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# Pragmatism: A Second Look

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## Historical Note: Paul Carus

Paul Carus, the first editor of *The Monist*, was born in Ilesberg am Harz on July 18, 1852, and died in La Salle, Illinois, on February 11, 1919. After receiving his Ph.D. degree in philosophy and classical philology from Tübingen University in 1876, he taught briefly at the State Military Academy at Dresden. In search of freedom for expression of his independent views, he migrated first to England and then to the United States. In 1887, he accepted the invitation of Edward C. Hegeler (who later became his father-in-law) to edit *The Open Court* magazine, a monthly journal devoted primarily to comparative religion. In 1888, *The Monist* was established as a quarterly journal of the philosophy of science, and Paul Carus served as editor of both journals and as editor of the Open Court Publishing Company until his death in 1919.

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## PURPOSE, POWER, AND AGENCY

There are various reasons for taking a second look at anything at all. One reason is to discern aspects which have been overlooked; another frequently related reason is to reappraise the value or relevance of whatever is being reconsidered. A thing might be deemed worthless or negligible because some feature or set of features has been overlooked. And this way of conceiving the thing might become so familiar, so entrenched, that it powerfully, because subtly, works against alternative conceptions.<sup>1</sup> In certain intellectual circles, for example, the critiques of religion have become so familiar that the religious hypothesis is not (in William James's phrase) a "living option."<sup>2</sup> As John Dewey noted, familiarity is more likely to breed credulity than contempt: We take the familiar conception, containing its implicit evaluation, as worthy of our belief, simply because it is familiar. Thus, a second look undertaken from a fresh perspective is ordinarily most promising; for it is most likely to bring into focus overlooked facets and unsuspected relevancies of familiar topics.

## Pragmatism: How to Make Our Philosophies Concrete

My objective is, accordingly, to look at classical American pragmatism from a somewhat novel perspective. The writings of Jürgen Habermas, Ian Hacking, Richard Rorty, and Cornell West—to mention but four randomly selected authors—have enhanced the possibility of giving pragmatism a fresher and fuller look than at any other time during recent decades.<sup>3</sup> Philosophers and scholars in other disciplines who have little or no firsthand acquaintance with American pragmatism are more open today to the distinctive approach to philosophical questions wrought by Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. The novelty of my own perspective should not be stressed too much, however; for what Peirce says about philosophical doctrines applies in all likelihood to the interpretation of them as well: "Any philosophical doctrine that should [turn out to] be completely new could hardly fail to prove completely false" (CP 6.11).<sup>4</sup> Even so, the emphasis of my interpretation on purpose, power, and agency is sufficiently novel to differentiate itself from other interpretations of American pragmatism, especially currently fashionable ones which

sistence upon framing philosophical problems and formulating philosophical positions in a thoroughly concrete manner. Such a manner takes what James calls the "full fact" as the context from which reflection emerges and the one in which it terminates.<sup>10</sup> "A conscious field *plus* its object as felt or thought of *plus* an attitude towards the object plus a sense of a self to which the attitude belongs—such a concrete bit of personal experience may be a small bit, but it is a solid bit as long as it lasts; not hollow, not a mere abstract element of experience, such as the 'object' is when taken alone. It is a *full fact*."<sup>11</sup> What is ordinarily designated objective is a highly abstract feature of a richly textured situation. To take as the full fact the concrete situation, rather than an abstract object (that is, an object abstracted from the activities and thus purposes of human agents) does not denigrate objectivity, much less deny its possibility. Rather such an approach situates objectivity: in one sense, it does so by conceiving "objects" as those beings which throw themselves in the path of our activities, often in an unforeseen and even unwelcomed way<sup>12</sup>; in another, it does so by recognizing the demand for objectivity as a constitutive norm of responsible inquiry. This demand is met by appealing to the observations and criticisms of other investigators. Adherence to the principle of intersubjectivity<sup>13</sup> is, accordingly, indispensable for the attainment of objectivity.

The deliberate attempt to fashion a concrete approach to philosophical inquiry was motivated, in large part, to counteract a dominant tendency in Western philosophy, a tendency James dubbed "vicious abstractionism."<sup>14</sup> He described this tendency in this way:

We conceive a concrete situation by singling out some salient or important feature in it, and classing it under that; then, instead of adding to its previous characters all the positive consequences which the new way of conceiving it may bring, we proceed to use our concept privately; reducing the originally rich phenomenon to the naked suggestions of that name abstractly taken, treating it as a case of 'nothing but' that concept, and acting as if all the other characters from out of which the concept is abstracted were expunged. Abstraction, functioning in this way, becomes a means of arrest far more than a means of advance in thought. It mutilates things; it creates difficulties and finds impossibilities; and more than half the trouble that metaphysicians and logicians give themselves over the paradoxes and dialectic puzzles of the universe may . . . be traced to this relatively simple source.<sup>14</sup> (MT 302)

"Abstract thought" is a pleonastic expression: to think at all is to abstract or select certain features of a situation, disregarding countless others. Abstractions are vicious when we fail to acknowledge the work of our own minds and the purpose(s) guiding this work.<sup>15</sup>

pride themselves on "strong misreadings"<sup>16</sup> of the classical pragmatists (the four thinkers mentioned above—Peirce, James, Dewey, Mead—plus C. I. Lewis). Far more important, this interpretation suggests a fruitful way of taking up anew the question of pragmatism; better, it suggests ways of picking up the tasks that were too soon put aside when logical positivists, many of whom were fleeing a political hegemony in Europe, set up an intellectual hegemony in the United States and elsewhere. In addition, this approach illuminates some fundamental affinities between American pragmatism and certain important movements in Continental European thought (for example, the phenomenological existentialism of Maurice Merleau-Ponty; critical theory, especially in its later developments; and Michel Foucault's genealogical accounts of various institutional and discursive practices).

