

The Pragmatic Century

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There are many ways of telling the story of the vicissitudes of pragmatism in the United States. I want to begin with a brief account of what may be considered the standard story, because I intend to challenge it. The standard story goes something like this. Pragmatism was popularized primarily through the lecturing and writing of William James at the beginning of the twentieth century. We can even date the explicit introduction of the term “pragmatism” by James in his 1898 address, delivered at the University of California, Berkeley, “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results.” In that address, James generously acknowledged his debt to Peirce, “one of the most original contemporary thinkers,” and he refers to “the principle of practicalism—or pragmatism as he called it, when I first heard him enunciate it at Cambridge in the early 1970s.” James initially gives a rather metaphorical description of “Peirce’s principle”: “the soul and meaning of thought, he says, can never be made to direct itself towards anything but the production of belief, belief being the demicadence which closes a musical phrase in the symphony of our intellectual life.” Furthermore, “beliefs, in short are really rules of action; and the whole function of thinking is but one step in the production of habits of action” (James 1967: 348). In 1898, Peirce was barely known as a philosopher (except to a small group of admirers like James). As James’s popular version of pragmatism spread, Peirce was so appalled and outraged that he renamed his own doctrine of meaning “‘pragmaticism,’ which is ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers” (Peirce 1931: 5.414). There is the famous quip that pragmatism is the movement that was founded on James’s misunderstanding of Peirce. In the 1890s, the young John Dewey was in active communication with James and was working on his *Studies in Logical Theory*. Earlier, when Dewey was a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University, he studied logic with Peirce. At the time, Dewey was

much more influenced by the Hegelian, G. S. Morris. Dewey originally characterized his own philosophic orientation as “instrumentalism” or “experimentalism,” but as Dewey’s reputation and renown grew during the early decades of the twentieth century, “pragmatism” is the name that took hold as the name identifying the style of thinking exemplified by Peirce, James, Dewey, and Dewey’s close associate at Michigan and Chicago, George Herbert Mead. With the passing decades of the twentieth century, pragmatism began to fade from the philosophic scene. During the 1950s, a quiet but dramatic revolution was taking place in American philosophy departments. Positivism, logical empiricism, the philosophy of science, and the new logic inspired by the legacy of Frege and Russell captured the imagination of young philosophers. These currents, together with the varieties of conceptual analysis and ordinary language philosophy practiced at Oxford, reshaped most of the prestigious philosophy departments in the United States. It is from this period that we can date the infamous Anglo-American analytic/Continental split in philosophy with its ugly ideological resonances. Furthermore, the philosophies of Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead were almost completely marginalized. To the extent that their contribution was even acknowledged (and this was rare indeed), a patronizing attitude was prevalent. The pragmatists might have had their hearts in the right place, but they lacked the rigor, clarity, and argumentative finesse required for “serious” philosophizing. Furthermore, the original pragmatic thinkers had not made the “linguistic turn.” The sad truth is that, from that time until today, the overwhelming majority of PhDs in America have never really studied—and probably have never even read the classic American pragmatic thinkers. By the 1950s and 1960s interest in pragmatism reached an absolute nadir. The pragmatic movement seemed quite moribund—except for a few courageous persons who tried to keep the tradition alive.

It was primarily due to the provocative intervention of a single individual that the interest in pragmatism began to change. Richard Rorty, a philosopher from Princeton who made his reputation as a bright, analytic philosopher, began to question the foundations and pretensions of analytic philosophy. He shocked many of his colleagues when he declared that Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and Dewey were the three most important philosophers of the twentieth century. Analytic philosophers might concur with his judgment about Wittgenstein, just as Continental philosophers might endorse Rorty’s judgment about the significance of Heidegger. But virtually no one (except a few dedicated followers) would have

even dared to claim that Dewey was one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. Since the publication of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* in 1979, Rorty has identified himself (and his controversial views) with the pragmatic tradition. There is now a virtual industry of scholarship showing how Rorty misunderstands, distorts, and betrays the pragmatic tradition. Nevertheless, many thinkers (who probably have never even read a word of the classic pragmatic thinkers) have come to identify pragmatism or neopragmatism with Rorty's idiosyncratic philosophic outlook. Although Rorty still remains a key player, today there are many thinkers from diverse disciplines—religious thinkers, political and social theorists, literary critics, and lawyers who think of themselves as pragmatists. It is becoming increasingly common to speak about the “resurgence” or the “revival” of pragmatism.

