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ABSOLUTISM, RELATIVISM, AND ANARCHY: ALAIN LOCKE AND WILLIAM JAMES ON VALUE PLURALISM

§1. INTRODUCTION

It would not be an exaggeration to say that pluralism was central to the philosophical thought of William James. Repeatedly, James claimed that the difference between monism and pluralism was the "most pregnant" in philosophy (1910, SPP: 61).[1] Radical empiricism, his own metaphysical vision, was first introduced as the view that pluralism could be a permanent form of the universe (James, 1896, WTB: 6), and this pluralism continued to be a central feature of his view in later years (James 1909, PU: 20).

The assertion that pluralism was a valid philosophical hypothesis was not merely theoretical, but practical. James often connected pluralism with democracy, and monism with "despotism" (James, 1882, WTB: 202). Whereas monisms – in any field – asserted that everything must be unified in one substance, or in one intellectual system, pluralism was content with a world of interconnected powers, with no one power completely dominant over the others (James, 1909, PU: 145). This is the key to James's assertion that his radical empiricism "frankly interprets the universe after a social analogy" (James, 1905-6, ML: 367).[2] Pluralism was a way of viewing the world democratically. According to James, it was the monist tendency to assert one ideal as absolute, at the expense of all others, which was the "root of most human injustices and cruelties" (James, 1899, TT: 151). And, vice versa, it was the attitude which allowed us to see other people's values as different but no less real than our own which was "the basis of all our tolerance, social, religious and political" (James, 1899, TT: 150). As such, the rejection of monism, dogmatism and absolutism, and the adoption of a more reasonable and fallibilistic pluralism, was meant to be a large step in the direction of a more tolerant world.

James spent his career combating monism and absolutism within philosophy, and it is a testament to his efforts that pluralism looked like a reasonable position to the thinkers who followed him. One such thinker was Alain Locke. Locke was writing at a time when pluralism was not merely a potential philosophical position, but a necessary political one. Multiculturalism was struggling to emerge within his own society, and totalitarianism was flourishing outside of it. For Locke, then, it was not merely enough to deny the philosophical validity of absolutism, as he took

James to do. One must also present a positive and functional pluralistic axiology.

Like James, Locke saw the tendency in human nature to assert one value or system of values as absolute as the root of most evils in the world. In both theory and practice, such absolutism inevitably leads to conflict:

> Whether […] on the plane of reason or that of action, whether 'above the battle' in the conflict of 'isms' and the 'bloodless ballet of ideas' or in the battle for partisans with their conflicting and irreconcilable ways of life, the same essential strife goes on in the name of eternal ends and deified ultimates' (Locke, 1930: 35).[3]

Locke, also like James, connected his pluralism with democracy, arguing that there was a "vital connection" between the two (Locke, 1942: 53). Concerning the practical results of pluralism, and the pernicious effects of absolutism, James and Locke are very similar in project and vision.

Locke, however, was much clearer on what a pluralist view needed to consist in, if it were to be successful. A pluralist view must be positioned between two negative extremes: absolutism on one side, and what he called "anarchism" on the other. According to Locke, James was an example of the latter.[4] Locke's observation was that the pluralistic philosophies which had proceeded him:

> avoided [the] normative aspects, which has led them into a bloodless behaviourism as arid as the intellectualism they have abandoned or else resulted in a completely individualistic and anarchistic relativism which has rightly been characterised as "philosophic Nihilism" (Locke, 1930: 34).

In reaction to such philosophies, Locke saw himself as attempting to present an account of value which avoided both absolutism on the one side, and either positivism or anarchistic relativism on the other. His own account aimed for a more "systematic relativism", as opposed to the anarchistic relativism of James (Locke, 1942: 55).[5]

The positive account of value Locke aimed to give provided enough space for different values to be tolerated, rather than being seen as necessarily in conflict (the rejection of absolutism), whilst at the same time allowing them to be normatively motivating and to come into meaningful contact and communication with each other (the rejection of individualism or anarchistic relativism). Here is Locke presenting this central project clearly and forcefully:

> To my thinking, the gravest problem of contemporary philosophy is how to ground some normative principle or criterion of objective validity for values without resort to dogmatism and absolutism on the intellectual plane, and without falling into their corollaries, on the plane of social behaviour and action, of intolerance and mass coercion (Locke, 1930: 36).

From this broad project, we can delineate three separate problems which concerned Locke in the formation of his pluralistic axiology. The first is providing an account which enables values to be normative, without linking them to some universal or absolute principle or set of principles. We can call this the *normativity* project. The second is providing an account with enough objectivity so that meaningful comparisons could be made across value systems and different cultures. Call this the *objectivity* project. The third is providing an account which allows us to whole-heartedly maintain our own values as important and motivating, whilst at the same time being tolerant about other people's values. Locke refers to this as value-loyalty (Locke, 1944: 70), so we shall call this the *loyalty* project.

The paper will examine each of these projects in turn, and see how the different pluralisms of James and Locke aim to meet them. My overall argument will be that Locke was hasty in calling James a value anarchist, and that Locke's approach to pluralism should be supplemented with a kind of Jamesian realism if it is to successfully meet these three projects.

§2. Normativity

The first challenge in developing a pluralistic account of value is providing an account of normativity. Any anti-absolutist account must abandon the idea that there are absolute, universal values. However, in so "dethroning our absolutes", we need to "take care not to exile our imperatives, for, after all, we live by them" (Locke 1930: 34). So though we might reject the absolute nature of certain values, we cannot reject their "functional character as imperatives of action and as norms of preference and choice" (Locke 1930: 35). These are the aspects of normativity, then, that Locke is most anxious to keep.