My own suggestions for how to look at pragmatism are, at once, rooted in certain points stressed by the pragmatists themselves and certain themes inadequately developed by them. Most prominent among these insufficiently articulated themes is that of agency; most prominent among the focally emphasized points is the importance of concreteness. My objective is to render pragmatism more concrete by making the theme of agency more central to this position than the pragmatists themselves were disposed to make it—to realize more fully one of the deepest intentions of the pragmatists by highlighting a theme that they themselves did not fully explore. One way this approach to pragmatism drives toward a more concrete understanding of this doctrine than the pragmatists themselves systematically achieved is that this approach takes the cultivation of historical consciousness to be a focal concern of philosophy. Concreteness requires an appeal to history, to our actual, historical situatedness and (for an understanding of this situatedness) an exploration of a complex, tangled past. The Dewey of "Philosophy and Civilization"—that is, the pragmatic naturalist coming to terms with his own Hegelian past—can serve as a guide here; but others (Hegel himself, Morris R. Cohen, John Herman Randall, Jr., and John William Miller<sup>17</sup>) need to be consulted as well, for the theme of history and thus the topic of narrative did not capture the pragmatists' attention. It is, however, only in detailed reference to our concrete historical circumstances that we can catch a glimpse of our uniqueness as well as our universality, of what is distinctive about our agency at this moment in history and what we share in common with our predecessors.

William James suggested that: "The whole originality of pragmatism, the whole point in it, is its use of the *concrete* way of seeing. It begins with concreteness, and returns and ends with it."<sup>18</sup> The fecundity as well as novelty of this philosophical outlook resides in, above all else, the untiring in-

A pragmatic account of human thinking stresses the *potentially* public or intersubjective character of thought, while acknowledging its characteristically private or inward occurrence. On the one hand, it is imperative to recognize that: "There is no reason why 'thought' . . . should be taken in the narrow sense in which silence and darkness [that is, privacy] are favorable [much less, absolutely essential] to thought. It should rather be understood as covering all rational life, so that an experiment shall be an operation of thought" (CP 5.420). On the other hand, it is necessary to see that much, if not most, of our thinking takes place either entirely in our imaginations or through them. Here also a text from Peirce serves our purpose: "the whole business of ratiocination, and all that makes us intellectual beings, is performed in imagination"<sup>16</sup> (CP 6.286; in addition see CP 5.440; 5.499; 5.507; 5.517).

The most sophisticated forms of human reflection have their roots in the historical struggle of a precariously situated species to carve out a niche for itself in an environment only partly hospitable to the presence and continuance of this species. Here we encounter an essential feature of American pragmatism: this philosophical outlook is, explicitly and self-consciously, post-Darwinian.<sup>17</sup> This means, among other things, that the nature and function of reflection must be reconceived in light of the facts and implications of evolution. The most temporally extended and practically remote modes of reflection have been made possible by those biological and cultural facts that capacitate human organisms to respond to the problematic as such.<sup>18</sup> The way to grasp the nature and function of reflection is—for the pragmatists, at least—to relate reflection to the delayed, outward or bodily responses of embodied agents. The capacity to stop and think opens the possibility for ever more extended and refined responses; these responses, in turn, both depend on and contribute to various forms of symbolization.<sup>19</sup> Such responses are, in embryonic form at least, symbolically mediated responses of an essentially experimental cast.

Any reflective response to a concrete situation involves selective emphasis (singling out some salient or important feature in the situation).<sup>20</sup> I take the dog to be a threat because of its growl and the tautness of its body, both suggesting readiness to attack; the color of its eyes and sheen of its coat go unnoticed in the situation being described. Though in all likelihood I do not, in the immediate circumstance, consciously call to mind any purpose or end-in-view, my selection of certain features and neglect of others is animated by the desire to avoid injury. A purpose guides my action even though it is acknowledged, if at all, only after the fact or, better, the act.

The presumption of the pragmatists is that human agency in all of its higher manifestations has evolved from just such concrete circumstances in which a vulnerable organism is confronted, often (if not usually) in concert with other organisms of the same species, with possibilities of both injury and fulfillment. Frequently, the possibility of fulfillment is linked to that of injury—the stream promising to quench one's thirst lies beyond a plain upon which predators tend to roam. The way to fulfillment demands the circumvention of danger. Human intelligence was originally cultivated and is only refined as a result of reaching some fulfillment while simultaneously averting some danger. Such, at least, is the presumption of the pragmatists. This presumption does not entail reductionism; it *does* suggest that human intelligence is, first and foremost, a cultivated capacity to discern the possibilities of weal and woe.<sup>21</sup> As Peirce puts it, "one, at least, of the functions of intelligence is to adapt conduct to circumstances, so as to subserve desire" (CP 5.548). Intelligence can be adapted to serve other purposes (for example, to discover the laws of nature without regard for how these discoveries bear upon our happiness or unhappiness); and with this adaptation the very meaning of weal and woe can—and, most likely, does—change. Human flourishing, properly understood, usurps the place of biological survival, simply conceived.

A concept—or *Begriff*—is the *Denkmittel*,<sup>22</sup> the means by which we grasp some situation or, stated alternatively, by which we orient ourselves to some context. One cumulative result of our reflective responses is a storehouse of concepts to which we can go for the resources to deal with novel no less than with familiar circumstances. This storehouse provides us with the means of confronting immediately pressing exigencies (for example, the need to avoid *this* danger or to satisfy *his* thirst); it also provides us with the means for conceiving ever more remote, but nonetheless still possibly relevant, contexts in which our agency might be situated (for example, the memory of persons no longer present or the hope of a future not yet realizable, much less realized).<sup>23</sup> When this storehouse becomes the depository for the conceptual handiwork of countless generations, and when the perfection of this handiwork is more or less dissociated from the immediate concerns of ordinary people, then vicious abstractionism becomes an omnipresent danger.

Above we recalled James's own characterization of "full fact." Another way of capturing what is meant by this term is to appeal to a lived sense of our agency-in-the-world. Our being here is a striving for. Such striving is always situated: it is embedded in contexts of more or less in-

defining mode of practice. This way of approaching pragmatism helps us to see what issues most urgently need to be addressed by pragmatists and what lacunae need to be filled. These issues range from narrow technical questions to broad cultural preoccupations. But the most important questions are, from the pragmatic perspective itself, *practical*. How do the various forms of reflection (including philosophical discourse) actually intervene in the ongoing life of a culture? How might these forms of reflection be reconstructed so that they provide historically situated agents with more effective resources for cultural critique?<sup>27</sup> What relation, if any, is there between the immediately practical modes of reflection and the highly theoretical modes of discourse? While the pragmatists devoted considerable attention to articulating a theory of the relationship between thought and action (or between theory and practice), this theory itself insisted upon recognizing thought as a species of conduct and theory as a form of practice. As such, theory is destined to intersect both with other forms of our cultural life (e.g., political engagement, artistic creation, and scientific inquiry) and with at least some features of the various contexts in which theoretical reflection is taken up.