Now, although some variation of the aforementioned account is generally accepted as an accurate narrative, it is—so I want to argue—superficial and misleading. It misses what is most important, vital, and philosophically significant about the pragmatic tradition. If I may steal a phrase from Heidegger, it is correct (*richtig*), it just isn't true (*wahr*). The thesis I intend to sketch is that the classic American pragmatists introduced a number of interrelated themes that have been explored and elaborated in novel ways throughout the twentieth century. Sometimes this has happened because of direct influence, but more frequently we can detect independent lines of inquiry that exemplify a pragmatic way of thinking and reinforce pragmatic insights in novel ways. I fully endorse Hilary Putnam's claim that pragmatism is a “way of thinking” that involves “a certain group of theses, theses which can and indeed were argued very differently by different philosophers with different concerns.” He summarizes some of these key theses as “(1) antiskepticism; pragmatists hold that doubt requires justification just as much as belief; (2) fallibilism: pragmatists hold that there is never a metaphysical guarantee to be had that such and such a belief will never need revision (that one can be fallibilistic and antiskeptical is perhaps the unique insight of American pragmatism); (3) the thesis that there is no fundamental dichotomy between “facts” and “values”; and the thesis that, in a certain sense, practice is primary in philosophy” (Putnam 1994: 152). I think this list might be supplemented with a few other closely related theses, although I do agree that the classical pragmatists would endorse Putnam's claims—even if they interpret them in divergent ways. It is only now at the end of the twentieth century that we can appreciate how

much of the best philosophic thinking of our century can be understood as variations on pragmatic themes. This is my warrant for calling the twentieth century “The Pragmatic Century.” Let me be explicit and blunt. I not only think that pragmatic themes have had a strong influence on the range of cultural and social disciplines, but that we can detect the centrality of pragmatic concerns in Continental philosophy. I sometimes like to speculate that future intellectual historians will look back on the so-called analytic-Continental split as a minor ideological ripple that holds little philosophic interest when compared with the common pragmatic themes of our time. But that is part of a larger narrative. Here I want to limit myself to *beginning* my counternarrative to the standard one.

Let me start by going back to what Rorty himself identified as the central chapter of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, “Privileged Representations.” This is where Rorty deals with Quine’s critique of the language-fact distinction and Sellars’s critique of the “myth of the given.” The reason Quine and Sellars are so important for Rorty’s overall argument is that he claims that modern epistemology and analytic philosophy rest on the “Kantian picture of concepts and intuitions getting together to produce knowledge.” For Rorty, this turns out to be the equivalent to “saying that if we do not have the distinction between what is ‘given’ and what is ‘added by the mind’ or between the contingent (because influenced by what is given) and the ‘necessary’ (because entirely ‘within’ the mind and under its control), then we will not know what would count as a ‘rational reconstruction’ of our knowledge” (Rorty 1979: 169). According to Rorty, Quine renounces the language-fact distinction (along with the conceptual-empirical and analytic-synthetic distinctions), while Sellars questions the given-postulated distinction. But without at least one of these Kantian distinctions, “analytic philosophy could not be written.” It is by pressing (some would say distorting) Sellars’s and Quine’s critiques all the way that Rorty arrives at his own distinctive version of pragmatism—one that abandons both of these Kantian distinctions and repudiates epistemological foundationalism.