Locke is contrasting his approach with one in which values are seen as the result of rational judgements, or evaluations in which we apply logical predicates. On these kinds of accounts, we apply certain universal categories, values, or logical predicates such as "The Good" and "The Beautiful" to our experience, and their application brings with it categorical imperatives of action. In the attempt to abandon the absolutism

whilst maintaining the normativity of such a picture, Locke inverts it. Instead of appealing to logic, Locke appeals to phenomenology and psychology. Instead of universal values, he roots normativity in "modes or kinds of valuing" (Locke, 1930: 38). Instead of thinking about value in terms of the application of logical predicates to our experience, we should think of it in terms of an experience of valu*ing* which only subsequently can be articulated in terms of a logical predicate.

> These [value- or feeling-] modes co-assert their own relevant norms; each sets up a categorical imperative of its own, not of the Kantian sort with rationalized universality and objectivity, but instead the psychological urgency (shall we say, necessity?) to construe the situation as of a particular qualitative form-character. It is this that we term a function categorical factor, since it operates in and through feeling, although it is later made explicit, analysed, and validated by evaluative processes of judgement and experiential test (Locke, 1930: 41).

Experiences of valuing bring their own normativity. So instead of making the normativity of particular instances of valuing dependent on logical categories, Locke makes the normativity of these logical categories dependent on experiences of valuing.

We need to say more about how valuing experiences come to have normativity outside of explicit evaluation. Locke's assertion is that though we later come to rationalise our experience in terms of predicates, values such as "beauty, goodness, truth (as approval or acceptance) [and] righteousness are known in immediate recognitions of qualitative apprehension" (Locke 1930: 39). Values are first qualitative and affective, and only subsequently logical. But these qualitative values are not without normativity. In fact Locke's claim is that the values set up "directly through feeling, a qualitative category, which […] constitutes an emotionally mediated form of experience" (Locke 1930: 38). We set up, through valuing, a *mood* or an emotionally charged kind of experience. In this experience of valuing a "qualitative universal is given" (Locke, 1930: 39) and this qualitative universal generates "dispositional imperatives of action choices" (Locke, 1930: 36). Certain actions appear right and certain actions appear wrong, given the mood of the experience. Accordingly, these qualitative values are "normatively stamped" by feeling in "the original value experience", and subsequent evaluation "merely renders explict what was implicit in the original value sensing" (Locke, 1930: 39).

We see here that Locke appeals to *types* or *modes* of feeling and valuing. Unlike the value anarchist, Locke's position suggests that there are "basic

and fundamental feeling-modes" which are common to different people and cultures (Locke 1930: 39). There are common types of feeling, which give rise to common types of experience, and common types of value. An appeal to common-sense tells Locke that the moral, the aesthetic, the logical, and the religious are the most common categories of value. As these different categories of value must first be identified at the qualitative level of feeling, Locke delineates four different "feeling-modes". For instance, it is the feeling-mode of *exaltation* which brings religious experiences, this feeling of exultation itself setting up a mode of experience in which we feel that there are normative imperatives to perform, or refrain from performing, certain actions or interpretations. In the same way, the feeling of *tension* grounds our ethical experiences, the feeling of *acceptance* grounds logical value; and the feeling of *repose* grounds aesthetic value (Locke, 1930: 43). Locke's complete picture of normativity, then, is that there are certain common feelings or valuations, which give rise to moods or types of experience, which carry with them a certain normative force to interpret the situation in certain ways and behave in certain ways, and that this is what subsequently, in intellectual analysis, comes to be expressed in the language of logical predicates such as "The Holy", "The Good", and "The True" (Locke, 1930: 43).

Locke maintains a strict anti-realism throughout his account of value, as he associates the realist claim that our values are true of something outside of our attitudes with absolutism.[6] The realist's attempt to discover the "true" value of some object is taken to be a sign of a particular fallacy:

> [f]rom the functionalist's point of view the basic error lies in regarding the formal value as the cause of the valuation or as an essence of the value object rather than the system value of the mode of valuing' (Locke, 1945: 86).[7]

Valuing an object only makes sense within the context of a felt experience with a certain emotional mood. The attempt to take the object outside of this context to discover whether or not it is *really* valuable is the realist's mistake. Locke's "functionalist" view interprets a claim that some object is valuable *within* the context of the experience this is claimed in, and analyses the roles such claims play and the behaviours which they make appropriate. It is *not* interpreted as a claim about the properties of the object. As such, the relativism of Locke does not foster conflict between different value systems, in the way absolutism does. If you are interpreting an object as beautiful, and I am interpreting it as good or morally compelling in some way, we are not in conflict. We are merely operating under different value-modes or -systems, neither of which are more correct or accurate accounts of reality. Arguments over which value

represents the *summum bonum* are "doomed to perpetual logical opposition because their basic value attitudes are psychologically incompatible" (Locke 1930: 45).

One of the strengths of Locke's vision is its ability to account for what Locke calls "trans-valuations". Trans-valuations are times when we switch between value-modes whilst valuing the same object. Examples include when we appreciate an intellectual formula as beautiful rather than true or correct (Locke 1930: 44), or when an artist comes to see the work he is working on as an act of duty rather than an act of creative activity (Locke, 1930: 41). In these cases the feeling with which we are engaging with the object changes, and our categorisation of the value of that object changes accordingly. The absolutist must explain away these cases as illusionary, or merely metaphorical. For Locke these trans-valuations are a real and normal part of our lives.

