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INTRODUCTION: PRAGMATISM AS THEORY IN ACTION

Lyubov Bugaeva
Armen T. Marsoobian

The "blooming, buzzing confusion" that was James's description of a baby's experience of the world also characterizes everyday lived experience at large. Not only is the universe pluralistic, but our interaction with the world is multimodal, as cognition "begins not with the amodal symbols of language but with multimodal simulations of multimodal memories of multimodal experiences",1 and is probably true now more than ever. In their attempt to understand contemporary politics, arts, social and cultural practices, many theoretical discourses have lost their critical value. Meanwhile, in recent decades, in both the United States and Europe, we have witnessed the rise of a pragmatist tradition that insistently emphasizes the concept of experience based on "vital interaction of a live creature with the environment in which he exists".2 Pragmatism offers the language to describe, to discuss and to chart dominant ways of experiencing and thinking about the world, no matter how complex the world is. The philosophy of pragmatism is instrumental, in Dewey's sense. It finds its theoretical and practical application in various domains, i.e., in politics and social life, in culture and the arts, in science and education, and it boosts the ongoing growth of experience in all those domains in a sequence of "discoveries". One could say that pragmatism is not just a theory, but a theory in action. The articles collected in this special issue of Pragmatism Today demonstrate that.

This issue is a celebration of the Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF), an organization created 20 years ago in order to provide a space for the interaction of American and European scholars who work in the tradition of pragmatism and American naturalism. From its birth, the CEPF has had an ambitious goal to "open eyes" – to create an environment that is educational, experimental, experiential, pluralist and thought-provoking, thus enriching the experiences of the forums' participants from both sides of the Atlantic. It was and is "an inclusive and mutually enhancing community of action and thought".3 This special issue of Pragmatism Today is the tip of an iceberg; it gives a glimpse at what pragmatist thought can bring into the discussion of the contemporary world. The contributors to the special issue are the co-founders of the Central European Pragmatist Forum (John Ryder and Emil Višňovský), members of its board (Lyubov Bugaeva, James Campbell, Ľubomír Dunaj, Sami Pihlström, Scott Pratt, Jane Skinner), keynote speakers from the bi-annual conferences of the CEPF (Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. and Rosa M. Calcaterra) and long-standing participants (Philipp Dorstewitz, Armen T. Marsoobian and Kathleen Wallace). The authors apply pragmatist theory temperament and to politics and lived experience, discuss it in relation to social practice and science, and examine its history. The issue opens with "A Brief History of the Central European Pragmatist Forum", told by its co-founders John Ryder and Emil Višňovský, and describes how a casual conversation during a conference in Boston led to the creation of the first pragmatist platform for American-European dialogue after the Cold War.

The application of pragmatist ideas to political theory is discussed in the three papers presented in the section on Political Theory. John Ryder in his article "In Defense of Moral Liberalism" discusses moral liberalism in its opposition to what he identifies as five general sets of contemporary illiberal challenges, i.e., populist nationalism, authoritarianism, elitism, traditionalism, moral absolutism. Seeing these forms of illiberalism as a threat to the moral liberalism, Ryder proposes a pragmatist approach to moral liberalism that can serve as a basis for contemporary political systems. Sami Pihlström too, in his article "James's Children? Post-Factualism as a De-

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[1] Boyd Brian. 2009. *On the Origin of Stories: Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction*. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, p. 155.

[2] Dewey John. 1987. *Later Works*. Vol. 10. *Art as Experience* (1934). ed. by Jo Ann Boydston. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, p. 138.

[3] Dewey, John. 1980. *The Middle Works, 1899–1924,* vol. 9: *1916: Democracy and Education* (1916). ed. by Jo Ann Boydston, Carbondale, IL, p. 88.

scendant of the Pragmatist Conception of Truth”, engages contemporary politics. Pihlström ponders over the pragmatist conception of truth, from William James to Rorty, while bringing into the discussion recent political talk about “post-factualism” and the “post-truth era”, as well as the figure of Donald Trump. The paper by Ľubomír Dunaj, “Philosophy of Pragmatism as a Solution After an (Un) Successful Transformation”, dips into contemporary political environments by examining the social transformations that have taken place after 1989 in East-Central Europe.

The next set of papers, Social Practice and Lived Experience, deals with pragmatist ideas put into action in social practice. Scott Pratt in his “The Edges of Resistance” considers theoretical aspects of a philosophy of resistance. Drawing on Mark Johnson’s “embodied realism”, Scott develops a conception of philosophical resistance “that both affirms the dominant system and opposes it by providing the opportunity to go beyond it”. Kathleen Wallace in turn, in her “Intersectionality and Fragmentation” examines, from a pragmatist perspective, various meanings of the concept of intersectionality, and the “lived experience” of intersectionality in communities with overlapping intersectional identities. Armen T. Marsoobian, employing a pragmatist conception of the social self, in his article “The Social Self and Social Death: Rethinking Reparations for Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity”, reexamines the process of reparative action. Jane Skinner in her “Testing the Truth” addresses conceptions of the mind and John Dewey’s theory of education in the context contemporary South-Africa, arriving at the conclusion that new approaches and “best thinking” (Joseph Margolis) are needed to handle crises in the 21st century, especially in the developing world.

Pragmatist responses to the challenges created by technological progress and the development of science are discussed in the papers assembled in the section Social Practice and Science. Thus, Emil Višňovský opens a discussion of “Science as Cultural Practice”, and emphasizes the cultural value of science. Philipp Dorstewitz muses “On the Possibility of Intelligent Planning”, arguing that Dewey’s philosophy of intelligent action and democracy is applicable in social planning.

The last section of the special issue of *Pragmatism Today* returns to the roots, i.e., to history of pragmatism and evokes names of Emerson (James Campbell “Why Emerson?”), Santayana (Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. “Santayana: Biography and the Future of Philosophy”), G. H. Mead (Rosa M. Calcaterra “Language, Behavior and Creativity: G. H. Mead’s Renewed Naturalism”) and John Dewey in the legendary Black Mountain College (Lyubov Bugaeva “Black Mountain College as a Form of Life”). However, each of these four papers transgresses the historic frames and makes the questions discussed critical for the contemporary moment.

In *Democracy and Education* John Dewey argued that “the self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action” (1916).[4] For him democracy, like the democratic man, has never been an ideal state, but a process and an action. The same is true for pragmatism, which is, as the articles collected in this anniversary issue demonstrate, not a static set of ideas but a live theory in action and is still in the making.

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[4] Ibid., p. 361.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN PRAGMATIST FORUM

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We first met at the World Congress of Philosophy in Boston in 1998. John had for some time been interested in the studies of American philosophy that had been undertaken in the Soviet Union, especially during the Cold War years. He had twice spent semesters at Moscow State University in the 1980s studying the works of Soviet specialists in American philosophy and speaking with those who were prominent in the field. This inquiry culminated in his Interpreting America: Russian and Soviet Studies of the History of American Thought (1999). Meanwhile, Emil, from his perch in Bratislava, had been interested in American liberal social and political thought, especially pragmatism, specifically John Dewey, and he was working on commentaries on and translations of Dewey into Slovak.

Within a few years of the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian interest in American philosophy had waned. At the same time, there was renewed European interest in pragmatism and American philosophy generally, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Prominent scholars emerged in Slovakia, Poland, Italy, Germany, Finland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Spain, and elsewhere.

When we met in Boston, conversation quickly moved to the growing body of work by Europeans in pragmatism and the history of American philosophy, and we both noted the unfortunate fact that for the most part the American and European specialists did not know one another. Moreover, the Europeans were familiar with American scholarship, but with few exceptions, the Americans were unfamiliar with the work of the Europeans. This, we thought, was not good for those on either side, and that the study of pragmatism and American philosophy would be much enriched if there were greater and direct communication among the Europeans and Americans.

If memory serves, at that time there was no organization that was designed to provide an opportunity for specialists in American philosophy from various countries to meet one another. SAAP had been active since the mid-1970s, but although it was open to, and even encouraged, international participation, it was primarily an American organization. The Pragma group was already active in Italy, though that was an opportunity for primarily Italian specialists to meet and share their ideas. We thought that there was clearly a need for some systematic way for the Americans and Europeans whose work covered roughly the same terrain to get to know one another and one another's writings. As it happened, earlier that summer there had been a week-long meeting in Poland, co-organized by Beth Singer and Leszek Koczanowicz, that was held in Karpacz, a small village in the mountains south of Wrocław. Beth and Leszek's idea was to bring a small group of Americans and Europeans together to present papers, to discuss their work and ideas, and generally to get to know one another. That small conference was a great success, though there was no plan to do it again.

With the Karpacz experience fresh in mind, and with the recognition that some way was needed to enable American and European philosophers to meet, we thought to create an organization that would, at the very least, convene with some regularity, and that the Karpacz conference would serve as a good model for the new group's meetings. Thus, was hatched the Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF), with the two of us as co-chairs. After some discussion, we agreed that the first meeting of the nascent group would take place in Slovakia in June 2000, with Emil responsible for arranging the venue and gathering European participants, and John responsible for gathering Americans.

We did not then, and do not now, envision the CEPF as an organization with membership, dues, and other formal features common to academic bodies. The idea was simply to enable communication and the mutual enhancement of one another's thinking in the style of a "summer school." To make this possible, we made several decisions that have remained in place since 2000. The first is that CEPF meetings will be intensive, weeklong affairs, with an equal number of Europeans and Americans attending; at the meetings all participants will be expected to participate throughout, all sessions will be plenary, and each participant will make a presentation; this structure necessitated that there can be no more than 30 participants at any given meeting; and because of the time commitment expected of participants, the CEPF would meet every second year, rather than annually. We also decided that because we were not building a complex organizational structure, we could determine the cost of participation solely on the basis of the expenses incurred for the venue, accommodation, and food for the duration of the meeting. This enabled us to keep the cost relatively low, which in turn made it possible for people to travel, often long distances, to the meeting. Even with relatively low costs, however, on average our European colleagues, especially those in former socialist countries, were financially less able to travel than their American counterparts. This led us to decide to hold the meetings in Europe, and to ask the Americans to pay a bit more, thus subsidizing the Europeans. Over the years financial situations have changed for everyone, and there is rather less subsidizing today than there was 20 years ago, though the meetings are still held in Europe.

In June 2000, the CEPF convened its first meeting at the conference facility maintained by the Slovak Academy of Sciences at the small, ski resort town of Stará Lesná, in the High Tatras Mountains in the north of the country. The setting proved to be ideal for the participants to listen to one another's ideas, in both formal presentations and informal discussions. We had decided to ask a prominent philosopher to offer a keynote address for each conference, and to function generally as primus inter pares for the full event. For this first conference, Joe Margolis was gracious enough to accept our offer to serve in this capacity, and the topic of his talk was "The Master Economies of Pragmatism."

The success of the first meeting prompted us to proceed with plans for a second, in 2002, which was held in Kraków. The local organizer, Krystyna Wilkoszewska, arranged for her institution, Jagiellonian University, to serve as host, and the meeting was held at the university's lovely conference facility not far outside the city. John McDermott served as keynote speaker, speaking on the topic of "Transiency and Amelioration Revisited". The idea was to try to balance from one meeting to the next returning participants with new ones. The goal has been to create an intentional community without turning it into a closed club. For the first two meetings, requests for proposals were issued, but subsequently it was decided to invite participants for future meetings, appealing to the two principles of continuity and novelty.

We had decided before the Kraków meeting that it would be useful to publish selected papers from the meetings, which we did for the first five, after which the CEPF journal Pragmatism Today began to publish. We will say more about that below. In 2004, the volumes of selected papers from the first two conferences appeared with Rodopi Press: Pragmatism and Values, which we jointly edited, and Deconstruction and Reconstruction, which was co-edited by Krystyna Wilkoszewska and John Ryder.

In 2004, the third meeting was held in Potsdam, Germany, in what had been the GDR. Gert Wegmarshaus, then of Viadrina University in Frankfurt am Oder, was the local organizer, and John Lachs gave the keynote presentation, the title of which was "Leaving Others Alone". The selection of papers from the Potsdam meeting, Education for a Democratic Society, co-edited by Gert-Rüdiger Wegmarshaus and John Ryder, appeared with Rodopi Press in 2007.

The 2006 meeting was held in Szeged, Hungary, organized by Alexander Kremer, who is a member of the faculty at the University of Szeged, and the founder of the John Dewey Center there. For the first time, the CEPF invited a European keynote speaker, Hans Joas, whose presentation was "From the Soul to the Self: Problems of the Understanding of the Person in Pragmatism." The volume of selected papers from Szeged, Self and Society, which was co-edited by Alexander Kremer and John Ryder, appeared in 2009, again through Rodopi.

In 2008 the CEPF met in Brno, Czech Republic, under the sponsorship of Masaryk University and through the organizing work of Radim Šip, a member of the Masaryk faculty. We were honored at that meeting to have Charlene Haddock Seigfried as the keynote speaker, who presented a paper titled “Relating Identity and Diversity”. The volume of selected papers, which was the final such volume that was published, bore the title Identity and Social Transformation, co-edited by Radim Šip and John Ryder, and appeared through Rodopi Press in 2011.

At its 10th anniversary, the Central European Pragmatist Forum, with a bit of creative geography, met in Cádiz, Spain. The host institution was the University of Cádiz, with local arrangements made by Carlos Mougan Rivero, a prominent philosopher at the university and already a long-time participant in CEPF meetings. The keynote speaker in Cádiz was the well-known American Santayana scholar Herman Saatkamp, whose presentation was “Santayana: Naturalism, Democracy, and Values”.

To mark the group’s 10th year, the Board of Directors decided to launch a new journal that would be dedicated to contemporary scholarship on pragmatism and American philosophy generally. This was officially announced at the small 10th anniversary event held under the title “The Philosophy of Pragmatism Today” at Comenius University in Bratislava, the seat of the CEPF, on June 7, 2010, with Susan Haack as a guest, speaking on “Pragmatism, Then and Now.” Pragmatism Today appeared with its first issue later in the summer of 2010. Under the tireless and able editorial leadership of Alexander Kremer, the journal, now in its 11th year, has become a mainstay of international scholarship in the area of American philosophy. Its articles are peer-reviewed, and its issues are frequently guest edited by prominent specialists in the field from Europe and the US.

In 2012, the CEPF met in Turda Romania, as guests of the Ratiu Center for Democracy, and the gracious hosts Indrei and Pamela Ratiu. The keynote address was presented by Larry Hickman, then Director of the Center for John Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, who spoke on “Pragmatic Religion for Global Culture”. The Dewey Center, it should be pointed out, was for many meetings, including this one, a financial supporter of the CEPF. Several of the meetings also received financial support from the Cyrus H. Holley Professorship in Applied Ethics at Bloomfield College, New Jersey, through the efforts of the Cyrus H. Holley Professor, and frequent CEPF participant, Richard Hart.

The CEPF was fortunate in 2014 to meet in Wrocław, Poland, organized by Leszek Koczanowicz and hosted by the Wrocław branch of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities. Beginning with this meeting, the CEPF Board of Directors had decided to honor the group’s regular participant and friend Michael Eldridge, with had recently passed away, by naming the keynote address The Michael Eldridge Memorial Lecture. The keynote speaker who delivered the lecture in Wrocław was Richard Shusterman, who spoke on “Pragmatism, Somaesthetics, and Contemporary Art”.

In 2016 the meeting moved for the first time to Italy, where it was organized in Venice by Roberta Dreon and hosted by Universita Ca’Foscari. The Michael Eldridge Memorial Lecture was given, in a return performance, by Joe Margolis, whose paper was title “Norms Misjudged”. At this meeting, Professor Dreon had also organized for Margolis to deliver two University Lectures, sponsored by Universita Ca’Foscari. The first lecture was “Persons as Natural Artifacts”, and the second was “The Mongrel Functionality of Ordinary Discourse”.

The 10th biannual meeting of the CEPF was held in 2018 in Prague, hosted by Charles University and organized by Martin Švantner of the Faculty of Humanities. The Michael Eldridge Memorial Lecture was presented in Prague by the prominent Italian philosopher Rosa Maria Calcaterra, who spoke on “Feelings and Reasons in Communication: Signposts for the Epistemology of the Self and Recognition of Others”.

At the 2018 meetig, we informed the Board of Directors that after the 2020 meeting, we will step down from the co-chair positions of CEPF. Fortunately, Scott Pratt of the University of Oregon agreed to co-chair the organization from the American side, and Alexander Kremer took on the responsibility of serving as European co-chair. Both will assume their duties at the next CEPF meeting. We should also note that in this process, Alexander will step down from his editorial position at Pragmatism Today. The journal owes its success more than anything to his efforts, and we are confident that his successor, Ľubomír Dunaj of the University of Vienna, will continue to lead the journal with distinction.

As with so many other activities during that time, the 2020 meeting of the CEPF, which was scheduled to be held again in Stará Lesná, Slovakia, was postponed due to the global pandemic. There is every expectation that the group will resume its meetings when conditions permit.

When the CEPF was founded, there was little opportunity for specialists in American philosophy and pragmatism in Europe to meet and share their research and insights. We are pleased to note that now, in 2020, there are several such opportunities, from the Nordic Association to organized groups in Spain, Germany, France, Romania, and elsewhere, and since 2012 there is a European Pragmatism Conference held every three years.

There is also since 2009 the European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy. We would like to think that the Central European Pragmatist Forum, and its journal Pragmatism Today, has played some role in this renaissance of studies and scholarship in American philosophy, and that it will continue to do so.

Last but not least, we would like to thank all colleagues, participants in our conferences and exchanges, as well as other partners and collaborators – in particular our webmaster Mr. Peter Krákorník of Slovak Academy of Sciences, who took charge of maintaining our websites www.cepf.sk and pragmatismtoday.eu – for their interest in this project and their contribution.

We feel proud that the Central European Pragmatist Forum has been a success which provided a useful space for developing philosophical conversation and the many incentives for the growth of philosophical thinking itself.

POLITICAL THEORY

IN DEFENSE OF MORAL LIBERALISM

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ABSTRACT: Though it is much maligned, liberalism remains a vital component of any viable political and social condition. This claim can be defended, though, only once the confusions concerning the meanings of liberalism are resolved. This can be done by considering the primary contemporary challenges to liberalism, of which there are five: populist nationalism, authoritarianism, elitism, traditionalism, and moral absolutism. Each of these, though in differing ways and some more than others, are sources of illiberalism. To appreciate the meaning and import of what is here called moral liberalism, it is valuable to clarify the nature of the challenges to it and the reasons we have to prefer moral liberalism over any of its illiberal alternatives. In the end, moral liberalism may serve as a viable grounding for contemporary societies and states only in so far as it rests, not on commonly held ideas or consensus, but on the recognition of the many interests that members of groups and societies hold in common.

Keywords: liberalism, illiberalism, elitism, traditionalism, authoritarianism, populism, nationalism, freedom, rights, common interests

I

One of the more important political and social issues facing us, and it is one that is not restricted to any country or small set of countries, concerns the current state and future fate of liberalism.[1] Liberalism in some form has been challenged for a long time. In the 20th century both Marxis and Fascism were understood, correctly for the most part, to be alternatives to liberalism. In our time, as recent developments have indicated, the challenge comes from populism or authoritarianism of one sort or another. Given the importance of liberalism historically and politically, as well as the significance of related political realities such as democracy, individuality, and community, among others, it would be wise for us to try to sort out the relevant concepts. Doing so may enable us to come to a clearer sense of what our options are, and how we may reasonably evaluate them.

In the end, our position will be that for many reasons, which we will indicate, liberalism is a powerful and valuable set of moral, social and political commitments to maintain, and that is all the more reason to understand it correctly. The form of liberalism to be endorsed, however, and the reasons for it, are not what may be expected.

As the last comment suggests, the relevant terms and concepts, and perhaps liberalism has been the most susceptible to this, have taken on many different and sometimes inconsistent meanings, and ordinary discourse about social and political events is seriously muddled as a result. This is a situation that benefits no one, other of course than those who would like the public to be confused and therefore more easily manipulated. On the assumption that it is better for all members of the public to have reasonably clear ideas and to be less rather than more susceptible to manipulation, it is to the advantage of the general public as well as intellectuals that we think through the meanings and implications of liberalism and related concepts.

The confusion occurs at the public level in part because we tend to conflate two distinct sets of political concepts and then use the term 'liberal' in both without being sufficiently aware of the distinction. We can refer to the two sets as 'policy' and 'value' concepts. Policy concepts tend to represent a continuum with respect to approaches to political policy from what has traditionally been considered to be the right to the left. In this respect, policy concepts also represent partisan political possibilities. We may plot these possibilities, and the related approaches to policy, using political parlance that is currently common, from far right on one end of the line to far left on the other, even while acknowledging that these terms are themselves rather muddled. This continuum is meant to include conservatism and liberalism in a partisan sense, revanchism, radicalism, and their many permutations. Political parties tend to be distinguished by falling on one or several points along this continuum, often overlapping, which means that policy concepts like these invariably have a partisan edge but hazy boundaries.

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[1] An earlier and shorter version of this paper was presented to the Ratiu Dialogues on Democracy, Ratiu Center, Turda, Romania, May 2019. A still earlier version was given at the Central European Pragmatist Forum in Prague, Czech Republic in June 2018.

The set we have called value concepts, for which we will also use the term ‘moral’ concepts, does not represent a continuum of this kind, nor is it directly related to partisan political options. It is, rather, the options available to us with respect to the values we adopt or employ in relation to our respective polities. Such value options include populism, cosmopolitanism, nationalism, internationalism, liberalism, neoliberalism, and other similarly broad sets of moral possibilities. These values are significant for us not only in that they delineate political styles and forms of engagement with one another, but they also importantly represent what we take to be the ends or purposes of our polities. They are the concepts and precepts we bring to bear when we consider questions like what we want the political aspects of our societies to be like, and what is the proper end of political affairs, which is to say of the state. As in the case of the policy concepts, our thinking concerning values is often complex and conducive to overlap. The lines among our moral options, as with our policy options, are not crisp or cleanly demarcated.

To complicate matters a bit, we should point out that there is also a third set of politically relevant concepts, which we may refer to as structure concepts. Here we find the organizational possibilities available to polities – monarchy, republic, democracy, constitutionalism, dictatorship, and others. As in the other cases, these organizational options overlap in a wide range of ways, depending often on historical traditions of a polity, and on such social traits as class relations, conflicts and/or commonalities of interests among differing social groups, and even religious orientation. As important as this set of structure concepts is for understanding political situations generally, we will pay little attention to it here. Our concern is with the first two sets, with a special emphasis on the value concepts.

To put the point directly, liberalism cuts across the two sets of policy and value concepts and can be applied to the third as well. In itself this may be an indication of nothing more than the richness of the term. In practice, though, the term ‘liberalism’ has different meanings and connotations in each set of concepts, and we sometimes equivocate between them without realizing that we are doing so, and it is the resulting confusion of this equivocation that we would like to sort out in these remarks.

It is common, currently and even traditionally, to defend liberalism as the reasonable, ‘center’, alternative to the unreasonable excesses of the left and right.[2] This is not the position that I wish to defend in these remarks, and I cannot state this emphatically enough. One of the reasons it is unacceptable is that it is the chief illustration of the confusions created by putting the term ‘liberal’ to work in one set of concepts with meanings derived from another. When it is said that liberalism represents a political center, the term is being applied to the continuum on which are plotted the policy concepts, with the right on one side and the left on the other. The problem with using the term ‘liberal’ in this way is that it tends to be applied with the meanings it has in the set of value concepts, which is to say that we mean it as a moral concept but apply it as a policy concept.

The confusions arise immediately. For one thing, the meanings of ‘liberal’ as a value or moral concept can be applied to right and left as well as to anything in the center, which would presumably be some sort of amalgamation of traits of the political left and right. For example, among the meanings we would ascribe to ‘liberal’ as a moral or value concept is flexibility and expansiveness of outlook, but there is nothing inherent in either ‘right’ or ‘left’ policy concepts that preclude their being flexible and expansive. There can be adjustable and outer-oriented conservatism and socialism, for example, so to contrast liberalism with them simply confuses rather than illuminates. Similarly, it is equally possible for there to be an inflexible and ‘inner-looking’ center, just as there can be right and left positions that can be rigid and xenophobic, and we will look at examples a few pages on. Liberalism as a set of values ought not to be offered as a contrast within the context of policy concepts.

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[2] A recent book that argues for the virtues of liberalism as centrism is Gopnick 2019.

This is not to say that liberalism as a value cannot be applied as a modifier of policy concepts, for surely it can be. There can certainly be a liberal right, center, or left, just as there can be an illiberal right, center, or left. The point is not that liberalism is meaningless; on the contrary, our position is that it is powerfully meaningful. Its power, however, is obscured when it is used inappropriately and in ways that are conducive to confusion. The point of the illustration is that we ought not to be talking about liberalism as an alternative, and therefore not as a preferable alternative, to right and left policy concepts. The import of liberalism lies elsewhere.

II

We may begin by looking more closely at the meaning of the term 'liberalism' as a set of values, because that is where its importance lies. In this respect, liberalism is a set of values that developed, largely in Europe and the Americas, from roughly the 17th century to the present. These values are enshrined in many central documents through these centuries, from the US Constitution to the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the EU's Human Rights Charter. The values that constitute this sense of liberalism turn centrally on the idea of rights, human rights specifically, as well as on freedom. One can readily acknowledge that both terms – rights and freedom – are themselves complex and have a range of meanings available to them, but descriptively it is the case that liberalism in this moral sense is closely related to them, in one or several of the meanings that they have. It also values, as among the rights and freedoms to be respected, speech and expression, the press, human moral equality, religious liberty, justice, human development, and the profound significance of individual and community prosperity. As a matter of structure concepts, it is generally assumed that liberalism in this sense goes hand in glove with democracy. Historically that has been the case, though I would like to leave open, tentatively at least, the question whether liberalism of this sort requires democracy of some kind.

In our day, liberalism in the sense of a set of values as described above, is being challenged by one or another form of illiberalism. The term 'illiberalism' has come into use recently through the Hungarian ruling party's (Fidesz) reference to its position as 'illiberal democracy'. This is a fascinating phrase because, for one reason, it challenges the association of democracy with liberalism that has been an article of faith for those committed to liberalism as a policy or structure concept. We should take seriously, again at least tentatively, the possibility of a democracy that is illiberal, as Viktor Orban has proposed, and what that might mean. It is worth pointing out, too, that just to complicate things there is also in use the term 'undemocratic liberalism'. This is another locution we should take seriously, because, I would like to argue, much of the partisan, policy liberalism of recent decades, for which we may use the term neoliberalism, has in critical ways been far too undemocratic – remember the concern within the EU about a 'democratic deficit' – which has in turn caused to a considerable extent the reaction against political liberalism through which we are currently living. We will, in the end, want to describe neoliberalism as a form of 'undemocratic liberalism'. If the terms 'illiberal democracy' and 'undemocratic liberalism' are meaningful and point to some prevailing realities, then there is reason to believe that the presumed necessary relation between democracy and liberalism has been severed, in some respects anyway, and that this has been accomplished by both the illiberal democrats of the Orban variety and the leadership of the dominant western democracies. Neither set of political figures should think themselves superior to the others because we are all, or surely most of us, on the hook for our contemporary political malaise.

If all of this is sensible, then several important conceptual challenges present themselves to us. One is to examine whether democracy is a political condition that we ought to continue to endorse, and if so, in what forms and why. Another is whether liberalism, particularly in its policy and moral forms, continues to deserve our support, and why. A third critical question is what the proper relation among the two, which is to say the relation between democracy and liberalism, might plausibly be. Those three questions are enough for more than a few volumes of thinking and writing, so I would like to focus on one of those questions, and make a case for a specific meaning of liberalism as a value or set of values, and to clarify the reasons it warrants our continued support.

The question is, then, whether moral liberalism should prevail over the illiberal alternatives. First, we need to be reminded that this is not a question of whether in general to endorse the left, right, or center, because illiberalism can prevail in all of them, as I will try to show. Second, we need to be clear about what sort of challenges to the values of moral liberalism are posed by illiberalism, and it is this question that will occupy much of the rest of the essay. As we will see, illiberalism takes several forms, and it is not difficult to offer illustrations of all of them. The illustrations provided are current as of late 2019, when this is being written. How each individual case will develop, indeed how the current forms of illiberalism will turn out, remain to be seen.

I would identify five general sets of contemporary illiberal challenges: 1) xenophobic, i.e. populist nationalism, 2) authoritarianism, 3) elitism, 4) traditionalism, and 5) moral absolutism. When we begin to consider these five sets of challenges, we can see why it is not helpful to think in terms of left, right, and center. Nationalism, especially of the xenophobic, populist variety, frequently comes to us from the right – think of Orban, Trump, Marine Le Pen, the AfD, Salvini and the Northern League, Kukiz 15, Zivi Zid, Vox, Modi and the BJP, and other examples in Austria, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and elsewhere – but a potentially destructive nationalism can come from the left as well. Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party's hostility to the EU comes from a left-leaning nationalism, in the sense that absent a proper socialist international, Corbyn will retreat to the English case alone, and the same tendency is appearing now elsewhere in Europe, for example in the German Social Democrats' 'Aufstehen' movement, created in early 2019, and to some extent in Mélenchon and his interest in the 'Gilets Jaunes' in France. While these are certainly not all the same, and the right-wing variety tend to be more xenophobic than the others, a debilitating nationalism can come from anywhere.

The same is true of authoritarianism. Authoritarianism certainly has right wing credentials, as the history of fascism and militarism around the world makes clear. Contemporary authoritarianism can also be right wing in some sense – the Turkey of Recep Erdogan comes to mind, as does Bolsonaro in Brazil and the Duterte government in the Philippines. The PRC, however, to the extent that it still has anything more than nominal socialism remaining, comes to us from the left, as do several other single-party states, and Russian authoritarianism is even harder to categorize.

Elitism is also ubiquitous, though it has the distinction of being the form of illiberalism that is most at home in the political center. It is what has for some time now gone by the name of neoliberalism, and was for some time referred to as, or at least related to, the 'Washington Consensus'. It is the collective leadership of the liberal democracies, what is sometimes called the 'Party of Davos', and it is the set of people that has been most stunned by the illiberalism of our times. Whoever those people are, and one could argue about who they are to whom the term refers, they were quite sure, since the end of the cold war, that the future belonged to them. Now they are not so sure, though they most certainly have not given up.