I want to return to the article of Sellars that so influenced Rorty, “Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind.” It is here that we find Sellars’s famous critique of the myth of the given. What is so striking about this 1956 monograph is the way in which it reads like a commentary on a famous series of papers that Peirce published in 1868–1869 (“Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man,” “Some Consequences

of Four Incapacities,” and “Grounds of Validity of the Laws of Logic: Further Consequences of Four Incapacities,” collected in Peirce 1931: volume 5). I think that the real beginning of American pragmatism dates from the publication of these articles rather than the more popular articles that Peirce published a decade later. The language and concerns of Peirce and Sellars reflect the differences of their philosophic contexts, but there is a remarkable similarity of the arguments advanced. Sellars, like Peirce, claims that the epistemological doctrine of immediacy or direct intuitive knowledge lies at the heart of much of modern (Cartesian) epistemology. I do not think that there is an argument presented by Sellars that is not anticipated by Peirce. Both reject the very idea of epistemological foundationalism, and both reject the idea of “self-authenticating epistemic episodes.” Both also claim that we can give an adequate account of the intentionality of mental states and our privileged first-person access of our own thoughts without any appeal to immediate introspection. Profound similarities also exist in the alternative conception of language, knowledge, and inquiry that they develop. Sellars’s linguistic turn is anticipated in Peirce’s more comprehensive theory of signs. Both agree that there is an irreducible intersubjectivity or, more accurately, sociality involved in the acquisition of conceptual capacities and the mastery of language. Sellars is clearly drawing on the insights of the later Wittgenstein, especially in his characterization of what he calls the “logical space of reasons” embedded in normative discursive practices. But in doing so, he is calling attention to the pragmatic motifs that recur throughout the *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1978). Both Peirce and Sellars argue that an adequate account of concepts and language presupposes the acknowledgment of norms implicit in practices. Sellars gives an eloquent expression of Peirce’s antiskeptical fallibilism when he asserts that “empirical knowledge, like its sophisticated extension science, is rational, not because it has a foundation, but because it is a self-correcting enterprise which can put any claim into jeopardy, though not all at once.” This is a principle that all pragmatists would endorse.

It is not surprising that there should be so much agreement between Peirce and Sellars. I do not think that this is to be explained by direct influence (although Sellars is clearly familiar with Peirce’s work.) Both of these philosophers came to their insights by way of a pragmatic reading of Kant. By this I mean that they both appreciate Kant’s insights about the character of experience and empirical knowledge insofar as it already involves conceptual capacities but nevertheless voice a certain caution

about Kant's transcendental machinery. Both are arguing for a more pragmatically open appropriation of Kant—one that also reflects some of the Hegelian criticisms of Kant—and is compatible with the fallibilistic spirit of modern science and the social character of linguistic practices.

Here Rorty (who I will not discuss here) has done a serious injustice to a robust understanding of the pragmatic tradition. Kant is Rorty's *bête noire*. Rorty frequently writes as if Kant is the source of everything that is misguided about modern epistemology, and that his "rigid" dichotomies are the basis for much of analytic philosophy. Indeed, in "Pragmatism, Relativism, and Irrationalism," Rorty's presidential address to the American Philosophical Association (APA), he virtually excludes Peirce from the pragmatic tradition because he "remained the most Kantian of thinkers." Rorty dismisses Peirce when he remarks that Peirce's contribution to pragmatism was merely to have given it a name, and to have stimulated James.

But we do a great injustice to the pragmatic legacy if we downplay the Kantian (and the Kantian-Hegelian) influence. It was a reflection on Kant's categories that led Peirce to his pragmatism. Even Dewey wrote his dissertation on Kant, although he was reading Kant through the spectacles of neo-Hegelianism. Furthermore, we can see both the continuity and the fertility of this legacy by turning to the recent work of Hilary Putnam, John McDowell, and Robert Brandom. Each of these thinkers illustrates my general thesis that the resurgence and development of pragmatism are not exclusively due to the influence of the classic American pragmatic thinkers but the result of the dialectical thinking through of issues that are at the cutting edge of philosophic discussion. From the time that I first started working on the classic pragmatic thinkers in the 1950s, I have always felt that contrary to the myth of the pragmatists being *passé*, they were actually ahead of their times. And it is only now at the end of the twentieth century that philosophy is catching up. This is what Hegel might have called the "cunning of Reason" (*List der Vernunft*).