Examples of trans-valuation do three things. First, the fact that changes in our feeling towards an object changes the categorisation of the value we place on it seems to provide support for Locke's assertion that the affective is prior to the evaluative. 'Once a different form-feeling is evoked', Locke tells us, 'the situation and the value type are, *ipso facto*, changed. Change the attitude, and, irrespective of content, you change the value type; the appropriate new predicates automatically follow' (Locke, 1930: 44). [8] Second, this is meant to be an instance in which Locke's systematic relativism can account for a feature of moral experience which the absolutist cannot. Whereas the absolutist must explain away such cases, Locke's theory "apply[s] a common principle of explanation" (Locke 1930: 44). Thirdly, these trans-valuations are meant to provide us with an analogy for how we can react to other people's values with tolerance. If we find that within our own experience apparently opposed values are harmonised, and merge into each other, then this may lead us to think the same about differing values between persons. When we realise that different values have "complementary character in human experience", we stop thinking that only one value can be the correct one (Locke, 1930: 47).

So unlike the "anarchic relativism", attributed by Locke to James and others, "systematic relativism" can provide some account of normativity, whilst also avoiding absolutism. This is the "middle ground" Locke was looking for (Locke, 1930: 38). Though Locke is right that James does not explicitly forward an account of normativity, we'll see in the final section (§4) that he does have some response to the claim that his brand of pluralism is "anarchic".

It is worth noting at this stage that James should in principle be on board with Locke's "affective theory of valuation" (Locke, 1930: 45). Locke's bold and original move is to attempt to provide an account of normativity without appealing to anything outside of affective experience. As such, the Jamesian can recognise in Locke a kind of radical empiricist approach to normativity.[9]

There are, however, some concerns we might raise about Locke's account. Locke's account of normativity is based on the idea that certain types of feelings come with imperatives to interpret and act in certain ways. What Locke does *not* supply is an account of why we ought to feel certain ways in certain situations. Why is it appropriate to feel exultation in certain situations, and not in others? When my next door neighbour demonstrates a sense of exultation and holy awe in response to his new garden fence, do I have grounds for criticising what appears to be his misplaced feeling? Can the relativist have anything to say to someone who feels no tension in what is, to others, a situation that requires moral interpretation? These are not original claims to level at the relativist, but it seems that these are this kinds of concerns Locke's systematic relativism are meant to avoid. Locke can provide normativity in the sense of having shared modes of valuation which have imperative norms of action and interpretation attached. But there is no normativity concerning which situations require certain felt responses.[10]

Locke cannot appeal to objective features of the environment to provide this normativity. We've seen that Locke equates any form of moral realism with absolutism. Our values are relational in nature, in that they are directed towards the objective world, and emerge in an "emotionally mediated form of experience" (Locke, 1930: 38-39).[11] But the claim by Locke that these values "are rooted in attitudes, not in reality, and pertain to ourselves, not to the world" suggests that there are no features on the objective pole of this relation which determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of a particular attitude (Locke, 1935: 46). Locke asserts that though valuation always has some content, that content never determines the nature of valuation: "feeling-quality, *irrespective of content*, *makes* a value of a given kind" (Locke, 1930: 40, emphasis mine).

This anti-realism doesn't follow straight-forwardly from Locke's project. Later, I will suggest that James's account can provide a kind of realism which Locke's lacks, without returning to absolutism. We can suggest that our feelings are responsive to certain objective elements of a situation, without suggesting that only *one* value-mode is an appropriate response. This pluralistic realism would not be at odds with Locke's larger project. Locke's refusal to accept any form of realism into his affective theory leads

to a certain lack in his account of normativity.

§3. Objectivity

The second challenge to providing a pluralistic account of value is objectivity. If we are going to have meaningful discourse about values between different people and different cultures, then we must have something objective on which to ground such interactions. Locke wants to provide an account in which value is grounded on something more objective than subjective opinion (the value anarchist position), but less objective than universal values to which all of humanity should be held accountable (the absolutist position). Locke has already rejected any kind of moral realism as a basis for objectivity, and so he must look elsewhere for an answer. He does so by introducing what he calls "functional constants" (Locke, 1942: 55).[12]

Locke's basic strategy is to appeal to "objective but neutral common denominators", which operate between valuers and cultures (Locke, 1944: 73). We have already seen this at work in Locke's appeal to common feeling types which ground our different ways of valuing. Though we may have several different instances of a type of value, these different valuations are all connected by virtue of a common feeling which brings about a qualitative universal and set of norms. These valuations may have different *objects*, but they have common attitudes, and thus norms, by which we can assess them.

A good example is Locke's approach to modern art. Many traditionalists rejected modern art *as* art, because they were wedded to a particular idea of "Beauty". They thought that beauty was a matter of particular properties of certain objects, and modern art did not accord with this notion. Locke's interpretation of modern art, by comparison, sees modernism as making progress over the traditional approaches. The modernist has *enlarged* the scope of our artistic norms to include objects which were not previously included (Locke, 1945: 90). Though these objects are different, our "basic attitudinal qualities" have not altered, and so we can recognise the modern art as being part of the same value system as the more traditional pieces. If we judge the different art styles by a fixed absolute such as a particular vision of beauty, then they appear to be divergent activities, at odds with one another. However, if we consider these different styles to have a broad functional commonality, allowing our contemplative feeling-attitudes to express themselves, for instance, then we can recognise both the traditional and the modernist approaches

as fulfilling this role in different, but comparable ways. Locke contends that this "widening of the variety of styles and aesthetic has actually been accompanied by a deepening of aesthetic taste and a sharpening of critical discrimination" (Locke, 1945: 90). We can see the modernist approach as an adaptation and refinement of a kind of activity which the traditionalist was also engaged in.

