs "go back", "connect", "directed" in quote (13)).

(13) the half-breed cannot entirely go back to his parents because he is not exactly as any of his ancestors; and being unable to connect fully with the past, the mestizo is always directed toward the future – is a bridge to the future (JV 83)

The following passage from Freyre also launches the comparison with plants and enables us, moreover, to easily identify foregrounded values of profit and control.

(14) ... the introduction of the African Negro in the sugar regions (...) may not, however, have constituted so serious an ecological disturbance (...) From the standpoint of man's relationship to nature, the Negro's adaptation to the climate and other physical conditions of Brazil seems to have been perfect. From the social standpoint he was culturally better prepared than the nomadic Amerindian to adjust himself to the status of slave – plantation and domestic slave – in Portuguese America. His adaptation to American conditions was

as happy as that of the sugar-cane plant, his symbiotic companion in the task of modifying the Brazilian landscape (...). (GF 94-95)

This passage very well corroborates the metaphorical conceptualizations of Brazil as a container or an ecological system where new elements are introduced and may cause a "disturbance" or fulfil a useful "task" after having "adjusted" and "adapted" themselves to new social conditions. It is curious that for the sake of comparison, Freyre selects the sugar cane, a symbol inexorably linked to the plantation system and slavery. What is even more curious is his claim about an almost idyllic adaptation to new life conditions as for both the plant and the African. Adaptation and self-adjustment appear to be represented as voluntary rather than compelling processes.

In a similar vein, Vasconcelos tailors the colonial history to fit his arguments.

(15) The Spaniards were bolder; for the decision to accept the results of intermarrying the native was not without forethought, but perfectly calculated (...) the cultural results of the Spanish method [Spanish policy in America in comparison with the English policy in India] are superior. The Spanish have succeeded in reproducing their blood in part and their culture in full in twenty nations that are today about as Spanish as Spain itself can be (...) We do not pretend to give advice, but we are bound to accept the Spanish method which in a way has created our nationalities and is the very reason of our existence as a race and a branch of the human family. (JV 86-87)

We attest here to a further elaboration of the above-mentioned metaphor MIXTURE IS A CREATIVE ACTION. Interethnic mixture is represented as an important historical legacy of the Spanish colonization. Colonization itself is perceived as a creative means of giving rise to nationalities and "races". Closer examination of this supposed 'creativity' reveals it, however, to be confined to hardly creative processes of biological reproduction and cultural cloning. Emphasis is rather given to the aspect of pragmatism, rational calculation and farsightedness of "the Spanish method" or "the Latin system" with regard to the future, something we have already observed in Freyre's argumentation (cf. quote (9)). The entire machinery of colonialism is condensed into a positive image of rationality and almost mathematical precision. This is perfectly in keeping with the narrative about the profit and control via assimilation.

We attest hereby to an important aspect of the function of metaphors, which is their natural and systematic ability to focus or even to create particular semantic connections, while hiding or discounting other aspects of the concept (cf. Lakoff / Johnson 1980: 10-11). Thus, the violence of sociohistorical reality is metaphorically redressed in a positive myth. It is worth noting here that the aspects of the source domain that are not transferred to the metaphorical target are as important as the selected features. To draw attention to this ideological omitting helps us to take a critical stance towards metaphorical uses of language.

What is more, both authors praise interethnic mixture in Spanish or Portuguese America as a moral decision that from the very beginning aimed at the exclusion of racial prejudices, dominance and segregation that are attributed mostly to the North Americans. It allows for the conceptualization MIXTURE IS MORALITY which resonates with MISCEGENATION IS RELIGION in Freyre's text (cf. quote (5)).