Traditionalism is a bit harder to characterize, though it is an interesting phenomenon. It is possible to reject liberal values without being nationalistic, xenophobic, or especially authoritarian, and an illiberal traditionalism meets this description. For example, there is currently a Catholic movement in France, referred to as 'La Manif' that to some extent could be characterized this way. Its roots are in traditional Catholic values rather than more modernist liberal commitments, and I have in mind such values as family, church, traditional marriage, and community. Such religiously grounded traditionalism is intriguing because it could also describe many Americans whose value systems are in traditional, in some cases pre-modern, forms of Christianity. Many such people are among those who voted for and continue to support Trump, though he himself does not fit the description of a religious traditionalist. One of the public figures who is associated with La Manif, by the way, is Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, the granddaughter of Jean-Marie and niece of Marine Le Pen. The American Vice-President Mike Pence might meet this description, though his Protestant traditionalism is of a more virulently authoritarian stripe. We may also point out that in the US especially, there is a school of traditional Catholic political philosophy, drawing in part from the communitarianism of Alasdair MacIntyre, that is critical of liberalism on similar traditionalist grounds. Patrick Deneen is among the most prominent of this group for his *Why Liberalism Failed*, and there are others at several universities across the country (Deneen 2019).

The final category of illiberalism, what I have called 'moral absolutism', comes to us largely from the left, at least in the US and as I understand it to some extent in the UK as well, and it is most evident in universities and in the press. There are many people who are quite sure that they are in possession of the truth, especially with respect to anything having to do with race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc., and they are determined to ensure that no falsehood have a chance to be uttered or even heard. These are the people who disrupt speakers with whom they disagree, or who make demands of certain kinds with respect to university curricula, or who determine which words, expressions, and grammatical forms we may be permitted to use, or who demand that they not be exposed to any ideas that offend them. In their certainty and moral absolutism, they are akin to the 17th century self-righteousness that is often associated with the Puritans (though this may be unfair to the Puritans), and in fact to a certain sort of Christian missionary who was determined to save souls and allow no evil to interfere. Just as that form of intolerance and missionary zeal represents the world against which moral liberalism developed, its current manifestation in secular guise is one of the forms of illiberalism with which we must currently deal.

A related form of this sort of absolutism is the idea, now heard on some American university campuses, that liberal values are threatening and dangerous. An example is a 2018 development at Williams College in Massachusetts, one of the most prestigious American liberal arts colleges. The administration and faculty there had voted to endorse formally the University of Chicago's statement of the necessity of freedom of speech on campuses as central to the mission of any serious university. This attempt at Williams to endorse that principle was met with stiff resistance by a number of students, who rejected it on the grounds that 'free speech harms', in the language of one of the posters students used. The idea is that free speech gives opportunity to racist, misogynist, and other voices hostile to some students to be heard. In the face of this resistance, many faculty members withdrew their support for the Chicago statement, as did the Williams president. The issue continued to be under discussion at Williams.

We should point out that there is also a form of moral absolutism that comes from the right. In the US this is found more than anywhere else in the activism of some religious fundamentalist communities. It is the moral certainty that fuels attacks on abortion clinics, and on doctors and nurses that perform abortions, or even counsel women on the subject. It is the certainty that inclines many to ignore science in the name of religion, on even such basic matters as evolution or the age of the universe. It takes the form of blind faith over evidence and reason, and lawmakers who fit this description will, in the name of such faith, drive policy and governance. We may also note that something similar can be seen in the form of traditionalism, without any specific tie to religion or religious belief. For many of us, the bonds and habits of tradition can be a powerful social impediment to liberal values. Whether the traditionalism mentioned earlier, as exemplified by La Manif, necessarily collapses into this sort of moral absolutism is an open question.

All five of these forms of illiberalism threaten the values we have identified as definitive of moral liberalism. The first two – populist nationalism and authoritarianism – are readily and commonly acknowledged as hostile to liberalism. The latter three – traditionalism, elitism, and moral absolutism – are much less commonly recognized as threats to liberalism as a value or moral concept. I would like to argue that the latter three are no less threatening than the others. Traditionalism is a tricky matter because it is possible for traditionalism and liberalism to coexist if both are willing to grant, as liberals certainly should, the right of individuals to disagree. Whether the religiously grounded traditionalists are willing to grant that is not clear. What is clear is that moral liberalism is no more preserved by allowing elitism and moral absolutism to prevail than it is by surrendering to xenophobic or populist nationalism or to authoritarianism. The difficulty we currently have, or one of them anyway, is that people on the so-called right can see the threat from elitism and moral absolutism, but they cannot see the threat from traditionalism, nationalism and authoritarianism. For many people on the so-called left, the situation is the opposite, in that they can see the threat from traditionalism, nationalism and authoritarianism, but not from elitism and moral absolutism; or, for many left-wing academics, they can accept that elitism is a challenge, and even that moral absolutism of the fundamentalist variety is a problem, but do not see the illiberalism of the moral absolutists among themselves. And of course, the many people in the center, so to speak, continue to think that if only we can overcome the nationalists and authoritarians, and return power and authority to the neoliberal economic and political elite to whom they are quite convinced it rightfully belongs, then all will be well.

To reinforce the point, it is worthwhile to take a moment to clarify how these several forms of illiberalism are a threat to the moral liberalism I will eventually champion, and we can do so succinctly. With respect to populist or xenophobic nationalism, the point is fairly straight-forward. Among the core values of moral liberalism that was at the heart of European and American revolutionary theory of the 18th century, and has been central ever since, is the commitment to the universality of rights and freedoms. 'All men are created equal', Thomas Jefferson wrote in the American Declaration of Independence, and both the UN Declaration and the EU Charter speak to the equal entitlement of all people to the rights and freedoms we are here describing as central to moral liberalism. (There have been challenges to such universalism in recent decades in academic circles, more or less on the grounds that such appeals have an indefensible cultural hegemonic character to them. I think these objections can be answered, but we will leave that question aside.) Populist nationalism is a direct challenge to the universality of moral liberal commitments in that it explicitly defends the view that some people, that is some nations or ethnicities, are morally more important than others. We should note that the universality of which we speak does not necessarily imply that all people have an entitlement to a specific nation's legal commitments, which is to say to any nation's commitments to its own citizens. We can maintain the distinction between those who are and those who are not citizens while also maintaining the universality of liberal values. Populist nationalism is, in practice, willing to abandon universality when doing so is perceived to be in the 'national interest'. Much of the deplorable treatment of immigrants in Europe, the US, and elsewhere is an example of this problem.

Authoritarian leaders abandon liberal values even with respect to their own citizens. Among the core commitments to liberal values that we have described are the freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press, and it is worth reminding ourselves why these rights and freedoms are as important as we say they are. One practical reason, and this derives from John Stuart Mill's mid-19th century defense of freedom of speech and expression, is that even if some speech is false, indeed hateful, the free engagement of ideas will be more conducive to the truth over time than will any limitations on speech and expression. I will simply say, without argument for now, that Mill was right about that. To draw on another liberal strain, John Dewey argued throughout his writings that the importance of such freedoms is that they are necessary for individual and community development in the sense of achieving our self-defined purposes and potential. Restrictions on these liberties stultify us, and to that extent constitute a hostility to liberal values. One of the many problems with authoritarianism is that it is prone to just such restrictions, and in that fact lies its danger to liberalism.

This is not to say that speech may never be restricted, because there are well established cases in which some speech is illegitimate and proscribed. The general reason for this is that process can never be fully untethered to content. To put the point succinctly, and in a way that relates to our concern with illiberalism, speech should be free in the context of the entitlement of members of a relevant community to full participation in the community's activities and goods. For example, all students in a university have every reason to expect that their entitlement to the university's goods and activities be unimpeded. No university is required, on free speech or other grounds, to permit actions or speech that seeks to undermine that entitlement among students and other members of the community. Free speech is a paramount value, but it is indefensible when it undermines the moral legitimacy of individuals' participation and membership in their own communities. With that caveat, the right freely to express ourselves is central to moral liberalism, and it is challenged by modern authoritarian illiberalism.

As we have mentioned, nationalism and authoritarianism are commonly regarded as impedements to liberalism, while the challenges of elitism, traditionalism, and moral absolutism are less commonly understood. We need, then, to focus a bit of attention on those. The problem of elitism can be especially difficult to see because it has become characteristic of most Western democracies, we have become so accustomed to it that we easily miss it, and it constitutes the so-called political center of Western democracies that many of us simply assume is a reasonable place to reside intellectually and politically. Whether we can readily see the problem or not, it is just this elitism of the center that has prompted the illiberal backlash in Europe and the US that is currently underway, and that fact alone should be sufficient to give us pause.

The problem can best be seen in the tension between elite and common judgment, which, we should point out, has been an issue in Western democracies since at least the 18th century. In the American case such prominent revolutionaries as John Adams argued that 'the rich, the well-born, and the able' are those who could be expected to have the ability to rise above undesirable influences, even if not over the allure of narrow self-interest, and embody necessary republican virtues, and Adams was not alone, having drawn this view from a deep well of European thinking on the subject. In the French case, the tilt toward elitism in the revolution gained a firm hand by the time of the Terror and then in the counter-revolutionary ideals of Bonapartism. There were always less elitist voices on the scene – Jefferson and Thomas Paine come to mind, and even Edmund Burke to some extent – so the tension was there, and it never went away. By the early 20th century in the US, Walter Lippmann would argue for the superiority of elitist policymaking, on the grounds that things had become too complicated to expect average people to understand and impact through their votes. It was precisely against Lippmann's call for an elitism of some kind that John Dewey wrote *The Public and Its Problems.*

It is useful to note, without going into the details, that this was an 'in-house' disagreement among liberals – can liberalism rest on the traditional notion of the competent citizen properly educated, as Dewey argued, or does it require, as Lippmann thought, a different politics that places extensive decision-making authority in the hands of elite managers? The elitists won the day, and in the process of exercising this form of liberal polity they have to considerable extent deprived citizens of the power that democracy is presumed to convey. This is the reason that the politics of so many of our societies in

Europe and North America can now be described as ‘undemocratic liberalism’, and it indicates the reasons elitism is hostile to genuinely liberal values. To the extent that such elitism denies individuals the power and authority to determine the policies that guide their governance, the purpose of the commitments of liberalism is undermined. Elitism does not necessarily obstruct the exercise of liberal values, but it eviscerates their potential to enhance individual and social development. The values of moral liberalism remain, but they are rendered impotent. While people do not typically put the point this way, this is, I would posit, the reason so many Europeans and Americans are resentful of the governing classes, and one of the primary reasons for the illiberal rebellions we are witnessing. Unfortunately, their response to elitist illiberalism has been illiberalism of another sort.

The question of the relation of traditionalism to liberalism is a bit harder to sort out. In fact, as we have mentioned, it is possible for even religiously grounded traditionalists to accept liberal principles. It appears, though, that this rapprochement is much less common than many of us had thought. Liberal values place an individual’s freedom to choose his or her own sexual identity as among one’s moral entitlements; religious traditionalism tends not to do so. Liberalism is committed to secularism as a principle of social and political organization; religious traditionalism tends not to be. Liberalism is committed to the freedom of religious belief and expression; religious traditionalism can all too easily not be.

The problem of religious fundamentalism, which we have identified as a right-wing moral absolutism, is rather easy to see. Any unreasoned insistence on a perceived or assumed truth, whether on religious or secular traditionalist grounds, undermines the principles of criticism, reason, and evidence on which the commitments to rights, freedom, and equality are based. Moral liberalism cannot prevail in a fundamentalist or absolutist traditionalist environment because they embrace values that are not open to examination and development. In such an environment, there is no soil and no atmosphere in which morally liberal values can prevail and expand.

The alternative displayed by much of the so-called left, which I have described as moral absolutism, is no better. I will assume that we can stipulate that the racism, sexism, and homophobia that has characterized all of our societies for centuries must be overcome, and that overcoming them is an implication of the moral equality, not to mention the freedoms and rights, that are at the heart of moral liberalism. There remains the question, though, whether all forms of anti-racism, -sexism, and -homophobia are conducive to the ends we all seek? I would submit that some of the ways that the resistance to racism, sexism, and homophobia is currently expressed are in fact hostile to the values of moral liberalism. When we shut down voices of those with whom we disagree, or undermine access to the writings and ideas of those of whom we disapprove, we are abandoning the very values that we ought to endorse. But these are precisely the sort of actions that are taking place, repeatedly in some places, in American universities and other social centers, and perhaps elsewhere as well.

One ought not to paint a picture with too broad a brush because there are often relevant differences from one case to the next, but efforts to remove statues of historical individuals because they owned slaves, or to eliminate a university course on the work of a famous film-maker because of his dodgy reputation with respect to sexuality, or the refusal to mount a production of an important author’s play because of the way it depicts people from a particular nation, or petitions to major museums to remove paintings because of the ways they depict young women, or the refusal to host speakers who challenge a received opinion, are all attempts to censor our intellectual and cultural experience based on the moral certainty of the censor. Such certainty may be well intentioned in the sense that it is grounded in some understanding of social justice for those who have been mistreated on racial or gender grounds, but they are for that no less hostile to the moral liberalism that we need.

There are surely racists and sexists and homophobes among us, but we need to engage them, not try to hide from them or lock them away. If nothing else, hiding from them and locking them away does not work as a means to combat racism, sexism, and homophobia. Moreover, it is inimical to the values of moral equality, freedom, and genuine respect as among the liberal values that we want to endorse. Moral absolutism, even in the name of liberal moral virtues, is as hostile to them as are the other dangers we have discussed.

III

We have provided examples, and made the outline of a case, for the illiberalism of the left, right, and center. The presumption behind the examples and the argument, of course, has been that moral liberalism represents a virtue we ought to defend. What does such a defense look like? We have already pointed to it as these remarks have proceeded, but we may remind ourselves. Liberalism as a value or moral concept is not an end or virtue in itself. Its import derives from its consequences in practice, and it is those consequences that we want to endorse. Specifically, a society in which we are able to think, speak, and assemble according to our own lights serves our individual and social development better than any alternative. Moreover, having all reasonable opportunity to fulfill our potential, to reach for and possibly achieve that which inspires or motivates us, is as much as we can expect for our lives. There are alternatives as ends one might prefer to pursue – happiness, for example, or contentment, or service. Societies in which we have less opportunity to pursue our potential can nevertheless generate happiness or contentment, but they would be the result of chance or of others' decisions and judgments. We can live in such societies; many millions of people do, and they get along more or less well. But in the end, self-determination is preferable to determination by others, or so I would posit.

This is a point that we need to attend to carefully. Frequently, when philosophers, especially American philosophers, talk about political values, there is a tendency to insist that whatever we prefer must be ideal for everyone else as well. This is understandable, given that typically philosophers are not interested in describing simply what people prefer but rather what ought to be the case, and equally typically we tend to argue in universal terms, so that whatever we determine to be best must be best for everyone. In some cases this is appropriate. Slavery, for example, is an unjust violation of an individual's integrity, and it makes no difference whether anyone prefers it or not, including a slave. Slavery is unacceptable as a universally applicable value.

But not all political virtues lend themselves to such generalizable conclusions. Democracy is one such virtue. As much as those of us who are accustomed to democratic circumstances would not be comfortable in others, there are millions of intelligent and morally trustworthy people who prefer other political arrangements. For anyone to claim that they are wrong to prefer political arrangements other than democracy is to indulge in an arrogance and self-righteousness that the most narrow-minded of colonialist administrators and missionaries would find congenial.

Liberalism may well be another such value. Those of us who identify with moral liberalism and the possibilities it engenders should be expected to apply its flexibility and broad-mindedness sufficiently to be able to respect and acknowledge the wishes of those who prefer otherwise. But that fact does not preclude us from exerting the efforts required to defend liberalism when it is threatened. Some others may prefer a different sort of social and political values, but we are not required to accede. Moral liberalism, combined with other social possibilities such as strong educational opportunities, if properly embedded in a society, is more likely to produce opportunities for self-determination than any alternatives of which we are aware. The illiberalisms we have discussed militate against the values of moral liberalism, and hence against the virtues of self-determination. Consequently, they are to be resisted in the interest of moral liberalism.

There remains, however, one possible misunderstanding I would like to avoid. I have argued that the primary virtue of moral liberalism is that its values enable self-determination, and that self-determination, as opposed to determination by others, is a circumstance we should value. It is possible, though, to misunderstand this point as an endorsement of a kind of traditional individualism over against the importance of social relations. This is not what I mean to say or endorse, and I would like to take the time necessary to indicate how we can avoid such traditional individualism while maintaining a commitment to self-determination.

The reason is simple, really, and it is that individuals are social beings. Our desires, our interests, our purposes, all arise in the context of the social and other relations in which we find ourselves and which contribute to our identity.[3] To endorse self-determination is to embrace our individual capacities to act and to judge within the social relations that constitute us. From the perspective of social structures and political possibilities, the way we may both enact individual self-determination while embracing our sociality is through understanding and acting on common interests.

Members of any social group large or small, from neighborhood associations to ethnicities to states, have by virtue of their membership common interests. Dewey made much of common interests, saying in fact that holding interests in common, and pursuing common interests with those beyond the limits of a given group, is the foundation of any successful community. This, in turn, is the basis of his understanding of democracy (Dewey 2008). By 'common interests' neither Dewey nor I mean to refer to common beliefs, or to some commonly agreed upon sense of the good, but simply to garden-variety common interests.

Philosophers have tended to think that societies, or in any case the healthiest societies, are held together by a common sense of purpose, or outcome, or principles. Some think that the most well-structured society is one that enables and encourages the sort of ongoing social discourse and deliberation that will tend toward consensus about 'the good', or about foundational values and commitments. This traditional approach tends to assume that a healthy society requires agreement among its members at some explicit or at least implicit level. In this respect, it is the heir to an even more traditional social contract theory, which also assumes an at least implicit agreement as the basis of the political legitimacy of the state.

There are serious problems with the notion that ideally members of a society will tend toward consensus. The fact is that we may, and usually do, disagree with one another over many ideas, principles, values, and other important matters. Moreover, not only is this the case, but on liberal principles it is a situation we would hope would continue. All the evidence of history and our own lives suggests that a society of free-thinking people will be one characterized by a range of opinions, ideas, commitments, and values. We should not expect ourselves to agree, even about basic commitments, nor should we even want such a situation.

But even in such disagreements, we have interests in common. My neighbor may think that a secular society is an abomination, and I may think that a religious society is an outrage, but we both want our street to be safe; neighbors want their schools to educate their children well, even if they do not agree on every point about what counts as a good education; fans of a particular team, regardless of their varied backgrounds, want their team to win; we all want our built environments to be well engineered and safe, regardless of the various basic values we may hold; members of a community want parks and recreation facilities, regardless of which activities and sports we prefer or which political party we support[4]; despite whatever disagreements we may have, we nevertheless need to pursue together those interests that we have in common. The simple ones are relatively easy, like rooting for the same team. Others, like ensuring the safety of our built environments, are much more complex and difficult. In both cases, though, to hold interests in common is to say that we can be expected to work with one another to best meet those interests. The only agreement required in such cases concerns how best to meet the interests, and even here there may be disagreements that require compromise and a willingness to settle for something short of our ideal in order to avoid failing to meet our shared interest as all.

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[3] For an important and current description and defense of a relational understanding of the self, see Wallace 2019.

[4] I would like to thank John Bing for bringing this example to my attention, and for demonstrating the extent to which parks and recreation are a useful illustration of democratic organization based on common interests.

If a healthy society rests not so much on people's opinions and ideas but on practical interests that we have in common, then we can begin to see how a society rooted in complex and constitutive relations among its members can simultaneously accommodate social relations and individual integrity as equally central. The fact of common interests indicates our sociality, and the fact that not all our interests are held in common with any one other person or groups of persons indicates our individual distinctiveness and its importance. As a general ontological point, each of us is related in complex ways to many people and various features of our environments, but not to everything and not in all ways. The same point applies to interests.

Each of us has some common interests with some other people, but not all interests in common with the same set of people. Any group of individuals with a common interest is likely to overlap with other groups defined by other common interests, but it is unlikely that any two groups will be identical. The reason is simply that we do not have all interests in common. In fact, there are some respects in which our interests may conflict or contradict one another. Marx developed an entire social, economic, political, and historical theory based on this observation, and he was right that in some respects, some individuals have conflicting interests. Some of those conflicts are not much of a problem: I want the Mets to win, and you want the Yankees; I support Man City and you favor Arsenal. These are conflicting interests that we can live with and usually laugh with one another about. In fact, in cases such as these, the necessity of being able to live with them is an enabling condition for the relations to exist at all. There would be no competitive sports if we were attacking and killing one another over them.

Other conflicting interests are more of a problem, and Marx as well as others before him identified the most intractable of them. In the *Federalist Papers*, James Madison famously pointed out that "The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society." Madison went on to say that even among the propertied, interests differ and conflict among manufacturers and traders and financiers. Marx would have agreed. One important difference between the two is that Madison thought that a proper structure of political power could accommodate these conflicting interests, while Marx thought otherwise. For his part, this was the argument Madison made for the proposed Constitution, i.e. that government can be organized such that there can be a level playing field, so to speak, on which the differing interests can compete without any of them dominating the others and without destroying the political and social system. In this respect, the competing interests that Madison identified become more like Man City vs. Arsenal than like class conflict. One might argue, though, that in fact Madison's solution works for the competing interests among the propertied, but leaves out most of the rest (Ryder 1989). Marx might have agreed, because it is far less clear that the fundamental class conflicts between those with and those without property can be domesticated by political structures. There is a debate to be had here, and it is an important issue. It is, in fact, one of the basic differences between Deweyan liberalism and Marxism.

However, that debate is resolved, if it can be resolved, the fact remains that the human condition is a social one, and that its social condition is characterized by interests that individuals have in common. Following Dewey again, we may point out that not only is our sociality defined in part by interests we hold in common with others, but social health generally requires that we actively extend the range of common interests. In other words, we make an effort, where possible, to extend the borders of our interests to include others, and that this be done with due regard for others' individual integrity. Dewey did not mean, nor do we, that we ought to extend the borders of Christianity by forcing others to convert, nor did he or we mean that we expand the borders of democracy by forcibly 'spreading democracy' to sovereign countries. The pursuit of common interests is not a matter of behaving like the Borg – 'You will be assimilated; resistance is futile' – but of expanding the opportunities for common ground and fruitful communication. The expansion of common interests makes it possible for neighboring communities to coexist and prosper, and it makes it possible for nations to engage constructively rather than competitively with one another.

To summarize: this social feature of our individuality can be recognized more and more broadly, in the sense that our interests are held in common in many respects and with many people. On that basis, there is a good deal of room for collaboration and common action without concerning ourselves with questions about who agrees with whom about what. Agreement on principles and ideas looms much less large than it does in other approaches to social and political engagement. If we add to this a commitment to the importance of education as a way to help us develop the habits of recognizing and even promoting shared interests beyond our immediate and accepted communities, we will have gone a long way to avoiding an indefensible individualism and to creating conditions necessary for individuals and their societies to prosper on morally liberal grounds, pending of course some resolution to the problems created by the fact that some of our interests are in conflict. Assuming that can be done, then the ground is cleared to defend the kind of moral liberalism that has been endorsed here, the sort that holds individual self-determination to be a paramount value, and consequently that supports the features of social structures and engagement that enable such self-determination.

I do not want to suggest that this would be easy, but I would posit that a society and polity that rests on the recognition of shared interests, and the pursuit of shared interests beyond one's immediate geographical and cultural borders, enables us to endorse the central importance of self-determination while understanding the necessarily social nature of our own and others lives. If we can do something like this, then the values that constitute moral liberalism may have a fighting chance against the illiberalism of our moment. Moreover, if social and political life pursued in this way can be understood as a rich form of democracy, and if it can, as we have argued here, resonate with genuine moral liberalism, then the link between liberalism and democracy can be re-established on grounds less likely than our recent experience to collapse into illiberalism. The liberalism so described turns out to be more or less what Dewey had worked out long ago. He may have pointed us in this direction by designing an appropriate conceptual and social model, but it is up to us to understand, develop, and apply it.

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JAMES'S CHILDREN?
POST FACTUALISM AS A DESCENDANT OF THE PRAGMATIST CONCEPTION OF TRUTH

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ABSTRACT: William James's critics argued early on that James's pragmatist conception of truth, according to which truth is what "works", leads to subjectivism and irrationalism. This paper engages in a critical self-reflection of pragmatism and asks whether there is a "slippery slope" from James's views on truth via Richard Rorty's radical neopragmatism to truth-denialism and post-factualism exemplified by both real-life populist politics and the fictional character of O'Brien in George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, a novel insightfully yet problematically interpreted by Rorty in an essay on the relation between truth and freedom. The paper argues for a pragmatically pluralist conception of truth capable of accommodating realism and objectivity within pragmatism.

Keywords: truth, pragmatist conception of truth, realism, objectivity, pluralism, James, W., Rorty, R., Orwell, G.

> "What happened to the truth is not recorded"
> (Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*. London: Vintage, 2009 [1984], 65)

Introduction: Vulgar Pragmatism?

Together with a group of Finnish colleagues, I have since 1999 been involved in writing and revising a series of philosophy textbooks for high-school students, published by the Finnish publishing house Edita, which specializes in textbooks and non-fiction books (though not in scholarly publishing). In an introductory book published in 2005, we included a brief discussion of "the pragmatist theory of truth" in the context of a more general exploration of the concept of truth. As textbooks usually do, our books also include a lot of pictures, hopefully keeping their young readers alert. For the truth-theoretical section, we decided to use a photograph of Donald Trump, picturing him with his bestseller, *How to Become Rich*. In those years, Trump was not at all well known in Finland, although he was already at that point a famous celebrity in the United States. I can't remember who decided to use the picture in the book; I certainly had no idea whatsoever who this guy was, and I had never heard of him before. The point of the photograph was obvious: we asked whether the sentences of Trump's books are true if they make their author (or, possibly, their reader) rich and if they in that sense pragmatically "work". Getting rich would then be their concrete "cash value".

Little, of course, did we know: I could never have imagined that I would write a paper seriously asking whether there is a slippery slope leading from William James all the way down to Donald Trump, and even beyond, but this is precisely what I am now doing. If Trump is a pragmatist, he is certainly the most vulgar pragmatist there can be.[1] Susan Haack (1995) once called Richard Rorty's pragmatism "vulgar", contrasting it with Peircean pragmatism, in particular, but it should be obvious that there can be no serious comparison between pragmatist intellectuals like Rorty (no matter how controversial their views might be) and truly vulgar "pragmatists" like Trump, many of whose pronouncements are not only false but degrading, insulting, full of hate, and a continuous threat not just to world economy but to world peace. Fortunately, the disgraceful Trump presidency is over, but the political divisions yielding post-truth populism will unfortunately continue to trouble us, as we are witnessing the fragility of democracy not only in the United States but in other countries as well. I do believe we must seriously consider how exactly pragmatism is related to the kind of attitude to truth and reality that we find Trump, and his supporters, exemplifying. The worry that there might indeed be something like a slippery slope from James – via Rorty – to Trump is to be taken seriously: are post-factualists "James's children", and if so, in what sense exactly?[2]

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[1] During Obama's presidency, there was serious scholarly discussion (including a special session at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and a thematic issue of the journal *Contemporary Pragmatism*) on "Obama's pragmatism", i.e., on how Obama's background at the University of Chicago might have exposed him to pragmatist influences that could have played a role in his thinking about law and politics, among other things. In Trump's era, an analogous talk about his "pragmatism" would be a dark joke, comparable perhaps to Mussolini's well-known interest in William James.

[2] The allusion here, as any historian of pragmatism easily recognizes, is to Murphey's (1968) characterization of the classical Cambridge pragmatists as "Kant's children" – a view that I largely share. Note that the reason I am focusing on James and Rorty in

There is no need to describe even in general terms the ways in which Trump and his supporters, like many other populists in many other countries, on the one hand deliberately lie in order to advance their own pursuits and on the other hand just do not seem to care about the distinction between truth and falsehood at all – or care about it only in the crudest possible "pragmatic" sense of having their own interests served. We all know very well how Trump's disrespect for truth is consistently manifested[3] in his actions and public statements, including his incredible tweets. In an extremely crude sense of pragmatism, those speech acts openly loathsome of truth and the commitment to pursue the truth may have been pragmatically "true", as they did bring Trump to his powerful position.[4] They indeed pragmatically "worked" for him – but they certainly do not seem to work from the point of view of those suffering from the political and economic catastrophes of his presidency.[5] In this situation, many people disillusioned by political developments talk about "post-factualism" and the "post-truth era", and if there is any individual who can act as a face for this cultural situation, it is presumably Trump (surrounded, of course, by an alarming number of leaders of major countries all over the world who share the willingness to sacrifice truth in the interest of greed and power).

Ironically, on the page next to the one with Trump's picture in our 2005 textbook, we placed a picture of a Soviet citizen reading the newspaper *Pravda* (meaning "truth"). Every statement contained in the pages of that official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had gone through strict censorship by the Soviet authorities. There was just one official truth available, the view the Party held, and though our situation is different – in Trump's era, there seem to be no shared truth (or shared falsity) available at all but just a confusing rhapsody of self-serving tweets – we might be in an equally serious danger of losing contact with truth and reality.

I will now ask whether the pragmatists are in some ways guilty of this development. The two main figures I will focus on are, unsurprisingly, James and Rorty. There is no point in offering any close reading of their well-known views here,[6] but I will explore them in the context of the worries many of us share regarding Trump and other truth-degrading populists in our confusing political world today.

William James on Truth

It needs to be emphasized that, far from leading to radical relativism or political opportunism, James's (as well as Dewey's) pragmatism functions as a link between the crucial relevance of the concept of truth and the emphasis on individual plurality and spontaneity.[7] I would like to suggest that it is through Jamesian pragma-

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this paper is purely practical: it is in the work of these two pragmatists that the threat of a "slippery slope" is the most striking. Other pragmatist contributions to debates on the concept of truth, including, say, Charles S. Peirce's or (in contemporary pragmatism) Robert Brandom's, would not as obviously lead to such problems. On the other hand, I am definitely not committed to the picture of there being two clearly distinguishable pragmatisms, the Peircean realistic one and the more relativist or subjectivist one starting from James's alleged misreading of Peirce; I find the pragmatist tradition much more complicated – and also more unified (cf., e.g., Pihlström 2008, 2015, 2020).

[3] Even this is incoherent or a bad joke: one needs the concept of truth to be consistent at anything, including one's disrespect for truth.

[4] Moreover, Trump of course perversely uses the notion of truth, as well as related notions like "fake news", always suggesting that what he says is true and what his opponents say is false. For some illustrative picks from among thousands of possible examples, see, e.g., https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jul/14/the-death-of-truth-how-we-gave-up-on-facts-and-ended-up-with-trump and https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/25/politics/donald-trump-vfw-unreality/index.html. On the latter occasion Trump is reported to have urged his supporters: "Stick with us. Don't believe the crap you see from these people, the fake news. ... What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening." It is of course a traditional populist strategy to claim that only the populist leader has some privileged access to what is "really" happening. Even at the final stages of his delusional campaign denying the facts of the 2020 Election, he continued to claim that "the facts" were on his side.

[5] It could be argued that even Trump himself in the end collapsed due to his truth-denialism, including his inability to take seriously the facts of the covid-19 pandemic. This can be left for political historians to examine.

[6] One of the best recent examinations of the pragmatic conception of truth is Capps 2019.