At a cultural level, Locke's claim is the same. Though the *content* of what different cultural groups value may differ, these different values provide the same *functional role*. This notion is what Locke calls "cultural equivalence" (Locke, 1944: 73), and Locke suggests it is one of three logical corollaries of applying his systematic relativism on the cultural level. The other two are the *reciprocity* of different values, the claim that we can reject assertions of any culture's superiority, but still engage in "scientific, point-by-point comparisons" to see how well they perform their functional role; and *limited cultural convertibility*, or the view that because there are shared functional attitudes between cultures, cultural transference can take place, but should be limited by certain sociological factors (Locke, 1944: 73).[13]

Locke's pluralistic vision is meant to have very practical results for democracy:

> [I]t puts the premium upon equivalence not upon identity, calls for co-operation rather than for conformity and promotes reciprocity instead of factional antagonism. Authoritarianism, dogmatism, and bigotry just cannot take root and grow in such intellectual soil' (Locke, 1942: 60).

Though both the relativist and the absolutist are aiming for peace within the political sphere, the absolutist confuses *uniformity* for *unity*. Uniformity is identity in form or content, whereas unity on the relativist picture can be achieved by the recognition of common functions or purposes, though perhaps clothed very differently (Locke, 1942: 53). The absolutist, because of their association of unity with uniformity, must pursue unity via orthodoxy, which "involves authoritarian conformity and subordination" (Locke, 1944: 70). As such absolutism leads to dogmatism, struggle, and the very conflict which it aims to avoid. Relativism, on the other hand,

> with no arbitrary specifications of unity, no imperious demand for universality, nevertheless enjoins a beneficent neutrality between divergent positions, and, in the case of the contacts of cultures, would in due course promote, step by step, from an initial stage of cultural tolerance, mutual respect, reciprocal exchange, some specific communities of agreement and, finally, with sufficient

> mutual understanding and confidence, commonality of purpose and action' (Locke, 1944: 70-71).

As Harris tells us, Locke's claim is that '[t]he unity of peoples can exist without uniformity of cultural modalities' (Harris, 1989: 68).[14]

So, in summary, Locke believes that his systematic relativism provides us with the capacity for objective analysis between different valuers and cultures. Though different cultures might value different *things*, these values are underpinned by a common type of feeling, and common functional roles. Though what we find beautiful might differ, our feeling of beauty, the inchoate norms that emerge from this feeling, and the functions of the practices based on this feeling are all essentially similar. We might worship different Gods, but what it means to worship, and the kind of role it plays in our lives, are commonalities which unify us. It is Locke's suggestion that focusing on these "neutral common denominators" rather than "superficial institutional divergence" gives us a basis for analysing different values according to one standard, and is more likely to lead to cross-cultural discussion and cooperation than absolutism. And it is this objectivity which he accuses the anarchic relativist of lacking.

We might not think that the attribution of anarchic relativism to James is unfair, considering some portions of his work. For instance, in his explicit work on ethics, James makes the seemingly individualistic claim that the good is nothing but the satisfaction of demand, and that each demand *prima facie* deserves to be met. In fact, James is insistent that nothing common underlies various values (or "ideals" in James's vocabulary).[15] However, a closer look at James's work as a whole reveals that the attempt to uncover fundamental affective and functional similarities when assessing very divergent positions is a staple of James's pragmatism. I'll address two such attempts here: James's approach to philosophy as a whole, and James's approach to religion.

Throughout his career, but most forcefully in *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), James argues that one of the central goals of philosophy is to provide us with an account of the universe such that we can feel "at home" in it. He expresses this by suggesting that "intimacy", an affective measure of how "at home" a particular theory allows us to feel, is the criterion by which we should assess different metaphysical visions. On this view, then, though metaphysical visions appear to assert any number of contradictory things, they have a shared purpose which allows these different philosophies to enter into conversation, and be assessed by the same criteria (James, 1909, PU: 11). Over the course of the work, James argues that his own pluralistic account meets this affective and functional

criterion of intimacy better than monism. This is not the time to present this argument in detail, but what it tells us is that James accepts something very similar to Locke's approach of finding objectivity in underlying "common denominators" which different views share, rather than in common objects.[16]

A second example can be found in James's work on religion. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and elsewhere, James analyses the various claims of very different religious beliefs, and finds common functional aims behind them. In *Varieties* this is stated as:

> the practical needs and experiences of religion seem to me sufficiently met by the belief that beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and his ideals (James, 1902, VRE: 413).

We can find similar statements of the broad functional aim of religion elsewhere in James work.[17] This might seem like a very weak sense of religion, but James is not offering us a definitive account of religious belief. Instead, his is suggesting that there is a common function which every religious account is attempting to meet, and by which we can assess the different religious hypotheses. James, like Locke, does not want this "common denominator" to determine content. It leaves open, for instance, such questions as to whether the best religious hypothesis is monotheistic or polytheistic, whether God is infinite or finite, and whether human immortality is possible (James, 1902, *VRE*: 412-3). James asserts that a pluralistic thesis of religion, which sees God as finite, is "the hypothesis by which the largest number of legitimate requirements are met" (James, 1902, *VRE*: 411), but this remains a fallible hypothesis, rather than a dogmatic assertion.[18]