Let me begin to show this by turning to the philosophic development of Hilary Putnam. Putnam received his graduate education at UCLA at a time when Hans Reichenbach taught there. The young Putnam was the very exemplar of the "tough-minded" analytic philosopher who possessed a sophisticated understanding of mathematical logic and recent developments in quantum physics. His early heroes were Reichenbach, Carnap, and Quine. He thought of himself as a philosopher of science working in the tradition of logical empiricism, even though he was critical of many aspects of this tradition. He moved in that inner circle

of analytic philosophy—UCLA Princeton, MIT, Harvard. Many of the “positions” that he advocated, including “functionalism,” “scientific realism,” and “metaphysical realism,” became the “hot” topics debated by analytic philosophers. This is not the occasion to follow in detail his philosophic development, but what is most manifest and exciting is the explicit pragmatic turn that his thinking has taken—especially during the past two decades. Putnam is extremely knowledgeable about Peirce, James, and Dewey, and he has made significant contributions to the scholarship of these three pragmatists. In the best tradition of pragmatism, he has not been hesitant to press his criticisms of them. But what I find most impressive is the way in which his distinctive philosophic orientation integrates Peircian, Jamesian, and Deweyan motifs. Temperamentally, and by training, Putnam is closest to Peirce, who also came to philosophy trained as a logician and a natural scientist. But Putnam argues that Peirce’s “convergence thesis”—the thesis that at the ideal “end of inquiry” there will be a convergence of our knowledge of reality—is mistaken. It is a thesis that is no longer compatible, so Putnam argues, with a more contemporary scientific outlook. Indeed, Putnam argues that the convergence thesis betrays the deeper pragmatic insight about irreducible pluralism. One might think that James’s graceful metaphorical style of philosophizing might offend the “tough-minded” proclivities of Putnam—as Peirce had been offended. But Putnam is a great fan of James and thinks that philosophers have failed to appreciate James’s argumentative finesse. What Putnam finds especially attractive about James is his “direct realism”—what James called “natural realism”—the thesis that we have direct perceptual contact with a real world of common sense objects. Like James, Putnam rejects the idea that we are really only in an immediate contact with our own “sense data,” which are then taken to “represent” external real objects. But Putnam’s interest in this aspect of James’s thought goes beyond a technical interest in a proper theory of perception. Rather, it is an essential aspect of his pragmatic vision of “realism with a human face.” Like all of the classical pragmatists, Putnam takes the contributions of natural science seriously. But he rejects all versions of reductionism, eliminativism, and what John McDowell has called “bald naturalism.” The everyday world in which we live our lives—our *Lebenswelt* (the word Putnam uses)—is just as real as what we learn from science. In this respect, Putnam now rejects all forms of scientific realism and metaphysical realism that do not do justice to the human position—the human world of everyday objects and persons

that we confront as agents. Like Dewey, Putnam thinks that a good deal of traditional philosophy has been motivated by a “quest for certainty” or, to use his own term, a “craving for absolutes.” Putnam even thinks that, despite claims to the contrary, much of analytic philosophy has been motivated by the same craving—a craving that needs to be exposed and exorcised. Putnam also appropriates Dewey’s multifaceted critique of the fact-value dichotomy. Without values, there would not even be a world of facts. Furthermore, values are objective and can be rationally debated.