The need to take a second look at pragmatism "as a fundamental philosophical outlook" can be established in various ways.<sup>28</sup> One way concerns the question posed above regarding the complex relationship between reflection and culture. On the one hand, we should acknowledge "the fact that the nature of action and its relation to thinking and to knowing are major issues on the current scene. The political theory of Marxist writers, the involvement of social scientists in policy decisions and programmes of social engineering, and perplexing issues in biomedical ethics and ecology all testify to this fact."<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, a developed and nuanced account of the relationship between theory and practice is precisely what students of philosophy encounter in the writings of the pragmatists. Hence, such students will find in these writings a finely articulated response to a central concern of contemporary thinkers. It is, in my judgment, true that: "The resources to be found in the pragmatic outlook for current thinking will become evident only when we succeed in recovering what the pragmatists had to say about *their own* questions and concerns."<sup>30</sup> Even so, when these questions and concerns overlap with *our own*, we are in an ideal position to address—and be addressed by—the classical pragmatists in their full contemporary relevance.

While my objective is to look at a historical movement from a fresh slant, this objective itself is not historical or primarily historical. My goal is philosophical: it is nothing less than an attempt to trace a possible trajectory

clusive scope. Human action is, at the very least, a purposive striving and, in turn, human agency is an enduring center of more or less articulated, acknowledged purposes, dependent for their realization on a nexus of evolved and evolving powers.<sup>24</sup> Explicit, sustained attention to the conditions and consequences of such conduct and agency characterizes the pragmatic perspective; indeed, to be a pragmatist means being devoted to attaining a fuller and finer grasp of just these conditions and consequences. The context of our action and agency is nothing less than these conditions and consequences, comprehensively considered and integratively understood.

The full fact is, then, the engaged self *and* the enveloping arena(s) in which some concrete engagement is taken up and, thus, taking place. An even fuller fact is glimpsed by, first, framing a comprehensive portrait of the engaged self—a portrait of the self in all of its engagements—and, then, situating the nexus of these engagements in the most inclusive context imaginable to the responsible inquirer.<sup>25</sup> One thorny difficulty in framing a comprehensive portrait of human agency is that the forms of such agency do not immediately or readily fit into a harmonious whole. The most authoritative forms of inquiry might, for example, challenge the validity of the most accepted forms of worship; that is, the form of agency assumed by inquirers might conflict, at some historical moment, with the form assumed by worshippers. Such agents are at cross-purposes. Historically, classical American pragmatism was a self-conscious response to the way an articulate group of educated persons experienced their agency-in-the-world as being at cross-purposes with themselves. In the most acutely personal example of this, there is, of course, James's lifelong struggle to establish the right to believe without abandoning his responsibilities as an inquirer. For this reason, Oliver Wendell Holmes's remark about James's project ("His wishes led him to turn down the lights so as to give miracle a chance") seems unfair. Quite the contrary. James turned *up* the lights, in order to illuminate the very dimensions of our agency-in-the-world that various forms of reductionism (materialism and scientism) systematically refused to acknowledge. By far, the most important of these dimensions was, for James, the irreducibly personal and historical character of this agency, a dimension which neither materialism nor scientism could even recognize, much less explain.

The full fact from which all human reflection originates and to which it appeals is our agency-in-the-world, our cumulative yet precarious, essentially purposive yet often unwitting, striving for some concrete good.<sup>26</sup> This striving is almost always a participation in a historically defined and history

for the development of the pragmatic position. Many of the most important writings of Peirce, James, and Dewey bearing upon pragmatism were written in the opening decade of this century<sup>31</sup>; in the closing decade of this century, a textually and historically informed interpretation of classical American pragmatism should be more than that. It should be an attempt to put pragmatic ideas to work and should show a willingness to modify these ideas or alter the emphases of the early pragmatists where changed circumstances demand such revision or alteration. Any interpretation of pragmatism that treats it as a museum piece is condemned to betray the very doctrine it alleges to depict; for it fails to convey the vitality of this doctrine. Here, as elsewhere, life is manifest in the capacity to grow, the ability of a being to modify itself and its environment. A second look at pragmatism should reveal, above all else, the inherent vitality and adaptability of this doctrine.

#### *Towards a Clarification of Thought and Action*

It is one thing to subordinate theory to practice; it is quite another to subsume theory under practice, that is, to reconceive theory itself as a form of practice. All thought involves, by its very nature, a withdrawal from the immediate scene of human action; in a sense, then, all thought is generated by the refusal to act or to continue acting here and now. But this way of putting it suggests precisely the dualism between thought and action that Peirce, James, and Dewey rejected. The problem resides in an ambiguity. "Action" might mean our overt and thus manifest doings and engagements, the paradigms of these being chopping a log or planting a garden or crossing a street; or it might mean something more inclusive, namely, any purposive exertion, even ones in which agents do not appear to be *doing* anything at all ("What are you doing?"—"Thinking.")

In one sense, pragmatism is directed against theoreticism. In another, it is directed against a form of monism (what might be called a monism of purpose) which entails a hegemonic reductionism within the intellectual domain. Let us consider each of these targets of criticism in turn.

A theoreticist bias is evident in the dominant tradition of Western philosophy; for the subordination of practice to theory, of the crafts and manual arts to contemplation and purely symbolic (or discursive) fabrications, is at or near the center of this tradition. Part of this theoreticism is the refusal or inability to view theory itself as a form of practice; *theoria* and *praxis* operate in separate domains of being, or deal with different levels of reality. The proper concern of *theoretical* reason is a transcendent domain, a sphere of being that transcends mutability, contingency, and temporality.

In contrast, the crafts and manual arts are from the classical perspective concerned with a lower level of reality, one defined by the very characteristics from which *theoria* takes flight.<sup>32</sup> What is most relevant for our purposes is that the vision of ourselves and our world provided by *theoria* has been taken as the very definition of the really real: what is glimpsed from the perspective of theoretical reason is the measure against which all other forms of being—in particular, that form of being designated as appearance or phenomenon (that form whose being is inseparable from its appearing, its presenting itself to others in one guise or another)—are to be judged. In time (!), it is no surprise then that time becomes treated as a stepchild and appearance as an illusion.<sup>33</sup>

When *theoria* overcomes its fixation with the eternal and the immutable, and when it ceases to conceive itself as the unique privilege of an aloof spectator and begins to reconceive itself as an ongoing, communal process undertaken by embodied, fallible agents, the glimpses which it offers of ourselves and our world are to be taken with the utmost seriousness. But the perspective which it provides needs to be squared with other viewpoints. This brings us to the form of monism against which pragmatism is directed. But, before identifying this target of criticism, let me stress that pragmatism is not opposed to any and all forms of theory. Above all else, it is opposed to those forms of theory which are insufficiently conscious of, or worse, downright wrong about their status and function. In particular, pragmatism opposes most strenuously those forms (1) which claim for themselves the exclusive right to define, once and for all, the nature of reality and (2) which are unconscious of their own status as evolved and evolving sets of practices, exhibiting in their over-all constitution no less than in their specific claims the character of an experiment (or purposive trial committed to learning from its inevitable frustrations and failures).