[7] The main sources for James's views here are, of course, *Pragmatism* and *The Meaning of Truth* (James 1975 [1907] and 1978 [1909], respectively).

tism that we can bring the notion of truth itself bear on the analysis of human experiential plurality and unique individuality (see also, e.g., Cormier 2001, Capps 2019). This requires, however, that we not only maintain that there is a plurality of truths, or that truths may be relativized to a plurality of practice-laden human perspectives of inquiry, but seriously try to understand and reconceptualize the concept of truth itself from a Jamesian pragmatist perspective. *Pragmatic pluralism* in a Jamesian style insists that individual perspectives and commitments to truth-seeking matter to what truth is or means for us. This is clear in James: truth is always truth-for-someone-in-particular, an individual person pursuing truth both generally and in, e.g., their existential, ethical, or religious lives, not abstract truth-in-general.

The pragmatist theory of truth is far from uncontroversial, as anyone who ever read undergraduate textbooks on truth knows. We might, however, approach it in terms of the distinction between *truth* and *truthfulness* (very interestingly analyzed in Williams 2002). These are clearly different notions, but they are also connected. One may pursue truthfulness without thereby having true beliefs; one can be truthful also when one is mistaken, insofar as one sincerely seeks to believe truths and avoid falsehoods and also honestly seeks to tell the truth whenever possible (and whenever the truth to be told is relevant). Clearly, whatever one's theory of truth is, one should in some way distinguish between truth and truthfulness.

On the other hand, certain accounts of truth, such as the pragmatist one, may be more promising than some others in articulating the intimate relation between those two concepts. We might say that this distinction is "softened" in James's pragmatist conception of truth, which rather explicitly turns truth into a *value* to be pursued in one's (individual and social) life rather than mind- and value-independent objective propositional truth corresponding to facts that are just "there" no matter how we as truth-seekers (or truth-tellers) engage with or relate ourselves to them. Truth in the Jamesian sense is richer and broader than mere propositional truth precisely because it incorporates truthfulness – a normative *commitment* to truth – as a dimension of the notion of truth itself. Truth, then, is a *normative* property of our practices of thought and inquiry in a wide sense and in this way something that our practice-embedded life with the concepts we have involves, not simply a semantic property of statements or a metaphysical property of propositions that could be taken out of that context of life-practices. Its normativity is, we might say, both epistemic and ethical. James's pragmatic conception of truth hence crucially accommodates truthfulness, as truth belongs to the ethical field of inter-human relations of mutual dependence and acknowledgment. Truth is an element of this "being with others" (to borrow a Heideggerian term out of context). It also incorporates an acknowledgment of the inner truth (and truthfulness) of others' experiences.[8]

Jamesian pragmatic truth is also inextricably entangled with our individual existential concerns; therefore, it is indistinguishable from James's general *individualism* (see, e.g., Pawelski 2007). Individuals' responses to their existential life-challenges vary considerably, and any ethically, politically, existentially, or religiously relevant conception of truth must in some sense appreciate this temperamental[9] variation – without succumbing to the temptations of uncritical subjectivism or relativism, though. Now, if we for ethical reasons do wish to take seriously the Jamesian approach to individual diversity, as I think we should, then we must pay attention to what he says about the "plasticity" of truth and about truth being a "species of good":

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[8] This particularly concerns others' experiences of suffering (cf. Kivistö and Pihlström 2016, chapter 5; Pihlström 2008, 2019, 2020). Only irresponsible metaphysical speculation about, say, "theodicies" leads us to postulate a false transcendent meaningfulness for such experiences. My "antitheodicist" reading of James is very closely connected with my understanding of his conception of truth and truthfulness, but this is a large topic that must be set aside here.

[9] James's (1975 [1907], Lecture I) account of individual philosophical temperaments should, I think, be understood in close entanglement with his notion of truth. There is no way of completely disentangling the temperamental aspects from our practices of pursuing the truth.

> Truth independent; truth that we *find* merely; truth no longer malleable to human need; truth incorrigible, in a word; such truth exists indeed superabundantly – or is supposed to exist by rationalistically minded thinkers; but then it means only the dead heart of the living tree, and its being there means only that truth also has its paleontology and its 'prescription,' and may grow stiff with years of veteran service and petrified in men's regard by sheer antiquity. But how plastic even the oldest truths nevertheless really are has been vividly shown in our day by the transformation of logical and mathematical ideas, a transformation which seems even to be invading physics. (James 1975 [1907], Lecture II)
>
> … truth is *one species of good*, and not, as is usually supposed, a category distinct from good, and co-ordinate with it. *The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons.* (Ibid.)

Another famous Jamesian formulation relevant here is this:

> Pragmatism, on the other hand [in contrast to other accounts of truth], asks its usual question. "Grant an idea or belief to be true," it says, "what concrete difference will its being true make in anyone's actual life? How will the truth be realized? What experiences will be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?" The moment pragmatism asks this question, it sees the answer: *true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify; false ideas are those that we cannot.* That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known-as. This thesis is what I have to defend. The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-*fication*. Its validity is the process of its valid-*ation.* (Ibid., Lecture VI)

Note how easy it is to interpret such ideas in the "vulgar" way. Truth "happens" to an idea when that idea leads to useful results in one's life – such as one's becoming rich and powerful, for instance. However, it should be obvious that, no matter how careless James's formulations were, such crude pragmatism was never James's own view. He is unclear and controversial, but he is certainly not recommending that we just replace truth with our wishful thinking or political and economic pursuit of power.[10]

Several outstanding James scholars have already shown how nuanced James's view on truth is – also in the political sphere – so I only need to cite a few readings to emphasize this point. In his discussion of James's theory of truth, which I find highly pertinent to these concerns (cf. also Pihlström 2013, chapter 4), Jose Medina (2010) defends Jamesian pluralism in a politically relevant manner: in ethics and politics, we can never reach an "absolute" conception of what is universally best for human beings and societies, but different suggestions, opinions, experiential perspectives, and interests must have their say – that is, must be acknowledged (though this is not Medina's exact terminology). A conception of political solidarity can, then, be grounded in Jamesian ideas about truth. James maintains not only pluralism and individualism but also (on Medina's reading) a *relational* conception of individual identities: nothing exists in a self-sustained manner but only as parts of networks of mutual interdependence. Such a metaphysics of diversity and relationality needs, furthermore, the concept of acknowledgment: we must sincerely (which is not to say uncritically) respond to even those perspectives on life that we find alien or even repulsive, though this is much more easily said than it is done. While James's pluralism and relationalism are, according to Medina, elements of a metaphysical view according to which everything must be understood in relation to other things, in terms of ubiquitous relationality, they are irreducibly ethical and political ideas, applying even to the reality of the (epistemic, ethical, political) self.

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[10] Note also that James is here speaking about the potential consequences of our ideas or beliefs (actually) "being true", not about the consequences of their being believed to be true. The passage just quoted is therefore one of the more realistic formulations of the pragmatic conception of truth by James, even presupposing his commitment to something like (a minimalist version of) the correspondence theory truth. Generally, however, James is much less clear than Peirce in formulating his pragmatism as a principle concerning not just the consequences of the truth of our ideas but of those ideas being believed or entertained by us (cf. Pihlström 2015).

It is precisely in this context that we should, according to Medina, appreciate James's theory of truth. True beliefs are, as James says, "good to live by"; when maintaining a belief, any belief, we are responsible for its consequences in our lives, and in those of others. The pragmatic "theory" of truth – which should not be called a "theory", in order to avoid seeing it as a rival to, say, the "correspondence theory" – invokes not only, say, the satisfactory or agreeable consequences of true beliefs but also ethical ideas such as solidarity and justice in terms of which the functionality of our beliefs ought to be measured. Therefore, we may say that truth (in the pragmatic sense), truthfulness, and the acknowledgment of otherness are conceptually tied to each other in James's pragmatism. One cannot genuinely pursue truth in the Jamesian sense unless one also acknowledges, or at least truthfully seeks to acknowledge, others' perspectives on reality – indeed, the uniqueness of such individual perspectives, and their potentiality of opening up genuine novelties. If we take this articulation of Jamesian pragmatic truth seriously, then we can immediately see how vulgar a "Trumpist" version of pragmatism is. Trump's views may in some sense be "satisfactory" or "agreeable" for him and his opportunistic (or cynical and disillusioned) supporters, but they can hardly be said to truly acknowledge other perspectives on the world, let alone to honor any commitment to pursuing the truth independently of personal or political benefit.

The pragmatist account of truth is also connected with James's moral philosophy by Sarin Marchetti (2015, 33), one of the most perceptive recent commentators of James. It is easy for us to agree with his general claim that pragmatism as a philosophical method also incorporates a fundamentally ethical intention based on a conception of ethics as self-transformation and –cultivation.[11] He maintains that James is not primarily advancing a theory of truth but "using pragmatism to unstiffen our views on truth and put them to work" (ibid., 169). We are invited to rethink the meaning of truth "in our lives", and James is therefore offering us a "genealogical phenomenology" of this concept (ibid., 177).[12] Truth is something that dynamically functions in our ethical world-engagement, not a static relation between our beliefs (which are not static, either, but dynamically developing habits of action) and an allegedly independent external world. The concept of truth is also interestingly entangled with James's important but often neglected metaphor of blindness: "We are morally blind when we fail to see how the sources of truth are nested in the very meaning those experiences have for those who have them […]" – and the most serious blindness is our losing touch "with the meaning of our own truths and experiences" (ibid., 202, 205).[13]

The commentators I have briefly cited (Medina and Marchetti) are of course only individual voices among many. They nevertheless help us note a certain approach to Jamesian truth that is inherently ethical. I have tried to capture this basic idea by using the concept of truthfulness, but that is obviously only one possible concept that can be used here. Regarding the active union of truth and ethics, I find myself mostly in agreement with Medina's and Marchetti's readings (without going into any great detail here).[14] I will now have to move on to the worry that James's pragmatist account of truth might be easily developed into a direction that turns problematic, especially in our "post-truth" era.

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[11] In addition to being an application of the "pragmatic method", we might say that in a sense the Jamesian approach to *metaphysics* is an application of the pragmatist conception of truth. On James (1975 [1907]) as engaging in a pragmatically shaped metaphysical inquiry (rather than rejecting metaphysics altogether), see, e.g., Pihlström 2009, 2013. Our ideas expressed or expressible by means of concepts like substance, God, freedom, etc. – our metaphysical views and commitments – are pragmatically "true" or "false" in so far forth as they put us in touch with ethically significant experiences. The truth of a metaphysical view can be assessed by means of the pragmatic criterion of its ability to open us to what James (1897) called "the cries of the wounded" (see also Kivistö and Pihlström 2016, chapter 5; Pihlström 2020). It is right here, in a pragmatist ethically structured metaphysics, that truth, in James's memorable phrase, "happens to an idea".

[12] Pragmatism, James maintains (according to Marchetti), "transforms the absolutely empty notion of correspondence in a rich and active relationship between our truths and the way in which we can entertain them and thus engage the world" (Marchetti 2015, 184). For a non-empty correspondence theory, see, however, e.g., Niiniluoto 1999.

[13] As Marchetti notes, James sees the "possibility of overcoming" such blindness as a "transformation of the self" (Marchetti 2015, 206). The relevant reference here is James 1983 [1899]; see also Pihlström 2019.

[14] See Pihlström 2008, 2013, 2020 for my more comprehensive discussions of James's pragmatism.

Rorty (on Orwell) on Truth

Rorty is famous for a version of pragmatism advocating what he calls *ethnocentrism* ("we have to start from where we are", acknowledging our historical contingency) and *antirepresentationalism* (which rejects any representational relations between language and reality, claiming that the traditional problems of realism and skepticism, among others, only arise in the context of representationalism). Here we cannot deal with the development of Rorty's pragmatism, or its relation to truth, since his early work in the 1960s and 1970s to his late proposals to replace systematic philosophy by "cultural politics".[15] I will focus on a specific strand of Rorty's pragmatism, relevant (I suppose) to the worries about post-factualism raised in this paper.

As was suggested earlier (and as other James commentators like Marchetti have emphasized), the concept of truth, far from being restricted to the oft-ridiculed "pragmatist theory of truth", is fundamentally important in James's moral thought in general. It is in this context that we will now expand our horizon from James's pragmatism to Rorty's neopragmatism and especially to Rorty's treatment of George Orwell. While discussions of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) have often primarily dealt with Winston, the main protagonist of the novel, Rorty's treatment of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* finds O'Brien, the Party torturer, the most important character of the novel.[16]

In his essay on Orwell, "The Last Intellectual in Europe" (in Rorty 1989), Rorty rejects the standard realistic reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, according to which the book defends an objective notion of truth in the context of a penetrating moral critique of the horrible and humiliating way in which Winston is made to believe that two plus two equals five. Consistently with his well-known position (if it can be regarded as a philosophical "position" at all), Rorty (ibid., 173) denies that "there are any plain moral facts out there in the world, […] any truths independent of language, [or] any neutral ground on which to stand and argue that either torture or kindness are preferable to the other". Orwell's significance lies in a novel redescription of what is possible: he convinced us that "nothing in the nature of truth, or man, or history" will block the conceivable scenario that "the same developments which had made human equality technically possible might make endless slavery possible" (ibid., 175). Hence, O'Brien, the "Party intellectual", is Orwell's key invention, and Orwell, crucially, offers no answer to O'Brien's position: "He does not view O'Brien as crazy, misguided, seduced by a mistaken theory, or blind to the moral facts. He simply views him as *dangerous* and as *possible*." (Ibid., 176.)

The key idea here, according to Rorty, is that truth as such does not matter: "[…] what matters is your ability to talk to other people about what seems to you true, not what is in fact true" (ibid.).[17] In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston's self is destroyed as he is made to believe that two plus two equals five – and to utter "Do it to Julia!" when faced with his worst fear, the rats. Rorty points out that this is something he "could not utter sincerely and still be able to put himself back together" (ibid., 179). The notion of sincerity is highly central here, especially as it obviously establishes a link to the key idea of truthfulness that I above claimed to find at the heart of James's account of truth.

A basic distinction between truth and falsity is, however, necessary for the concepts of sincerity and truthfulness. Insofar as Rorty's pragmatism carries Jamesian pragmatism into a certain extreme, one is left wondering whether there is any way to stop on the slippery slope arguably leading from James to Rorty (and eventually bringing in, with horror, first post-factualists like Trump and then Orwell's O'Brien). Reality must still be contrasted with something like unreality, while truth and truthfulness must be opposed not only to falsity but also to lying and self-deception, and possibly other kinds of loss of sincerity and truthfulness that may follow from the collapse of the truth vs. falsity distinction itself. What we find here is, as we may say, the problem of realism in its existential dimensions. This is, arguably, the core pragmatic meaning of the problem of realism and truth, and therefore the very possibility of ethical truthfulness is a key pragmatist issue to be dealt with, not just marginal to the Jamesian-Rortyan engagement with truth.

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[15] Again, I cannot review the development of the complex views of a major philosopher like Rorty here (any more than in the case of James). For Rorty's pragmatism as an account of truth as what our "cultural peers" let us say, see Rorty 1979; for his antirepresentationalist understanding of pragmatism, see Rorty 1991; and for philosophy as cultural politics, see Rorty 2007.

[16] The discussion here is partly based on the chapter on James, Rorty, and Orwell in Kivistö and Pihlström 2016.

[17] This is followed by the well-known Rortyan one-liner, "If we take care of freedom, truth can take care of itself." (Rorty 1989, 176.)

By destroying Winston's capacity for sincerely uttering something and still being able to "put himself back together", O'Brien leads us to imagine the possibility of evil that renders truthfulness itself impossible. This will then collapse the Jamesian pragmatist conception of truth as well, given that it starts from a kind of pragmatic softening of the notion of objective truth culminating in the "truth happens to an idea" view that we may find characteristic of James's ethically grounded metaphysics, and his pragmatism generally.

While James only resisted certain metaphysically realistic forms of metaphysics, especially Hegelian monistic absolute idealism (and corresponding metaphysical realisms), without thereby abandoning metaphysics altogether (see Pihlström 2008, 2009, 2015), Rorty's reading of Orwell is deeply based on his rejection of *all* forms of metaphysics. According to Rorty, Orwell is urging us that "whether our future rulers are more like O'Brien or more like J. S. Mill does not depend […] on deep facts about human nature" or on any "large necessary truths about human nature and its relation to truth and justice" but on "a lot of small contingent facts" (Rorty 1989, 187–188). Now, this is hard to deny; various minor contingent facts have enormous influence on how our world and societies develop. This is also a very important message of Rortyan *ironism* in general: our firmest moral commitments, our "final vocabularies", are historically contingent. But the worry is that if we give up (even pragmatically rearticulated) objective truth entirely, we will end up giving up the very possibility of sincerity, too, and that is something we need for resisting the future of all possible O'Briens' Newspeak seeking to justify evil, suffering, and torture.

It is, indeed, one thing to accept, reasonably, historical contingency and to reject overblown metaphysics of "deep facts about human nature"; it is quite another matter to give up even a minimal pragmatic sense of objective truth required not only for truthfulness and sincerity but for their very possibility (and, hence, for the possibility of insincerity as well, because insincerity is possible only insofar as sincerity is possible, and vice versa), that is, the very possibility of keeping in touch with "the meaning of our own truths and experiences" (quoting Marchetti's apt phrase again).

I am not claiming that Rorty (or James) is wrong, or has a mistaken conception of truth (or facts, or history), but that *if* Rorty is right (whatever it means to say this, given the threatening disappearance, in his neopragmatism, of the distinction between being right and being regarded as being right by one's cultural peers), then we may be in a bigger trouble regarding the place of truth in our lives than we may have naively believed. We may, then, lack sufficient philosophical resources for dealing with people like Trump. Jamesian pragmatism seems to take the correct, indeed vital, step toward integrating the ethically and existentially normative notion of truthfulness into the pragmatist account of truth itself, as we briefly saw. However, insofar as this kind of pragmatism develops into something like Rorty's neopragmatism, which lets the notion of truth drop out as unimportant, the end result is not only an insightful emphasis on historical contingency[18] but also the possible fragmentation of truthfulness itself, which seems to depend on a relatively robust distinction between truth and falsity.

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[18] As well as the role of literature in showing us fascinating, and dangerous, contingent possibilities (see also the other relevant essays in Rorty 1989; cf. Conant 2000).

What this shows is a quasi-Rortyan point: Orwell is more important, and O'Brien more dangerous, than we might have thought; and so is Trump (and therefore, furthermore, Rorty's version of pragmatism as an intermediary stage between James and full-blow post-factualism is also more important than many pragmatism scholars might want to admit). But this also shows that Rorty in effect deprives us of the linguistic, literary, and philosophical resources that we might have seen Orwell as equipping us with.

This criticism of Rorty (which is, implicitly, a qualified criticism of Jamesian pragmatism, though *not* a proposal to give it up but to carefully rethink its lasting value, being aware of its potential problems) comes close to James Conant's (2000) devastating attack on Rorty's reading of Orwell.[19] According to Conant, Rorty is committed to (indeed, obsessed by) the same philosophical prejudices as his metaphysically realist opponents in claiming that notions such as objectivity, facts, or historical truth are not in the focus of Orwell's worries. Conant argues that Rorty fails to see that there is an "ordinary" way of using these and related concepts that need not be construed either metaphysically realistically or antirealistically (or in a Rortyan deflated manner); hence, "when our intellectual options are confined to a forced choice between Realist and Rortian theses […] we are unable to recover the thoughts Orwell sought to express […]" (ibid., 279–280). Conant obviously does not dispute Rorty's (or Orwell's) emphasis on historical contingency, but he argues that in a perfectly ordinary sense, "the demise of 'the possibility of truth'" could still be an extremely scary scenario (ibid., 285–286). In Conant's view, Orwell's novel is primarily "about the possibility of a state of affairs in which the concept of objective truth has faded as far out of someone's world as it conceivably can" (ibid., 297),[20] and therefore it is directly relevant to our concerns here.

Conant contests in a thoroughgoing manner Rorty's deflated reading of O'Brien's character as someone who *simply* enjoys torturing Winston and seeks to "break him" for no particular reason (see ibid., especially 290). Truth and truthfulness do, he maintains, occupy a central place in Orwell's analysis of what is really frightening in totalitarianism; in this way, the debate between Rorty and Conant on these notions in the context of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* directly continues the general pragmatist struggle with truth and truthfulness.[21] O'Brien's "unqualified denial of the idea that (what Orwell calls) 'the concept of objective truth' has application to the past" (ibid., 308) can be directly applied to Jamesian sincerity and truthfulness. It must be possible for the Jamesian pragmatist to argue that O'Brien has given up any ethical commitment to truthfulness through his arbitrary reduction of truth to the opinion of the Party. But then, *pace* Rorty, freedom and the availability of the concept of objective truth are inseparable:

> What [Orwell's] novel aims to make manifest is that if reality control and doublethink were ever to be practiced on a systematic scale, the possibility of an individual speaking the truth and the possibility of an individual controlling her own mind would begin simultaneously to fade out of the world. The preservation of freedom and the preservation of truth represent a single indivisible task for Orwell – a task common to literature and politics. (Ibid., 310)

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[19] See also Rorty 2000. Conant's essay is, in my view, one of the best critical discussions of Rorty's project in general, by no means restricted to the interpretation of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* – yet, as it focuses on that book and Rorty's reading of it, it does show us something about the fundamental philosophical relevance of Orwell's novel.

[20] He also says the novel "is perhaps as close as we can come to contemplating in imagination the implications of the adoption of a resolutely Rortian conception of objectivity (that is, a conception in which the concept of objectivity is exhausted by that of solidarity)" (Conant 2000, 307). This formulation is better than the one quoted in the main text above because it avoids involving the notion of a state of affairs which might itself be regarded as a remnant of old "Realist" metaphysics.

[21] Note how different Orwell's views on totalitarianism, at least on Conant's reading, are from Hannah Arendt's well-known ideas, in which the concentration camp is the epitomization of totalitarianism. (See Arendt 1958.) For Orwell, such atrocities are peripheral; hostility to truthfulness is the "really frightening" thing. (Conant 2000, 295.) Note, however, also that Rorty charges Conant of confusing truth with truthfulness (Rorty 2000, 347). Conant says that the "capacity of individuals to assess the truth of claims on their own" threatens "the absolute hegemony of the Party over their minds" (Conant 2000, 299). This is presumably also why populist political movements are willing to cut down education, higher education in particular.

No matter how exactly we should read Orwell and Rorty, this is a fundamental link between freedom and truth, a link also needed to make sense of the very idea of truthfulness in its pragmatist meaning. In particular, the preservation of freedom and truth – the task Conant argues is shared by literature and politics – is inseparably intertwined with the need to fight against "the corruption of language", which corrupts our concepts and, thus, thought itself (ibid., 313).

In the interest of being fair to Rorty, we can still try to understand the matter, and sketch our response to it, in Rortyan terms. Rorty, famously, rejects the very idea of our being responsible or answerable to any non-human objective reality – traditionally presupposed, he believes, in realist accounts of truth – and emphasizes that we can only be answerable to human audiences.[22] This could be analyzed as a relation of acknowledgment: we acknowledge human audiences as our potential rational critics in a way we cannot acknowledge any non-human reality. Thus formulated, Rorty is not very far from Jamesian truthfulness, which involves the continuous challenge of acknowledging others' perspectives on the world (cf. above). However, part of our response to a (relevant) audience is a response to an audience using the concept of objective reality. We have to recognize the relevance of that concept by recognizing the relevant audience. This is a case of what has been called "mediated recognition" (cf. Koskinen 2017, 2019): we recognize objective reality and truth by recognizing the appropriate audience(s) and our responsibility or answerability toward it/them. We acknowledge objective reality itself by being answerable, and recognizing ourselves as being answerable, to an audience (e.g., potential rational critics) that might challenge our views on reality.

Now, the problem here – to recapitulate our worries once more – is that the relevant audience could change in an Orwellian manner. The *use* and (thus) meaning (recalling the Wittgensteinian view that "meaning is use") of the concept of objective truth could even be destroyed. Then the kind of mediated recognition alluded to here would no longer work. In some sense there would no longer *be* an audience we would be responsible to anymore. And there would then be no views to have on anything anymore. Rational thought would collapse. In other words, we can recognize each other as using the concept of an objective reality (and a related concept of truth), and thereby acknowledge each other and ourselves as being normatively – truthfully – committed to pursuing objective truth about reality – but only until O'Brien gets us. Then that commitment collapses, and so does our acknowledgment of each other as users of the notion of truth – and, hence, of communicating agents. So does, then, our commitment to sincerity and truthfulness, which are needed for moral and political seriousness.

Rorty then seems to be wrong about the idea that defending freedom would be sufficient for defending truth. It is certainly necessary but hardly sufficient. In particular, negative freedom from external constraints is not enough: what is needed is positive freedom and responsibility, hence commitment to truth-seeking, something that the Jamesian integration of truth with truthfulness succeeds in articulating. There certainly is a kind of unrestricted freedom in American politics, but truth apparently has not been able to take care of itself. Moreover, Rorty (1989, 188) himself needs to use the concept of truth – and related concepts such as the ones of fact and reality – when he reminds us that "[w]hat our future rulers will be like will not be determined by any large necessary truths about human nature and its relation to truth and justice, but by a lot of small contingent facts".

Interestingly, Rorty also maintains the following: "If we are ironic enough about our final vocabularies, and curious enough about everyone else's, we do not have to worry about whether we are in direct contact with moral reality, or whether we are blinded by ideology, or whether we are being weakly 'relativistic'" (Ibid., 176–177) This is, indeed, a very big "if". We need to worry about these matters precisely because we can never be sure we are able to be "ironic enough" and "curious enough". These attitudes themselves require a commitment to truthfulness. Our need to maintain a pragmatic conception of truth more realistic than Rorty's can thus be seen to be based on Jamesian pragmatic reasons. Moreover, this need also emerges as a result of our taking seriously a crucial Rortyan lesson about the fundamental contingency of even our most basic conceptual commitments. It is precisely due to the fragility of truth – the possibility that O'Brien might arrive, as Orwell warns us, destroying our ability of distinguishing between truth and falsity – that we must cherish our Jamesian ability of responding, with ethical sincerity and truthfulness, to others' perspectives along with our own continuous commitment to pursuing the truth.

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[22] This theme runs through Rorty's entire thought, but *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, the book containing the Orwell essay, is one of its best articulations.

Conclusion: Truth, Pluralism, and Critical Philosophy

In conclusion, and in order to further emphasize the political significance of the issue, let me very briefly compare these pragmatist elaborations on our need to be committed to the pursuit of truth – and the related integration of truth and truthfulness – to Hannah Arendt's views on truth (and Richard Bernstein's useful reading of Arendt), especially as they are articulated in Arendt's "Truth and Politics", an essay originally published in 1967 (see Arendt 2003).

Arendt not only offered us an analysis of totalitarianism of lasting relevance and an equally lasting defense of human spontaneity in its ethical and political dimensions but also an ever-timelier account of the significance of the concept of truth. In "Truth and Politics", she carefully examines the often-antagonistic relation between truthfulness and political action, drawing attention to deliberate lying as a political force – and one may argue that her views are, for well-known reasons, even more relevant today than they were half a century ago (see also Bernstein 2018, 67–83). She reminds us that while truth itself is "powerless", it is also *irreplaceable*; political force, persuasion, or violence cannot substitute it, and "[t]o look upon politics from the perspective of truth […] means to take one's stand outside the political realm", from "the standpoint of the truthteller" (Arendt 2003, 570). This kind of *critical distance* necessary for an adequate understanding of the relation between truth and politics requires the age-old project of "disinterested pursuit of truth" (ibid., 573). It is, of course, this very project that the populist culture that brings into power people like Trump seeks to suppress.

Is such disinterestedness available in pragmatism? Isn't pragmatism, especially the Jamesian version of pragmatism we are preoccupied with here (let alone the Rortyan one), inevitably "interest-driven", and doesn't its individualism therefore open the doors for political manipulation and disrespect for truth? Why, more generally, is the concept of truth important for a sound appreciation of pragmatic pluralism and human diversity, after all, and why exactly should we aim at a pragmatist articulation of this concept in the first place?

A key to this issue is *reflexivity*: pragmatism – better than other approaches, I believe – is able to acknowledge the meta-level "interests" guiding our pursuit of disinterestedness itself. We pragmatically *need* a concept of truth not serving any particular need or interest. Thus, we also pragmatically need a deep pluralism (but not relativism) about truth. The reflection we are engaging in here, with the help of Arendt as well as James and Rorty, is in a crucial sense internal to pragmatism. We are asking what kind of purposes our different philosophical conceptualizations of truth, including the traditional realist (correspondence) one and the more comprehensive pragmatist one, are able to serve. In this sense, Jamesian pragmatism, I would like to suggest, "wins" at the meta-level. Its potential collapse to Trumpist populism or O'Brien's destruction of truth is definitely a threat to be taken very seriously – especially if one is willing to take seriously Rorty's developments of Jamesian (and Deweyan) pragmatism – but there is no reason to believe that a slide down the slippery slope would be unavoidable. By drawing attention to the continuous meta-level critical (and self-critical) inquiry into our own commitments, and the truthful commitment to ameliorate our practices of truth (in science, ethics, politics, and everywhere else as well), we should be able to stop that slide. But where exactly it can be stopped is a question that needs to be asked again and again in varying historical and cultural contexts.

In the end, I think, we should defend a pragmatically pluralistic view about truth itself:[23] there are many truths about truth, including realism and the related correspondence theory of truth, to be defended *within* pragmatism. These truths about truth are context-embedded; for instance, we may need a realist correspondence-theoretical account of truth within a political discourse opposing Trump (and O'Brien), but we may, and in my view do, need a pragmatist account within a more purely academic discourse on truth.[24] A kind of pragmatic realism is certainly worth striving for: in the "post-factual" era of powerful populists, we should not too much emphasize the pragmatic "plasticity" of truth but, rather, the objectivity and realism inherent even in the Jamesian pragmatic conception of truth.[25] The "truth" about these issues is itself a pragmatic, contextual matter. This, I would like to suggest, is how the pragmatic conception of truth operates at the meta-level. Far from encouraging us to slide down to irresponsible relativism or populism, Jamesian pragmatism urges us to take responsibility for our practice-laden employments of the concept of truth within our everyday, scientific, ethical, political, and religious lives (and any other sectors of human life for that matter). This profoundly ethical nature of truth, integrated with truthfulness, is something that perhaps only a sufficiently deeply pragmatic account of truth can fully accommodate.

Even so, there are further reflexive questions that may be posed: can we really say, for instance, that philosophical theories (about truth, or about anything else), such as pragmatism, are themselves true or false, and in what sense exactly (e.g., in a pragmatist sense)?[26] Is it sufficient for a pragmatist to maintain that pragmatism itself is pragmatically true? This is related to the question how far a form of *pragmatic naturalism* can be taken in metaphilosophical reflections. According to philosophical naturalists, even realism may be an empirical theory about science and truth. Whatever kind of naturalism is available to the pragmatist, it should at least be self-consciously *non-reductive*, and thus the pragmatic naturalist must constantly face the challenge that it may be problematic to use the concept of truth in the same sense when applied to philosophical theories as it is used when applied to, say, scientific theories. I must leave this issue open here.