(16) the Spaniards have always disregarded this purely white prejudice [the conservation of an original unmixed human stock] and have actually created the millions of the mestizo stock of America and of the Philippines. (JV 84)

(17) The advantages of a mixture of races has then been generally recognized; race prejudice as it exists today is a comparatively modern feeling and originates perhaps from the necessity for the English colonizer of far-distant territories densely populated by dissimilar races. (JV 86)

(18) Brazil's national status is not an expression of race consciousness, for no single pure or nearly pure race made the country. No European people engaged in colonizing America was less animated by a race-superiority or race-purity complex than the Portuguese (GF 123)

(19) Owing to the possibilities for social improvement and cultural expression, there never was any chance for the Brazilian descendants of Africans to develop that consciousness of being a Negro which exists in the United States. (GF 154)

The argumentation in the quoted passages is strikingly similar. Both authors silence the experience of slavery and elaborate independently from each other on the "freedom from race prejudice" (GF 119) and the miscibility of Spanish or Portuguese colonizers of America. They depict their respective countries as "racially" creative and free of 'race' discrimination, attributing every sort of racialized thinking to the modern Anglo-Saxon world.

In fact, Vasconcelos was one of the first intellectuals at the time who perceived the ethnic and cultural particularity of Latin America both as a cultural alternative to North-Americanization and as a political vehicle for supranational integrity and survival, especially in the light of the United States' thriving southward expansionism. Racial prejudice was, however, by no means just a North American feature, even if it took somewhat different forms in Latin America. Utopian ideas of "cosmic race" or "ethnic democracy" neither aimed at eliminating racism from Latin American society nor at deracializing political discourse. The political effect of Vasconcelos' and Freyre's writings was rather to create an alternative context that induces release from actual social tensions, especially racial ones. Pointing at racial discrimination and segregation in the United States gave the Latin American authors an opportunity to emphasize how much better race relations were at home. It is true that both Vasconcelos and Freyre tried by all means to refute untenable arguments about an "unsound and even contemptible mixture of races" (JV 83). Justifying the contrary, they nevertheless

drew themselves on arguments that strongly remind of the rhetoric of colonialism and theoretical reasoning of eugenics.

We may conclude that the contrast to the U.S. is constructed primarily on a narrative level with regard to the foundational myth-making. For both authors, as for many of their fellow thinkers, Latin America was predestined for building a superior civilization due to a natural, almost unlimited mingling of different cultures and due to an ability to assimilate rather than to passively imitate existing North American or European models. In this way, both authors placed an imagined cultural openness and presumed absence of racial prejudices at the core of Latin American society and culture. Not only was it conceptualized further as an essential element of particular national characters but it also became a distinction marker of cultural identities of mixed societies in general.

#### **4. Mestizaje as a means and a goal of superior life**

According to the premises of cognitive linguistics, single metaphorical expressions from our everyday language usually build coherent culturally determined clusters referring to the same image, which is what Lakoff / Johnson (1980: 4-5) call a "metaphorical concept". The above analysis has demonstrated different conceptual constructions of *mestizaje*, for example, in terms of source domains of force and action. This kaleidoscope of complementary metaphorical patterns is likely to be drawn on a metaphor system representing event structure with its various aspects like process, cause, state or purpose, etc. (cf. Lakoff 1993: 17). In Vasconcelos' and Freyre's texts, *mestizaje* appears to be perceived cognitively as an event, or, more precisely, as an action that includes a purposeful long-term activity where progress is an issue. According to Lakoff's argumentation (1993: 20-21), in the Event Structure Metaphor, purposes are conceived as destinations, activities as self-propelled movements, means to achieve a purpose as chosen paths one moves along to the destination, and problems as obstacles on the way to this destination. A long-term activity is, therefore, usually imagined in terms of the source domain of travelling or journey, that is, LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY IS TRAVELLING (JOURNEY) ALONG A PATH TOWARDS A DESTINATION. We look now at how this conceptualization is manifest in the texts.

As already discussed in part 3, Vasconcelos and Freyre highlight *mestizaje* as a purposeful action of production, creation, building, and incorporation, all of them meaning a forward movement and thus a form of progress opposed to a static and conservative stance of "pure-race" cultures. In Vasconcelos' lecture, unity as the ultimate goal of interethnic mixture is framed in the concept of universal unity. The idea is transported from the domain of



physiological contact to the domain of social encounter (cf. "bringing together all the races", quote (20)).