The point of pragmatism is not to fly from theoreticism to practicalism. Its aim is not to claim that *praxis* in some restrictive sense, rather than *theoria*, provides us with a privileged access to the really real. Rather its goal is to challenge all narrow and exclusive ways of delimiting the meaning of "reality." The character of reality is glimpsed—and it is perhaps never more than glimpsed—only when we take into account the totality of our engagements. That is, only when we reflect on how the world discloses itself to us in a variety of contexts—most importantly, the political, the moral, the religious, the artistic, the narrowly practical and the formally theoretical—are we in a position to begin framing what might approximate, however remotely, an adequate conception of reality.

In any actual situation, selective emphasis and, in a sense, selective bias are operative. For the purpose of finding a makeshift paperweight, the content of a book is irrelevant; in contrast, its size and shape and weight are to the point. But if we are to render pragmatism clear by making it concrete, we are obliged to do so by conceiving the full fact of our agency-in-the-world in a manner suggestive of this fact's full complexity. At this juncture, it is crucial to guard against a simplistic view of our purposive agency. We are, simultaneously, knowledgeable actors (we more or less know what we are doing) and unwitting participants in ongoing processes, the conditions and consequences of which are never fully appreciated even by the most knowledgeable and expert participants. Accordingly, pragmatism is (against such positions as skepticism and nihilism) a robust affirmation of our status as knowledgeable actors; it is (against such positions as foundationalism and dogmatism) a continuous reminder of our fallibility and finitude. Just as only rational beings can act irrationally or go insane, so only knowledgeable actors can act unwittingly or become skeptical. At the heart of the pragmatic account of human knowledge, then, there is a twofold affirmation: we always *more or less* know what we are doing; and we never comprehend fully nor finely enough what we are about. In other words, various forms of competency coexist with the omnipresent possibility of errors.

In this section and, even more fully, in the previous one, I have sketched in broad strokes the vision of person-in-the-universe that can be assembled from hints found in the pragmatists' writings. In addition, I have in this section offered an outline of a distinctively pragmatic approach to thought and action. Historically, pragmatism was not initially put forth by Peirce, its originator, as a comprehensive vision of human agency; rather it was presented as a specific maxim conducive to responsible inquiry. It will be illuminating to see how my own interpretation of pragmatism is, in a way, already implicit in Peirce's original formulation and later refinements of the pragmatic maxim. After doing so, it will be instructive to step back from this particular recommendation and to conclude by taking additional pains to frame a just picture of the pragmatic outlook in its full scope.

#### *Looking at Familiar Texts Afresh*

In a famous text, C. S. Peirce asserts that "pragmatism is, in itself, no doctrine of metaphysics, no attempt to determine any truth of things. It is merely a method of ascertaining the meanings of hard words and of abstract conceptions" (CP 5.464).<sup>34</sup> This method was expressed originally in the "winged words" of conversations (CP 5.13) and later in the second article

in a series devoted to providing "Illustrations of the Logic of Science" (W 3: 242-374). As Max H. Fisch notes, this series constitutes nothing less than "an anti-Cartesian Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Searching for Truth in the Sciences"<sup>35</sup> (1986 [1977], 288; cf. 311). In Peirce's discourse on method, the authority of an ongoing community of inquirers replaces the authority of the intuitive judgments of the *cogito*—in other words, the fallible judgments of a community replace the infallible intuitions of a solitary, disembodied, and theoretical consciousness<sup>36</sup>; the conception of doubt as a disorientation of our agency replaces the conception of it as a disquietude of mind; and the fixation of beliefs by agents struggling to overcome some specific disorientation replaces the judgments of an intellect removed from any worldly entanglements. Moreover, the abstract definitions of Cartesian rationalism and of the entire intellectualist<sup>37</sup> tradition need to be supplemented by formulas which do not trade solely upon other words but spell out their meanings in terms of conduct and its consequences. Here the successful procedures of experimental inquiry are made the model for the investigations of philosophers (see, e.g., CP 5.411-412).

The clarification of meaning, no less than the fixation of belief, is achieved by agents whose every undertaking is, in effect, an experiment. Hence, the clarification of meaning and the fixation of belief are thoroughly experimental processes. In such processes, we expose our meanings, beliefs and, indeed, even ourselves to both the thwarting influence of unforeseen contingencies and possible clues to unsuspected regularities. Pragmatism is addressed to persons for whom thinking is not a mere reverie but truly a mode of conduct, a purposive striving defined by the operative (though not necessarily conscious) presence of norms and ideals; in short, it is addressed to agents (see, for example, CP 5.396). It is a maxim enjoining them to translate hard words and abstract conceptions into their conceivable practical effects.<sup>38</sup> The most appropriate and perspicuous form of any such translation is itself a maxim; more fully, it is a "practical maxim expressible as a conditional sentence having its apodosis in the imperative mood" (CP 5.18). To learn most clearly the meaning of an assertion—e.g., of "Sugar is soluble"—requires us to translate the assertion into a maxim such as "If you place this substance into water or similar liquids, it will dissolve." The way things characteristically behave is discovered only in light of how they actually have behaved. To know adequately what we are saying requires us to know what we *would do* in various situations, imaginary as well as actual, to which our utterances refer. At one end of the scale, there are immediately practical situations in which our indubitable

commonsensical beliefs have virtually infallible authority. At the other are those truly fantastic situations to which such beliefs have only indirect relevance and questionable authority (for example, the situation—imagined by Galileo—in which a ship is moving on a frictionless surface or the one—envisioned by a dreamy youth on a trolley train—in which a human travels on the endpoint of a lightbeam). What requires emphasis is that our indubitable commonsensical “beliefs refer to a somewhat primitive mode of life, and that, they never become indubitable in so far as our mode of life remains that of somewhat primitive man, yet as we develop *degrees of self-control* unknown to that man, occasions of action arise in relation to which the original beliefs, if stretched to cover them, have no sufficient authority” (CP 5.51). This implies that “we outgrow the applicability of instincts—not altogether, by any manner of means, but in our highest activities” (*Ibid.*). We outgrow the applicability of these and develop higher levels of self-controlled conduct by taking flights in the imagination. “The formation of habits [and thus beliefs] under imaginary action . . . is one of the most essential ingredients of both [moral and logical self-control or, what amounts to the same thing here, moral and theoretical reason]; but in the logical process the imagination takes far wider flights, proportioned to the generality of the field of inquiry, being bounded in pure mathematics solely by the limits of its own powers, while in the moral process we consider only situations that may be apprehended or anticipated” (CP 5.440).