In any event, something like *critical philosophy* is vitally needed to stop the slide along the slippery slope from James via Rorty to Orwell's O'Brien (cf. also Skowronski and Pihlström 2019). Critical philosophy is both pragmatist and Kantian in its willingness to take seriously the reflexive questions that haunt us whenever we use the notion of truth or any other concept, we are normatively committed to in the very activities of using it. In quasi-Kantian terms, I would like to phrase my main result as follows: just like Kant saw empirical realism as possible only on the assumption of transcendental idealism, a reasonable form of realism in our contemporary society (and academia) not only needs to embrace a qualified (correspondence) account of objective truth but must at the meta-level be grounded in transcendental pragmatism that makes such realism and objectivity possible.[27]

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[23] For alethic pluralism (though in a form not based on pragmatism), see, e.g., Lynch 2009. In fact Wittgenstein (1980, 75) once suggested that we should not choose between the classical "theories" of truth, as all of them contain valuable insights into truth, and none of them is the whole truth about truth.

[24] In principle, Rorty's neopragmatism may offer us valuable resources for switching between different context or "vocabularies" and for developing a self-critically ironic attitude to them, even the most "final" ones. Therefore, my assessment of here is not at all purely negative, though I do think we should be concerned with its potential dangers. Rorty himself was laudably active in promoting pragmatism in the former communist East-European countries that opened up to Western ideas of freedom and democracy in the late 1980s and the 1990s – and the emergence of the Central European Pragmatist Forum is indeed part of this history, with a lot of pragmatism-related activities developing in countries like Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The fact that the current situation in Europe does not look equally promising regarding, say, the development Deweyan democracy is of course one of the background factors that need to be taken seriously by pragmatists now critically inquiring into the nature of truth.

[25] Critics of pragmatism also need to be constantly reminded that James himself repeatedly emphasized that he is denying neither the "standing reality" external to us nor the idea of truth as a relation of "agreement" between our ideas and that reality; rather, James's investigations of truth are attempts to tell us what these notions can be taken to pragmatically mean – i.e., what they are "known as" in terms of human experience. Another matter that needs further elucidation is the fact that the context we operate within are constantly in flux; they cannot be just naively taken as self-standing fixed realities. Our ways of using the concept of truth themselves constantly shape the contexts within which we may employ different discourses on truth. This is a crucial element of the kind of pragmatic reflexivity emphasized above. On pragmatist (ontological) contextuality and reflexivity, see also Pihlström 2009, 2015.

[26] This, in any case, is hardly a problem just for the pragmatist. The correspondence-theoretician might also have to hold, equally reflexively, that the correspondence theory of truth corresponds to reality (or is made true by the objective facts about what truth is, or something along these lines).

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PHILOSOPHY OF PRAGMATISM AS A SOLUTION AFTER AN (UN)SUCCESSFUL TRANSFORMATION[1]

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to recall certain ideas of the pragmatist tradition that could inspire dialogue about progressive future developments and caution regarding too radical a social transformation and that, perhaps even more importantly, could save the democratic and liberal character of Slovakia and other East-Central European societies. The point of departure here lies in the interpretations of two philosophers: Emil Višňovský and František Novosád. Not only are they the most renowned experts on social and political philosophy in Slovakia, but their analyses are in certain crucial aspects significantly close to Axel Honneth's *Zeitdiagnose* and to his attempt to revive John Dewey's democratic theory, which plays a key role in the theoretical parts of the paper. For further elaboration on those ideas, the author proposes a discussion, with the still highly relevant normative ideals of the Czech and Slovak revolution(s) of 1989, as reconstructed by James Krapfl. The paper suggests a potential path for a social-democratic "revival", one which might contribute to finding a balance among politics, market, society and, not least, ecology.

Keywords: East-Central Europe, Slovakia, pragmatism, democracy, negative freedom, political philosophy, liberalism, dialogical cosmopolitanism

Introduction

The fall of 2019 had already marked the 30th anniversary of the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, which fundamentally changed the shape of the region.[2] During that time, and especially in recent years, numerous authors expressed their doubts about whether the social transformations that took place after 1989 managed to fulfil the expectations of those who demanded a shift from state socialism towards democracy. The question is still open and difficult to answer. Nevertheless, one important historical lesson to learn is that political transition can be a painful and even regressive process, especially in the absence of necessary groundwork and preparations. Unfortunately, the neoliberal waves of the last 30 years, which accompanied the process of transition, rather than bringing the promised prosperity and political stability in East-Central European societies, have triggered the growth of far-left, but especially far-right movements. While we cannot attribute all aberrations to neoliberalism, its unfavorable consequences in these countries are just too obvious. Yet, their diverse conditions would require more nuanced reflections, so they will have to stay out of the focus of this paper, which will be confined mainly to the Slovak experience.

Like most other countries of East-Central Europe, Slovakia is currently experiencing a struggle over the future character of the state. Apparently, the political situation in many Western societies is tense as well. Nonetheless, the basic assumption about Western democracies is that even the most severe crises will not undermine the firm foundations of liberal democracy. Indeed, none of the horrible experiences such as 9/11, the financial and economic crises of 2008/2009, the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo or the Bataclan Theater massacre, has shaken the established political systems.[3] In East-Central Europe, however, an ongoing political, economic, and moral crisis may launch a political change of regimes, which happened several times in the 20th century.

To put it bluntly, there is no single solution for preserving the democratic and liberal character of East-Central European societies, and rose-tinted expectations can only result in disappointment and disillusion. This paper aims to recall certain ideas of the pragmatist tradition, which may suggest "softer ways" of solving social and political problems, presumably with "less harm and pain" than in the last decades. In this endeavor, proper understanding of democracy as such is *the condition sine qua non*. In order to develop the ideas of 1989 further and to 'reactivate' them in the contemporary debate, one should also take account of the idea of *dialogical cosmopolitanism*, indicated in the closing part as a suitable direction of further research.

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[2] The East-Central European countries usually include the so-called *Visegrád (V4) group* – Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. We can loosely add there also Slovenia, Croatia, the eastern part of Germany, the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and even (the western part of) Ukraine.

[3] While the final words of this paper were written a few days after the 2021 storming of the United States Capitol, even the 4 years of Donald Trump do not seem to push us to change this statement – although, naturally, the consequences of his way of doing politics are hardly predictable at the moment.

A Slovak Perspective on Transformation: Uncertainty and Ambivalence

It may no longer be an unknown fact that one of the main characteristic features of the present situation in East-Central European countries is that a large part of the population is unable to identify itself with the existing political system, even though its standards embody many ideals of the Enlightenment and (Western) modernity. A significant part of the public is losing respect for the pluralistic political system and, as a result, cannot positively contribute to democratic processes and institutions. The paradox of this situation is that instead of vehemently demanding the fulfillment of our rights guaranteed by the constitution – civil, political, social, cultural, ecological etc. – a large part of the population tends to follow authoritarian and populist leaders, or secludes itself in "private spaces", as was the case during the *era of normalization*.[4] Instead of striving for the exercise of these rights in order to lead their lives in a transparent manner, many prefer their own opaque ways, which often results in various forms of corruption to satisfy their real needs and, naturally, also many artificially induced "needs", stimulated by ubiquitous advertising. The situation is not particularly different in Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Czechia or even Slovenia (although the latter two are economically, politically and culturally the most successful examples of transition). Moreover, the governments of countries like Belarus or Russia obviously gave up on building a liberal democracy many years ago.

Emil Višňovský introduced his reflections regarding the pragmatist understanding of sociocultural transformation with the question of "How much transformation can people bear?" Višňovský states that "social transformation is sometimes a rather painful, even destructive process. All social transformations entail certain 'costs and yields', apparently also victims, and it is impossible to count and calculate them all. Too much transformation can harm, if we are not ready for it." (Višňovský 2014, 102)[5] František Novosád summarizes on a similar note: "we should not forget that the processes that sociologists and political scientists denote as 'transition', 'transformation', 'the change of a system', 'the change of structures', result from the action of particular individuals and behind these 'systems' and 'structures' there are always humans with their hopes and frustrations, personal ambitions, gains and losses, joys and pains. With every historical shift some gain, and some lose." (Novosád 2007, 231)[6] The question that begs to be answered is, "how can we prepare at all for such revolutionary changes?"

Any endeavor to answer this question should be undertaken with modesty because the nonlinear and chaotic character of historical processes cannot be overlooked. Hence, the problem will be narrowed down to the following one: "How can we realize social improvement, without ending up in unreflective radicalization?" The prime examples of such radicalism are Communism and Neoliberalism. There are numerous analyses dealing with the negative consequences of both – these ideologies are now among the most debated paradigms of social change and social order. However, the debate should not be undertaken unless the notion of democracy, whose adequate grasp is indispensable for eliminating the risk of radicalization, has been addressed in the first place. The population of the former socialist countries might have longed for freedom and democracy even before 1989 – both were once promised by Communism and also by Neoliberalism. Yet, it is only with the lapse of time that we can see what was not so clear in 1989, namely, that there are multiple interpretations of freedom and democracy. The main mistake of the post-1989 regime was that population at large had had quite simplistic understanding of the concept, which was implemented in an overly formal fashion – e.g., for many, democracy was only about going to the polls once in four years – with narrow comprehension of freedom as a *negative* liberty, neglecting adequate proactive participation and contribution of citizens.

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[4] In the history of Czechoslovakia, "normalization" is a name commonly given to the policy enforced in 1969–87, which was gradually established after the military intervention of the Warsaw Pact armies in august 1968 and which resulted in general political apathy and opportunism. Regarding the revival of the term 'new normalization' cf. for instance (Krapfl 2013, 222). One typical example of such ignorance and indifference is low voter turnout, especially in regional elections and elections to the European Parliament as a sign of resignation on the hope that one's vote can change something (the participation is often less than 20%). Even during the most important decision-making process, elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (the Slovak parliament), the voter participation has only once exceeded 60 % since 2006.

[5] All Višnovský's and Novosád's quotations in the text were originally written in Slovak – translated by Ľ.D.

[6] Yet, Novosád himself optimistically adds that, in the longer term, perhaps everyone gains. This in a way correlates with Axel Honneth's general attitude. Their mutual similarities as well as differences, however, would require a more detailed explanation. Nevertheless, in our personal conversation a few months ago, Novosád was rather pessimistic about the current developments in Slovakia and his earlier optimism now seems to be fading.

To point out other negative consequences of the post-1989 transition, let us quote some more of Emil Višnovský on the nature of post-1989 transformation in Slovakia. According to Višnovský,

> what is happening in post-Communist countries following the collapse of the totalitarian regime, whose nature was truly anti-transformative, is clearly two things: (1) the disintegration of society and the disintegration of many forms of social life; (2) the application of power in all its forms, including corruption as 'a method' of transformation, combined with strong bureaucracy. Not only is the legacy of the previous regime, as far as political culture is concerned, so powerful that politics is understood largely, if not exclusively, as a struggle for power – miles away from Dewey's understanding of politics as a method of intelligent problem–solving; what is worse, it is combined with capitalism, which was implemented too quickly in these countries. Neither the left nor the right side of the political spectrum can offer an alternative concept of politics as a tool for transformation (Višňovský 2014, 105).

To draw a broader picture, it is relevant to add the very first paragraph from James Krapfl's book *Revolution with a Human Face. Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989–1992*, where the Canadian historian refers to a widespread commonplace in contemporary Slovakia regarding the revolution 1989 and the subsequent misdevelopments:

> 'So, you're going to write about what fools we were?' my friend Ivan asked after I explained to him the nature of the research that had brought me back to Slovakia in 2004. It was a better response than I had expected. Over the years, I had grown accustomed to Czechs and Slovaks responding to my interest in 1989 not with polite curiosity but with awkward discomfiture, hysterical laughter, or angry derision. Evidently it was not a topic one could discuss dispassionately. Ivan's ironic question probably explains why: history has not unfolded the way most citizens of Czechoslovakia expected it would in 1989. Indeed, the contrast between their faith in humanity then and the many deceptions and disappointments that have followed – dare one say as a result? – tends to make 1989 either embarrassing or a cruel reminder of how easily people can be manipulated (Krapfl 2013, xi).

Although Krapfl does not absolutely subscribe to Ivan's ironical comment, he still takes this interpretation seriously. There are indeed many sociological and historical studies that would support the interpretation of Krapfl's friend Ivan.[7] On the other hand, there are also many that would point to the positive aspects of transformation.[8] I am not going to take a side on this matter here, as the length of the paper does not allow for a detailed analysis. What is more important for me is to share the sentiment shared by a huge part of the population: a "lack of freedom."[9] This is indeed a paradoxical phenomenon, since the most important critique of the old regime was this very lack of freedom.[10]

Granted, such experience is hard to measure, especially if looked upon as "feelings" or "impressions." What often happens though is that when someone speaks favorably of some aspects of the former regime, they are immediately countered by the accusation of "retro-optimism," or Communist nostalgia (in German, the word "Ostalgie" is often used in this context, a portmanteau of the German words *Ost* [east] and *Nostalgie* [nostalgia]). Conversely, however, even such pre-eminent Slovak philosopher as František Novosád views the post-1989 development in a similar way:

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[7] Compare this to the analyses undertaken at the various institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, such as: (Pekník et al 2005, Plichtová 2010, Krivý 2013).

[8] For the ambivalence of post-1989 development not only in East-Central Europe, see (Ther 2016).

[9] It is worth noting that the sentiment pertains not only to the issues of political correctness and all displays of private and public "censorship". For most people, the main problem lies in the undemocratic and often even unbearable work conditions, where the owner of a company or the boss has or used to have – there have been certain improvements in recent years – (almost) absolute power over the employees, especially in the poorest regions. Henry Ford's assertion that "**democracy stops** at the **factory gates**" is something which most people are still not able to digest, and the relevant question is, why should they?

[10] Both in Slovakia and in Czechia, November 17 is a national holiday, marking the victory in the struggle for freedom and democracy in 1989.

> Since 1989, almost everything has changed: institutions have changed, technological conditions of life have changed, and our life strategies have changed. The changes, however, have manifested themselves differently in the lives of the elites and in those of 'ordinary' people. The life of an 'ordinary' man has remained essentially the same, and even has become more difficult, because today, his or her fate hinges on several increasingly vague factors. The social environment, especially the working environment, is less defined, requiring more will to adapt than before. It is ambiguous even when it comes to the liberty to express oneself freely. Formally, there are no obstacles to freedom of speech. However, the line separating the acceptable from the 'indecent', while not publicly drawn, is ruthlessly adhered to. As a result, we are paradoxically almost as careful with words as we used to be. The life of the 'elites' has changed radically. A new world has opened up for them, with new possibilities - so many new possibilities that they cannot even absorb them. We can even talk about the increasing cleavage between "the elites" and "the commoners", which is clearly reflected in political behavior patterns and attitudes. The 'elite' bemoans the fact that the 'masses' prefer populists, while 'the commoners' in their turn lament the unwillingness and inability of the elites to understand the elementary concerns of an individual who lives from paycheck to paycheck. The 'elites' respond to the commoners' concerns according to the pattern: 'If they do not have enough money to buy bread, let them eat cakes'[11] (Novosád 2010, 29).

Of course, majorities can be wrong in their assessment. This has happened many times in history. Yet what is important here is the fact that a few years ago (and often also now), in the liberally dominated public sphere, even to ask a question about – at least certain aspects of – the legitimacy of the former regime, that is, to express a more balanced view on the state-socialist regime, was something unthinkable, something that could cost, at best, one's good reputation and, at worst – fortunately only in very few specific cases – even one's career.[12] The reason behind such ostracization was that any Leftist alternatives to the dominant neoliberal discourse were brand-marked as 'Communist' and associated with the re-establishment of gulags and other extreme measures.[13] Nevertheless, mistrust on the part of the Slovak population of the mainstream liberal 'elitist' interpretation of history is widespread – often for relevant reasons (see, for instance, ongoing mass-media manipulation towards neoliberal economic policies). According to F. Novosád, the writings on the present-day situation in Slovakia even among the intellectuals have been dominated by texts that, in fact, are nothing but policy-making tools in disguise.

> [T]he intellectual consequences of this situation are devastating to everyone. Above all, the distinction between political, politological and ideological texts has been erased. In fact, erasing these differences meant that all texts began to be understood as political. Politicalness, however, implies bias, which results from partisanship. The value of a political text is not in its intellectual or argumentative strength but in its effectiveness. Yet, in this context, efforts at effectiveness entail the use of psychological suggestion in place of arguments as a persuasion tool, so logical argumentation has been supplanted by a whole array of rhetorical persuasion strategies. Analysis has merely been a blind; in reality, it has been a 'struggle', its point being moral humiliation of the opponents. Thus, the analyses have assumed the status of moral judgment, and the more this virus of 'moralization' spread, the more the political writings depreciated in value. Eventually, however, the bare truth that the political effectiveness of such texts was virtually nil, that it was only 'surplus labor' of the new guardians of the 'only decent and possible views' was bound to show through (Novosád 2007, 227–228).

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[11] A variation on the most famous quote attributed to Marie-Antoinette, the queen of France during the French Revolution.

[12] For more detail on the idiosyncrasies and distortions of the "post-Communist situation" and discourse in Slovakia, cf., for instance, (Larson 2013).

[13] And although, for 12 consecutive years (with a short break between 2010 and 2012), Slovakia was practically ruled by a party that named itself "Social-Democratic" (*Smer-SD*), being the leading party in three governments, its overall policy was rather national-conservative with certain social programs than a truly leftist alternative.

Although Novosád wrote his book in 2007, his term "orchestrated, stage-managed mobilization', i.e., permanent playing up of a situation or an issue, as if of something fateful that will, 'here and now', decide the future of Slovakia 'in all its aspects and spheres' for good, seems to have become not only a typical characteristic of the 'transition period', but, unfortunately, an underlying perennial strategy of almost all political actors as well as of most intellectual writings. Even though certain kinds of political activism should generally be considered instrumental in progressive change, too much of ideological and unreflected-upon intellectual involvement after 1989 was, according to Novosád, very destructive. And although we can say that now society seems to be a little more pluralistic, in the times of fake news and alternative mass media it is hard to tell whether we are really confronted with broader acceptance of other opinions and interpretations, or whether this is merely "information entropy" of the new social media, where everyone can express (almost) everything, but has only a handful of followers. Yet this aspect, however intriguing, is outside the scope of the current paper. What is more interesting here is the question of why the philosophy of pragmatism has not gained more attention among philosophers (and public intellectuals) in Slovakia. Meanwhile, the ideas of this philosophical tradition could help reduce the tension among proponents of various ideological positions and thus make the public sphere more functional.

In this sense, one of the possible answers to why the philosophy of pragmatism has, as yet, gained little attention from humanities in Slovakia is that it does not fit into any of the possible compartments[14], which seems to "terrify" a significant part of Slovak philosophers and intellectuals. For instance, with regard to the relationship of pragmatism to Marxism on the one hand, and liberalism on the other, Emil Višňovský states that

> the '*middle ground*' of pragmatism in political theory and praxis means that "pragmatism is in sharp ideological opposition neither to liberalism nor to Marxism. On the contrary, it finds in both a 'rational core' and such aspects that it can side with. Pragmatists are post-liberals and at the same time also post-Marxists, who have learned a lesson not only from the history of classical liberalism but also from Marxism. The philosophical framework and the basis of such ideological integration is pragmatist anti-dualism, transcending traditional oppositions between individual and community, individualism and holism, nature and culture, subjective and objective, facts and values, aims and means, morality and politics, politics and economy, right and left, capitalism and Communism, ideals and reality, motives and deeds, etc., that is, between those that liberalism and Marxism traditionally separate and juxtapose (Višňovský 2014, 119).

It has to be emphasized that such an attempt at locating oneself in-between different positions, or directly in "the middle", does not serve as a camouflage to conceal any kind of conservatism or reactionary stance, nor is it a naïve belief that every problem can be solved by a "centrist" compromise. Rather, it is a genuine dialogical attitude towards social reality.

How can we reconcile diverse and often very rigid positions, and what role can pragmatism play here? Višnovský's interpretation may help once again as a point of departure for further discussion. In his words, pragmatism rejects the existence of eternal, invariable, constant, ideal platonic "forms" or the universal essence of all variable individual things: "Forms are real rather than ideal, for they are inherent in things; they are fluid, they evolve, i.e., they transform themselves, along with things and within their context." (Višňovský 2014, 105) As Višňovský further emphasizes, "we can even say that the entire "spirit" of American philosophy in general, and pragmatism in particular, is transformative, in the sense of a vision, revision and the potential for envisaging and creating a new picture of the world."[15] (Višňovský 2014,

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[14] Like in Western countries, the three major "compartments" are liberalism, socialism and conservatism. In Slovakia, however, throughout history, there have been (too) many adherents of their various extreme versions such as classical *laissez-faire* capitalism, which dominated in the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938), Clerical Fascism (1939–1945), Stalinism/Marxism-Leninism (after 1948), Neoliberalism (after 1992, in Slovakia, especially after 2002). Today, they all are variously present in the public sphere, struggling for the dominance; their "soft versions", such as left-liberalism, social-democratic reformism or moderate conservativism, are rather scarce.

[15] Unfortunately, it is not the philosophy of pragmatism that

107) Višňovský lists a number of other features of pragmatism such as anti-finitism, temporariness, provisionality, ephemerality, fluidity and temporality, dynamism, processuality and anti-absolutism. Ontology prioritizes time and change, potentiality and contingency over immutability and fixedness – nothing is given as fixed or absolute that we could not recreate or transform through our activity. This may lead us to claim that we could as well transform economy and thus evade the Marxist – as well as the current neoliberal – perception of economy and society as "eternal", "unchanging" and "the only possible". In this context, it is important to point out pragmatism's orientation towards praxis and action. "Human activity per se means transformation – through an active contribution and intervention in reality, through experimentation and reconstitution of various situations." (Višňovský 2014, 107) It does not, however, represent "a defense of a blind, anarchist or arbitrary transformation at all costs, but rather a directed, controlled, planned, "humanistic" transformation in the name of common human good." (Višňovský 2014, 108)

For pragmatism, social and cultural critique is an instrument of transformation, thus representing one of the essential characteristics of pragmatist philosophy at large. However, the critique should be constructive rather than "pathological" (such as voices claiming that everything in present Slovakia is downright wrong, as can be heard especially from Marxist-Leninists or Fascists, but also from radically Western oriented "categorical" liberals), and rather gradual than categorical.[16] It should indeed be moderate and based on dialogue, and able to reveal the underlying reasons why Slovakia (along with other East-Central European countries) has ended up in current morass. In order to find relevant answers, thorough historical research and hermeneutics seem to be necessary.

The previous reflections deserve one more comment. Although the idea of a dialogical way of solving problems has not yet been applicable in all societies for various reasons, most of the EU countries (of which Slovakia is a member, too), possess enough resources for dialogical and pragmatic problem-solving. Thus, for all that has been said, the democratic transitions in Europe have been largely successful and there is enough room for addressing the current problems by other than radical means. To break it down further, "the old" EU members (before the extension in 2004) had either been democratic even before WWII, such as France, the Scandinavian countries or the former EU member Great Britain, or underwent democratic transition after the war, such as Germany or Italy, with Spain, Portugal or Greece joining in later. Ultimately, in the post-1989 period, when Czechoslovakia, and then independent Slovakia (since 1993), jumped on the huge wave of transformation, the liberal-democratic framework was established across Europe. What is now of utmost importance is to make sure that the existing distortions – such as the neoliberal understanding of the economy – would not destroy the still-fragile (especially in "the new" EU) democratic structures and institutions. Hence, the question that remains to be answered is whether the legal framework alone is sufficient for securing stability, democracy and justice.

The Slovak Experience in a Broader Perspective of Neoliberal Europe

Outside the East-Central European context, the last thirty to forty years have not given any reason for overt optimism, either.[17] A quick glance at contemporary Western societies makes us realize that the existing situation requires considerable criticism. With regard to the state of societies in highly developed capitalist countries, Axel Honneth, along with many other social scientists,[18] argues that there is a "trend toward growing impoverishment of large parts of the population; the emergence of a new 'underclass' lacking access to economic as well as sociocultural resources and the steady

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dominates at American universities today, especially not Dewey's. This may at least in part account for the global success of neoliberalism.

[16] Cf. (Honneth 2014, 9)

[17] Cf. for instance (Geiselberger 2017).

[18] There is a large selection of relevant literature, cf. for instance (Sklair, 2001, Robinson 2004, Piketty 2014, Streeck 2014).

increase of the wealth of a small minority" (Honneth 2004a, 112). Already in 2004, Honneth lashed out at the "scandalous manifestations of an almost totally unrestrained capitalism today" (Ibid.) at a time that was the culmination point of neoliberal radicalization in Slovakia, and at a time which was still full of "(neo)liberal triumphalism" across the Western world, with the famous slogan "There is no alternative". Naturally, Honneth was not the only one. Nevertheless, to offer a short explanation of the negative consequences of neoliberalism, I will follow his interpretation further. Honneth points out that what happened during that period was described by economists as the phase of eliminating Fordist production methods, which led to a new method of addressing job candidates not as dependent employees, but rather as "creative businessmen with themselves". Honneth highlights the fact that corporations operating at an international level without any political control constantly seek new ways of signing contracts. This leads to the reoccurrence of the same forms of unprotected contractual work, part-time jobs and work from home, which had existed at the beginning of capitalist industrialization. Due to increasing flexibility of the labor market and adaptation of the whole society to market principles, poorly justified by referring to a new form of individualism, the "social question" is becoming a challenge once again, even though, by the latter half of the 20th century, it was regarded as part of the already-vanquished heritage of the 19th century (Honneth 2004b, 473, 475).

It is necessary to emphasize that all the phenomena are much more pronounced in post-socialist countries. In Slovakia, a huge part of the population has been very critical and very confused and disappointed about the post-1989 situation, not least due to high unemployment rates.[19] Other pressing problems are emigration – including the brain drain of young and educated elites, pauperization of a large part of the population, and the emergence of slums, which exacerbates the marginalization of ethnic minorities, material inequality and further phenomena increasing the social gulf. And there are a number of other problems, like the collapse of industry and agriculture in many regions, the political dominance of oligarchs, and omnipresent corruption. The most painful and, in a way, also the darkest phase of the transformation from a Soviet economic system to market economy was the decade of 1990–2000.[20] And now, following the economic crisis of 2008, the situation in the European periphery is similar to that of post-socialist countries, in some cases even arguably worse – such as in Greece (not to speak of the conditions in many regions in Spain, Portugal or in southern Italy, or even in France and Great Britain).[21] Nonetheless, as already mentioned, we should not conclude that there are no major differences between the West and the East-Central European societies. Although similar developments may be identified especially in the political area – such as the recent rise of the so called "anti-system or anti-establishment parties" – the system of "checks and balances" and the role of civil society are still stronger in most Western countries than in East-Central Europe. Take, for example, the institutional blockades of willfulness of Donald Trump or Boris Johnson, or the huge civil resistance against certain decisions of Emanuel Macron. At the other extreme, there are Poland and Hungary, and think also of the "berlusconisation"[22] of Slovakia and Czechia.[23]

Yet – and after all these critical remarks this may sound paradoxical – despite all misdevelopments, there are still many reasons to believe that East-Central European countries have sufficient prerequisites – legal, political, cultural, economic or social – for preventing potential collapse of the liberal-democratic regime.[24] Moreover, in the European Union, there is an array of the New Leftist movements (such as Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain) or personalities (such as former leader of the Liberal Party Jeremy Corbyn), with their (as yet unfulfilled) ambition to put forward viable alternatives to the flawed versions of capitalism. Hence, the future of many traditional social-democratic parties across Europe is obviously in question, too. Despite occasional victories in some countries, they are losing or have already lost their traditional position. In this sense, it becomes important to re-think economic and political alternatives to the present situation, where an idea of democratic socialism may once again play a cardinal role, and which Axel Honneth attempts to revive (Honneth 2017). His attempt could be brought on the same platform with the discussion in Czechoslovakia in 1989, when an idea of socialism was still one of the political demands of the Velvet/Gentle revolution.[25]

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[19] Fortunately, these figures have been on the decrease over the last few years, but they are still regionally very unbalanced, thus not really helping to solve "anti-systemic" political tendencies. Moreover, we must ask, regarding the structure of Slovak economy, whether the increase in unemployment is only "seasonal" or stable in the long term.

[20] Needless to say, in countries like Romania, Bulgaria or Russia, this transition has been experienced even more drastically. And in Ukraine, this process appears to be entering its final phase – with millions fleeing the country. Countries most affected by emigration include Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, the former East Germany and Bulgaria.

[21] See (Ther 2016).

[22] The term 'berlusconization' should be understood as a situation when a rich person gains major control over politics, economy and mass media. This enables them to create a semblance of democracy, while in fact, people's chances to participate in the democratic procedures are either minimised or manipulated.

[23] With the Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, who now controls not only a big portion of Czech economy and mass media, but also politics.

Dewey, Honneth and the Czechoslovak '89

Although Honneth's analyses of the "scandalous manifestations of capitalism today" were written before the financial and economic crises of 2008, and one, especially with a radical leftist perspective, may expect even a more critical response with regard to the existing problems,[26] there are plausible reasons to claim that the core of Honneth's approach, in a sense rather moderate, is still relevant. This is accompanied by the assumption that despite certain similarities between our present situation and the 19th-century laissez-faire capitalism, there is no way to conceive of a socialist revival in narrow Marxist categories related to the 19th-century perspectives. Modern human societies are too complex to offer such a simplistic solution. Moreover, to emphasize it again, the degree of moderateness I attempt to develop keeps in mind Višnovký's emphasis on the "middle ground" of pragmatism, which, in my view, is shared by Dewey and Honneth alike.

Hence, before touching on Honneth's interpretation of John Dewey's democratic theory, let us quote Dewey's brief but comprehensive critique of Marxism, from his study entitled "Totalitarian economics and democracy" (Dewey 1988):

> The inherent theoretical weakness of Marxism is that it supposed a generalization that was made at a particular date and place (and made even then only by bringing observed facts under a premise drawn from a metaphysical source) can obviate the need for continued resort to observation, and to continual revision of generalizations in their office of working hypotheses. In the name of science, a thoroughly anti-scientific procedure was formulated, in accord with which a generalization is made having the nature of ultimate "truth," and hence holding good at all times and places.
> Laissez-faire individualism indulged in the same kind of sweeping generalization but in the opposite direction. Doubtless, in accordance with the law of the union of opposites, this background played its part in creating a cultural atmosphere favourable to Marxism. But two opposite errors do not constitute one truth, especially when both errors have the same root. With some disregard for historic facts, the Marxist doctrine might even be regarded as a generalized version of that aspect of classic economic theory which held that completely free competition in the open market would automatically produce universal harmony of persons and nations, Marx converting competition of individuals into war of classes (Dewey 1988, 125).