(20) No nation has ever risen to true greatness without an ardent faith in some high ideal. (...) Broadness, universality of sentiment and thought, in order to fulfil the mission of bringing together all the races of the earth and with the purpose of creating a new type of civilization, is, I believe, the ideal that would give us in Latin America strength and vision. (JV 94)

In this metaphorical scenario, *mestizaje* is not viewed as an involuntary, uncontrolled result of individual sexual behaviour, but as an achievement of a well prepared, guided and purposeful action. Any encounter presupposes that its participants follow a certain path and thus often need a map or a guide. In metaphorical terms, Mexico / Latin America are represented as a guide and only the guide who knows the destination and who is able to bring all the "races" to the final goal. At the same time, the notion of guidance evokes religious discourse. It is important to observe a general close conceptual connection between the domain of the sacred and the domain of the secular in this context. Thus the final goal is referred to as "the fulfilment of a mission" that gives "strength and vision" and that cannot be reached without "an ardent faith". Vasconcelos envisions himself as a priest who "preaches the gospel (that is, evangelium, cf. OED) of the mestizo", highlighting the advantages of interracial mixture.

(21) From our local point of view in Mexico, I have started to preach the gospel of the mestizo by trying to impress on the minds of the new race a consciousness of their mission as builders of entirely new concepts of life. (JV 95)

Alongside with the notion of a guide, the author attributes to Mexico and its new mestizo 'race' the role of a creator and builder, again both important notions in religious discourse and messianic language. Connecting the religious and the social domain via metaphors, Vasconcelos equates the main purpose of his proposed undertaking, that is, to make the world a better place to live in, with spiritual progress. The lexical choice of "ideal", "sentiment", "thought", "consciousness", "mind" also matches with the lexical chain of movement along the vertical axis, reflected in "risen" and "high".

We have already encountered metaphorical uses of 'build' in the conceptualizations of society as a container. These representations capture the idea of building as a structure, and more precisely they refer to a particular kind of building, such as a laboratory (as to Brazil) or a bridge (as to the mestizo "race"). Building metaphors in the collocations "to create a new type of civilization" and "to build entirely new concepts of life" are motivated somewhat differently, that is, by the activity of building. They capture the idea of a building as the symbol of a worthwhile social endeavour (cf. Charteris-Black 2004: 96). According to Charteris-Black,

there exists a close cognitive relation between knowledge of buildings and valued social goals, such as "better life concepts" in our case. 'To build' means literally to put in an upright position and to provide a stable basis for preventing the falling. This idea is transferred to social goals perceived as valuable. Thus, the abstract concepts 'civilization' and 'life' exemplify this reification, that is, they are treated as objects that can be built.

Charteris-Black (2004: 97) also points to another close conceptual relation that exists between building and travelling, as they both represent activities in which progress towards a desired goal takes place gradually. In the case of journeys, this progress occurs along a horizontal path, and for buildings, there is an increase in the surface covered along a vertical path. When we consider that Vasconcelos means travelling primarily in spiritual terms, then his journey and building metaphors aim at the same direction upwards. Interestingly enough, the widespread dichotomy RATIONAL IS UP and EMOTIONAL / SPIRITUAL IS DOWN described in Lakoff / Johnson (1980: 17) is reversed here in Vasconcelos.

With regard to the conceptualization of *mestizaje* as travelling towards a desired goal, this progressive activity is described as a violent, extreme or vehement, constant and uncontrolled movement forward rather than slow and methodical steps. We can draw here on the entailment of the Event Structure Metaphor MANNER OF ACTION IS MANNER OF MOVEMENT (cf. Lakoff 1993: 18). Lexical chains in the following passage (22) such as "unlimited ideas", "unbounded tendency", "break the routine", "fiery impetus" and others are very illustrative:

(22) The goal may seem too ambitious, but it is only great, unlimited ideals that are capable of giving a nation the strength that is required to break the routine of life and to outdo itself. (...) Our mystic temperament demands a task that has, in itself at least, a tendency that is unbounded and almost impossible. A fiery impetus is our only hope if we are to catch up with the world. Our struggle is, in a way, the struggle of the future, because every day mankind will come more and more into contact, and mixtures of all sorts of blood and thought and sentiment will go on increasing, and with them the phenomena and the problems of "mestissage" (of mixture) will become universal. The time and the opportunity of the one-blood, a pure-blood, group is passing away; everywhere the pure-blood groups are being absorbed; and even if they have been masters, they will not stand long before the increasing wave of the technically educated masses of the complex breed. (JV 94)

Closer examination of lexical items in this quote reveals many of them to proceed originally from the domain of movement or travelling and to be extended metaphorically to other domains. Thus, according to the OED, 'tendency' means "a constant disposition to move toward some purpose; to have a motion or disposition to move"; 'to catch up with' means "to succeed in reaching a person who or thing which is travelling in a particular direction"; 'impetus' refers to "a force in a moving body; moving force"; 'to struggle' means literally "to make violent bodily movements in order to resist force". Uncontrolled, violent natural force as a central element of

the MANNER OF ACTION or MOVEMENT evokes a vivid image of a crushing wave of tsunami or an avalanche – itself an image of a mixture of snow, earth and ice. This "increasing wave of ... masses" "go[es] on increasing", "becoming universal", "absorbing" and makes it impossible to stand up before it. What is more, force is described in technical terms, something that converts human beings into obedient, intelligent robots moving in masses in a certain direction (cf. "the technically educated masses of the complex breed"). It is very striking how few room the reference to human beings gains in all these "mixtures of all sorts of blood and thought and sentiment". "A new race" is never presented in terms of persons, individuals, human beings but rather in technical or scientific generic terms such as "element", "masses", "type" or as natural violent force.

Interestingly, we have already encountered the same metaphorical image of an uncontrolled natural force in the description of the lower part of a container (cf. quote (3)). In that context, the focus was, however, placed on negative characteristics of such a force, whereas in the current context, this is a positively connoted image of a force crushing all obstacles and counterforces of "pure races". This time, the metaphor carries a strong positive connotation because it expresses aspiration towards the desired social goal. According to the Event Structure Metaphor (cf. Lakoff 1993), journey metaphors in general have a clear positive orientation, although they imply social effort, physical struggle and some form of hardship necessary to attain worthwhile long-term goals. Even when these negative aspects of a journey and obstacles on the projected way are highlighted by the metaphor, the effort that is necessary to achieve anything is viewed as worthwhile. In Vasconcelos' text, these obstacles are social phenomena that are negatively evaluated and mostly connected with the USA such as segregation, prejudices, injustice, "mad competition and distrust", "distressing (racial) differences". To overcome them requires patience from the whole society since it will take time and effort to comprehend and to acknowledge its own "mission". Freyre, as we have already seen in part 3, depicts interracial relations *per se* as a problem of modern societies on the way towards advancement and proposes miscegenation, according to the Brazilian example, as the only effective solution.

The concept of movement present in Freyre's text differs from Vasconcelos' vision of *mestizaje* as a universal encounter. Freyre frames *mestizaje* in the idea of transculturation (cf. Martínez-Echazábal 1989: 36). First, he gives great emphasis to the characteristics of the Portuguese connected with movement and plasticity, that is, their mobility and miscibility that would become fundamental to the colonization and the emergence of a mixed society in Brazil. Further, he explicitly dissociates colour from its racial boundaries in Brazil by means of

metaphorical concepts of movement such as TRANSITION and PASSING (FOR). According to him, the black and indigenous influence in Brazil manifests itself not only in racially mixed individuals but also in those who are not mixed: "nothing is honestly or sincerely Brazilian that denies or hides the influence of the Amerindian and the Negro" (GF 122). At the same time, he praises the practice typical already in the colonial times of "passing for white" or "sociological Aryanization" (98), that is, the importance of a political and social status of a person which outweighs the notion of "biological race".