When we try to conceive the possible practical bearings of our conceptions (when we try, for example, to ascertain what we mean in saying that this thing is *hard* or that thing is *real*), we can do so only by means of the imagination. Hence, the absolute separation between conceiving and imagining defended by Descartes marks yet another important respect in which the classical pragmatists are opposed to the Cartesian outlook. While the pragmatists do not attempt to reduce *tout court* conceiving to imagining, they do insist upon an essential connection between the two cognitive processes.

It is not only legitimate but necessary to ask: What is the purpose of trying to apply the pragmatic maxim, to translate sentences of one form in to those of another? What do we expect to accomplish by translating hard words and abstract conceptions into practical maxims? Peirce’s own answer deserves to be recalled here: Pragmatism “is expected to bring to an end those protracted disputes of philosophers which no observation of facts could settle, and yet in which each side claims to prove that the other side is in the wrong” (CP 5.6). It promises to provide the rational resolution of seemingly interminable disputes and to discover the practical significance of

apparently pointless controversies. Accordingly, pragmatism should be seen as part of what Peirce called “methodeutic,” that branch of logic devoted to showing “how to conduct an inquiry.”<sup>33</sup>

#### *Purpose, Power, and Agency*

All of this is, no doubt, well known to students of pragmatism and many others besides. What a second look at the original formulation of American pragmatism such as I am proposing might reveal is that the emphasis on the methodical character of pragmatism has obscured some of the deeper dimensions of the philosophical revolution inaugurated by Peirce and James. Such a look might also disclose that an idealized conception of scientific inquiry is, at once, invaluable and dangerous: invaluable because it aids us in bringing into focus the most important features of responsible inquiry, but dangerous because it assimilates too quickly and completely all of our cognitive endeavors (all of our attempts to make sense out of ourselves and our world) to what scientists ideally should do.

In my judgment, an extremely fruitful but largely overlooked characterization of the pragmatic perspective is one couched emphatically in terms of purpose, power, and agency. The human self is, first and foremost, an embodied agent, one whose very agency bears the stamp of various communities and thus of tangled histories. This self is a center of purpose and power. Action is, at the very least, a striving animated by a purpose, though the purpose is never fully clear to nor even necessarily acknowledged by the agent-in-act. We are required to learn what we are about and we do so only haltingly. From a truly pragmatic perspective, our starting point can only be the formal recognition of our agency-in-the-world. Such recognition requires us to conceive human experience as an ongoing transaction between a historically situated agent and an insistently problematic world.<sup>34</sup> Without exertions and endeavors, there would be no experience<sup>35</sup>; but without agents and their purposes, there would not be exertions and endeavors.

Human agency resides primarily in the capacity to conceive and to realize purposes. In Dewey’s lexicon, this capacity deserves the name of “freedom”: “It is . . . a sound instinct which identifies freedom with power to frame purposes and to execute or carry into effect purposes so framed. Such freedom is in turn identical with self-control: for the formation of purposes and the organization of means to execute them are the work of intelligence.”<sup>36</sup> Our freedom—our power to frame and realize purposes—is rooted in a long, tangled history and sustained by complex, overlapping in-



stitutions. It is not inherent in individual actors in isolation from the natural setting, their historical setting, or their social ties. Such freedom is attained, sustained, and enhanced only in and through their evolving relationships to nature, history, and other actors.

The meaning and setting of human agency, so conceived, define what might be called the *pragmatic horizon* (cf. CP 5.1). It is the perspective that moves along with us as we make our way through the world. The process of making our way through the world is one of making the world a home for humanity. In this connection, it is not insignificant that William James in *A Pluralistic Universe* approvingly quotes Hegel's claim that: "The aim of knowledge is to divest the world of its strangeness, and to make us more at home in it."<sup>43</sup> But, paradoxically, the task of divesting the world of its strangeness requires us to make the familiar strange, to strive to attain an angle of vision from which the ordinary appears remarkable, if not miraculous.

A text from A. N. Whitehead's *Process and Reality* helps us to see why this is the case: "when thought [in particular, *philosophic* thought] comes upon the scene, it finds the interpretations [of experience] as matters of practice. Philosophy does not initiate interpretations."<sup>44</sup> It inherits them. The philosophical task resides, above all else, in the critical appropriation of this tangled inheritance—in the self-conscious and self-critical interpretation and critique of schemes to which we are committed as *matters of practice*. Such appropriation demands a deliberate effort to distance oneself from one's inheritance. The ancient (and continuing) quarrel between poetry and philosophy, no less than the more recent divorce between philosophy and science, are important historical illustrations of the need of philosophical reflection to distance itself from the dominant discourse, the imperial interpretation, of a particular epoch.