Objectivity—including moral objectivity—is not incompatible with moral disagreement. In Dewey, Putnam finds a political ideal that he himself endorses—the ideal of human flourishing in a democratic community. He defends and endorses the Deweyan thesis that “democracy is not just a form of social life among other workable forms of social life; it is the precondition for the full application of intelligence to the solution of social problems” (Putnam 1991: 217).

Hilary Putnam started his philosophic career as the very model of a “tough-minded” analytic philosopher. Some of his “hard-core” analytic colleagues think that he has gone soft and fuzzy. But let me remind you that when William James sought to characterize the distinctive pragmatic esprit, he employed what I think is still one of the best philosophic distinctions ever invented—the distinction of the “tough-minded” and the “tender-minded.” And he argued that pragmatism combines the virtues of both of these poles and avoids the vices of these extremes. This is Putnam’s way of making a similar point.

I would agree with Myles Burnyeat who once said that philosophy needs vision and argument. Burnyeat’s point was that there is something disappointing about a philosophic work that contains arguments, however good, which are not inspired by some genuine vision, and something disappointing about a philosophic work that contains a vision, however inspiring, which is unsupported by arguments. . . . I take [vision] to mean vision as to how to live our lives, and how to order our societies. Philosophers have a double task: to integrate our various views of our world and ourselves . . . and to help us find a meaningful orientation. (Putnam 1999: 44)

Putnam cites Myles Burnyeat here, but he might have cited William James, who said much the same thing in *A Pluralistic Universe*. As Putnam

has shown, James had a healthy respect for arguments and invented a number of ingenious arguments, but it was James who said “a man’s vision is the great fact about him.” He also declared, “where there is no vision the people perish.” When philosophers have a genuine vision, then one can read them over and over again “and each time bring away a fresh sense of reality” (James 1977: 14–77). The philosophic humane pragmatic vision that has emerged in Putnam’s development during the past half century beautifully illustrates the way in which pragmatic themes that we see in Peirce, James, and Dewey have been appropriated, criticized, refined, and transformed in novel ways.

In turning to John McDowell and Robert Brandom (sometimes referred to as “the Pittsburgh neo-Hegelians,” or, as I prefer to say, “the Pittsburgh pragmatic neo-Hegelians,” I must be much briefer, not because their thought deserves less attention but because of space constraints. McDowell’s philosophic credentials as an analytic philosopher are impeccable. Trained at Oxford, he has been philosophically engaged with the works of the most important analytic philosophers of our time. He has a strong background in classical philosophy and has written illuminating articles on both Aristotle and Wittgenstein. There is little evidence that McDowell has more than a superficial acquaintance with the classical American pragmatists. But in his thought-provoking book, *Mind and World*, and his recent John Dewey lectures delivered at Columbia University he shows how deeply he has been influenced by the pragmatic reading of Kant, Hegel, Wittgenstein, and Sellars. One can begin to wonder what is happening to the analytic-Continental split when a philosopher with McDowell’s background and analytic credentials announces in his preface “that one way that I would like to conceive this work is a prolegomenon to a reading of [Hegel’s] *Phenomenology*” (McDowell 1996: ix). The pragmatic themes that I find in McDowell’s work are due to his own appropriation of Sellars’s critique of the myth of the given. McDowell is a good example of a philosopher who, following his own independent line of inquiry, has evolved an orientation that echoes (and reinforces) pragmatic themes. In *Mind and World*, McDowell seeks to show that there is a way of dismounting from the oscillating seesaw between the myth of the given and coherentism. This was also the basic project of the pragmatists and is especially evident in Peirce’s work. Peirce declared that “the truth is that pragmatism is closely allied to Hegelian absolute idealism, from which, however it is sundered by its vigorous denial that the third category . . . suffices to make the world, or is even so much as self-sufficient. Had Hegel,