As shown, Dewey not only convincingly argues against the tenability of Marxist theory (which will be discussed below in more detail, using A. Honneth's interpretation), but also against the tenability of laissez-faire capitalism. This makes such ideas applicable also to the present situation, especially in East-Central Europe, which seemingly goes from one extreme to the other. For an educated social democrat, such a conclusion as offered by Dewey may sound banal at first. And of course, it is banal in a sense. However, if we consider today's intellectual discourse in Slovakia, the difficulty with reaching a consensus or at least a certain balance between the supporters of those two ideological poles becomes blatantly apparent. In a similar vein as Dewey, Honneth looks critically at the flaws of classical Marxism and the 19th century socialism, which he interprets as being fixated on the spirit and culture of industrialism, especially emphasizing three critical points.

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[24] Regarding the Slovak issue, see for instance, (Šimečka 2017).

[25] Cf. (Vaněk 1994, 56). The terms "Velvet Revolution" and "Gentle revolution" are used interchangeably, with the former being more frequent in Czechia and internationally, while the latter is more confined to the Slovak setting.

[26] See for instance the discussion between Axel Honneth and Jaques Rancière (Honneth – Rancière 2017).

First, Honneth points up that just like Saint-Simon and his followers, the subsequent generations of socialists were hardly interested in the political function of the newly acquired civil rights, and "the reorganization of society according to the principle of solidarity would have to take place entirely within the economic sphere." (Honneth 2017, 34) Secondly, Honneth sees the problem of their theory (once again mentioning the followers of Saint-Simon but also Robert Owen, Louis Blanc and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon) in the fact "that even before their theory takes effect in practice, the interests and desires they sought to justify and bring to fruition already existed objectively in social reality." (Honneth 2017, 38) From this, Honneth concludes that "socialist theory was in danger of becoming self-referential[27] by projecting onto social reality a collective movement, which was meant to justify its own prognoses, but which had in fact merely been constructed by ascribing certain interests to workers." (Honneth 2017, 39) Concomitantly, socialist theorists relied on a revolutionary proletariat as the internal opponent to the capitalist system. The third flaw of the socialist theory consists in the premise of the historical inevitability of human progress. This precludes opening socialist thinking to the idea of experimentalism, proposed by John Dewey,[28] and also by above-mentioned Emil Višnovský as the general feature of pragmatism.[29]

Let us turn now, however, to the discussion about the proper understanding of democracy, in which the role of the public sphere – the space for democratic will-formation, is necessary for discussing, challenging and overcoming the past and potential future "errors" (i.e. wrong generalizations). According to Honneth, as expressed in his study "Democracy as Reflexive Cooperation: John Dewey and the Theory of Democracy Today" (Honneth 2007), there are two dominant streams in the theory of democracy, which aim at assigning a more central role to democratic will-formation than political liberalism: republicanism and proceduralism. Despite the common ground, i.e., their respective critique of liberalism, there are significant differences:

> [w]hereas republicanism takes its orientation from antiquity's ideal of a citizenry for whose members the intersubjective negotiation of common affairs has become an essential part of their lives, proceduralism insists that citizens' virtues are not needed to reactivate the process of democratic will-formation, but simply morally justified procedures. Thus, in the former model, the democratic public sphere is the medium of a self-governing political community; in the latter, it is the procedure through which society attempts to solve political problems rationally and legitimately (Honneth 2007, 218).

However, according to Honneth, there are more than merely two radically democratic alternatives to political liberalism, and he suggests John Dewey's theory of democracy as a third path. I argue, in line with Honneth, that such a suggestion may appear surprising, since both normative models of democracy – republicanism and proceduralism – claim Dewey as a theoretical predecessor. There is not enough room in this article to comprehensively introduce Dewey's theory, or Honneth's interpretation. Regarding the above-mentioned problem of the post-1989 transformation, I will only introduce a few ideas relevant to developing a more proper understanding of democracy. The thrust of Honneth's interpretation lies in the following two points: (1) the difference between Dewey on the one hand and Arendt and Habermas as the most important proponents of republicanist and proceduralist tradition, respectively, on the other; (2) Dewey's rediscovery of the notion of democracy as an ethical ideal.

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[27] This was even more salient in the works of Karl Marx: "In both his early and later writings, Marx assumes that the aims of his own theory are already shared by a collective subject within social reality – a subject that, despite all the differences between the concrete feelings of the individual members possesses a shared interest in revolution. As a consequence of this highly dubious methodological presupposition, socialist theory would henceforth be bound to the virtually transcendent precondition of an already present social movement, even though it was necessarily unclear whether it actually existed in social reality." (Honneth 2017, 40)

[28] "By assuming historical inevitability, as John Dewey would later remark matter-of-factly, socialists robbed themselves of the chance to view themselves as a movement whose best way of realizing the idea of social freedom under given historical conditions was to experiment socially. Instead, all representatives of socialism were convinced that they already knew what the new social organization of freedom would look like without ever having to explore the opportunities for change offered by rapidly changing circumstances" (Honneth 2017, 46).

[29] It is important to mention that the idea of experimentalism plays a crucial role in Honneth's attempt to renew a certain idea of socialism as well.

"Although Dewey shares with Arendt and Habermas the intention of criticizing the individualist understanding of freedom," Honneth writes, "he sees the incarnation of all communicative freedom not as intersubjective speech but as the communal (*gemeinschaftlich*) employment of individual forces to cope with given problems" (Honneth 2007, 222). Honneth adds that by proceeding from this idea of voluntary cooperation, Dewey is committed here more to Marx than to Tocqueville, and emphasizes that, from the outset, Dewey appreciates the internal connection between cooperation, freedom and democracy. Equally significant is Dewey's criticism of the quantitative model of democracy. In Dewey's view, democracy may not be understood instrumentally as a numerical principle for the establishment of state order; "for him it is too unrealistic, too much a mere fiction, to believe that social life unfolds without any association between the individuals prior to the formation of a political unit." (Ibid.) So Honneth concludes:

> [t]he idea of the democratic public sphere exists on the basis of social presuppositions that can be secured only outside this idea itself; it must expect each citizen to share so much common ground with all others that an interest in involving oneself actively in political affairs can emerge at all. However, this much common ground can evolve only where individuals have already been able to experience communicative relatedness in the pre-political domain; and in [Honneth's] view, this vacant spot in a politically one-sided theory of democracy is filled by Dewey's idea of social cooperation, i.e., of a division of labor under conditions of justice (Honneth 2007, 235).

As Honneth emphasizes, in Dewey's concept of society (heavily influenced by Hegel – especially in his earlier phase), the idea of a "social organism" plays an important role.[30] It is necessary to point out, however, that for Dewey, "each individual is entitled not just to a part of the freedom that has been made socially possible, but always also possesses the entire sovereignty through which all individuals, as a people, jointly become the sovereign bearer of power" (Honneth 2007, 223). Honneth then emphasizes that John Dewey broadened the ideas presented by Plato and Aristotle, which dealt with the relation between individual freedom and political community:

> Dewey concedes that antiquity's ideal of aristocracy does not essentially differ in substance from the democratic idea. In both ideals, citizens are said to attain freedom through self-realization in conformity with the ethical ends that together constitute the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of the polity. Hence any difference between the two ideals must consist not in the ends, but in the means of the political constitution: whereas the aristocratic ideal believes only a small group of very talented individuals to be capable of ethically appropriate self-realization, such that the majority of the population has to be urged paternalistically to conduct a virtuous life, the democratic ideal is confident that all members of society can perfect themselves of their own free will in the desired direction of the good pursued by the members of society (Honneth 2007).

Honneth concludes that Dewey rediscovered the notion of democracy as an ethical ideal epitomized by the three guiding principles of the French Revolution, liberty, equality, and fraternity: a "democratic constitution presupposes individual freedom in the sense of an unconstrained personality development that, on the condition of institutionalized equality of opportunity, allows all members of society to develop the capabilities and strengths that enable them in association with all other to contribute fraternally, or better, solidarily, to the pursuit of jointly shared ends" (Honneth 2007, 225).

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[30] The reason behind emphasizing the idea of "organism" – or better, of an organic approach to democracy –, is that such an understanding of democracy can be found in James Krapfl's interpretation of the Czech and Slovak revolution(s) of 1989.

As mentioned above, Slovakia is far away from such conditions. Moreover, there is a strong tendency in post-1989 political writings to belittle the role of citizens or to interpret the motivation for a revolution solely by people's desire for more material consumption (which is partly true, but hard to assess), which the former regime was not able to deliver. James Krapfl used an interesting method of interpreting the revolution in Czechoslovakia, which described the expectations of most Czechoslovakian citizens. In his interpretation of the revolution in Czechoslovakia, he did not draw only on the post-revolutionary history books, which mainly focus on the developments in Bratislava and Prague, the Slovak and Czech capitals. Rather, he based his reflections on detailed archive work in which he explored the grassroots revolutionary activity in 1989 through posters, leaflets and reports of public meetings etc. He also took a closer look at the peripheral regions to show that what happened indeed constituted a mass movement, not just a "cabinet revolution" as a deal between old and new rulers. Krapfl lists six key ideals of November 1989 as the main message from the revolution of 1989: nonviolence, self-organization, democracy, fairness, socialism, and humanness (Krapfl 2013, 74-110). Thus, he highlights the strong normative aspects of that revolutionary motivation. According to Krapfl,

> the Gentle Revolution articulated new ideas about representation and the culture of democratic politics. Whether or not they had read Arendt, Czechoslovak citizens agreed that 'political freedom… means the right 'to be a participator in government,' or it means nothing.' Whereas American revolutionaries at the end of the eighteenth century had innovated by instituting checks and balances among branches of government, Czechs and Slovaks at the end of the twentieth century innovated by proposing checks and balances between government and people. Collectively, their demands for referenda, the power to recall deputies who had betrayed their trust, and other mechanisms for confronting lawmakers with public opinion amounted to a new model of democracy that was neither "liberal" nor "totalitarian," but sought to combine the virtues of representative and direct democracy while avoiding their defects. With this model, and with their concern for representing modernized social estates, Czechs and Slovaks essentially sought to humanize democratic institutions and make them responsive, to ensure meaningful participation of the people in the government of their affairs. They turned their attention not just to the institutional side of the equation, but to the popular side as well, seeking to nurture a democratic political culture. In this concern, the revolutionaries of 1989 were united with those of 1789, but whereas the French had sought to create a democratic culture through rationalist means, Czechs and Slovaks – characteristically – adopted a more organic approach, emphasizing democratic practice rather than ideology. In this, too, their approach was novel (Krapfl 2013, 109–110).

James Krapfl points out – and this needs to be emphasized – that such great thinkers as Jürgen Habermas or François Furet were not able to see any novelty at all. He claims that "Habermas and Furet proffered these judgments, of course, without actually consulting much evidence" (Krapfl 2013, p. 105). In this sense, there is something significant about the critical social theory today which focuses its interest mostly on analyzing four countries, i.e., Germany, Great Britain, France and the United States. The consequence of such blindness and narrow-mindedness is lingering West-centrism, which can be found also in Honneth's work. Yet, for all that has been said, his social philosophy might still play an important role in attempts to strengthen democracy in Slovakia. However, for this to happen, it is necessary to further discuss, develop and even question Honneth's version of his pragmatic critical theory, especially with regard to 1) the negative impacts of globalization (including the consequences of environmental crises) and 2) cultural and civilizational differences. Point 1) deserves a reservation – despite the aforementioned circumstance, many existing problems are hardly solvable within the borders of one country, let alone a country as small as Slovakia. Surprisingly, however, Honneth does not inquire much into the dynamics of global capitalism or the possibilities of reducing its negative impacts.[31] Point 2) addresses the intercultural facet of globalization. Naturally, Honneth himself is well aware of the variety of reactions to the same ideas in different societies during intercultural encounters,[32] but in this respect, like in his approach to global capitalism, he does not offer much in terms of thorough analysis. Indeed, members of such societies from across the world often not only have fundamentally highly diverse 'patterns of recognition', but also different world views, i.e., ontological and cosmological perspectives (S. N. Eisenstadt; J. P. Arnason). If there is to be an emancipatory theory capable of offering the tools for the emancipation of individuals from inappropriate social conditions (i.e., for social progress) under the context of globalization, it must develop (and not merely declare) – specific sensitivity in order to see the 'dialectics' between the "universal" and the "particular" in its interdisciplinary analyses and inquiries.[33]

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[31] Christopher Zurn summarizes in his concluding speculation about Honneth's work that "the 'struggles and wishes of our age' are, however, *environmental* and *global* struggles and

I would not claim that the Czechoslovak activists' understanding of democracy, so important for Krapfl's analysis, can be directly equated with Dewey's conception. However, there is at least an indirect connection between Dewey and Honneth on the one hand and the popular understanding of democracy by the majority of Czechoslovak citizens on the other through the ideas and works by the first Czechoslovak president and philosopher Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. In general, there is a certain continuity between Masaryk's thought and the philosophy of pragmatism, and his ideas already played a certain role during the Prague Spring of 1968, which can, in many respects, be regarded as the forerunner of 1989. In order to comprehend what went wrong over the past thirty years and which normative direction can be taken, the affinity between their ideas and ideals promises a successful (and creative) adaptation of Dewey's and Honneth's thoughts in Slovakia today. In fact, both for Dewey and for Masaryk, democracy was a way of life, an ethical ideal – and not merely a political regime with specific kinds of procedures. According to Krapfl, "Czechs and Slovaks in 1989 elevated humanness and human dignity above ideology; they insisted on never losing sight of human reality whatever rules, bureaucratic procedures, and other man-made systems might decree; they recognized that these systems can never fully encompass every human situation" (Krapfl 2003, 107–108). However, this did not mean that the activists of 1989 found procedures irrelevant; rather, they did not find them sufficient. Many of them would definitely appreciate Dewey's rediscovery of the notion of democracy as an ethical ideal. Hence, in the end, let us mention another very important theme, which should be part of our ethical framework today.

Instead of a Conclusion: Towards Dialogical Cosmopolitanism

Although their various and specific roots are difficult to trace, we can identify many *identity movements* across the globe in the past, but especially today. The same is happening in Slovakia. The growing interest in the "revival" of certain aspects of traditional Slovak culture, especially of Slovak folklore, is omnipresent. From new fashion collections with folk ornaments, through popular singers and music bands singing traditional songs and playing folk music, to the renaissance of various traditions of Christmas, Easter, and many others.[34] This indisputably has many favorable consequences that are praiseworthy such as interest in interpersonal relations, family, local communities, neighborhoods, etc., most of them pointing in a direction that Višňovský, Dewey and Honneth would be sympathetic towards. Nevertheless, there is still a great danger that those positive feelings and passions may escalate into unbalanced ethnocentric glory of one's own culture and nation and dismissal of all nondomestic elements. What we currently experience

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wishes. Capturing them in thought – specifically in an interdisciplinary social theory with emancipatory intent – will, I believe, require expanding Honneth's critical social theory through new categories and modes of analysis adequate to new perils and promises" (Zurn 2015, 212).

[32] See, for instance, his brief comment regarding gay marriages in his book about socialism (Honneth 2017, 100).

[33] Cf. my attempts to open such a discussion (Dunaj 2017, Kögler – Dunaj 2018).

[34] Cf. for instance (Feinberg 2018).

(and not only in East-Central European countries), is an increasing number of nationalist ressentiments against threats from abroad. This fear has an explainable core. Indeed, many recent deviations in society have been connected with the negative impacts of global capitalism and geopolitical games of superpowers and must be somehow stopped. However, the "closing door" solution and the comeback to our "traditional values" is not only problematic (nobody really knows what those values exactly are), but very dangerous as well. Just remember how badly Slovaks treated the Slovak Jews during WWII and how aggressively a huge part of the population treats the Slovak Roma people today.[35]

In this sense, I would like to conclude that the big task mainly before philosophers and intellectuals in the East-Central European region is to once again open the debate over cosmopolitanism, and this idea should be of key importance in democratic self-understanding. It is indeed relevant to consider Honneth's reservations about one of the most famous versions of cosmopolitanism – namely, that of Ulrich Beck, which can be found in Honneth's comments on the future cosmopolitan or non-cosmopolitan character of socialism (Honneth 2017, 100).[36] However, we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater, as do many critics of cosmopolitanism (Honneth does not do it, he just opens the problem), for there are other versions of cosmopolitanism, which chiefly prioritize the dialogical nature of such an endeavor. As Maria Rovisco and Magdalena Nowicka state in their introduction to the *Ashgate Research Companion to Cosmopolitanism*, there is a new research direction, represented by authors like Fuzuki Kurasawa, Hans-Herbert Kögler and Pheng Cheah, but also Nick Stevenson, Anthony Cooper, Chris Rumford and others, which

> brings forth a more robust theorization of critical cosmopolitanism as reconstructive critique of alternative perspectives and concrete practices 'from below' that are underpinned by cosmopolitan principles. In this new understanding, cosmopolitanism is not necessarily seen as a project of global governance that exists beyond the state form. In fact, the citizenship and the territoriality of the state are now seen as capable of renewal not only by optimizing the conditions that enable meaningful cosmopolitan experiences, but also by facilitating adherence to cosmopolitan principles by a range of state and non-state actors. This is visible, for example, in the possibility of modes of action in negotiations between states and the contribution of bottom-up resistance and legal innovation taking place around the world to the resilience of domination within and across state borders (Rovisco – Nowicka 2018, 3).

The general openness and non-dogmatic mode of the pragmatist philosophical tradition is a very promising point of departure for adopting the idea of dialogical cosmopolitanism, as proposed by Hans-Herbert Kögler. According to him, the capabilities required for a fruitful and adequate participation in global discourse are acquired in particular social and cultural (even familial) settings. As such, they always remain bound with specific meanings and value orientations of one's home culture and context. But then, they also allow for a dialogical expansion into other contexts and reflexive distancing from one's own, thereby avoiding ethnocentric overgeneralization (Kögler 2018). Works by authors such as John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Richard Rorty (despite various differences among them, also regarding Kögler's conception) and others reveal a sharp eye for the "local-global" dynamics and, as such, may be very useful in overcoming the growing conservative and nationalist tendencies (not only) in Slovakia. And even if a significant part of the Slovak Left dreams of the return to the pre-1989 state of affairs, we cannot but agree with Emil Višňovský's analysis again. He emphasizes that one thing is certain about the discussions of a meaningful future political program – there is no going back to the situation before 1989 (Višnovský 2014, 104). The slogan "The way back is impossible, you must go forward!", coined by Ľudovít Štúr[37] and 'posted' on one of the most frequent streets in Bratislava (named after him), should also be permanently reminded to all neoliberals, who are mentally stuck in the late 1990s, to all those Marxist-Leninists and Neo-Stalinists, who would wish the restoration of the political system of 1948–1989, to all Fascists, who long for the resurrection of the Slovak State of 1939–1945, and to all conservatives who would even want back the kingdom of the early 20th century, in short, to extremists of all creeds. To me, the message adapted for the 21st century reads, "towards a more open outlook on society as an organic part of the globalized yet interconnected world, towards (political) creativity and genuine dialogue".

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[35] Not to mention increasing islamophobia (even though there are almost no Muslims in Slovakia), the EU hate (despite Slovakia's slim chances to compete against global players), homophobia, etc.

[36] According to Honneth, Ulrich Beck's stipulation to think "methodologically" only in cosmopolitan terms within the theory of society was, in this regard, too premature, as it did not take into account to what extent the broad areas of our social reality are still determined by national regulations alone.

Closing notes: While, naturally, other interpretations of the revolution are possible as well, the normative potential of the above ideals (that is, those listed by Krapfl and combined with dialogical cosmopolitanism) for current human emancipation is worthy of inquiry. Yet, what is perhaps most significant is that Slovaks (or Czechs) do not have to feel that democratic and socialist ideals were a "foreign import" from the West (or from the East). In fact, these have been an inherent part of their self-actualization, of their historical "struggles for recognition" for centuries. Both nations have enough resources and tradition of their own to have to rely solely on this foreign import (and/or indoctrination) from either side.[38] On the other hand, despite the obvious reasons behind, and potential for, the 1989 revolution, the last 30 years have revealed serious shortcomings which, if left unaddressed, could mean the collapse of these liberal-democratic regimes – or rather their transformation into a kind of illiberal system, as already seems to be the case in Hungary and Poland (at least such a strong tendency may be observed there). One of the theses I have attempted to put forward in this study is that we misunderstood the concept of freedom, reducing it to the freedom of the market – a 1990s import from the West, where it manifested itself as a neoliberal "revolution". Paradoxically enough, here we can identify certain parallels with the import of Communism from the East, especially its Stalinist ideology, to the home arena. Many (including JP Sartre[39]) explain the failure of socialism in our country by not implementing "our" socialism (such as that TG Masaryk might have embraced as well) but its Stalinist form instead. The "takeaway" for today is that we have not carried out "our" social and participatory democracy, but its neoliberal version.

To back my interpretation, I first reached for the analyses by influential Slovak authors – Emil Višnovský and František Novosád, and then briefly touched on a broader European context, using the works of Axel Honneth. In the fourth part, which is of key importance from a philosophical perspective, I have attempted to show that it is still possible, even desirable, to build on certain theoretical concepts from abroad. Slovakia is not an island and many problems are similar, if not the same, in almost all modern societies - hence the reference to John Dewey in addition to Axel Honneth. To prevent any objections claiming there is a new attempt to import something from the outside, I have pointed out, using James Krapfl, that many of Honneth's and Dewey's ideas have not only been long present in our society, but were even rather widespread, especially in 1989.

To conclude, what has to be pointed out is the need to extend the normative ideals by the perspectives that neither Dewey, nor Krapfl, not even Honneth have elaborated on in detail: the problems of negative effects of globalization, and how to deal with them adequately. I regard the return to closed nation-states as impossible, so I propose to extend the ideals of the Czech and Slovak revolution(s) of 1989 as recounted by Krapfl by dialogical cosmopolitanism, the idea developed by Hans-Herbert Kögler, which, while being "rooted", is still open enough to perceive and embrace the global context and problems, including the current serious environmental crisis.[40]

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[37] One of the three most recognized political figures in Slovak history (together with Milan Rastislav Štefánik and Alexander Dubček)

[38] As early as 1848, in *The Claims of the Slovak Nation*, one can identify not only national or political motives, but also social ambitions and hopes. The widespread idea of equality can perhaps be most aptly illustrated with the 1864 revolutionary poem by Samo Chalúpka *Mor ho* (*Crush him!*), where he emphasizes:
"God's truth decreed to Slovak folk is strong / To be enslaved is far from right; to be a master is a greater wrong/ The rights of man his peers' should not exceed / Freedom and glory is our holy creed!"
In a similar vein, another poem by Karel Kuzmány written in 1848 and equally important for the interpretation of normative ideals of modern Slovak history, entitled *Kto za pravdu horí* (*Who burns with passion for the truth*), betrays some cosmopolitan features:
"He, who burns with passion for the truth in holy sacrifice / The one who's ready to forgo his life for humanity's rights / Whose tears for poor will always fill his eyes / To him my song of glory soars above the skies."

[39] Cf. Sartre's essay "The Socialism that Came in From the Cold" in (Liehm 1968).

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SOCIAL PRACTICE AND LIVED EXPERIENCE

THE EDGES OF RESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT: In *Morality for Humans*, Mark Johnson rejects what he calls moral fundamentalism as part of a sustained effort to challenge the dominant assumptions of modern Western philosophy, especially as they have emerged in the philosophy of language and mind in what we have come to call the analytic tradition. In this work, Johnson is also an inheritor of pragmatism. The resulting view is what Erin McKenna and I called a *philosophy of resistance* in our book, *American Philosophy from Wounded Knee to the Present* (2015). In this paper, I argue that Johnson's "embodied realism" is an example of a philosophy of resistance and provides the tools to better understand what philosophical resistance means. Using Johnson's conceptual tools, I show that a philosophy of resistance is such that it is not undone by what might be called the *paradox of resistance*, the objection that resistance itself is no more than a practical affirmation of the dominant system, and, as such, is part of the system's ongoing dominance. Instead, resistance, framed by what Johnson calls the "schemas of containment and source-path-goal," operates with a logic that makes resistance a complicated process that both affirms the dominant system and opposes it by providing the opportunity to go beyond it, operating at the edges.

Keywords: philosophy of resistance, Mark Johnson, George Lakoff, edges, C. S. Peirce

In *Morality for Humans*, Mark Johnson gives a personal narrative of his coming to reject what he calls moral fundamentalism. In the wake of this rejection, Johnson sought an alternative metaphysics, which he and his co-author, George Lakoff, call "embodied realism," that provides a starting place for rethinking the received philosophical problems of European-descended philosophy. "For real human beings," they write, "the only realism is an embodied realism" (1999, 26). The resulting view is what Erin McKenna and I called a *philosophy of resistance* in our book, *American Philosophy from Wounded Knee to the Present* (2015). A general claim in that book is that there are two strands of philosophical thought in the United States. The first strand descends directly (and explicitly) from European sources and operates not only within the academy but also in the intellectual life of American society and engrained in the concepts and methods used to understand the world and solve its experienced problems. The examples of this strand are many and include the received notions of morality (often explicitly bound to the imported Christian tradition), critical thinking (central to present-day rationales for everything from standardized tests to a liberal arts education), and science (at least in its institutional forms of siloed disciplines and grant-funding agencies).

The second strand, we argued, encompassed a wide range of thinkers and activists who at once challenged the first strand and its dominance and offered various alternatives that were to affect, directly and indirectly, widely held conceptions and methods of problem solving. Included in this second strand are the classical pragmatists – Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and Josiah Royce – along with a host of others – Simon Pokagon, Jane Addams, T. Thomas Fortune, Anna Julia Cooper, Elsie Clews Parsons, Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, Vine Deloria, Jr., James Cone, Noam Chomsky, John Kenneth Galbraith, Lewis Mumford and Rachel Carson – and, perhaps surprisingly, Rudolf Carnap, Otto Neurath, Gustav Bergmann, and May Brodbeck, and their neo-pragmatist successors Wilfred Sellars, W. V. O. Quine, Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. This last group counts as part of a tradition that struggled against one part of the dominant strand of philosophy only to end up embracing another part of that same strand. As a story of philosophy, the "strands" approach reads well. Our narrative locates thinkers in the vicinity of the problems of their day through what we call "signal events" and permits a kind of back-and-forth exchange that illuminates the developing philosophical views even where the thinkers did not actually talk to one another. But at another level, the thesis of two strands – a dominant one and a set of philosophies of resistance – begs the question. What precisely does it mean to resist in this sense? Is there a general character that philosophies of resistance display such that we students of philosophy might learn something about our practice in order to do it better or teach it well?

In gathering the strand of American philosophies of resistance, McKenna and I surveyed contemporary philosophers and included, in particular, the work of Mark

Johnson. In some sense this was recognition of Johnson's general stand on the received philosophy of the 1970s and 1980s. In an academy dominated by a philosophical approach that had given up its resistance in the 1950s, Johnson refused to operate within the expectations of his teachers and critics. Since the publication of his first co-authored work, *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980, Johnson has stood overtly outside what we have come to call the analytic tradition by challenging the dominant assumptions of philosophy of language and mind. Johnson is also an inheritor of the pragmatist strand of resistance. "I was introduced [to pragmatism] in the early 1980s by my colleague Tom Alexander in a seminar he was teaching on John Dewey's classic *Experience and Nature*. I began to see the pragmatism of C. S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey as the most appropriate nondualistic and scientifically responsible framework for understanding human experience and cognition" (2017, 17). For Johnson, pragmatism, as he has taken it up, "is characterized by (1) a profound respect for the richness, depth, and complexity of human experience and cognition; (2) an evolutionary perspective that appreciates the role of dynamic change in all development (as opposed to fixity and finality); and (3) recognition that human cognition and creativity arise in response to problematic situations that involve values, interests, and social interaction" (2017, 96). At the same time, even as a resister, Johnson's work has stayed in many ways close to the problems debated by the dominant tradition and his solutions are often drawn from mainstream Western science. In this light, Johnson is part of the resistance, but in a qualified way that has also led to critiques by feminists and others for not resisting enough. Whether it is resistance enough, of course, is predicated on deciding that Johnson's work is a philosophy of resistance in the first place.

As a pragmatist, Johnson represents a renewed engagement with contemporary science. His work is also an opportunity to think again about the idea of a philosophy of resistance. It became clear that Johnson offered work that was not only an example of the strand of resistance in the American philosophical tradition that McKenna and I sought to describe, but his work also provides resources for understanding the outlines of the tradition of resistance in a clearer way than we managed in our book. Using Johnson's work, I will reconsider the idea of a philosophy of resistance. I will begin by arguing that Johnson's work in general has two characteristics we identified across the philosophies of resistance we examined in the American tradition. First, it emerges in the context of experienced problems, not received questions. Second, as a practice, Johnson's work involves the expectation of a pluralism of both results and methods, and the expectation that its conclusions are fallible. Using Johnson's conceptual tools, I will then argue that a philosophy of resistance is such that it is not undone by what might be called the paradox of resistance, the objection that resistance itself is no more than a practical affirmation of the dominant system, and, as such, is part of the system's ongoing dominance. Instead, resistance, framed by the schemas of containment and source-path-goal, operates with a logic that makes resistance a complicated process that both affirms the dominant system and opposes it by providing the opportunity to go beyond it, operating at the edges.

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In broadest form, a philosophy of resistance begins in the context of an indeterminate situation framed by conflicts among widely held beliefs experienced as disruption, dislocation, or confusion. In Johnson's case, the indeterminate situation was framed by the experienced conflict between the moral and metaphysical demands of his community and his own quest for meaning. "I was born and raised in… Kansas," he writes, "which contains the geodesic center of the country and which prides itself on being the *true* 'Heartland' of America" (2014, 5). His parents, he continues, "raised me to be a good Lutheran and, they fervently hoped, a good Republican. I failed them on both counts." The failure, which may be better understood as an act of resistance in the sense I will discuss, eventually led Johnson to "rethink" his "whole conception of what it means to be human, along with [his] views about the origin of human moral values" (2014, 5). This sort of "rethinking" is, for Johnson and for McKenna and me, a quintessential example of doing philosophy understood as an activity that arises from experience in order to address problems at hand.