These two examples show that James can appeal to the same basic account of objectivity that Locke can, though James's account is less structured. But this is not the only notion of objectivity which James has available to him. We can see this in James's explicit engagement with relativism. James does, in fact, call himself a relativist, by which he simply means anti-absolutist (James, 1909, MT: 142). But he explicitly rejects the notion that any opinion is as good as any other, which is what Locke's accusation of anarchic relativism amounts to. "Opinion", for the pragmatist, is something rooted in "the whole environment of social communication of which they are a part and out of which they take their rise" (James, 1909, MT: 145). These opinions have been *tested*, and will continue to be tested, against experience, and we have to trust that experience will help us select which opinions are true (ibid).[19] Over time, we make progress towards true

beliefs. And we have no reason to suspect that our beliefs within the ethical or aesthetic sphere are any different.[20] James's relativism, then, does not deny absolute truth:

> No relativist who ever actually walked the earth has denied the regulative character in his own thinking of the notion of absolute truth. What is challenged by the relativists is the pretence on anyone's part to have found for certain at any given moment what the shape of that truth is" (James, 1909, MT: 143).

The primary difference between absolutism and James's relativism, then, is not that one believes in absolute truth and the other does not. The difference is that for the Jamesian relativist absolute truth is what will be coercive over experience in the long run of human inquiry (James, 1909, MT: 143).

So it seems as if James has access to two sources of objectivity in his account of value pluralism. He shares with Locke a *functionalism*, an appeal to affective and functional constants which underpin different values. But he also appeals to a kind of *realism*, which sees our values as responsive in the long run to features of experience, so that we move closer to truth. We can find this second element of objectivity in the examples we've already looked at. In James's metaphysics, each account is treated as a hypotheses whose objectivity is measured by assessing how well they fulfil their functional roles *and* how well the continued drift of experience continues to confirm them.[21] In the case of religion, James tells us to treat our different religious beliefs as hypotheses, which experience will confirm or deny in the long run (James, 1896: WB: 9). James' approach in these cases is to combine functional analysis, which delineates commonalities in aims and methods of assessment between apparently divergent positions, and a realism by which we test our various hypotheses against experience.[22]

For Locke, this realist approach will be indicative of his second large criticism of pragmatism. [23] Though many pragmatists claims to be pluralistic, argues Locke, they in fact reduce all claims of truth to what is experimentally testable. [24] Locke calls this the "logico-experimental" methodology (Locke, 1930: 37). The tendency to think of truth as "the correct anticipation of experience [or] the confirmation of fact" unduly narrows what we actually mean by truth (ibid). According to Locke, truth "may also sometimes be the sustaining of an attitude, the satisfaction of a way of feeling, the corroboration of a value. To the poet, beauty is truth; to the religious devotee, God is truth; to the enthused moralist, what ought-to-be overtops factual reality' (Locke, 1930: 37). The experimentalist fallacy,

on the other hand, is to apply just *one* account of truth, drawn from the natural sciences, to *all* areas.[25] We look for objectivity not in the actual processes of valuation, but in "the confirmations of experience or the affirmations of evaluative judgements" (Locke, 1930: 38).

Interestingly, this concern of Locke's is shared in some sense by James. James continually suggests that a philosophy should aim to account not just for intellectual needs, or scientific validity, but also aesthetic, moral, and practical needs.[26] Any philosophy that suggests that only questions of science or logic are answerable will be seen as deficient on James's account. Nonetheless, James sticks to his claim that aesthetic, moral, and practical beliefs are tested in experience. And he does so by broadening the notion of experience beyond the physical. James's radical empiricism is rooted in the claim that everything that is real must be experienceable, and that everything experienceable is real (1904, ERE: 22). This includes religious experiences and moral experiences. So James has a broad enough notion of inquiry, and of experience, to avoid Locke's concerns about the experimentalist method. James's experimentalism means nothing more than the notion that we should treat our various ideals and beliefs as hypotheses to be tested against our experience and that of humanity as a whole, and that we should be open to their alteration by contradictory experience. This account does not seem to narrow the kinds of things which can be seen as real or true in the way which worries Locke.

§4. Loyalty

The third challenge for developing a non-anarchic relativism is "loyalty". Whilst being tolerant of values different from our own, we must also be able to find our *own* personal and cultural values meaningful. First and foremost our values are calls to interpretation and action. Any relativism which abandons the feeling that our own values are meaningful and motivating will essentially lead to nihilism and indifference. This is what Locke believes anarchic relativism, with its "everything goes" approach to value, leads to (Locke, 1944: 70). Absolutism, on the other hand, maintains our own values are meaningful and motivating, but only at the expense of dogmatically denying *other* people's values as worthwhile. Locke's own relativism aims for a middle ground: "[it] contradicts value dogmatism and counteracts value bigotry without destroying the sense of active value loyalty" (Locke, 1944: 70). This is the claim we will be assessing in this final section.

According to Locke's anti-absolutism we cannot think of our cultural or

personal values as superior to others. But Locke does not want us to eradicate the loyalty we feel to these values, but to *reposition* it. Instead of taking particular forms or symbols of our values as the "centre of value loyalty", we should instead take "the goal of maximizing the value-mode itself as an attitude and activity" (Locke, 1930: 48). "[E]nlightened value loyalty" is the ability to distinguish between the mere "symbol and form" of our different values, and those underlying functional and affective commonalities which unite them as their "essence and […] objective" (Locke, 1942: 60).

Certainly, value pluralism of this kind can lead to a perceived loss of prestige for our particular culture's values. We lose the notion that our value system is *the* correct value system. But, in exchange, we move towards an "effective *pax romana* of values, with greater and more permanent eventual gains" (Locke, 1942: 56). More pessimistically, Locke elsewhere tells us that, though this repositioning of our values might be difficult, it becomes much easier when we see that "the only alternative policy is suicidal" (Locke, 1932-4: 137).