instead of regarding the first two stages with his smile of contempt, held on to them as independent or distinct elements of the triune Reality, pragmatists might have looked upon him as the great vindicator of their truth" (Peirce 1931: 5.436) Peirce is here referring to his elaboration of the categories of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. The point that Peirce emphasizes in distinguishing Secondness and Thirdness anticipates that crucial point that McDowell makes when he insists that there are "rational constraints on our thinking that come "from outside thinking, but not outside what is thinkable" (McDowell 1996: 28). Peirce would certainly agree with McDowell when he goes on to say, "When we trace justifications back, the last thing we come to is still a thinkable content; not something more ultimate than that, a bare pointing to a bit of the Given" (McDowell 1996: 28). Like Peirce, and the other pragmatists, McDowell doesn't think that spontaneity—the source of our conceptual capacities—can be naturalized, if "naturalized" is taken to mean reduced to a bald or disenchanted nature. Like the pragmatists, McDowell seeks to develop a richer and thicker conception of nature in which we can find a place for the second nature characteristic of human beings. McDowell appeals to Aristotle to justify his conception of nature. But he might have just as well appealed to John Dewey, who argued for the continuity of human experience and nature. It is not surprising that Putnam, who is much more explicitly indebted to, and influenced by, the classical pragmatists, should find so much in common with McDowell. He thoroughly endorses McDowell's claim that what Kant calls spontaneity and what Sellars calls the "logical space of reasons" is essentially and intrinsically normative. Furthermore, Putnam praises McDowell for independently showing the truth of direct realism—the type of realism that Putnam finds in James. McDowell tells us "there is no ontological gap between the sort of thing one can mean, or generally the sort of thing one thinks truly, what one thinks is what is the case" (McDowell 1996: 27).

Here I think it is appropriate to explicitly acknowledge the relevance of the later Wittgenstein for a pragmatic way of thinking. I certainly do not want to suggest that Wittgenstein was a pragmatist. If there ever was a thinker who wasn't any kind of "ist" it surely is Wittgenstein. But I don't think that it is an accident that many contemporary thinkers who do identify themselves with the pragmatic tradition are drawn to the later Wittgenstein. Earlier I cited Putnam's remark that for the pragmatic way of thinking, "practice is primary." Wittgenstein, more than any other twentieth-century philosopher, has brought out the nuances and the vari-

ety of human practices—especially linguistic practices. I can indicate the significance of Wittgenstein's reflections concerning practices by turning to the work of McDowell's colleague, Robert Brandom.

At a time when the journal article has become the favored form of philosophic writing, Brandom has written a closely argued book of 741 pages. To round out this phase of my discussion of pragmatic themes, I want to focus on a single but central theme of *Making It Explicit*. The title of his opening chapter is "Toward a Normative Pragmatics" (Brandom 1994). In this chapter Brandom tells a story whose main characters are Kant, Frege, and Wittgenstein. He argues that it was Kant who initially brought out the normative character of concepts and rationality. Building on Kant, Frege makes a sharp distinction between *justification*—where assessments of correctness of propositional contents are involved—and *causation*. It is Wittgenstein, however, who shows that norms are embedded in practices. They are implicit in social practices. Indeed, the explicit formulation of rules itself presupposes norms implicit in practices. We make these norms explicit. Brandom's larger aim is to clarify what it means to be a rational creature. In a manner that echoes the classical pragmatists, Brandom tells us "Being rational is being bound or constrained by norms." Brandom also is influenced by the Kantian-pragmatic theme in Sellars and Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein shows us why unless we acknowledge the role of implicit norms in linguistic practices we cannot adequately account for our capacity to follow rules. In a recent paper, "Pragmatics and Pragmatism," Brandom succinctly states his primary thesis: "Some norms are implicit in practices—in what practitioners actually do—rather than explicit in the form of rules that say what the norm is" (Brandom 2002). The power of Brandom's book is that he seeks to justify this general thesis in exhaustive detail—to show precisely how norms are implicit in social practices, and how they influence what we say and do. He seeks to show how his normative pragmatics leads to, and is compatible with, an inferential semantics. Although Brandom does not include Peirce in his narrative of the emergence of normative pragmatics, I would argue that Peirce not only plays a vital role in this narrative but anticipates the main thesis about norms being implicit in practices. We even find the anticipation of an inferential semantics in Peirce in his reflections on "leading principles."