As a typical teenager, Johnson says, he was "naïve, parochial in my experience and vison, and mightily confused about love, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (2014, 13). These were not, however, only his problems "but rather represent basic issues attending any moral doctrine or theory that pretends to give ethical guidance by means of unconditional principles, laws, commandments, or standards of value" (2014, 13). Since experience is a situation framed by language, culture, history, embodiment, and the environment, philosophy arising from experience is not a transcendental practice engaged with the really real and truly true. Instead, for Johnson as for John Dewey in his essay "Philosophy and Civilization," the practice is "…approached with the antecedent idea that philosophy, like politics, literature, and the plastic arts, is itself a phenomenon of human culture" (1988, 3). As work within culture, within experience, Dewey continues,

> Philosophy thus sustains the closest connection with the history of culture, with the succession of changes in civilization. It is fed by the streams of tradition, traced at critical moments to their sources in order that the current may receive a new direction… But philosophy is not just a passive reflex of civilization that persists through changes… [P]hilosophy marks a change of culture. In forming patterns to be conformed to in future thought and action, it is additive and transforming in its role in the history of civilization. (1988, 7)

Philosophy, then, is a mode of inquiry into widely held beliefs and methods of solving problems that begins when established beliefs and methods are disrupted or fail.

The resulting philosophical practice is marked by the expectation that, whatever philosophical inquiries might find, they will be neither singular nor final. As a result, philosophers, from this perspective, recognize that the work the situation calls forth and its meanings must be both pluralistic and fallible. What is pluralism in this case? In his incomplete last book, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, James recognized pluralism as a sort of disconnection that avoids complete unification ontologically and complete reduction epistemically. Pluralism, he wrote, "only has the negative significance of contradicting monism's thesis that there is absolutely *no* disconnection" (1977, 259). Johnson likewise describes his view in *Morality for Humans*, by three claims of negative significance: his view, he concludes, is *non-absolutist*, *non-relativist*, and *non-reductive*. He names a fourth, positive significance as well, amelioration, which lines up precisely with James's further claim that "pluralism… is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, but melioristic, rather" (1977, 269). When Johnson claims that, as a result of his philosophical inquiry, "moral absolutism is profoundly mistaken," he joins James in recognizing that there is not a single system, moral, epistemic or otherwise. Of course, what holds for moral absolutism holds for every specific claim that purports to have universal application: they can be mistaken. "There is," Johnson concludes, "no way of avoiding a plurality of reasonable moral systems and practices, so we should instead focus our attention on how a situated and fallible critical perspective would allow us to engage in reasonable moral appraisal" (2014, 15). The resulting approach is not only defined negatively, it simultaneously marks a view that is ameliorative in its application, that is, it is a view "predicated on the psychologically realistic hope that collective human reflection and agency can make things better through intelligent problem-solving" (2014, 196).

But is this view also a philosophy of resistance? Lakoff and Johnson, in their co-authored book, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, provide grounds for two concerns about what a philosophy of resistance could be following two spatial-relations schemas that seem to underlie the concept of resistance.

Johnson writes, "image schemas are the recurring patterns of our sensory-motor-affective experience by means of which we can make sense of that experience and reason about it, and they can also be recruited to structure abstract concepts and to carry out inferences about abstract domains of thought" (2017, 127). On this view, all meaning emerges in organism-environment interactions and the specific patterns of interactions, for humans, provide the structure of embodied action and a "logic" for thinking about such action before and after the fact. Experiences of standing upright, moving in a particular direction, and encountering an obstacle generate "schemas" that provide a "logic" for thinking about up and down and movement toward a goal. "Because we must continually monitor our own changing bodily states, we are exquisitely attuned to changes in degree, intensity, and quality of feelings, which is the basis for our sense of scales of intensity of a quality (the Scalar Intensity schema). Because we must constantly interact with containers of all shapes and sizes, we naturally learn the 'logic' of containment (for the Container schema)" (2017, 129). The spatial logic of a container – the boundary between things inside and out, of putting things into something and taking them out – provides a pattern for thinking about the relations that frame our understanding of the abstract ideas of geometry and sets. Rather than explaining abstract concepts as a product of "pure" reason or a consequence of language, the study of image schemas shows that both reason and language are emergent aspects of human embodiment and so make abstract thought possible (2017, 132).

While Lakoff and Johnson do not discuss resistance directly, the concept appears in the context of moral strength and the process of willing. Here resistance emerges as a form of self-control, the ability to "stand up" for oneself, framed by the physical experience of standing. "When one is healthy and in control of things," they write, "one is typically upright and balanced" (1999, 299). The experience of physical resistance, as in standing up against forces that try to push you out of place, provides the schema that informs the conception of moral strength. Resistance then appears to be the experience of holding fast to a position one already occupies and a kind of self-control that is not about choice among alternatives, but rather against alternatives, as least those presented by force of physical strength, reason, or passion. From this perspective, resistance is framed as a conservative force that aims to maintain the status quo and so a proper philosophy of resistance worthy of the name, in this sense, would be the obverse of a practice demanding change. If this is resistance, then McKenna and my idea that philosophies of resistance challenge the status quo would appear to be mistaken. The first objection to resistance as a proper characterization for a strand of philosophy that is oppositional is that resistance is conservative and not transformative.

But this is only one possibility for the meaning of resistance. It is also possible to understand resistance as framed by the source-path-goal schema (1999, 33–34) in which obstacles to the trajectory emerge in route to the goal and block or otherwise interfere with the effort to reach the goal or end-in-view. Moral strength appears again, this time as a means of achieving a purpose. "And because strength enables us to achieve our goals and overcome obstacles, we see moral strength – strength of will – as what makes it possible to confront and overcome evil" (1999, 291). In this case, resistance is acts of not yielding to forces that would interrupt the process. To set a goal of growth or social transformation, for example, and then have others contrive to block or undermine that path, calls for resistance. But for resistance of this sort to occur, opposition is both in relation to a present force or obstacle *and* in relation to some not-yet-achieved state. This suggests the second worry about the concept of resistance: that resistance emerges framed by the source-path-goal schema. If the goal that frames the resistance itself is a goal adopted from (or imposed by) the dominant system, then resistance is again only apparently oppositional and practically is as much a part of the dominant system as resistance that only seeks to conserve the existing order. Resistance, rather than actually seeking some new state steadfastly, is really a part of a larger system of power. Given either the first worry or the second, philosophies of resistance appear not to be a challenge to the dominant system they purport to oppose, but rather are part of a perpetuating power – this is the *paradox of resistance*.

These objections to the possibility of a philosophy of resistance as means of social transformation – that resistance is at best a conservative force or it is at worst an unconscious process that reinforces the dominant system – are compelling and call for a response. However, using resources from Johnson's work, it can be shown that these objections only hold if the system of philosophies is closed, that is, where resistance and what it opposes form a dyad. Instead, if the framing metaphor is recognized as the triadic container schema that includes internal relations, external relations and a boundary, a different notion of resistance emerges. Rather than being a dyadic term that serves to affirm that which it opposes, resistance can be seen as a third element that is neither inside nor outside and both inside and outside at once. What Johnson's work suggests – and what helps to define the tradition that McKenna and I sought to present – is that resistance emerging at the boundary between communities and ways of thinking has the character of being necessarily pluralistic in experience and method and necessarily fallible in outcome. In short, I argue that resistance is at the edges.

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What does it mean to say that resistance is at the edges? In *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson make the bold claim that "every living thing categorizes" (1999, 17). To the extent that categorizing is a mode of action, things that categorize are also agents. For Lakoff and Johnson, categorization is an evolutionary consequence: "if we hadn't [evolved to categorize], we would not have survived" (1999, 17). Even though it is not their concern, it is possible to generalize the concept of categorizing even further and see categorizing as *a process of maintaining a thing as itself in relation to other things*. From this angle, then, it would appear that not only living things categorize, but every *thing* categorizes. The process, as it emerges in the life activities of organisms, operates in the form of the container schema that divides the relevant world into things contained or included – things inside – and things excluded – things outside. The container schema by itself, if only understood as a relation of two terms, inside and outside, masks the more complex process of categorization that depends on processes of selection.

Even as categories operate on the schema of physical containment and exclusion, categories are not containers in a rigid sense (where everything is or is not in the category). In practice, "Human categories are typically conceptualized in more than one way, in terms of what we call prototypes" (1999, 19). A category – even if it is narrowly defined – is nevertheless a concept that directs our attention to a range of particulars where some serve as prototypes or exemplars of the category and other things that are "in" the category are similar but differ by degree from the exemplars. Categories on this view are rather more vague than the container metaphor would promise, serving to guide selection but not fully determine every result. The boundary of a category – understood in human categorizing as an indefinite fringe of things sufficiently like a category's prototype – forms a third element of the process and leads to the concept of "radial categories." "Instead of there being literal concepts defined by necessary and sufficient conditions," Johnson argues, "our concepts tend to have a rich internal structure that lacks any single univocal core and is rooted in our bodies, brains, and social interactions … The empirical research shows that our abstract concepts are defined by multiple, often inconsistent metaphors, resulting in a complex radial structure of our concepts and categories, with central category members connected to noncentral members by various principles of extension (e.g., propositional, image schematic, metonymic, and metaphorical…)" (Johnson, 2018, 28).

The concept of radical categories recalls Peirce's concept of a type or a "general." On his account, generals or types are real aspects of the world and provide both the structure needed for identifying the categories of things encountered and at the same time provide the character of the things that do the categorizing. As a result, the process of using a category is a process of an emerging triadic relation that involves the interaction of the thing encountered, the categorizing agent, and the general or type that is produced or found in the interaction. Rather than containing a determinate set of particulars, categories are general and so are a range of possibilities. "In short," Peirce said, "the idea of a general involves the idea of possible variations which no multitude of existent things could exhaust but would leave between any two not merely *many* possibilities, but possibilities absolutely beyond all multitude" (1931, 5.103). Agency for Peirce is this categorizing process or, as suggested by T. L. Short, agency is the process of selecting for a type or purpose (Short, 2007, 110). Things, on this account, seek their own future by being at once a present particular that is moving (changing, transforming) into some next state constrained by their type.

A near analog of Peirce's conception of type is the character of a person. You are yourself at the moment, sitting where you are, thinking what you are thinking, breathing the air around you, seeing whatever you might see and hearing whatever you might hear at this moment. But as you persist, you begin to think about the end of this paper, your desire for a change in scenery or to carry out some other task you have set for yourself. The trajectory of your persistence is controlled by your character framed by the desires and habits that make you who you are. Your character, in short, directs your experience but does not fully determine it. You will consequently act in a range of ways, some closer to type and others further away. When interacting with other persons, our ability to recognize them is an embodied process of perception *and* the activities of those we perceive. The types of people we encounter are in part determined by the categories that frame our perceptions and likewise depend on what we encounter, and those things, in turn, depend on their own histories of categorization, both as the agents categorizing and as beings categorized.

As containers, categories are not simply things contained and things excluded. The operation of prototypes and the act of selection, as I said a moment ago, mark a third element of the container schema: boundaries. As Lakoff and Johnson observe,

> [W]e all have a central category of bounded physical objects that is extended as we grow older. Neural optimization extends the central subcategory of bounded physical objects to a radial category on the basis of existing conceptual metaphors and other neurally based cognitive mechanisms. The result is a radial category centered around bounded physical objects (persons, places, and things) and extended from this simple center in many ways. (1999, 500)

Here physical objects are engaged as containers including their inward stuff (possibly obscured), their surroundings, and the boundary that makes them what they are in our experience. This experience of boundaries is generalizable so that Johnson can declare in *Morality for Humans* that "Virtually all of my critical arguments… are based on the inescapable primacy of organism-environment interactions as the basis of our values, meanings, thought, and actions" (2014, 217). These inescapable interactions are understood as marking boundaries. Johnson paraphrases Damasio: "an organism must establish at least a minimal permeable boundary that separates it from and simultaneously keeps it in contact with its environment… Without a boundary, there would be no organic integrity" (2014, 54). Boundaries in this case must not be understood as either/or constructions but as ones that both include and exclude – that are permeable (see 2014, 77). But permeability is not the same as finding boundaries dispensable. In the process of deciding values, Johnson argues, boundaries are less permeable because they mark the gap between the problematic structure of the present situation and the larger or wider perspective that is necessary for the operation of moral inquiry.

Considering the changes in the moral view of chattel slavery, Johnson concludes that the recognition of a "wider scope for the term 'moral person'" was "essential in bringing about the abolition of slavery" (2014, 126).

The recognition of a "wider scope" depends at once on the recognition of a boundary – of different concepts of moral persons in this case – and the recognition of something beyond it. This does not require, as Johnson observes, a "Gods-eye view of [reality's] essential nature. We are ineliminably perspectival creatures who find themselves embedded in processes of a changing world" (2014, 123). But such finding requires the reality of present boundaries, types, or categories that frame our reflection and our resistance. Boundaries, in this sense, are not arbitrary nor are they dispensable in the context of valuation and they are central to categorization and so to the ontology of agents.

The centrality of boundaries is not a new claim either for Johnson or for the American tradition. James, in his essay, "A World of Pure Experience," identified the boundaries between things – their edges – as necessary for the very possibility of life itself.

> [T]here is in general no separateness needing to be overcome by an external cement; and whatever separateness is actually experienced is not overcome, it stays and counts as separateness to the end. But the metaphor [of a mosaic] serves to symbolize the fact that Experience itself, taken at large, can grow by its edges. That one moment of it proliferates into the next by transitions which, whether conjunctive or disjunctive, continue the experiential tissue, can not, I contend, be denied. Life is in the transitions as much as in the terms connected; often, indeed, it seems to be there more emphatically, as if our spurts and sallies forward were the real firing-line of the battle, were like the thin line of flame advancing across the dry autumnal field which the farmer proceeds to burn. In this line we live prospectively as well as retrospectively. It is of the past, inasmuch as it comes expressly as the past's continuation; it is of the future in so far as the future, when it comes, will have continued it. (1977, 212–213)

Johnson, and John Dewey, agree with James on this point but add to it. For them, the character of life is also marked by a process of growth and, as such, a process of unification. "The key," Johnson writes, "to whatever freedom we are capable of is knowing the meaning of our situation so that we can affect change for the better" (2014, 201). To make situations better, Johnson continues, "we want to unify our situation, which means resolving, as far as is humanly possible right now, whatever is at odds within and without us. Unification of experience is an ongoing dynamic ordering… of our situation" (2014, 202).

Which brings us back to resistance. Resistance at the edges still brings with it the possibility of perpetuating rather than undermining the system it set out to oppose. Unification, in this case, sees boundaries as the things to be crossed in order that experience can grow. Dewey writes in *Democracy and Education*, that education is "emancipation from local and temporary incidents of experience, and the opening of intellectual vistas unobscured by the accidents of personal habit and predilection" (1980, 230). And a society is properly free when "each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment" (1980, 24–25).

Boundaries, in this sense, are essential to freedom because they are things to be overcome. Being at the boundary, on the edge, might mark resistance, but this is at worst a temporary state since also boundaries mark a process of unification. This again raises the specter of the paradox of resistance. Consider Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of the metaphor of being *on the edge*. To be on the edge combines two basic schema – containment and source-path-goal – and marks the experience of standing at a boundary and looking back, looking toward the inside of the container of which one has been a part. "If you are *on the edge* of a bounded region," they write, "then you are close to being in that bounded region" (1999, 181). "Being on the edge of madness," relying on the same structure, "means being at the boundary of a state facing toward the interior. The issue is whether you *go over the edge*" (1999, 180). The orientation of being on this edge is not toward some transformative alternatives or even more experience, but "backward" toward what has been. Being at the edge reinforces the relation of inside and outside: it marks at once a dangerous place to be and a sharp transition to another state. Boundaries, in this sense, are to be feared or permanently left behind. Either way, to resist at the edges appears to make resistance finally a process that demands an end to being on boundaries, leaving the thing resisted intact and the paradox in place.

The idea of an edge, however, is not a two-term relation. It takes as significant both containment and the relation of source-path-goal. An edge, understood in the context of a dyad, seems to present us with limited possibilities: fear or unification – affirming an uncrossable divide or setting it aside. But the edge of madness illustrates that edges are not simple boundaries but rather involve "facing," involve a direction. The presence of a goal or an end-in-view reframes the edge from a simple boundary to a location with a future and a past. Being on the edge is not only a dangerous place, it also a place of hope or at least the possibility of choice. Of course, edges have this character because they are framed by ends-in-view that emerge from the situation as it is experienced. "The aim set up," Dewey says, "must be an outgrowth of existing conditions. It must be based upon a consideration of what is already going on; on the resources and difficulties of the situation" (1980, 111). If this is so, then boundaries can neither disappear (since they define the situation that gives rise to the ends in the first place) nor can they block the passage beyond the situation (since they are ends that also frame movement away from the source). Resistance understood as emerging from experience marks the boundary of a recognizable dominant system and becomes an edge that also marks the possibility of change in the direction of something beyond. It is important to see that the boundaries do not vanish, however, and whatever unification there is, comes only by degrees. Consequently, the paradox of resistance is both rejected and affirmed: that which is resisted does not disappear, but it also does not exert complete control, absorbing the resistance into itself. The result is resistance that recognizes that there are some disconnections – and so pluralism and its consequent fallibilism – and that there remains a process of change that seeks something better beyond.

This idea of resistance appears again in Johnson's call for a response to the "Lure of Moral Fundamentalism" (2014, 164). "The linchpin for the whole orientation of moral fundamentalism," he writes, is "the idea that our moral concepts (e.g. *person*, *murder*, *lie*, *promise*, *right*) must be pre-given, literal, fixed, and highly determinate, in order for our moral reasoning to apply to concrete cases in experience" (2014, 170). Those committed to one or another form of such fundamentalism, enact the concept of "moral strength" by seeking "stable" "social arrangements" that "insure near fixity of beliefs and practices for extended periods of time." "Only under such conditions of resistance to change," he continues, "could one have the slightest hope of there being univocal foundational moral concepts grasped equally by all" (2014, 172). "Resistance," in this sense is to change while conserving a set of commitments already in place. But change, he notes, "is basic to the very possibility of experience" and "requires flexibility of thought, adaptation to changed conditions, and reconsideration of fixed habits, conceptual systems, and sometimes even moral principles" (2014, 189). In other words, action in a changing world requires a source, path and goal that can adjust to circumstances and overcome obstacles, including the obstacle of "immoral" moral fundamentalism. As such, moral agents must resist on the edge, poised between fixity and what will come next, organized by purpose and ready to respond to success and failure. Moral judgment as resistance in this sense is not framed by "an either/or logic that offers us only two radically opposed and equally mistaken" options where "either we *find* those moral values objectively existing in the world, or else we just *make them up!*" (2014, 194).

Moral judgment as resistance rather marks an interaction, a line where others also have their say, where no universal right of crossing has been issued. Perhaps we will be invited across or strike an ameliorative deal where, here at this place, we will have the chance to unify. Or perhaps we will recognize sharp differences and a few common concerns that produce not unification but an opening, a permeable boundary. Or perhaps we will encounter an edge where we do not unify, where our efforts to connect are refused. Our heightened attention, our wariness at the border, will allow us to notice that we are not welcome and we stand back, not up or against. Johnson's ethical naturalism, read as a philosophy of resistance, has the potential to place us at the edge of systems of domination in order to inquire and cross or inquire and step back.

In the end, Johnson provides both a way to understand the idea of a philosophy of resistance and an example of such a philosophy. To resist is to oppose but, in opposing, it is to be at a boundary where our actions and the actions of the others who live there will decide how experience unfolds. Our lives will not be predetermined by dogma nor will we be free to act without constraint. Johnson captures this place well as he summarizes the stance, he takes toward the moral principles we inherit from the Western philosophical tradition. "Moral principles are not to be taken lightly, but neither are they to be taken as absolutes. They are guides to important considerations that ought to be tried out and tested in ongoing deliberations" (2014, 189). The resulting ethical naturalism, Johnson concludes, a is *non-absolutist* in "that there are no non-perspectival, ahistorical, or… a priori… sources of moral values or principles;" *non-relativist* since reasons can always be given for the choice of a "better" action; and *non-reductive* since "no one method, or single type of explanatory framework, is by itself adequate to the complexity of experienced situations" (2014, 196). It also marks a teleological commitment, *amelioration*, "predicated… on the hope that collective human reflection and agency can make things better" (2014, 196). "Better" in this case names Johnson's (and the long-standing pragmatist) normative principle of growth. Recalling the schema of motion, Johnson concludes "If we are to move forward, we need an enriched understanding of all the factors operating within our situation and all of the possibilities open to us for harmonizing our competing ends, principles and values. In a very real sense, we need to go beyond our present self-identity" (2014, 199). The edge of resistance marks the boundary between ourselves and the world we navigate. Resistance here calls for one to "move forward" *beyond* ourselves, not back toward the places where we simply *stand up* for ourselves.

The philosophies of resistance that McKenna and I sought to describe are of this sort. They are ways of thinking and acting that reject dogma and recognize fallibilism and hope for a better future. But they also recognize that this can only occur in the context of a pluralism of method, knowledge, culture and place. As we said in *American Philosophy*,

> When [W. E. B.] Du Bois declared that the goal of racial groups in the United States was to embrace the 'unifying ideal of race', 'he (like [James] Cone after him) proposed a kind of power that both separated and united America along the edges of its parts. Such power… would not seek a final unity but a process of uniting with others here and there where the boundaries encountered would be the source of new life and experience… American philosophies of resistance, by attending to the situation at hand, became obstacles to the system, wrenches in the works. (2015, 374)

And in turn these philosophies of resistance sought to overcome the obstacles of the dominant culture and its ways of thinking and meaning. Johnson's work from his first dissent from the dogma of the church to his most recent work gives us a model of the struggle to live in a pluralistic world, a model of the edges of resistance.

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INTERSECTIONALITY AND FRAGMENTATION[1]

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ABSTRACT: This paper considers the scope of the concept of intersectionality and the extent to which it may be generalizable as a characterization of identity formation or is specific to marginalized identities. Several meanings of intersectionality are examined – as lived experience, as category, as analytical framework. The paper tentatively suggests that generalization could facilitate challenging the normative center. The paper concludes with a discussion of intersectionality and community. Building on Patricia Hill Collins' suggestion that there is a potential synergy between intersectionality studies and American pragmatism, the paper introduces the concept of experiential parallelism to develop the notion of community in relation to overlapping intersectional identities.

Keywords: intersectionality, lived experience, category, feminism, community, pragmatism

Section 1. Introduction

The concept of intersectionality was first introduced by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) to identify the particular kind of discrimination experienced by black women, discrimination that could not be reduced to one or the other category "black" or "woman" *and* that was not merely the sum of particular discriminations, but was, in virtue of their working together, itself a particular discrimination. Since then there has been a great deal of work done exploring and expanding on the definition, use and application of intersectionality. Even though intersectionality initially referred to the intersection of locations of domination and subordination, I thought it could be a generalizable concept, referring to the intersection of multiple locations constitutive of a self – interpersonal, physical, biological and social (and that are not necessarily or only ones of power).

In spite of my own interest in a more generalizable concept, I have wondered whether generalizing would detract from its specific purpose in the context of American Black Feminist thought where 'intersectionality' has a lengthy genealogy from Sojourner Truth to the Combahee River Collective's Black Feminist Statement (published in 1977)[2], and continuing in the work of contemporary Black feminists and theorists of race and color. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) wanted a way to identify and remedy the multiple dimensions of oppression and injustice experienced by black women. As such, intersectionality identifies the discrimination that a black woman suffers in virtue of both her race and her gender. As remedy, intersectionality suggests that multiple-axes analysis of anti-discrimination laws is needed. In so far as antidiscrimination law is dominated by a single-axis analysis, whereby discrimination in virtue of race or in virtue of gender are treated as distinct and mutually exclusive categories, the law fails to capture the scope of multidimensionally based discrimination and does a poor job of remedying black women's legal disadvantages.

Thus, 'intersectionality' has signaled the need to focus on a particular problem and to be a corrective to legal and conceptual frameworks that have treated identities as singular and generic. Recognizing the complexity and multiplicity of oppressed people's experiences and self-identifications is important not only for accuracy and for acknowledging an individual's lived experience, but also for developing an account of justice that can, in practice, more adequately address the injustices that people actually experience.

Still, I would like to explore the generalizing move for the concept for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, the concept seems quite apt for capturing the interrelated plural constitutedness of selves. Practically, generalizing the concept could have the salutary effect of possibly dislodging a normative center that tends to be seen as not intersectional. Conceptualizing all selves as intersectional could also, perhaps, open pathways for communication and solidarity, and mitigate the fragmentation that sometimes accompanies a focus on particularity alone. Perhaps intersectionality is a way of having both, particularity and solidarity across difference.

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[2] A Black Feminist Statement: the Combahee River Collective is reprinted in Hull, et.al. 1982.

'Intersectionality' has been used to identify a variety of forms of (multiply constituted) social oppressions, not only those of black women. A second, more generalizing move would conceptualize all social identities, both those of oppressor and oppressed, as intersectional, in a system of intersecting and mutually constituting relations of power, of domination and subordination. A third, even more generalizing move, would be to extend intersectionality to any self as multiply constituted by the intersection of many traits and locations some, but not all of which are about domination or subordination. Imagine, for instance, the person who is a dual citizen, speaks several languages, lives and moves between cultures and countries, who is also middle or upper class and not oppressed or marginalized in the way in which black women or other persons of color are in the U.S. or in the way in which a Chicana lesbian may be with respect to her Latine origins. If intersectionality is about complexity and multiple constitutedness more generally and not necessarily limited to contexts of oppression and domination, it would not be defining of marginality per se; marginality and oppression would be a kind of intersectionality.

I am not the only one to have thought of intersectionality as a more general concept. Bernstein, for instance, provides a good list of a variety of referents for the term 'intersectionality' that can be found in use.

> [I]ntersectionality refers to a few different phenomena. Sometimes it refers to members of intersectional social *categories*, like black women. Sometimes it refers to forms of oppression faced by members of such categories, for example, those forms of discrimination faced by black women that are faced neither by women alone nor by black people alone. Intersectionality sometimes refers to a type or token of *experience* faced by members of such categories, as in experiences had by black women that are not entirely explicable by appeal to being black or to being a woman. There is a *causal* theory of intersectionality, according to which intersecting systems of power produce effects on groups or individuals that would not be produced if the dimensions did not intersect. And intersectionality sometimes refers to a method of *theorizing* from or about a specific viewpoint, as when one is theorizing from the perspective of a disabled Jewish woman. (Bernstein 2020, 322)

Bernstein goes on to say that she will focus on the first, intersectional identity categories. She also suggests that everyone's identity, not only those of minority, oppressed persons, is intersectional, meaning that everyone's identity is characterized by distinctive forms of oppression *or of privilege* (my emphasis). However, she is explicit that she will restrict her focus to "intersectional categories as they relate to forms of interlocking systemic oppression" rather than intersectional categories full stop (323).

I will come back to Bernstein's analysis, but here I just want to note that she makes the move to the second generalization I noted, namely, that everyone, both oppressed and privileged has intersectional identity. This has to be right if oppression occurs in virtue of systemic structural power relations. Oppressive and privileged positions are had, sustained by and enabled for occupants in virtue of their positions in the system. I want to note that this move leads naturally to the third generalization identified previously. Aspects of persons that are shaped and constituted by relations of domination and oppression may also "intersect" with (be related to) other self-constituents that are not exclusively determined by domination/oppression, such as "parent," "English speaker," "left-handed," "sixty-four inches (or 1.6 meters) tall" and so on. These connections suggest to me that intersectionality is a broader phenomenon, rather than only about how power relations produce specific kinds of identity and oppression and privilege. I am not going to press this last generalization here but do want to press the second.

As a practical matter, an argument might be made that intersectionality has been and should be restricted to the first and second use. Reasons for restricting it might include (1) that generalizing the concept is a kind of expropriation of the concept that would weaken its meaning and efficacy in the contexts in which it arose and the uniqueness of the problem it was originally meant to illuminate; (2) that, in some of its uses, intersectionality is descriptive of a particular kind of lived experience, not all experience, and that as such it allows for recognition of identities that have hitherto been invisible; and (3) intersectionality is not only about how individual identities are constituted in part by social identities, but is specifically about the interlocking systems of oppression in which those social identities are embedded. On the other hand, if intersectionality designates a particular kind of identity or lived experience, that seems to run at least two risks (1) making communication, understanding and solidarity across particular different intersectional identities even more difficult than it already is; and (2) further reinforcing marginalization – if only oppressed persons are "intersectional," then would intersectionality not really challenge the norm of domineering homogeneity, "purity" and lack of complexity? This seems worrisome normatively and as a matter of definitional multiplication and splitting. I'll call both of these "fragmentation" risks.

Section 2. Intersectionalty, identity, lived experience

In my first encounter with intersectionality, I was struck by its generalizability, as a way of understanding the complexity and multiplicity of all persons. Every person is constituted by an intersection of multiple social (and biological, psychological, political, cultural, and so on) positions. Those who occupy socially dominant classes are no less intersectional than anyone else. A white, heterosexual man in the United States who is college-educated, a native English speaker, a U.S. citizen, of White-Protestant background, middle-class, son, uncle, is also intersectionally socially constituted. His relative privilege and assurance of rights are a product of a system that valorizes some of those identities. Or, a white, heterosexual woman, of Irish-Catholic background, college-educated, middle-class, a U.S. citizen, a native English speaker, philosopher and professional academic, sibling, aunt, friend, and so on. Her relative status and privilege in society are a product of a system which valorizes, or at least doesn't undercut her multiple identities, with the exception of gender. She experiences disadvantages in virtue of gender, but some of her other locations (e.g., being white, college educated) may tend to mitigate the disadvantages of gender, or at least prevent them from being worse than they might be either on their own, or in connection with other disadvantaged positions (such as being poor and/or uneducated). For a black woman, on the other hand, the disadvantages she experiences *qua* woman are compounded and worsened by her race.[3]

On this approach, intersectionality wouldn't be unique to those who are marginalized or oppressed. Whether intersectionality contributes to marginalization and injustice, whether it is a basis for disadvantage and the extent to which it is, would depend on how constitutive features are valorized and structured in and by the social system that includes power relations and structures of domination and subordination. Social identities may be freighted, or not, and whether they are may be due to historical, socio-economic, political, religious, and other cultural factors. For example, at one time, in the United States being Irish or Italian and Catholic were culturally marked locations that were the basis for much discrimination; they were identities that one would have had to negotiate and that posed great challenges for selves constituted by those identities.

But, for Black feminist theorists and for other theorists working on issues of oppression and injustice, intersectionality is specifically about the lived identity, experiences and locations of oppressed or marginalized persons. Appropriating the term for more general use, particularly if it is done without acknowledging its origins and genesis, has been characterized as "whitening" intersectionality (Bilge 2013) and robbing it of its power to grasp, conceptualize, and name the specific lived experience of oppressed persons.[4] There might also be the worry that by generalizing the use of the term, it decenters race as having a kind of primacy.[5] This concern might be particularly salient for Black feminism and its criticism of Anglo-European feminism for being mostly about white, middle class women's issues, and as exclusionary of Black women and more widely, women of color. Part of the point of intersectionality for Black feminists was to point out that gender alone, especially as treated in (white) feminist analyses, did not fully capture the lived (and oppressed) experience of Black women. Rather, black women are doubly oppressed, and race is central to how they experience gender discrimination.[6]

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[3] Haslanger's analogy of overlapping theatre lights is one metaphor for conveying the intersectionality of an individual's experience and identity. (Haslanger, 2014, 116). Another metaphor emphasizes inseparability or even fusing of categories: "Different liquids – milk, coffee, nail polish, olive oil, beet borscht, paint in several colors – run down from different places at different altitudes into roundabouts. Some of the liquids run together, some are marbled with others, and some stay more separate unless whipped together" (Garry 2011, 833). Neither of these represents how structural oppression actually works; for that you'd want an analysis of how structures interact.