## 5. Conclusion

Given the ever-growing interest in critical 'race' studies manifested in the humanities and the social sciences, this contribution attempts to re-think the ideas and ideals of two great visionaries and intellectuals of Latin America, José Vasconcelos and Gilberto Freyre, as they relate to 'race' issues not only in their respective home countries but also at large. Both authors contributed considerably to the development of the discourse known as *mestizaje*. An important insight of the analysis of their English lectures in the USA is that there is no one single principal conceptualization of *mestizaje* and no one single principal way deploying this metaphor. We came across various forms of its representation, first of all, the metaphorical representation of *mestizaje* as a symbol of political and cultural otherness. We depart from the hypothesis that *mestizaje*-narratives represent a kind of political discourse whose purpose is to offer an idealised vision of the social world. That would explain why these writings do not approach the racial question in a direct and confrontative manner, but rather through "evasive manoeuvres" (Kutzunski 1993: 6).

Interethnic mixture is, furthermore, metaphorically framed in the concept of universal (Vasconcelos) or Pan-American (Freyre) unity that is conceived as a desired future goal. This framing enables us to reconstruct the journey metaphor as the central metaphorical structure of both texts. Journey metaphors have in general a strong positive orientation indicating that, despite all the obstacles and hardship, moving forward and reaching a destination is worthwhile. The journey metaphor is deployed not only to frame utopian, futuristic concepts of "new civilization" (Vasconcelos) and "ethnic democracy" (Freyre), but it forms a path through the complete text inviting the listener or reader to become a traveller. It captures in positive terms as much the historical experience of colonization as modern relationships. While omitting negative aspects, the metaphors used focus on deliberately rhetorically selected aspects of the colonization and link them to future development. Key words like "new race", "new time period", "new world", "new family", creative "assimilation" are made valid for both historical

periods, something that underlines a historical predestination of Latin America. The allusion to the Spanish or Portuguese conquest and colonization establishes the terms on which the arrangement of a new civilization will take place, that is, control, assimilation, and profit. The history of violence a mixed ancestry implies is completely omitted and its results are presented as an advantage on the way towards the desired 'racial' and cultural unity.

What both authors put into play to be effective in the eyes of the North American audience is the distancing of falsity of racial eugenics and the reconstitution of the plausible. Their metaphor choice seems to be overt and conscious in order to communicate this 'corrected' view and to justify leadership by Latin America exploring the potential for a better world. We would like to recall here the conceptualization of the future in terms of spatialization metaphor THE FUTURE IS UP, discussed in Lakoff / Johnson (1980: 22, 24). This concept is generally attributed to groups that are out of the mainstream culture, and it seems to fit perfectly into the context when new nations were searching for a modern identity, self-definition, distinction, and cultural recognition from Europe and the United States.

At the same time, the metaphors used by both Latin American authors may be seen as linguistic indicators of their commitment to racialized discourse. Spatialization metaphors encode racial inequality and the social positioning ascribed to different ethnic groups. References to human beings in generic, unqualified terms underscore their symbolic function in a *mestizaje*-narrative obsessed with the idea of fusion, synthesis, union, bridge, hyphen, mixture, blending, consolidation, integration, transformation, etc. as such. We can distinguish two important metaphorical complexes: technology and organicist imagery, both connected with the description of the future and the envisaged goal of ethnic homogenization. The use of the biological rhetoric and references to scientific names and terminology should be, however, seen against the background of general material progress in the Western world strongly influenced by natural sciences during that particular historical time.

Together with Kutzinski (1993: 4) we think that it is unhelpful to charge authors of the beginnings of the last century with racism, inserting their perspectives into the context of present-day issues. Still we cannot dismiss such biased content as irrelevant to their works' presumably universal concern with racial conviviality. The concept of *mestizaje* proves revealing as an ideological construct embedded within the specific cultural and political history of Latin America, and its relations with the U.S. in particular.

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