The so-called "end of philosophy" might be viewed as the need of philosophy to distance itself from itself at a unique or peculiar historical juncture, namely, the moment when philosophy itself, in some form, is so deeply and pervasively part of the received or inherited view. Since (as James notes in "The Sentiment of Rationality") our minds are wedded to a process of seeing an *other* beside every actual or merely imagined object, including the totality of all things, it should not surprise us that we are haunted by a sense of the world being other than our interpretations of it. The dialectic generated by this sense of otherness eventually forces philosophy to be beside itself, to disembody itself from itself. In doing so, this dialectic forces philosophers to take seriously the possibility that the identity of philosophy is so thoroughly tied to received views of a stifling or crip-

pling nature that the ineluctable task of critical appropriation is best dissociated from what has historically been called "philosophy." What in one age has served to liberate self-conscious and self-critical reflection at the highest level of generality—in a word, philosophy—can in a subsequent phase of human history vitiate the possibilities of such reflection. The quarrel between the champions of *mythos* and the advocates of *logos* illustrates this point. What we realize today is that a truly adequate account of human reason must be couched, in part at least, in an explicitly narrative form. The *logos* of Logos must take the form of *mythos*! But, insofar as such a story serves the goal of coming to a deeper understanding of human rationality, it exhibits a continuity with earlier endeavors to accomplish this aim, even those endeavors which conceived themselves in opposition to storytelling and mythmaking. The work of philosophy is (as Dewey puts it at the outset of "Philosophy and Civilization") an "old and ever new undertaking."<sup>45</sup>

For the purposes<sup>46</sup> of philosophy, the deliberate adoption of the pragmatic horizon involves a conceptual revolution still in the making. In the opening decade of this century, James boldly wrote: "I shouldn't be surprised if ten years hence it [pragmatism] should be rated as 'epoch-making,' for of the definitive triumph of that general way of thinking I can entertain no doubt whatever—I believe it to be something quite like the protestant reformation."<sup>47</sup> In the closing decade of this century, intellectual and cultural developments seem to support James's prophecy. Even so, part of the original and, indeed, continuing opposition to the pragmatists is that the adoption of this horizon appears to call for abandoning the traditional aspirations of Western philosophy. Apparently, these uncultivated upstarts want to continue the conversation of humankind by changing it, by refusing to address the perennial questions traditionally taken to be definitive of the philosophical enterprise. This is more evident in Dewey than in either Peirce or James. Among the texts most often cited in this connection is his "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy." Here Dewey calls for "an emancipation of philosophy from too intimate and exclusive attachment to traditional problems."<sup>48</sup> He calls philosophers *from* such an attachment and *to* the actual problem of human beings in their most pressing contemporary form ("the problems of men"). Only through such a reorientation can philosophy recover itself and its significance for the culture which sustains and nourishes this order of reflection. But this reorientation or "about-face" entails a deliberate narrowing of the range of human reflection; for example, questions concerning the *ultimate* origin and destiny of human existence are dismissed out of hand.

It is one thing to insist that all reflection about this origin and destiny occurs *in medias res* and, beyond this, that the validity of such reflection is most effectively judged in reference to "our ordinary life-experiences and their predicaments."<sup>50</sup> (The validity of these reflections is determined, first and foremost, in terms of their ability to render our experiences and predicaments "more significant, more luminous to us, and [to] make our dealings with them more fruitful.") It is, however, quite another thing to insist that our locus *in medias res* precludes the possibility of meaningful or responsible reflection on the origin and destiny of our existence. Critics of American pragmatism tend to see Dewey's anti-metaphysical side (the "good" Dewey as far as Richard Rorty is concerned) as the logical outcome of philosophical commitments he shares with his two pragmatic forerunners, just as critics of British empiricism tend to see Hume as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the entire movement. However it might be with Hume's relation to British empiricism, Dewey's relation to American pragmatism cannot be construed as such a *reductio*. For one thing, students of philosophy simply do not encounter in Peirce and James the same ambivalence toward metaphysics; nor do the careful and fair among them flail, in the writings of these two philosophers, an incompatibility between their pragmatic strictures and their lifelong efforts to frame a metaphysical vision. For another thing, Dewey himself allows for a much broader range of philosophical reflection than such works as "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" or *Reconstruction in Philosophy* seem to permit. Dewey's metaphysics is integral to his philosophy<sup>51</sup> it is also indicative of a continuity between his empirical naturalism and the comprehensive outlooks of such philosophical predecessors as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas, Kant, and Hegel.<sup>52</sup>

In the writings of Peirce, James, and Dewey, the question of agency does not receive sustained and systematic attention. Nonetheless, it is still arguable that this question is at the center of their pragmatism. Part of the difficulty here is that their opposition to various forms of subjectivism moved them to downplay the significance of subjectivity.<sup>53</sup> This is especially true of Peirce and Dewey, only qualifiedly true of James. Also their sensitivity to sociality prompted them to conceive, at every turn, the "I" only in relation to other selves, so that the autonomy of individual agents needed to be integrated with their status as social beings. Despite these and other factors, it is impossible to read the classical American pragmatists without feeling the force of their robust affirmation of human agency. And when they are read in the light of this affirmation, a second look at American pragmatism promises to reveal the important respects in which Peirce, James, and Dewey make a distinctive contribution to the *ongoing* process of

philosophical reflection. The efforts of the pragmatist to situate the most distinctive forms of human discourse within nature and history are not attempts to change the conversation; rather they are attempts to carry on, in the wake of the Darwinian and other conceptual revolutions, the type of reflection traditionally understood as philosophy.<sup>54</sup> At this juncture in history, such reflection must acknowledge its essentially historical character: it occurs within the moving horizon of historically situated agents. But acknowledging this dimension of philosophy does not entail abandoning all of the most cherished goals of philosophical reflection, least of all sketching a comprehensive yet responsible portrait of our agency-in-the-world.

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#### NOTES

1. This would be a case of what William James called "vicious abstractionism." It is close to, if not identical with, what Alfred North Whitehead called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (the remarkably common mistake of treating some abstracted feature as equivalent to the concrete totality from which the feature has been abstracted). For a discussion of what James meant by this expression, see the section entitled "Pragmatism: How to Make Our Philosophies Concrete." It is interesting here to recall that, in 1927, John Dewey observed that: "Even such new movements as pragmatism and instrumentalism already have their secretion of myths which stand in place of the ideas themselves." This observation is found in "The Pragmatic Acquiescence," a response to Lewis Mumford's *The Golden Day* first published in *New Republic* 49 (1927), 186-89 and reprinted in vol 3: 1927-1928 of the *Later Works*, 1925-1953 of *John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). I will cite the *Later Works* by simply using the abbreviation "LW," followed by the volume number and, after a colon, by the page number. Thus, the citation for the text quoted above is: LW 3: 145. The same procedure will be used in citing the *Early Works* (EW) and the *Middle Works* (ME).
2. Cf. John E. Smith, *The Anatomy of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. xi-xx.
3. The case of Habermas is interesting here, especially since it points to an all too familiar tendency among intellectuals in the United States. This tendency can be seen, for example, in the case of Oliver Wendell Holmes's *The Common Law*. The author lamented, more than once, that this work had to be praised in England before it was recognized in the U.S. It is somewhat ironic that Mead and Peirce have had to wait upon the praise of German thinkers for philosophers in the United States to perk up their ears! For anyone who has read Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar," this propensity is, at this point in our history, deeply ironic.