As a matter of lived experience, intersectionality is more salient for oppressed and marginalized persons than it is for those who, even if they may be multiply and relationally constituted, do not necessarily experience themselves as such. Here the argument would be that white, heterosexual men in the U.S. tend to experience themselves as, and be recognized by others as, unified agents, homogenous or whole, precisely because or in so far as they are not marginalized. As the normative center, their agency is not multiple or fragmented because it is not called into question but operates without the kinds of self-monitoring and self-consciousness of aspects of themselves that marginalized persons experience and have to negotiate. The woman who has to self-monitor enacting and expressing her competence (rather than just being competent) and who is therefore self-consciously, self-questioningly female, not just an agent; the Black person who strives for academic success while at the same time rejecting the label that doing so is "acting white" and who is therefore self-consciously, self-questioningly black and not just an agent.

Even if white heterosexual males may be no less plurally constituted, their privileged status hides that. As a matter of lived experience, privilege lies in being the norm, in "being normal," and leaves unthematized particular aspects of selves.[7] Marginalized or oppressed persons *experience* themselves as at the margin, as not the normative center. In addition, if intersectionality also involves the collision, or mutual reinforcement, of different forms of oppression – e.g., racism and sexism – then marginalized persons may also experience themselves as fractured, as experiencing a "contradictory pulling and tearing" between features that distinguish them from the norm.[8] In that case, intersectionality would describe, would name the distinctive experience of the marginalized person, and in particular that of one who experiences multiple forms or layers of discrimination, inequality, oppression or marginalization. Collins calls the layers of discrimination the "matrix of domination," making explicit that the subject of analysis is not neutral, but specifically involves power relations of domination and subordination.[9] On this account, intersectionality identifies a particular kind of fraught, fragmented lived experience of marginalized, oppressed persons and would not be appropriately extended, as a matter of lived experience to those in dominant or privileged positions. Intersectionality would be about the experience of *particular* multiple oppressions and inequalities, and not about the complexity and multiple constitutedness of those who are privileged (let alone of persons in general).[10]

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[4] Others explicitly reject this interpretation of intersectionality as too narrow, and not consistent with what Crenshaw herself says about it (e.g., Carbado 2013).

[5] Race is a contested category and I'm not going to define it or otherwise clarify it. And at least in the United States, there has been so much intermingling that even people who identify or are identified as black or as white are often of mixed genetic origin, whatever their cultural or other identities might be.

[6] It is also possible that context matters. In the U.S. healthcare setting black maternal mortality rates are three times that of white maternal mortality rates; here it looks like race is the salient discriminatory factor. But, given that women in general are taken less seriously in the healthcare system, gender may also be a factor. In other words, females tend to fare worse in the healthcare system than males, even if it is also true that *black* females fare worse than white females, and black males fare worse than white. On the other side, black males are more likely than black females to be the target of police violence, and in this context, while race is salient compared to white males, gender is salient compared to black females. Of course, as Crenshaw has argued, violence against black women is quite prevalent, but tends to not garner the same attention as violence against black men does. She argues this may be yet another dimension to the particular kind of oppression and discrimination experienced by black women, in this case, that injustices to them are not as widely recognized, but are marginalized (Crenshaw 1991; see also, the #Say Her Name project). The point here was only that multiple social categories do not necessarily operate in fixed ways such that they always produce double-jeopardy, or triple-jeopardy, but that context may also matter. See Beale 1979 on double-jeopardy theory. Intersectionality has also become of interest in medicine and bioethics. See, for example, the February 2019 issue of the *American Journal of Bioethics* 9, no. 2.

[7] This is not to say that white, heterosexual males cannot experience themselves as marginal. Class can be powerful in this regard, as seen, for instance, in the account by J.D. Vance in *Hillbilly Elegy* of the ways in which he was and felt marginalized in comparison to his law school classmates at Yale (even though the book may also underestimate some of the advantages he had as white). As a white, heterosexual male his ability to move from the margin to the normative center is considerably enhanced compared to a white woman or to a black man or black woman because he already meets the eligibility criteria, so to speak, which neither a woman nor a Black person will ever meet. Class, at least conceptually, may allow for more choice and fluidity than race. It makes sense to say that one could move from poverty into the middle-class; and much less sense to say that one could move from being black to being white, or vice versa, Rachel Dolezal notwithstanding. (See also note 10 below.)

[8] Milczarek-Desai (2002, 128) uses that phrase "contradictory pulling and tearing" adding in to the mix of race and sex, the experience of being from another culture, in her case, that of India.

Another aspect of intersectionality understood as specifically about the lived experience and identity of marginalized, oppressed persons, is that the marginalizing identities are often conceptualized as not chosen or voluntarily relinquishable.[11] While that is also true for the white, heterosexual male, those identities are not disadvantageous and do not contribute to oppression, but just the opposite. The "matrix of domination" is characterized by the arbitrariness with which categories (race, sex/gender, ethnicity/culture) are the bases for recognition of capability, for access to social and economic opportunity, for fair treatment under the law, for social and economic rewards and benefits.[12]

Sometimes the claim seems to be that intersectionality is about not just oppression but the very complexity of constitution of marginalized persons, and that this identity is distinctive. There may be something of a tension between conceptualizing intersectionality as a (negative) lived experience of oppression, inequality, domination on the one hand, and on the other hand, conceptualizing intersectionality as a complexity of identity that is not sufficiently recognized by the dominant, privileged perspective. One mechanism of oppression is to label and to take apart without recognizing the wholeness of a person's complex identity (the fracturing and pulling apart mentioned previously). In contrast, intersectionality also asserts the complexity of identity as something to be celebrated, rather than fragmented, or diminished through stereotyping, categorizing or other more nefarious forms of discrimination and oppression. Intersectionality as a way of rendering visible identities that had hitherto been invisible is expressed by Anzaldúa's (1983) comment about the irreducible complexity of her identity/identities:

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[9] "Intersectional paradigms make a second important contribution to untangling the relationships between knowledge and empowerment – they shed new light on how domination is organized. The term *matrix of domination* describes this overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained... As the particular form assumed by intersecting oppressions in one social location, any matrix of domination can be seen as an historically specific organization of power in which social groups are embedded and which they aim to influence... All contexts of domination incorporate some combination of intersecting oppressions, and considerable variability exists from one matrix of domination to the next as to how oppression and activism will be organized" (Collins, 2000, 227–228).

[10] McCall (2005) calls this approach to intersectionality the intracategorical, meaning focused "on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection" (1774).

[11] One of the criticisms of Rachel Dolezal invokes this point, namely, that her *choosing* to self-identify as black is itself an act of privilege, and not a choice that the typical racially marginalized person has. Rachel Dolezal self-identifies as Black and was for a time the head of the NAACP in Spokane WA. She resigned that, and other, posts when it was revealed that Dolezal was born to and raised in a White conservative Christian family. Her family of origin adopted several children of color whom Dolezal helped parent. She subsequently, in 2010, became the legal guardian of one of her adopted brothers after she became estranged from her family. A discussion of Dolezal and "transracialism" by Rebecca Tuvel in an article published in the journal *Hypatia* (2017) instigated a very public, contentious dispute and a rift in the editorial board of *Hypatia* and in academic feminism more generally. I am taking no position on any of the issues involved in Dolezal's case; just observing the criticism that has been made of her claim. I am also setting aside questions about mixed racial identity, which is often a factor in being able to "pass."

[12] That mobility and choice are thought to be at least partial determinants of class might be a consideration against class being a truly marginalizing category. The argument might go that even if it is true that in fact there is very little movement out of one class into another (with notable exceptions), still it is conceptually meaningful and in principle possible to move into one class or another. However, class is a strong contributor to inequality and marginalization. Even if class itself is not a justiciable inequality, other social categories (race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion) that are intersect with it, and for the purposes of fully understanding oppression, class cannot be wholly discounted.

> I am a wind-swayed bridge, a crossroads inhabited by whirlwinds... What am I? A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label... One foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class... Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (Anzaldúa, 1983, 205)

While Anzaldúa does not use the term, the concept of intersectionality is implicitly at work here and is meant to distinguish, and celebrate, marginalized persons as distinctively multiply constituted (contrasting that with the homogeneity and unlayeredness of those who are privileged or dominant). Part of the nature of oppression consists in being labeled, reduced to a stereotype, and fragmented such that one's identity is not recognized or accepted qua multiple.

Lugones (2007) argues further that intersectionality renders visible the node of oppression, but also requires moving beyond "separable categories" and perceiving categories such as gender and race as fused:

> Intersectionality reveals what is not seen when categories such as gender and race are conceptualized as separate from each other. The move to intersect the categories has been motivated by the difficulties in making visible those who are dominated and victimized in terms of both categories. It becomes logically clear then that the logic of categorical separation... distorts what exists at the intersection, such as violence against women of color. Given the construction of categories, the intersection misconstrues women of color. So, once intersectionality shows us what is missing, we have ahead of us the task of reconceptualizing the logic of the intersection so as to avoid separability. It is only when we perceive gender and race as intermeshed or fused that we actually see women of color. (Lugones 2007, 192–193)

In this quotation, Lugones is arguing for resisting the tendency to split apart and stereotype people. She is also emphasizing that part of what a person wants is recognition of their complex identity as a whole, not broken apart into its particular locations or characteristics. As a matter of lived experience, her point is that a person is a whole who resists reduction to parts or aspects of themselves. Lugones is also pointing to lived experience as itself the basis or source of categories. Recognition of intersectional identities as arising out of lived experience is a long standing dimension of intersectionality studies from its origins in Black Feminist thought in the nineteenth century – think of Sojourner Truth's interrogation of the category "woman" through her lived experience of exclusion from it – through the present.[13]

In this section we have been discussing intersectionality as lived experience, as identifying a way in which marginalized or oppressed persons experience their identity and have developed the very concept of intersectional identity out of that experience. The Lugones quotation above also raises some interesting issues about the nature of categories, specifically about separability and what Lugones calls the "logic of purity" versus the logic of impurity, about sameness and difference.[14] I now want to consider some of these issues.

Section 3. Intersectionality and Categories

There are two aspects of the categories of social identity that I want to consider, one is their generalizability, and the other is their separability or distinctness.

Intersectionality is a powerful way of theorizing difference and recognizing the distinctiveness of marginalized people and their multidimensionality, and in particular the multiple burdens experienced by those who are marginalized and oppressed. At the same time, if applied only to marginalized or oppressed persons, that would seem to imply that some people are relationally complex and others (those who are dominant) are not. But, if everyone is embedded in systems of power relations, then everyone's identity is structurally shaped, albeit in different ways depending on whether one's position is dominant or oppressed.

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[13] Truth 1995, 37 See also, Gines 2011, 276, where she reviews Black Feminist thought in America and its development of intersectional analyses.

[14] See also Lugones 2003. Garry (2011) argues that the locations that form intersectional identity – e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity – are family resemblances, such that persons sharing one or two, but not all, still have some commonality and basis for solidarity. Garry agrees with Lugones's project to pluralize feminism and recognize distinct forms of oppression and experience, while at the same time is concerned that giving up separable categories altogether undermines recognizing the bases for commonality, solidarity, and common social justice action. Lugones herself recognizes the problem of fragmentation and disempowerment (Lugones 2003).

Critics of intersectionality argue that by revealing inter- and intra-group differences, it leads to particularism, fragmentation, divisions, instead of unity in political organizing.[15] Some have argued that intersectionality can be understood as not only about identity formation of marginalized subjects, but as a general theory of identity formation (Kwan 1997; Nash 2008). If intersectionality were more broadly understood, if everyone were to recognize themselves as shaped by multiple social identities, rather than those who are dominant being positioned as in some sense independent of such identities or as outside the system of oppression, then perhaps that would promote the possibility of solidarity across groups. Seeing intersectionality as addressing the position and agency of the privileged and powerful would make it clearer that the dominant too are shaped by and shape their position.

Recognizing their own intersectional location might facilitate better engagement with the problem on the part of those in the more privileged position. By this I do not mean that those who are privileged are also multiply burdened.[16] I mean only that being privileged is itself a systemically located advantage, rather than something deserved in virtue of individual merit or qualities.[17] This does not mean that the epistemic perspective of marginalized persons is diminished; rather, the thought is that by locating the perspective of privilege in the same system it shows the arbitrariness of that privilege and weakens the claim of entitlement to privilege in virtue of those social categories. That is not to relieve or mitigate responsibility for exploitation and domination. Even if some oppressive behavior is unconscious, unintended or a byproduct of systemic relations, much of it involves the active agency of those in dominant positions. And even when it doesn't, but is the former, recognizing oneself as a participant in a social world that is unjust is a precondition for recognizing oneself as bearing some responsibility to repair that world.[18] Intersectionality has the potential to expose that and the ways that social structures enable and support it.[19] I think this is what Carbado (2013) is getting at at the conclusion of his essay:

> The point of departure for this essay was the idea that many scholars frame intersectionality more narrowly than is theoretically necessary. I then proceeded to employ intersectionality to analyze social categories, civil rights problems, and legal doctrines that are ostensibly beyond the theoretical reach and normative concern of intersectionality. My hope is that this engagement will end some of the abstract debates about what intersectionality can and cannot do and encourage more scholars to push the theoretical boundaries of intersectionality rather than disciplining and policing them. (841)

As a social category, intersectionality identifies social (broadly understood) characteristics. As we have seen, there are questions about what social characteristics or identities should or could be included in the category of intersectionality – whether intersectionality is about marginalizing categories or can be about any social categories.

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[15] For example, critics would include Ehrenreich 2002, Ludvig 2006. Cole (2008), on the other hand, argues that "conceiving of identities intersectionally, as coalitions, illuminates 'new avenues of cooperation'" (447). Carastathis (2013) develops this idea further, analyzing Somos Hermanas and the "coalitional praxis of Carmen Vázques," and criticizing some categorial approaches to intersectionality as too rigid. Carastathis suggests that we have to be more creative and define categories as more fluid. Carastathis's analysis is of coalitions between marginalized groups, not between marginalized and non-marginalized, but it seems to me that the latter is also a possibility of intersectionality broadly understood.

[16] We might note that there can be degrees of privilege even among those who are burdened, and perhaps some degrees of burden among those who are privileged. Some of those differences may not be significant for political purposes or for redressing injustice but are worth noting with respect to the nuance and complexity of any identity formation and any position in a social system.

[17] Whatever other aspects of an individual's capabilities, effort and actions may contribute to judgments of desert.

[18] While there is not space here to do so, Young's social connection model of responsibility would be apt to developing further this point (Young 2006).

[19] Walby (2012) argues that an "ontology of inequality" needs to focus not only disadvantaged people or sets of people as that obscures the role of the powerful in unequal social relations (232).

Additionally, in the discussion of lived experience we saw that there is a tension in how to think about the interrelatedness of the categories or identities themselves and how separable or fused they are. I appreciate the point about fracturing and stereotyping that Anzaldua and Lugones highlight in a person's lived experience, but I want to push back a bit on the notion that the categories are fused. Fusion would imply that categories become indistinct from one another such that membership in the category "Black Woman" for example has nothing in common with membership in the category "Chicana Lesbian Woman." Each is its own unique category with constituents fused in such a way that there wouldn't be overlap, so to speak, with constituents of another intersectional identity. Even though the same term, e.g., 'woman', is used, it is not even a partially shared category because the real categories are "Black Woman" and "Chicana Lesbian Woman."

I understand the arguments against reifying the notion of woman, against essentialism, and against naive universalizing, as in "all women are x" or "all women want y" or "all women should band together." However, if the term 'woman' is meaningful it can't be that its distinctness qua category is destroyed in an intersectional identity of which it is a constituent. It remains, in some sense, an intact category (albeit not reified or essential). At the same time, the intersectional category is greater than the sum of its parts as an explanatory and analytical category. Bernstein's (2020) analysis of the intactness of the constituent categories *and* the explanatory priority of intersectional categories is a very clear exposition of the point.

> Rather than the conjuncts explaining the conjunction, the conjunction explains the conjuncts. The intuitive idea is that in understanding black womanhood, we thereby understand blackness and womanhood. *Being a black woman* explains being black and being a woman; features of blackness and womanhood are at least partially explained by black womanhood. Intersectional explanations are more informative than explanations exclusively involving the individual identity constituents. (Bernstein, 2020, 331)

Bernstein's argument is that intersectionality has explanatory and metaphysical primacy (332), but that this way of understanding it is neutral on the "comparative fundamentality of the constituents" and entails that one need not view any one constituent category as more fundamental than another (333–334). This seems to me to capture the crux of what makes intersectionality such a powerful category of analysis, which, at the same time, is consistent with the experiential integrity of intersectional identity, a point that Bernstein recognizes as well. Allowing for the intactness of the distinct constituents, though, could provide a path to solidarity and community. Even though intersectional identities may be unique, they are not wholly exclusionary either. A Black Woman Philosopher can have solidarity with others who are black (who may not be philosophers, and who may not be women), with others who are women (but not black and/or not philosophers), with black women (who are not philosophers), with philosophers (who are neither black nor women), with women philosophers (who are not black) and with black philosophers (who are not women). The point is that while being a Black Woman Philosopher explains that person's integrated, intersectional experience of being black, being a woman and being a philosopher, the intactness of the identity constituents also means that there can be contexts in which those subaltern constituents are shared with others and can be bases for some explanatory clarity and for solidarity and the formation of some joint commitments, coalitions and actions.

Section 4. Intersectionality: Category and Analytical Framework

As I have been arguing intersectionality[20] can be considered as not only naming lived experience, but as providing categories or a framework for analysis. This idea goes back to Crenshaw. Hancock observes that intersectionality is not only a category for understanding complex identity, but identifies an analytical approach:

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[20] In a review of the genealogy of intersectionality research over a twenty plus year period, Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) identify three approaches that have been taken: one that focuses on specific contexts of discrimination and oppression, another that focuses on intersectionality as theory and methodology, and a third that focuses less on analysis and more on praxis of social reform.

> Originally I thought of intersectionality as a content based specialization that emphasized the subjectivity of women who reside at the intersections of race-, gender, class-, and sexual orientation-based marginalizations (and other categories of difference)... [T]his kind of work has taken place in multiple locations simultaneously, often unbeknownst to intersectional scholars immersed in their study of a specific intersectional group. This immersion explains why some scholars claim an exclusive origin for intersectionality in the specific intersectional group they study. Similar to the political subjectivity of the women they study, the origins of intersectionality are multiple and intersecting. A comprehensive intellectual history of intersectionality research has yet to be published.
>
> [I]nattention to a comprehensive intellectual history of intersectionality research masks the ways in which intersectionality 1) can answer new questions as yet unanswerable with traditional models and 2) can generate strategies for political change that incorporate all of us as political beings, not simply a subset of the population discussed in a single comparative case only. I have therefore recently gravitated toward a position claiming that intersectionality is a normative and empirical research paradigm (Hancock 2007; see also McCall 2005), rather than a content specialization. (Hancock 2007, 248–249)

The contrast here is between intersectionality that is about identity and lived experience (what Hancock calls “content based specialization” in the subjectivity of women living at the intersection of race-...)[21] and intersectionality that is a paradigm for analysis.[22] For Hancock it is a paradigm for analysis of public policy, particularly for public policy as it pertains to those typically identified as intersectional subjects on the first meaning, but also more broadly (Hancock 2007, 251). Hancock characterizes intersectionality as a research paradigm for analysis and data collection that is “attentive to causal complexity” (Hancock 2007, 251).[23]

Even if in origin it was developed in order to provide a framework for analyzing the multiple layers of oppression and inequality experienced in being black and being female, there doesn’t seem to be any in principle reason why as a conceptual framework it couldn’t be generalized. As Crenshaw herself originally said[24],

> I should say at the outset that intersectionality is not being offered as some new, totalizing theory of identity. Nor do I mean to suggest that violence against women of color can be explained only through the specific frameworks of race and gender considered here.9 [sic; this is Crenshaw’s footnote and is included in the next quotation] Indeed factors I address only in part or not at all, such as class or sexuality, are often as critical in shaping the experiences of women of color. My focus on the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed.

And in her footnote 9, Crenshaw adds:

> I consider intersectionality a provisional concept linking contemporary politics with postmodern theory. In mapping the intersections of race and gender, the concept does engage dominant assumptions that race and gender are essentially separate categories. By tracing the categories to their intersections, I hope to suggest a methodology that will ultimately disrupt the tendencies to see race and gender as exclusive or separable. While the primary intersections that I explore here are between race and gender, the concept can and should be expanded by factoring in issues such as class, sexual orientation, age, and color.

And more recently Crenshaw suggested,

> Implicit in this broadened field of vision is our view that intersectionality is best framed as an analytic sensibility. If intersectionality is an analytic disposition, a way of thinking about and conducting analyses, then what makes an analysis intersectional is not its use of the term “intersectionality,” nor its being situated in a familiar genealogy, nor its drawing on lists of standard citations. Rather, what makes an analysis intersectional –whatever terms it deploys, whatever its iteration, whatever its field or discipline – is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing – conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power – emphasizes what intersectionality does rather than what intersectionality is.[25]

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[21] This would fall under the first approach identified in the previous footnote.

[22] This would fall under the second approach identified in footnote 4.

[23] Hancock refers to the work of the sociologist Charles Ragin on fuzzy set methodology in sociology for analyzing variation, diversity, multiplicity, intersectionality, and causal complexity (Ragin 2000).

[24] Crenshaw 1991, 1244–1245.

[25] Cho, Crenshaw, McCall 2013, 795.

Intersectionality could function as a framework for analyzing many sorts of discrimination and inequality. Kwan uses intersectionality to analyze the negligence of white, male police officers in overlooking the abuse of a young, Asian, gay male and allowing themselves to be persuaded by Jeffrey Dahmer that the young male's condition was just part of a "boyfriend-boyfriend" thing.[26]

In addition, analyses of oppression, discrimination or inequality might focus on matrices of domination and subordination, on certain kinds of hierarchical locations (rather than social roles more generally) and how they interact.[27] As providing a category or framework, intersectional inquiry might produce an analysis that conflicts with or remains unfelt or unnoticed by the subjects who are so located. Or, an analysis of intersecting (interlocking?) social mechanisms and processes of subordination and domination and of inequality may identify causal processes and relations that are not directly experienced and would not feature in a standard narrative of lived experience.[28] On this approach, identity, and specifically subordinated identities, are the outcome of power dynamics (MacKinnon 2013, 1023), and intersectionality studies examines the relationship between identity and power as determinative of subordinated positions.[29] Intersectional locations of the subordinated are thematized in ways that the locations of those at a normative center may not be.

Still, it continues to seem worrisome to set off intersectional positions of subordination or oppression as fundamentally different *qua* intersectional from positions of domination. As Carbado puts it (2013),

> Framing intersectionality as only about women of color gives masculinity, whiteness, and maleness an intersectional pass. That, in turn, leaves colorblind intersectionality and gender-blind intersectionality unnamed and uninterrogated, further naturalizing white male heterosexuality as the normative baseline against which the rest of us are intersectionally differentiated. (841)

Subjecting the normative center to intersectional analyses[30] as well could produce a deeper understanding of power relations and counteract narratives of individual desert or merit that ignore the ways in which the very position of being the center, the position of dominance is dependent on and sustained by social structures and relations.

Section 5. Intersectionality and Community

I have been emphasizing mostly theoretical issues, but there is an ethical imperative at work here regarding the need to actively engage social justice. There are, of course, many issues and hurdles to moving from theory to action, recognition and cooperation. Here, and in concluding, I want only to indicate how, building on a suggestion by Collins, community and thematizing intersectionality might facilitate taking steps in disrupting power and addressing inequality and oppression.

Collins introduces the importance of community via consideration of what pragmatism might contribute to intersectionality studies. She (2011, 2012) observes a kind of fragmentation occurring in intersectionality studies, wherein intersectionality studies pay increasing attention to individual, particular identities and in so doing, may be losing focus on collective identities and on the commonalities that are necessary for forging and sustaining solidarity and social reform. Rather, Collins (2003) suggests that every group occupies a location of "heterogenous commonality" (221). Collins suggests that pragmatism, and its emphasis on community, may be a helpful ally to and have a synergistic relation with intersectionality.

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[26] Kwan 1997. The victim had escaped and was found naked, bruised and bleeding in the street by neighbors who called the police. He was Laotian and had trouble speaking (although that was due to his injuries and trauma, not to his ethnicity), and the police returned him to the "care" of Dahmer (Jeffrey Dahmer was a serial killer in Milwaukee in the late 1970s through 1991). That the victim had escaped but was returned to Dahmer is particularly tragic in light of the horrific suffering Dahmer inflicted on this victim – at 14, also underage, another feature overlooked by the police officers – and four other subsequent victims before he was apprehended. Kwan suggests using the term "cosynthesis," rather than "intersectionality," which he thinks allows for more fluid and dynamic understanding of categories and their mutual interaction.

[27] Collins distinguishes between macrolevel analyses of *interlocking* systems of relations and microlevel processes that are *intersectional* and about how individuals and groups occupy their places in interlocking systems.

[28] See for example Tilly 2002.

[29] A number of essays in the 2013 special issue of *Signs*, edited by Cho, Crenshaw and McCall explore this set of issues. See MacKinnon 2013, Tomlinson 2013, Spade 2013, Verloo 2013, Lewis 2013.

[30] I do not mean to suggest that the standpoint of the subordinated, oppressed, disadvantaged or discriminated against should be supplanted or replaced by a hegemonic viewpoint masquerading perhaps as the "universal", but that the theory can and should account for the positionality and interdependence of the privileged, just as much as it can express the standpoint of the oppressed (see also e.g., Walby, Armstrong, Strid, 2012).

> In essence, the robust understandings of identity politics honed within social movements have been increasingly challenged within contemporary social theory. Individual identities and the personal politics that accompany them seem acceptable. In contrast, collective identities are less so. Here American pragmatism's well-developed history of the social self, experience, and the significance of symbols all affecting the construct of community provides a set of tools that potentially might counteract this drift toward decontextualized, individualized identities. Pragmatism's analysis of the social self developed in the context of community provides a provocative argument concerning experience that scholars of intersectionality might find especially useful. Conversely, intersectionality's analysis of complex social inequalities might stimulate pragmatist analyses of communities as infused with power and politics. Stated differently, linking conceptions of identity politics honed within social movements with pragmatism's complex analyses of community discussed above might catalyze an especially fruitful dialogue. (Collins, 2012, 453)

Drawing on a concept from the work of Justus Buchler, I want to gesture towards a way in which intersectionality and community can be fruitfully related. Borrowing from Buchler, I suggest that community be understood as experiential parallelism – Buchler would say "proceptive parallelism" (Buchler, 1979, 34, 38). Community is possible because there is some commonality –not necessarily exact similarity – of experience that provides a basis for communication to take place.[31] Commonality or "experiential parallelism" doesn't have to be "thick"; it could be as thin as being in the same place at the same time and subject to a set of risks, consequences, causes, or meanings distributed in the situation. Serendipitous and transient communities that spring up in urban environments are examples of such fleeting and "thin" communities.

But the kind of community that I think Collins has in mind is one in which identities form some kind of experiential parallelism that calls for thematization of some aspect of one's identity. Examples of the former: the experiential parallelism of Black feminist lesbians forming a community; or, an experiential parallelism of women in the U.S. forming a community, one that might *partially* intersect with the former, but neither in the whole nor as one that simply subsumes (and obliterates) the specificity of the former. In this approach, community would have to be understood as not necessarily intimate or deeply interpersonal. That would be a kind of community. Rather, community as experiential parallelism is more general; it is a kind of commonality that is a condition for the possibility of communication, coalition and action.

Collins (1993) offers the example of a college classroom as a context in which thematization of identities might take place. Being a student in the classroom constitutes an experiential parallelism that does not obliterate other intersectional identities of the students. Collins suggests that in the classroom different locations in a system of privilege and disadvantage were "equalized" such that genuine dialogue could take place (36–37, 39). I don't know how apt "equalization" is, although that may be an ideal in the classroom context. But the students' experiential parallelism *qua* students would be a common condition for the possibility of communication, in Collins' terms, "dialogue."

In Collins' example, a young white man had his position of privilege thematized and disrupted by being confronted with reports of the experiences of black students. The white student (not without resistance) became aware of his and of their positions in a system of power relations. The experiential parallelism involved both the dialogic context of the classroom *and* the developing awareness of each as occupying both common (*qua* student) and different but mutually interdependent positions in the system of power relations, as having "intersectional identities." When it goes well, both those who are typically subordinated and those who are more typically privileged have their relative positions challenged and modified (at least temporarily in that context) while at the same time recognizing themselves as having those positions or identities in that matrix of domination – their intersectionality has become (or has the opportunity to become) thematized.

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[31] For a treatment of community (experiential parallelism) and what I call reflexive communication, see Wallace 2019, Chapter 5, 114–141.

The students have experiential parallelism

1. in virtue of the context of the classroom, and
2. generally, as occupants of a system of social structures and power relations, even though they occupy different positions in it, and
3. as also occupying some overlapping positions. For instance, white and black males may have some overlap in virtue of being male, even though "whiteness" and "blackness" may also differentially affect their positions as male. All the students have some overlap in virtue of being students, even though they might have different reasons for and interests in attending college or in taking that particular class.

I'm thinking that this general experience of experiential parallelism as "heterogenous commonality" could be fruitful as a step in realizing that oppression and inequality are not just the concern of those who are subordinated, but of everyone. Not because everyone is oppressed, but because everyone is intersectionally located and has, in varying degrees and respects, some overlapping identities and positions, even if they have them in distinctive ways.

This phenomenon provides some support for generalizing intersectionality as characteristic of all social positions and for taking identity constituents as retaining some intact meaning that can be shared and a basis for experiential parallelism and ultimately communication. The possibility of community depends on experiential parallelism, and that requires some commonality. I am suggesting that generalizing intersectional identity and recognizing some intactness (without reification or essentialization) to identity constituents could allow for recognizing both commonality and difference. I am not arguing that there is a universal "thing" – "humanity" – that we all have. I am suggesting only, that intersectionality characterizes all of us – Collins's "heterogenous commonality" *and* that in some contexts some "categorial constituents" (being male, being a student, being black, being of a particular economic class) may overlap, that is, be locations of which persons are mutual members. Difference need not mean fragmentation and the undermining of solidarity and cooperation, precisely because intersectional identities entail that differences and commonalities overlap and can therefore, be a basis for community, communication, and the solidarity needed for coalition building and action. As Cole put it, "although intersectionality may be misconstrued to suggest a politics of identity [of] vanishingly small constituencies, in fact the concept holds the promise of opening new avenues of cooperation" (Cole, 2008, 447). As observed by Carastathis (2014, 311) doing so would build on Crenshaw's call at the end of "Mapping the Margins" to view identity-based groups not as monoliths, but as coalitions, constituted by internal differences as much as by commonalities (Crenshaw, 1991, 1299).