Locke aligns this repositioning strategy with Josiah Royce's "Loyalty to Loyalty" notion.[27] Like Locke, Royce's solution to an apparent paradox in the value of loyalty was to appeal to a common denominator. The paradox which concerned Royce consisted in the fact that being loyal to something is a supreme human good, but that the conflict which arises between different groups who are loyal to different things is the supreme human evil (Royce, 1908: 30-31). The common denominator Royce appeals to is loyalty itself. Each of us sees that loyalty is a common good, and we should reposition our loyalty so that we apprehend the value of "universal loyalty" or "loyalty to loyalty". Our goal becomes the increase of loyalty in humanity as a whole, and not merely the success of the particular cause we are loyal to. We now serve our individual cause with a view to securing "the greatest possible increase in loyalty amongst men" (Royce, 1908: 121). We then seek a good for all humankind, rather than ourselves, the aim to "make loyalty triumphant in the lives of all men" (Royce, 1908: 129-30).[28]

Locke's move to reposition our value loyalty, then, is again dependent on their being shared common denominators between apparently different values. Our aim, if we are truly loyal to a certain value, should be to increase understanding, diversity, or expression within a certain *type* or *mode* of value. To return to our example of art, the modernist is truly loyal to the *essence* of her value, seeing as she wants to increase diversity and understanding of aesthetic expression and appreciation. The traditionalist is only loyal to a particular *symbol* of value, a particular notion of Beauty

or aesthetic appreciation, and so rejects the progress the modernist represents. Similarly, though I am a Hindu and you are a Christian, we both express exultation of the divine, and so what we are loyal to is essentially the same, even though the external symbols of our respective faiths are different.

Conflicts can still occur, for Locke. But they are conflicts *within* a shared context. For instance, Locke considers two conflicting accounts of the atom: the classical theory and the modern theory. The two objects occupy the same functional role within the same value context, and cannot both be correct. However, appealing to the common functional denominator that each theory is attempting to fulfil, we can see that the modern theory "includes and interprets more observable phenomena", and so we are confident in calling that theory "truer" (Locke, 1945: 89). In a similar way, we might still discuss whether polytheism or monotheism is the better way to worship the divine. This is still a potential disagreement, but one with a common denominator both sides agree to and refer to. Recognition of a shared essence between the two positions leads to reasonable discourse, whereas the assertion that the different symbols of the different faiths are true leads to unhelpful conflicts. Moreover, assuming one side is not absurdly wrong, any new theory tends to incorporate a "good part of the previous theory" (Locke, 1945: 89).

This is a neat way of solving the problem of value loyalty. However, there are two potential problems which emerge when considering Locke's position from a Jamesian standpoint. The first concerns Locke's anti-realism, the second his appeal to common denominators. I'll consider each in turn.

Locke is quite insistent that his relativism sees values as existing in attitude rather than in reality. The problem with this is that it means the Lockean relativist is forced to conclude that whichever value one adopts, it can make no meaningful impact upon reality. James's account, on the other hand, is that the meaning of a value is dependent on that value's actual or potential contribution to reality. Only when we see that there are real possibilities which our values are responsive to, and which acting under our values can effect, can we see our values as meaningful and motivating (James, 1884, WB: 135). Only if we can see ourselves as fighting to bring some positive value into reality, can we find our lives meaningful (James, 1895, WB: 55). And any philosophy which removes external reference for our values "leaves the mind with little to care or act for" (James, 1882, WB: 71).

James's view is, simply put, that in order to find our values meaningful

and motivating, we must consider them to have some real reference, outside of our attitude. The force of our values is only felt when we consider that acting under them will bring about some effect. If we do not think some change to reality can be brought about, we lose any motivation to act. Without the motivation to act, our ideals become merely subjective, and at the thought of a world in which our ideals have no real reference, we are overcome with a "nameless *unheimlichkeit*" (1882, WB: 71).[29] In short, then, James would worry that Locke's system, in virtue of its anti-realism, would lead to the subjectivism and indifferentism that he aims to avoid.

Locke's reliance on common denominators presents a second problem. Because Locke seeks objectivity in his account of value, but cannot find this objectivity in any form of realism, Locke makes the commonalities he identifies *within* our valuing very robust. But the strength of these commonalities endangers the difference Locke wants to maintain. Apparently different values are either part of the same value mode, or they are not. If they are part of the same value mode, then in *essence* they are the same, though they may have different symbols. If they are not part of the same value mode, then they are not in conflict at all, but represent different but compatible psychological approaches to the same object. The latter option removes the possibility of saying one value mode is more appropriate than another in a certain context (§2). The former, James would say, unfairly reduces differences to commonality. We often find Locke suggesting that apparent differences are "superficial",[30] or that the particular symbols associated by a culture with the common value modes are done so "irrationally" (Locke, 1944: 76).

Seemingly, Locke gains harmony between competing values at the expense of the meaning of those different values. Locke may well be correct that there are underlying affective and functional constants beneath our apparently different value claims. But it remains unclear how reorienting our loyalty to these constants maintains the meaning of our personal and cultural values, if we simultaneously hold their distinctiveness as at best irrelevant and at worst irrational.