The work of Max Fisch, John Smith, John McDermott, Ralph Sleeper, Richard Bernstein, and numerous others is likely to appear slighted when Habermas, Rorty, Hacking, and West are given such credit. There is no intention on my part to slight the invaluable work of scholars who, all along, have been not only painstakingly exploring American pragmatism but also creatively philosophizing in a truly pragmatic manner.

4. All references to the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955-1958; vols. 1-6, ed. by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vols. 7-8 ed. by Arthur W. Burks) will be given in the body of the paper. CP indicates that the source is the *Collected Papers*, the first number refers to the volume and the second to the paragraph of the text cited. Thus, "CP 6.11" identifies the location of the text quoted as volume 6, paragraph 11, of the *Collected Papers*.

5. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

6. It might startle one (certainly one familiar with American pragmatism) to read that the pragmatists—a cluster of thinkers including William James after all—did not adequately develop a conception of human agency. Yet James's early attempt to explain the active self in terms of consciousness and his later account in terms of pure experiences are suggestive and insightful, but ultimately unsatisfactory. So, too, Dewey's emphasis on the transactional and situational dimensions of human experience do not allow him—in my judgment, at least—to bring into adequate focus the enduring character of personal agents.

7. In "Philosophy and Civilization," Dewey contends that "there is no specifiable difference between philosophy and its role in the history of civilization" (LW 3: 5). Just what this function is, according to Dewey, can be gathered from his contention that philosophy "is a conversion of such culture as exists into consciousness, into an imagination which is logically coherent and is not incompatible with what is factually known" (LW 3: 9).

8. Three important works to consult here are Morris R. Cohen, *The Meaning of Human History* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1961); John William Miller, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981); and John Herman Randall, Jr., *Nature and Historical Experience: Essays in Naturalism and in the Theory of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).

9. William James, *The Meaning of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), pp. 281-82; emphasis added. Hereafter cited as MT.

10. See ch. 1 ("Experience and Philosophical Method") of John Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (especially LW 1: 15ff.). Cf. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (corrected ed'n), edited by David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 5.

11. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: New American Library, 1958), p. 387. Hereafter cited as VRE.

12. This conception of objectivity is borrowed from ch. 6 ("Nature, Mind, and the Subject") of Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (LW 1: 184).

13. For an explanation of the principle of intersubjectivity, see John E. Smith, *The Spirit of American Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1983), pp. 26-30. Though this explanation focuses on Peirce's commitment to this principle, it sheds much light on the principle in general.

14. James, MT, p. 302.

15. There is also a comical aspect of thinkers who so abstract from their existential circumstances that they "forget" who they truly are and where they actually are. Søren Kierkegaard's critique of this tendency in Hegel's thought makes much of this comical dimension.

16. In a quite different context, Dewey also stresses the importance of imagination. He maintains that: "In philosophy we are dealing with something comparable to the meaning of Athenian civilization or of a drama or a lyric. Significant history is lived in the imagination of man, and philosophy is a further excursion of the imagination into its own prior achievements" (LW 3: 5).

17. This fact is manifest in Peirce's inaugural essays on the pragmatic approach to philosophical questions ("The Fixation of Belief" and "How to make Our Ideas Clear"), in James's *The Principles of Psychology*, and numerous other writings. It is brought to detailed, explicit self-consciousness in Dewey's "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy" (see MW 4: 3-14).

18. In *The Quest for Certainty*, Dewey states that: "Many definitions of mind and thinking have been given. I know of but one that goes to the heart of the matter:—response to the doubtful as such. No inanimate thing reacts to things as problematic. Its behavior is capable of description in terms of what is determinately there." But "[i]n the degree that responses take place to the doubtful as the doubtful, they acquire mental quality. If they are such as to have a directed tendency to change the precarious and problematic into the secure and resolved, they are intellectual as well as mental. Acts are then relatively more instrumental and less consummatory or final; even the latter are haunted by a sense of what may issue from them" (LW 4: 179).

19. For some illuminating remarks on the vital connection between stopping and thinking (between refraining from overt action and engaging in imaginative experimentation), see *Experience and Education* (LW 13: 41) and also *The Quest for Certainty* (LW 4: 121). It is here in *The Quest for Certainty* that Dewey asserts that: "the invention or discovery of symbols is doubtless by far the single greatest event in the history of man. Without them, no intellectual advance is possible; with them, there is no limit set to intellectual development except inherent stupidity."

20. See ch. 6 ("The Play of Ideas") in John Dewey's *The Quest for Certainty* (especially LW 4: 123ff); his "Thought and Context" in *On Experience, Nature and Freedom*, edited by Richard J. Bernstein (Indianapolis, IN: Library of Liberal Arts, 1960), pp. 88-110; and John E. Smith, "The Critique of Abstractions and the Scope of Reason" in *Process and Divinity*, edited by William R. Reese and Eugene Freeman (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1964), pp. 19-35.

21. See John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" in *On Experience, Nature and Freedom*, pp. 27-28.

22. In *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), James observed that: "All our conceptions are what the Germans call *denkmittel*, means by which we handle facts by thinking them. Experience merely as such doesn't come ticked and labeled, we have first to discover what it is" (p. 84).

23. What John William Miller wrote thirty years ago in his Afterword ("The Ahistoric and the Historic") to Jose Ortega y Gasset's *History as System and Other Essays* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1962) is equally true today: "We need not take