I feel that, as I am coming to the end of this chapter, I am barely just beginning. This is only a fragment of what I want to say. That is why I hope to write a book in which I can fully develop and justify the thesis

that our century is “The Pragmatic Century.” So, in conclusion, let me outline what I would like to show in detail. Here I have focused on a series of thinkers, Sellars, Putnam, McDowell, and Brandom, who are frequently identified as “analytic philosophers” in order to show how they exemplify a pragmatic way of thinking. In my larger project, I also want to focus on some developments in contemporary Continental philosophy—especially German philosophy—where we find a similar dialectic at work. I am referring to the work of Karl-Otto Apel, who is largely responsible for the introduction of Peirce in Germany, and who has developed his own version of a transcendental pragmatics; Jurgen Habermas, who has appropriated Peircian, Meadean, and Deweyan themes into his own creative synthesis, and whose understanding of deliberative democracy bears a strong affinity for John Dewey’s ideal of democracy; and Hans Jonas, the German sociologist who has not only written one of the best studies of George Herbert Mead but who has one of the finest understandings of the creative fertility of the American pragmatic tradition. The renewed interest in Mead, and especially the way in which Mead’s understanding of the genesis of intersubjectivity and sociality has influenced contemporary discussions of communicative rationality and intersubjectivity, deserves special attention. I also would like to explore some of the striking affinities (as well as some of the differences) between the pragmatists’ rejection of all forms of epistemological and metaphysical foundationalism and the critique of the “metaphysics of presence” in Derrida. Important similarities even exist in the way in which Derrida has recently discussed what he calls the “democracy to come” and Dewey’s ideal of creative democracy.

But it is not just that the pragmatic way of thinking cuts across the so-called analytic-Continental divide; it is also essential to see how the pragmatic esprit and the pragmatic way of thinking have influenced other domains of culture, including our understanding of religious experience. The classic American thinkers were never antireligious. Indeed, they sought to recover the integrity of religious experience from dogmatism and fundamentalism. Let me remind you that in the very essay in which James introduced pragmatism, he sought to apply the pragmatic approach to clarify and test the religious hypothesis by showing its relevance to our concrete practical experience. And finally, I also would like to discuss the work of those thinkers who, at a time when the classic pragmatic thinkers were neglected and marginalized, sought to keep this tradition alive—philosophers such as John E. Smith, John McDermott, and Max Fisch.

In 1954, when I was a graduate student at Yale, I had the good fortune to participate in a reading group of Dewey's *Experience and Nature* that was organized by a young assistant professor, John E. Smith. It was that experience that opened my eyes to the vitality and fertility of the pragmatic tradition and inspired me to write my dissertation, "John Dewey's Metaphysics of Experience." Yale was also the institution where Paul Weiss, the co-editor of the *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, taught. And many graduate students had a serious interest in Peirce. My first book, a collection of articles by Dewey entitled *John Dewey: On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, was published in 1960. In the Introduction to that book I wrote: "There is a felt need for reunion in philosophy, for new perspective and vision that is informed by the lessons of careful analysis. In this search for new directions, there is much to be learned from John Dewey, who sought to unite speculative imagination with a sensitive concern for the variety of human experience and the specific 'problems of men'" (Bernstein 1960). During the decade of the 1950s, when pragmatism had reached its low point among professional philosophers, I felt that the day would come when philosophy would catch up with the pragmatists. Now, almost half a century later, I feel completely vindicated. Pragmatism originally burst upon the philosophic scene at the turn of the twentieth century. As we look forward to fresh philosophic developments in this new century, we are witnessing an exciting and a lively flourishing of pragmatic themes. Philosophically, the twentieth century has been "The Pragmatic Century."

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