So, if we cannot appeal to underlying affective and functional constants, how *are* we to overcome conflicts in value on James account? According to James, we do so by seeing ourselves as engaged in a common epistemic project of discovering what the right and most inclusive system of goods really is (1888-9, ML: 184). When we find two ideals which are in conflict, we ask ourselves which "will give the best universe", and this question can only be answered by appeal to our own and other people's experience (1891, WB: 158). Ultimately, through the experience of the human race as a

whole, we reach some stable views on what is really good and valuable (1882, WB: 87). Though Locke might insist that James's turn to realism might lead to people dogmatically asserting our own ideals, James insists we are meant to hold our values as hypotheses. They are fallible, and subject to change in the face of experience. For instance, we may experience disappointment at the satisfaction of our values, or find they are incompatible with other values, or unachievable, or achievable at too great a cost. And we view other people's values as hypotheses along the same lines. As such, differences in values are seen as no more problematic than differences in scientific hypotheses. It with an appeal to a very broad notion of science, then, that James aims to avoid the dogmatism which Locke assumes goes along with realism.

This allows us to return to the promissory note regarding James's approach to normativity (§2). Though James does not explicitly talk about normativity, he does talk about what it is to find our ideals and values motivating. Locke himself takes motivation to be the primary notion of normativity. James holds that in order for our values to be motivating, we must consider them to be actual or potential contributions to reality. James gives us reasons to act under our various ideals, and avoids the nihilism and indifferentism which Locke is concerned to avoid. But James also provides us with a second account of normativity. According to James, our ideals and values are hypotheses about the world, and are amenable to experience. We can be right or wrong in our assertions that certain courses of action, or the adoption of certain practices, are valuable.[31] Moreover, seeing as the world is altered by our actions and the ideals we act under, we have a responsibility to make our values the right ones. We need to be aware of the consequences of acting under them, we need to be responsive to the experiences which tell us whether they are valuable in the right ways, and we need to allow other people to express equally plausible hypotheses about the good.

§5. Conclusion

Locke offers any account of value pluralism three challenges. For pluralism not to be mere anarchic relativism, we must provide an adequate account of normativity, objectivity, and loyalty, whilst avoiding absolutism. We've looked at two attempts to do so: Locke's own systematic relativism, and James's pluralism. Despite Locke's claim that James represents an anarchic relativist position, we've seen a great number of similarities between the two, with one major difference: though James is happy to appeal to a limited realism, Locke holds that any such appeal

leads to dogmatism.

Any Jamesian account has a great deal to learn from Locke's pluralistic axiology. Locke effectively articulates what such an axiology requires, and the problems which must face it. Locke aims to answer these problems by appealing to common affective and functional constants which lie behind different claims about value. His appeals to examples of trans-valuation, his careful analysis of the pluralistic thesis, and his affective account of normativity, are things which a Jamesian account must take seriously. However, I have suggested that an attempt to locate normativity *solely* in feeling and attitude limits such a theory. Without reference to something outside of feeling, and cultural practices of valuation, we cannot account for why certain values apply to certain objects appropriately, and not to others. Without our values having some kind of reference to a reality outside of them, our values become what James would call "a game of private theatricals", unable to be considered actual or possible contributions to reality, and so unable to be found meaningful.[32]

James's account of value pluralism appeals to some form of realism to meet the three challenges Locke has set. I have suggested that we do not need to think of this realism in a strong sense, as our values being *in* the world, or of one value being *absolutely* true. But we do need to think of our values as being responsive to a wider reality, outside of feeling. I have neither defended nor detailed this limited realism here. But I have suggested that any value pluralism which wants to meet the three criteria which Locke set out needs to appeal to something like Jamesian realism.[33]

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MT: James, W. *The Meaning of Truth.* Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1975.

ERE: James, W. *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976.

PU: James, W. *A Pluralistic Universe*. Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977.

WB: James, W. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosop*hy. Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds). Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979.

SPP: James, W. *Some Problems of Philosophy.* Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1979.

VRE: James, W. *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1985.

ML: James, W. *Manuscript Lectures*. Fredson Bowers and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (eds.) Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1988.

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ENDNOTES

[1]All references to William James are taken from *The Works of William James* editions. References will be in the following convention: (Author, date originally published, book abbreviation: page). See bibliography for abbreviations used.

[2]See work by David Lamberth (esp. 1997) for detailed analysis of James's “social analogy”. Speaking of Alain Locke, and cultural pluralism more generally, Horace Kallen also prevents a social analogy. For Kallen, the difference between monism and pluralism was the difference between “brotherhood” and “friendship”. Monists often refer to the brotherhood of man, but this word carries 'implication of identical beginning and common end' (Kallen, 1957: 120). For Kallen, brotherhood is a relationship defined by identity at the expense of difference. This relationship says: 'so that you become completely a brother, you must offer up your own different being to be digested into identification with mine' (ibid). On the other hand, friendship is a relationship defined by difference. The friend says 'I am different from you. You are different from me. The basis of our communion is our difference. Let us exchange the fruits of our differences so that each may enrich the other with what the other is not or has not in himself' (Kallen 1957: 120-1).

[3]All references to Alain Locke's works are taken from Leonard Harris's excellent edited collection T*he Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (1989). References will follow this convention: (Author, date originally written: page).

[4]Cf. Locke (1942: 55) for an instance of Locke's attribution to James of value anarchism. According to Harris (1989: 32), it is normal for Locke to attribute anarchism to James.

[5]Stikkers (1999) provides an account of an additional difference between Locke and James.

For James, Stikkers argues, pluralism was *intrinsically* valuable, something to be celebrated for "the sheer aesthetic enjoyment of difference". For Locke, on the other hand, pluralism was *instrumentally* valuable, as "a means to create a world in which we can all somehow get along peacefully" (Stikkers, 1999: 213). This is not a difference I have time to address in this paper. It would be incorrect, I think, to suggest that James was not also aware of the instrumental importance of pluralism. But it is quite right to indicate a tendency in James to see difference, novelty, and diversity as valuable *in itself* in a way that deserves separate investigation.