- 28. Smith, FT, p. 9.
- 29. *Ibid.*
- 30. Smith, FT, pp. 10-11; emphasis added.
- 31. For an excellent account of the early stages in American pragmatism's complex development, see Max H. Fisch, "American Pragmatism Before and After 1898" in *Peterson, Semiotic, and Pragmatism*, ed. by Kenneth Laine Ketner and Christian J. W. Kloest (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 283-304, hereafter cited as FSP.
- 32. This particular point and the discussion in which it is embedded reflect most of all the views of Dewey. See, e.g., his "An Empirical Survey of Empiricisms" (1935) and *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920).
- 33. For a pragmatic narrative regarding the philosophical disparagement of time, history, and process, see John Dewey's "Time and Individuality" (1940) in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom* (pp. 224-43) and, for such a pragmatic account of phenomena, see his "Appearing and Appearance" in *Philosophy and Civilization* and also LW 3: 55-72.
- 34. Peirce's pragmatism is, as a method, even narrower than this passage suggests, but not nearly so distant from metaphysics as the text might lead readers to suppose. According to Peirce, "pragmatism does not undertake to say in what the meanings of all signs consist, but merely to lay down a method for determining the meanings of intellectual concepts, that is, of those upon which reasonings may turn" (CP 5.8). While pragmatism is *in itself* not a doctrine of metaphysics, both its initial plausibility and its full articulation "could hardly have entered the head that was not as Peirce notes, pragmatism "could hardly have entered the head that was not already convinced that there are real generals" (CP 5.503). According to Royce: "Pragmatism is one of the results of my study of the formal laws of signs, a study guided by mathematics and by the familiar facts of everyday experience and by no other science whatever. It is a maxim of logic from which issues a metaphysics very early" (quoted in Fisch's FSP, p. 300).
- 35. Fisch, FSP, p. 288; cf. p. 311.
- 36. In fact, Peirce's challenge to the *Cogito's* authority was issued as early as 1868. He claimed in "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities" that, while Cartesianism "teaches that the ultimate test of certainty is to be found in the individual consciousness" (CP 5.264), "to make single individuals absolute judges of truth is most pernicious" (CP 5.265). "We individually cannot reasonably hope to attain the ultimate philosophy which we pursue; we can only seek it, therefore, for the community of philosophers."
- 37. For an excellent account of Peirce's critique of Cartesianism, see Susan Hansck's "Descartes, Peirce, and the Cognitive Community" in *The Relevance of Charles S. Peirce*, ed. by Eugene Freeman (La Salle, IL: Mouton Library of Philosophy, 1983).
- 38. For especially James and Dewey, "intellectualist" is a highly pejorative term. Indeed, one principal function of this term was to identify the position against which they, as pragmatists, were reacting. For one of Dewey's most important criticisms of "intellectualism," see LW 1: 27ff.
- 39. An early and persistent misunderstanding of pragmatism is based on the failure to distinguish between conceivable and actual practical effects. The pragmatism of Peirce, James, and Dewey offers no warrant for unprincipled expediency or opportunism. See Fisch FSP, p. 224.

too seriously the current objections to metaphysics. Anyone who looks farther than his nose may find himself wondering what lies over the horizon. No one takes satisfaction in the narrowness of his outlook nor could he appear to do so without a disguised pretentiousness like that of Antisthenes the Cynic, to whom Socrates commented that his pride showed through the holes of his ostentatious rags. We like to inhabit a world, and indeed are sure to do so if we enjoy a local habitation and a [distinctive] name" (p. 237).

24. I am indebted to John E. Smith for this characterization of the self. He formulates and defends this account in ch. V of *The Analogy of Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); in "Signs, Selves, and Interpretation" in *Contemporary American Philosophy* (Second Series), edited by John E. Smith (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), pp. 312-28; and in other writings. Smith himself is indebted to Josiah Royce for this way of conceiving the self.

25. Cf. John E. Smith, *Purpose and Thought: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 151. Hereafter cited as FT. In "The Critique of Abstractions and the Scope of Reason," Smith recommends that: "We must start our philosophizing with the concrete human situation—man is the only being for whom the problem of abstractions and importance becomes explicit—we must start, that is, with man as the religious, moral, social, political being and then move from there to the abstractions of specialized knowledge" (p. 33). He goes so far as to claim that: "The real situation for man, in short, the concrete is the moral, religious, political situation; all else is abstraction in relation to that and cannot be allowed to stand by itself" (p. 34). But, given the way our intellectual inheritance blocks immediate access to our concrete situation, there is a sense in which we do not so much start from this concrete situation as recover it by means of imaginative integration.

26. What William James said in *The Principles of Psychology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1903) about consciousness might, with at least equal force, be said about our agency-in-the-world: "[T]he moment you bring consciousness into the midst [of any situation], survival ceases to be a mere hypothesis. No longer is it, *if* survival is to occur, then so and so must brain and other organs work.' It has now become an imperative decree: 'Survival shall occur, and therefore organs must so work!' Real ends appear for the first time now upon the world's stage. The conception of consciousness [much less agency] as a purely cognitive form of being . . . is thoroughly anti-psychological (and, to boot, unempirical) . . . Every actually existing consciousness seems to itself at any rate to be a fighter for ends, of which many, but for its presence, would not be ends at all. Its powers of cognition are mainly subservient to these ends, discerning which facts further them and which do not" (p. 144). To consciousness (or agency) conceived as a fighter for ends, the world appears as theatre for heroism (to use an expression encountered in James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*).

27. The concluding chapter ("Existence, Value and Criticism") of Dewey's *Experience and Nature* is especially important for obtaining an understanding of a distinctively pragmatic mode of cultural critique. Here suffice it to recall that, for Dewey, "All criticism worthy of the title is but another name for that revealing discovery of conditions and consequences which enables liking, bias, interest to express themselves in responsible and informed ways, instead of ignorantly and fatuously" (LW 1: 321).

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40. Charles Sanders Peirce, *New Elements of Mathematics*, ed. by Carolyn Eisele (The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton, 1976), vol. 3, p. 207. Cf. Fisch, *PSP*, p. 392.
41. It is possible, especially in light of Gabriel Marcel's distinction between problem and mystery, to question the adequacy of this description of our experience.
42. See, however, Justus Buchler's critique of just this position. This critique is found in his Introduction to the Revised Edition of *Toward a General Theory of Human Judgment* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979).
43. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (LW 13: 43).
44. Quoted by William James in *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 127.
45. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), p. 14.
46. John Dewey, "Philosophy and Civilization" (LW 3: 3).
47. The pragmatists (with the important exception of Peirce) were characteristically suspicious of most forms of monism and friendly toward a plurality of pluralisms! It seems, thus, especially appropriate to stress the plurality of purposes constitutive of the historically evolved and evolving mode of reflection called "philosophy."
48. Quoted in Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. II, p. 453.
49. John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 21.
50. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), p. 18.
51. For a compelling, contemporary defense of Dewey as metaphysician, see Ralph W. Sleepers, *The Necessity of Pragmatism: John Dewey's Conception of Philosophy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).
52. Richard J. Bernstein, *John Dewey* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), pp. 176ff; also his *Praxis and Action* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), p. 197-98.
53. Cf. Smith, *PT*, ch. 5 (especially pp. 142-58).