[6] (cf. Locke, 1945: 85)

[7] Locke makes this anti-realist claim as far back as his doctoral dissertation, on which much of his later work is based: '[M]ost theories of value *make*, rather than seek to *discover*, a system of value (1918: 7, quoted in Mason 1988: 95, emphasis mine).

[8] cf. (Locke 1945: 84).

[9] Radical empiricism holds that we cannot appeal to anything outside of experience, nor ignore anything within experience (James, 1904, ERE: 22). Applied to value theory, we can see Locke's "affective theory" being a natural result. We can see James's own "affective" approach to value being attempted in "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" (James, 1891, WB: 141-162).

[10] There is a second, more unwieldy, criticism which follows from Locke's claim that normativity emerges from immediate sensational experience. As Mason puts it: 'The original value sensing is always a direct and immediate experience, and like all direct and immediate experiences, it is supposedly noncognitive' (Mason 1988: 93). Locke is either committed to a certain kind of non-cognitivism about normativity, or seems to engender familiar "myth of the given" type concerns. This point is too large to be adequately dealt with here.

[11] Comment redacted for anonymous review. See Carter (2012) for a more detailed analysis of the relational nature of value in Locke's account.

[12] Or "cultural cognates" on the cultural level (Locke, 1944: 73).

[13] Exactly what Locke means when he says his relativism is objective is questionable. My account here places this objectivity in shared phenomenological attitudes which underlie our apparently different values. This is a more objective account than other people's. For instance, Gbadegesin sees Locke's claims of objectivity as referring values to their "social and cultural backgrounds. This means that critical relativism is just another name for the functional approach" (1999: 286). Green too emphasises that the objectivity in Locke's account comes from the interpretation of values as "functional adaptations" to "particular backgrounds" (1999: 93). This difference comes in part from the fact that I am focusing on values modes, which exist in and between all cultures, and these scholars are talking about the objectivity of certain values within particular cultures. We agree that Locke does not, and cannot, appeal to any standard outside of human beings' practices of valuation.

[14]It would be easy to interpret Locke, given the time he was writing, as talking about the explicitly fascist movements of his time when he warns about absolutism. But this would miss the true force of his criticism. Locke is insistent that an ostensibly democratic society can be authoritarian in the way he is concerned about, if instead of recognising essential features of commonality between cultures, they insist on a conformity of democratic institutions. Cf. Locke (1942: 53ff).

[15] "The various ideals have *no common character* apart from the fact that they are ideals" (James, 1891, WB: 153, emphasis mine).

[16] See Stern and Williams (forthcoming) for more detail about this example. Lamberth (2014) has recently done an excellent job of elaborating what I take to be James's pluralistic meta-philosophy.

[17] (James, 1907, P: 144; 1909, PU: 139)
[18] cf. (James, 1907, *P*: 133-142; 1909, PU: 141)
[19] Locke will agree that all opinions emerge in historical and cultural contexts, but deny that we should see them as results of experimentation.
[20] See, for instance, (James, 1879, EPh: 21).
[21] cf. James (1909, PU: 147).
[22] Exactly what *counts* as experience in religious inquiry is up for debate. See, for instance, recent debates between Klein (2015) and Misak (2015).
[23] Fraser (1999) indicates a third criticism, not made by Locke, but made through him. She suggests that the American pragmatism of Peirce, James, Dewey, and even Jane Addams, is too abstract and intellectualised, and that Locke's pragmatism is based on a concrete understanding on inequality, power, domination, and race relations (cf. Fraser 1999: 4-5).
[24] We might suspect that James himself is not the target of this criticism, but that Locke was thinking of the more positivistic thinkers who followed James. However, in protecting James from the accusation of anarchic relativism, I am claiming James appeals to a realism which could potentially be criticised in the same way.
[25] Harris analyses these kinds of claims as a rejection of the "epistemological privilege" of inquiry based on the scientific method, and fleshes this out with an example of statistical research in social sciences: 'It is not that statistics are of no use in understanding social change for Locke, but that the 'inner' life of the human experience moves forward in advance of statistical research and in ways not capturable by our predictive powers' (Harris 1988: 73).
[26] cf. (James 1909, PU: 55).
[27] Locke saw Royce's idea as "nothing more or less than a vindication of the principle of unity in diversity carried out to a practical degree of spiritual reciprocity" (Locke, 1932-4: 137).
[28] Stikkers summarises this notion of Royce's, with attention to the similarity with Locke's, in the following way: 'I come to recognise the loyalty of my neighbor as "structurally equivalent" to my own – not necessarily equivalent in content – and out of that recognition there may grow a loyalty to an idea of loyalty, which I, my neighbor, and even my enemy might come to share. But loyalty to universal human loyalty through loyalty to loyalty must be grounded first in some particular loyalty, lest it become too abstract, vague and hollow' (Stikkers, 1999: 215). See also (Green, 1999: 88).
[29] Moreover, we tend to consider those who hold values but do not act under them "contemptible" (James, 1898, TT: 164)
[30] cf. (Locke 1942: 60; 1944: 73).
[31] Note that Locke's concerns about "logico-experimental" methodology prevents him from taking such an approach. For Locke, "correctness" is the method of evaluation within the logical sphere, but not the moral, religious or aesthetic sphere.
[32] (James, 1895, WB: 55).
[33] Acknowledgements redacted for anonymous review.