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THE SOCIAL SELF AND SOCIAL DEATH: RETHINKING REPARATIONS FOR GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

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ABSTRACT: Based on a pragmatist inspired conception of the social self, the concept of reparations for the harms of genocide is reexamined. Both Raphael Lemkin, the person who invented the term "genocide," and Claudia Card, a philosopher who examined the evil of genocide, hold similarly expansive notions of the harms inflicted by genocidal violence. Both argued that biological death is not necessarily central to genocide. For Lemkin cultural destruction of the targeted group is just as essential as the actual killing itself. Genocide is a group crime that aims to destroy the group and all the social aspects of group identity. Card similarly sees the target of genocidal violence as the social vitality of the self. This vitality is sustained by group relations. Reparations thus need to be reconceptualize in terms of the restoration of social life of the victim group and not solely on the basis of economic losses. Examples are given for the reparation of the social vitality of communities that have suffered genocide.

Keywords: reparations, genocide, social death, social self, Raphael Lemkin, Claudia Card

What follows is an application of a pragmatist conception of the self and community to issues arising from reparations for genocide and crimes against humanity. For my purposes I will not be singling out one particular pragmatist philosopher in my analysis. One could say that a pragmatist temperament is more at play here than any adherence to a particular pragmatist conception. This sketch for a reconstruction of the concept of reparations is part and parcel of a larger project on post-genocide moral duties and responsibilities. What is distinctive in the American pragmatist tradition is the idea that the self is fundamentally social and cannot be understood without taking into account the myriad of ways in which individuals interact with their environment. Whatever term of art we may choose to label this social self – whether it be the relational self, the intersectional self, John Dewey's transactive/interactive model of the individual, or the "I" and the "Me" of George Herbert Mead, they all lie in the background of how I approach my work, both theoretical and practical. Pragmatism has often been open to alternative philosophical voices, one of which, I will borrow for my analysis of reparations. Claudia Card's important work on the evil of genocide will be crucial for my rethinking of reparations.

For the specific purposes of this analysis, these pragmatist insights into the centrality of the self's relational nature will be brought to bear on the thorny issue of reparations for crimes against humanity, with a particular emphasis upon the crime of genocide. Contentious debates began more than twenty years ago with regard to reparations for the American slavery of Africans and, more recently, for our treatment of Native Americans. Advocates for reparations have often relied upon economic models of monetary compensation. In both these cases, no politically viable reparative solution has been possible. In the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War, the federal occupying power offered "forty acres and a mule" plus land along the Georgia and South Carolina coast for freed slaves. But even before the end of Reconstruction such schemes fell apart. Over the next hundred years the system of Southern Jim Crow and Northern racial discrimination actually extracted wealth from the African American community. In contrast and somewhat uniquely, reparations in the form of monetary compensation did take place after the Holocaust between the Federal Republic of Germany and the State of Israel. While limited in scope, some tangible property was restored to some victims' descendants. When slavery reparations were debated in the United States, though never as a central or overriding concern, may questions came to the front: How many lives were lost? What is a human life worth? Is worth measured in terms future earning potential? What is a normal life expectancy during the time of slavery as opposed to today? Does family size, whether actual or intended, matter? My concern here is not with such details but is broader and more philosophical. I will first ask what it means for a life to be taken in the context of genocidal acts of wrongdoing. If we are social selves, what does our death mean? Do all cases of human biological demise imply a social death or is there more to this story? This is where the work of an important American feminist moral philosopher, Claudia Card, can help us.[1]

Before addressing the issue of reparations, we need to be clear about the nature of the crime that calls for repair. I will focus primarily on the crime of genocide though aspects of the analysis may apply, with qualifications, to other large-scale mass atrocities. While genocide has historical antecedents going back to the dawn of recorded history, certain key events in the twentieth century led to the development of the concept of genocide and its eventual criminalization with the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948 that came into force in 1951. Civilian populations have always suffered in times of war. Criminalizing the behavior of combatants for the wrongful harming of civilians in wartime began in the late nineteenth century and were codified into international law with the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions. The laws of war were further refined in the course of the last one hundred years so that the deliberate targeting of civilians as a tool of war is, in theory, prohibited. Syria, Yemen, and most recently, Azerbaijan's aggression against Armenia are today stark examples of a lack of progress in this regard, especially when war is euphemistically labelled as "an ethnic conflict." Atrocities committed against the citizens of one's own nation state or acts committed by state agents outside the parameters of war, remained outside the purview of international criminal law well into the second half of the twentieth century. This is not to say that governments and individuals were not thinking about the civilian costs of conflicts. While no formal legal framework existed at the time, on May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers of Britain, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging, for the first time, another government of committing "a crime against humanity." With specific reference to the Armenian massacres that began a month earlier, the Allies stated: "In view of these new crimes of the Ottoman Empire *against humanity and civilization*, the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres" (emphasis added) (Facing History). But at the conclusion of the First World War the victors only made a half-hearted effort to punish the leadership of the Ottoman Turkey.

Two events and one individual stand out in the conceptualization of genocide and its eventual criminalization as a crime against humanity. The two events, the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, are linked together in the thought of Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish jurist, who lost 49 members of his family in the Holocaust. Lemkin was the individual who coined the word "genocide" in 1944 to capture what Winston Churchill, in describing the Nazi terror in Europe, had called, "a crime without a name." The eventual linkage in Lemkin's mind of what had happened to the Armenians beginning in 1915 and the events transpiring in Europe during the Final Solution can be traced to his philosophy, philology, and law studies in the 1920s. Lemkin had followed the 1921 Berlin trial of Soghomon Tehlirian, the Armenian assassin of Mehmed Talaat Pasha, the chief architect of the genocide. Lemkin had pressed his law professors regarding the contradictions in a legal system in which an individual, such as Tehlirian, could be charged with the murder of one individual, Talaat, but where there was no legal mechanism to bring to justice Talaat, the individual chiefly responsible for the murder of a million and a half of his own citizens. His professors told him that state sovereignty was supreme and that the citizens of a nation state were property whose rulers could do to them what they willed. Lemkin was astonished that a crime of such scale and such scope could be left unpunished.[2] In Lemkin's mind it was not simply a matter of breaching the barrier of state sovereignty but understanding that this was a crime of a different kind. A crime against a group, a collectivity or community, was not simply a matter of aggregating crimes committed against individual members of the collectivity. There was a harm of a different kind, maybe a greater harm, when individuals are targeted simply for being the members of a collectivity. Destroying a group that was essential to the self-identity of its individual members added a unique dimension to such crimes.

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[1] I had the privilege of working with Card over a decade ago on issues related to genocide. Her passing five years ago was an immense loss to our profession and to the philosophical study of genocide and crimes against humanity.

[2] See Lemkin's discussion in his autobiography, *Totally Unoffi-*

Lemkin would go on to propose a new international law to capture what had happened to the Armenians during the genocide of 1915 to 1923. In 1933 he had already prepared a paper for a League of Nations conference in Madrid in which he proposed the international prohibition of acts targeting collectivities and the unique harms that such acts engender. Lemkin wrote: "In particular these are attacks carried out against an individual as a member of a collectivity. The goal of the author *[of the crime]* is not only to harm an individual, but, also to cause damage to the collectivity to which the later belongs. Offenses of this type bring harm not only to human rights, but also and most especially they undermine the fundamental basis of the social order" (Lemkin, 1933). In analyzing these acts, which he labeled acts of barbarity and acts of vandalism, Lemkin emphasized the social nature of the crime. Acts of barbarity, while entailing the physical destruction of individuals, extended beyond individual acts of murder. Lemkin claimed:

> Let us consider, first and foremost, acts of extermination directed against the ethnic, religious or social collectivities whatever the motive (political, religious, etc.); for example, massacres, pogroms, actions undertaken to ruin the economic existence of the members of a collectivity, etc. Also belonging in this category are all sorts of brutalities which attack the dignity of the individual in cases where these acts of humiliation have their source in a campaign of extermination directed against the collectivity in which the victim is a member (Lemkin 1933).

The crime of brutality is not simply reducible to biological destruction. International law must take into account *how* one dies, not simply one's death. Such crimes against groups can take a further social dimension when culture is singled out for attack. Lemkin wrote: "An attack targeting a collectivity can also take the form of systematic and organized destruction of the art and cultural heritage in which the unique genius and achievement of a collectivity are revealed in fields of science, arts and literature" (Lemkin 1933). Lemkin labeled such crimes "acts of vandalism." He would go on to further develop this concept of cultural destruction in his 1944 work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, the work in which the word "genocide" first appeared in print. Today such acts of vandalism are singled out in the literature as "cultural genocide."

Understanding the collective social dimension of such crimes is central to Claudia Card's concept of social death. Social death is the unique harm of genocide and will serve as the basis of my preliminary rethinking of the concept of reparations. Card opens her chapter on genocide in her last book, *Confronting Evils,* with these words:

> The intentional production of social death in a people or community is the central evil of genocide. That is so not only when a genocide is mainly cultural but even when it is homicidal on a massive scale. Social death distinguishes the evil of genocide, morally, from the evils of other mass murders. Even genocidal murder can be understood as an extreme means to the primary goal of social death (Card 2010, 237).

For Card, social death is the death of the social self, not the death of a biological individual per se. As I remarked early, relations are paramount in understanding the conception of the self at work here. Selves are spatiotemporal creatures. Justus Buchler captures this notion in his introductory discussion of human query in *Nature and Judgment*: "The human self, as some philosophers have recognized, is spread out in space as well as time. Its principal power is action at a distance. It is connected with other selves and with the world by unseen ties – of obligation, intention, representation, conflict, memory,

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cial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin, Donna-Lee Frieze, ed., Yale University Press, 2013, 20.

and love... The self's spread, its relatedness, is the basis of sociality" (Buchler 56). While Buchler's claim is a metaphysical claim about human experience based upon his ordinal ontology, it helps us see the multiple ways in which we are related to others and the environment. It is this spread of relations that is attacked in genocidal violence, not just the biological/physiological relation we have with the world, the termination of which we normally identify with death. If we apply recent feminist literature on the idea of the self as intersectional, we can see that certain primary identities and roles are singled out for attack and eventual destruction in the crime of genocide. Card uses the term "social vitality" to characterize the depth and spread of relatedness. In her conceptualization, one can have degrees of social vitality. While acknowledging that not all of life's meaning is dependent on social relations – one may have spiritual vitality in social isolation (e.g., the self-chosen isolation of religious hermits) – social relations do play the central role in selfhood:

> Social vitality exists through relationships, contemporary and intergenerational, that create contexts and identities that give meaning and shape to our lives. Some of these relationships are with kin, friends, and coworkers. Others are less personal and mediated by basic social institutions – economic, political, religious, educational, and so on. Loss of vitality comes with the loss of such connections (Card 2010, 237).

Social death is the death of these socially vital relations. Card contends that "Genocide is the extreme [form] of social death" (Card 2010, 237). Social death is possible in less extreme forms than in genocide but the important point to reiterate is that biological death is not a prerequisite of social death. It is partially on this basis that Card restricts the scope of genocide. Large numbers of deaths by themselves do not determine whether we are in the presence of genocide. Mass death, even when intentionally inflicted by others, may not qualify as genocide. The mass death involved in the September 11th attacks would not count as an instance of genocide while the killing of Bosniak men and boys in Srebrenica would, even though in both these instances we are talking about deaths only in the thousands.[3] Body count is not determinate of genocide.

One could object to this distinction by claiming that in both instances, the September 11th attacks and Srebrenica massacres, the social vitality of the individuals killed was destroyed. Why then is the former event not genocide while the latter is? A further distinction is required. While most scholars accept the notion that genocide is a crime against a group or a collectivity, the debate often centers on how to identify what kinds of groups count for protection, that is, what order of social relatedness is worthy of protection. When Lemkin's ideas were incorporated into international law in the debates about the Genocide Convention in the aftermath of the Second War, controversy centered on whether to include political groups under the protection of the Convention's operative clause of "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such" (United Nations). Ultimately "political" groups were excluded because of pressure from the Soviet bloc. Card and many other genocide scholars are more flexible or expansive in establishing the subject of genocide. Yet not all collectivities count for these purposes.

The question still remains as evidenced by the contrast between the deaths on September 11th and in Bosnia: Why is the collectivity killed in the September 11th attacks treated only as an aggregate of individuals while the Srebrenica victims are a group whose identity is the prime target and major casualty of the Serbian slaughter? A finer-grained understanding of groups or collectivities is required. While selves may have an indeterminate number of constitutive relations, some are more essential and less easily rejected. Lemkin had created the word "genocide" by combing the Greek word *génos* ("people or race") and the Latin suffix *-cide* ("the act of killing"). Card answers our question by focusing on what it means to be a people. She draws upon a contrast developed by Iris Marion Young between structural and social groups:

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[3] This was borne out in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) ruling regarding the killings in Srebrenica as meeting the criteria of the crime of genocide under the Genocide Convention. See the case of Radislav Krstić: https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica20/

> Occupants of those bombed buildings did not constitute a people. A people is not an aggregate. Nor is it only a *structural group*, in Iris Marion Young's sense of a serial collectivity united by the relationships of members to externals, which gives them common interest. . .
> A people is a *social group* in Young's sense, that is a collectivity united by internal relationships and traditions, such as common language and practices. Relationships that constitute a people include connections of kinship and citizenship as well as cultural and social relationships created by such things as a common literature, cuisine, humor, and by sharing in the creation and maintenance of laws and traditions (Card 2010, 247).

Here I would not follow Card in her adoption of Young's terminology, though conceptually I do accept her distinction between structural and social groups. Identifying the former, structural groups, with external relations and the latter group, social groups, with internal relations, doesn't add anything to our understanding of such groups. Yes, some relationships are harder to deny and more enduring. Aside from the feeling that some relations are more determinate of who we are or have greater value, external versus internal adds nothing to the analysis. But the dead end and conceptual muddle of employing such internal-external terminology is a topic for another essay.

For Card, the practices and relationships she here identifies with social groups "create the social vitality that gives meaning to the lives of members of peoples" (Card 2010, 247). The social vitality of the World Trade Center victims and their relatives come largely from their membership in other groups, not from their membership in the group that happened to be in those buildings when airplanes crashed into them. World Trade Center group membership is secondary to the vitality of this set of victims.

For Card, the target of genocidal acts is the social vitality of the group: "To the extent that relationships that define the group are important sources of meaning and identity in the lives of its members, destruction of the group is for them a serious loss. By the same token it is a loss of the possibility of such meaning and identity for descendants" (Card 2010, 247–8). As we will see, this loss of meaning and identity for descendants of genocide victims plays a role in justifying the reparative work that is required in post-genocidal societies. The loss of social vitality extends beyond the direct victim to those in generations to come.

While the U. N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide provides no direct conceptual analysis of the meaning of genocide, it does provide support for the notion that genocide is not reducible to the mass killing. Only the first ("Killing members of the group") of the five types of genocidal acts identified in Article II of the Convention involves killing, while the remaining four do not:

(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;[4]
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (United Nations)

Our analysis thus far has brought Lemkin and Card into agreement: it is not the biological individual who is the victim of genocide but the social self.

We can now turn directly to the outline of my position regarding reparations for genocide. This will have to be a sketch since much detail needs working out. While commonalities abound, all genocides have unique elements that determine the particular nature of the reparative actions that must follow. My thesis, simply put is: Reparations must to directed toward the restoration of the social vitality lost in the social death of genocide.

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[4] With regard to (d) Card has written a number of important articles about rape both in the context of war and genocide. See: "The Paradox of Genocidal Rape Aimed at Enforced Pregnancy" in *Criticism and Compassion: The Ethics and Politics of Claudia Card.* Robin S. Dillion and Armen T. Marsoobian, eds., Wiley, 2018.

While reparations entail costs for the perpetrator community, these costs are not determined by the costs of simply compensating victims and their descendants for the material losses that resulted from the crime. Where practical, private property, both movable and immovable, should be returned or compensated. Yet we know that in most cases, we cannot return to the status quo ante. As a form of compensatory justice, reparations should provide the means, that is, all the resources necessary for revitalizing the collective life and social vitality of the victim community. I can only here list some components of what a true reparative program should entail. The list of actions is far from exhaustive and is not presented in order of importance:

1. A full acknowledgement and official apology by the perpetrator community. These acts need to be enshrined through both legislation and executive decree.
2. If individual perpetrators are still alive, they must be arrested, tried, and punished by the appropriate judicial authority (national courts under the Genocide Convention or the International Criminal Court).
3. A full and thorough historical account of the genocide must be written and incorporated into the national education curriculum of the perpetrator community.
4. The cultural and religious heritage of the victim community must be preserved and/or restored in consultation with the experts and the victim community (e.g., the restoration of Jewish synagogues in Prague which is in stark contrast to the intentional destruction of Armenian churches and monasteries in eastern Turkey, Nakhijevan, and Artsakh in Azerbaijan).
5. Resources to allow for the flourishing of the arts and literature of the victim community. Support for the arts in all its forms. This is more than historical preservation of the artistic and literary heritage but provides for resources for making new art and literature. (e.g., the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and its programs and exhibitions of contemporary Native American art.)
6. Language preservation when threatened with extinction due to victim dispersal (diasporas) and the death of language speakers. (e.g., Yiddish, Western Armenian).
7. Economic viability of survivor communities wherever they may be located.
8. Medical and mental health requirements of the survivor community (e.g., public health and social work resources).
9. No statute of limitations for the reparative acts required to restore social vitality. The reparative process is an ongoing process with no fixed end point.

The above is merely a preliminary sketch for a complex process of reparative action. Each of the above items call for further theoretical and practical elaboration. As has already been stated, each genocide has unique features that require reparative actions tailored to the specific harms inflicted.

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TESTING THE TRUTH

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses, from the perspective of an observer in southern Africa, some of the political and educational implications of theories of mind and knowledge developed within the pragmatist canon during the twentieth century. It argues that John Dewey's rejection of any idea of "knowledge in general" allowed for a dynamic conception of intelligent meaning-making within historical context – an understanding later grounded more firmly by the "robust relativism" of Joseph Margolis. In contrast Richard Rorty's attempt to "drop" philosophy, replacing epistemology and metaphysics entirely with empiricism and naturalism, had to renege on any role for philosophy in establishing or testing the truth, thus effectively handing over existing hegemonic knowledge to its supporting disciplines. The paper argues that this may be opposed to some of the central intuitions of pragmatism, and that it must inhibit the power of informed debate from acting as a creative force for developing entirely new approaches, and thus for the best thinking to emerge in the academy and beyond. As Margolis foresaw, such "best thinking" is now urgently required to address the crises facing the world in the 21st century and, most especially, in the developing world.

Keywords: Pragmatism, 'robust relativism', developing countries, Darwinism, higher education.

1. Introduction

Both the most influential pragmatists of the twentieth century, John Dewey and Richard Rorty, gained fame or notoriety (depending upon the viewpoint of the receivers of their messages) for new conceptions of the role of philosophy. At the beginning of the century, to a newly industrialised, dynamic, thrusting America, Dewey brought an end to outworn epistemologies, and a celebration of practical discovery, democratic values and evolutionary advance. To a globally powerful, prosperous, over-confident America at the end of the century, Richard Rorty brought a celebration of the liberalism of the west, and at the same time, gave over the finding of truth and meaning entirely to science with its currently determinist, physicalist underpinnings. Human advance would happen only through the positive influence of literature and irony – the inspiration of 'strong poets'. While there are some superficial commonalities, the paper argues that the implications of each of these positions for both politics and education are radically opposed.

Dewey's work was concerned with establishing a formidable body of practical theory. While he believed that "there is no problem of knowledge in general" (Dewey, 1917a: 32) and his demolishing of epistemology *as* "knowledge in general" is well known, the significance of intelligence and meaning-making, through experience and reflection, and the involvement of the interconnections of things, as well as its future orientation, contributed a dynamic general understanding of what it is to know, and what it is that we can know. Democracy was a project yet to be achieved – one which required an equality of status of all individuals, as did education, whose aim was to promote individual growth. (Current 21st century educational theory is apparently similarly focussed – but with a different orientation, as I discuss below).

Dewey's position lost influence partly because it allowed for its interpretation as inherently relativistic, and it remained for Joseph Margolis at the end of the century to defend the establishment of a pragmatic "robust relativism" – a defence of truth within context. Margolis's thinking combined the rigors of logical analytic thought with the reality that final, decontextualized knowledge is unattainable. At the same time, and much more famously, Richard Rorty was developing what Margolis dismissed as "philosophy by other means" (Margolis, 2000).

Rorty's "replacement" of epistemology and of metaphysics by empiricism and naturalism (Rorty, 1980: 6) led to his accompanying "dropping" of any independent concept of mind and meaning making altogether, and the second chapter of his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* is called "the invention of the mind" (Rorty, 1980). While Rorty wanted human conversation to continue, and particularly "the conversation of the West", he did not want these conversations to "degenerate into enquiry" (Rorty, 1980: 272). Truth must be "given" to science (Rorty, 1989: 3–4). That the philosophical world was dazzled by this sleight of hand seems to have surprised even Rorty himself – and I argue that it left a political vacuum, giving to our neoliberal world an unwitting apologist, and dampening the chances of developing radically different approaches to entrenched and powerful disciplines within the academy, or of challenging their supporting political structures. From this impasse a philosophy of "robust relativism" may be the best way out.

2. Conceptions of the Mind and Knowing Initiated by John Dewey

In *Philosophy and Education* Dewey insists on a central role for active intelligence and reflection in establishing knowledge: "mind is precisely intentional, purposeful activity controlled by perception of facts and their relationships with one another" (Dewey, 1916: 104). Within a democratic population "the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education" and "the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth" (Dewey, 1916: 100) – which is very close to what would now be called "lifelong learning". Again in *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy* Dewey says, "There is apparently no conscious experience without inference. Reflection is native and constant", and he concludes "the time has arrived for a pragmatism which shall be empirically idealistic, proclaiming the essential connexion of intelligence with the unachieved future" (Dewey, 1917a: 111).

While receiving a large following in the early decades of the century, Dewey's ideas were always open to the charge of relativism, and at the time of the Second World War they lost traction when, under the influence of analytic philosophy, the discipline became a highly technical, logical, word game. This has concentrated "not on ideas in the mind but on the language in which the mind's thinking is expressed" (Bullock et al, 1988: 30) and it took the emphasis away from meaning making, and the discipline away from the concerns of the real world. Morris Dickstein says, however, that while "the [Second World] War discredited the kind of enlightened planning with which pragmatism had become identified" its eclipse was never complete and that "during the very period when it seemed least fashionable the pragmatist revival was on the way"(Dickstein, 1998: 9–10).

One of its defenders in the latter part of the century was the philosopher Joseph Margolis whose defence of a "robust" relativism was minutely argued in his book *The Truth About Relativism* (Margolis, 1991). Margolis's method of analysis was described by one commentator as "analytic baroque" – which Margolis himself approved "because it signifies (to me) an honest effort to depart from the ingrained habits of analytic philosophy without abandoning its genuine sense of rigor" (Margolis, 1991: x). He argues that analytic philosophy simply assumes that its method of analysis will establish "justified true belief" despite the fact that, as he sees it, "the use of true is inseparable from our theories about what we mean by knowledge and the apprehension of particular truths" and therefore " there is no way of giving conceptual priority to alethic questions over epistemic or ontic ones". Thus "neither logic nor epistemology is an autonomous discipline though modern analytic philosophy has always mistakenly supposed they were" (Margolis, 1991: 8). However,

> The robust relativist shares with the opponents of relativism the ordinary alethic options of bivalent and many valued truth-values: his distinction rests rather, in theorising that, in this or that sector of inquiry, the intelligible world can intelligently support truth claims that, on a bivalent model, would yield inconsistency or self-contradiction.

And the implications of this are profound for the engaging with the world:

> Vindicated, relativism has the force of deepening, in the most profound way, every incipient doubt regarding the presumptions of cognitive fixity, certainly unconditional truth, irrelevance of context and history and personal and societal perspective in both theoretical and practical matters – hence of course, regarding the timeless reliability of specialist pronouncements on the grand Truth of anything – once and for all. (Margolis, 1991: 2)

Again "Relativism presents itself as a philosophy of the free spirit, of all those unwilling to divide the world between the revealed and the debateable. There are no such divisions”. Most significant here is the implication that only within a relativist position can there be an enabling of context, history and debate to inform what can be deemed as true, and consequently the meaning of things to be both potentially discoverable and infinitely debateable. Therefore, while Margolis argues against the final truth claims of analytic philosophers, his understanding of relativism enables critique to have a purchase on finding the truth in politics and in practical affairs within context. It is thus an enabling approach not a disabling one – bringing back into play the concerns of the real world.

> Margolis evokes the legacy of the ancient Greek philosopher and relativist Protagoras (“man is the measure”) but sees this as being virtually unrecoverable – only known through his critics, notably Plato and Aristotle. More recently, Carlin Romano has reaffirmed the legacy of the 4th century BCE relativist philosophy of Isocrates whose works *are* extant, seeing them as bearing remarkable similarities to the thinking of Dewey as far as a focus on practical problems and public life are concerned: “think of Isocrates here as Deweyonicus” (Romano, 2013: 551). Only accidents of history prevented these thinkers from attaining the central role in our conceptions of philosophy always held by foundational truth-seekers.

3. Conceptions of Mind and Knowing as Conceived by Richard Rorty

While Rorty saw his philosophy as entirely compatible with Dewey’s, (“I think of myself as sharing John Dewey’s political attitudes and hopes, as well as his pragmatism”) it seems that their conceptions of the independent role of mind and meaning are opposed at almost every point. Rorty was initially a professor of English Literature and a philosopher operating within the dominant analytic tradition. He explains his continued use of its method in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* as follows:

> The reason why the book is written largely in the vocabulary of contemporary analytic philosophers, and with reference to problems discussed in the analytic literature, is purely autobiographical. They are the vocabulary and the literature with which I am most familiar and to which I owe what grasp I have of philosophical issues. Had I been equally familiar with other modes of writing philosophy this would have been a better and a more useful book. (Rorty, 1980: 8)

Rorty seeks to refute Cartesian dualism by suggesting that our understanding of the independent concept of mind is merely intuitive and should now be superseded by “physiological methods” (Rorty, 1980: 10). “It seems clear, at least since Wittgenstein and Sellars, that the “meaning” of typographical inscriptions is not an “immaterial” property they have, but just their place in a context of surrounding events, in a language game, in a form of life” (Rorty, 1980: 25). This can be seen as an example of Rorty’s recruiting of other philosophers into his way of thinking – often without strong grounds for doing so. In *Philosophical Grammar*, for instance, Wittgenstein indicates that grammar itself is insufficient to indicate meaning: “Is the meaning only in the use of words? Is it not the way this use interlocks with life?” (Wittgenstein, 1969: 65). But I digress. Rorty then goes on to dissect the idea of mind by various analytic tools concluding that “we shall treat the intentional as a sub-species of the functional” (Rorty, 1980: 32) and that “insofar as dualism reduces to the bare insistence that pains and thoughts have no places, nothing whatever hangs on the distinction between mind and body” (Rorty, 1980: 69). However, the fact that Rorty can prove that the concept of mind cannot rightfully be placed within conventional analytic categories can have no final significance in undermining the existence of mind as distinct from the body from a common sense point of view. The inclusion of another consideration such as the quality of “discrimination” could, for instance, immediately reopen this debate – and he admits that he is “painfully aware of the lacunae in the story [he has] told” (Rorty, 1980: 69).

However, Rorty, although he uses their methods, is concerned overall to undermine and displace analytic philosophy. He therefore falls back on literature and hermeneutics to produce “edifying philosophy” and “conversations” – particularly ones which will encourage us to continue “the conversation of the West” (Rorty, 1989: 394) – an injunction which would hardly be currently well received by those nominally outside of a western orbit. Rorty’s naturalism necessarily involves biological determinism. His understanding is therefore that we are, at bottom, the playthings of a system that constitutes us through our biology: “Some atoms-in-the-void account of micro-processes within individual human beings will [eventually] permit the prediction of every sound or inscription which will ever be uttered”. In this scientific “reality” Rorty is certain “there are no ghosts”. But if we are not responsible, we cannot be accountable. Like the proles in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* we can be allowed to think whatever we like because, ultimately, our ideas will not matter.

Which brings us to consider the implications of Rorty’s interpretation of a key instance in Orwell’s book. This involves the main protagonist, Winston Smith, concluding that “the obvious, the silly and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true. Hold onto that! The solid world exists…stones are hard…water is wet… Freedom is the freedom to say that two and two equal four. If that is granted all else follows” (Orwell, 1990: 84). As H. O. Mounce argues, it is an extraordinary reading of this passage to suggest, as Rorty does, that this can be read as saying that:

> It does not matter whether “two plus two is four” is true, much less whether this is “subjective” or “corresponds to external reality”. All that matters is that if you believe it you can say it without getting hurt. In other words what matters is your ability to talk to other people about what seems to you true, not what is in fact true. If we take care of freedom, truth can take care of itself. If we are ironic enough about our final vocabularies, and curious enough about everyone else’s, we do not have to worry about whether we are in direct contact with moral reality, or whether we are blinded by ideology, or whether we are weakly “relativistic.” (Rorty, 1989: 176–177)

But it is surely precisely Orwell’s point that without the truth we cannot take care of freedom (or morality, or false ideologies). The simple truth that all of us are able to find unaided is, in the last resort, our only guarantee of freedom. If, however, our powers of independent thought are only illusory, if we can be swayed this way and that by “strong poets”, this ensures that we can not only recreate ourselves but that others can recreate us. If by means of terror or misinformation we renege on our beliefs, there is nothing for us to hold onto – we are at the mercy of the Party. Mounce holds therefore that Rorty and Orwell’s character O’Brien who “re-programmes” dissidents so that they come to love the system “differ in their politics but in their philosophy they are indistinguishable” (Mounce, 1997: 228). The more serious problem is however, that philosophy and politics *cannot* be thus separated. A politics (the holding of power) without a population who have access to independent, grounded, human thought or morality will inevitably turn out to *be* the politics of *Nineteen Eighty-Four.*

4. The Implications of Rorty’s Position for Politics and Education

In Margolis’s estimation “all philosophy is political” (unpublished comment, Stara Lesna, 2000), but the thrust of Rorty’s second major work, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity,* is his controversial attempt to divided “private irony” from public liberalism – philosophy from politics. His idea that philosophy has no power to underpin or to debunk other areas of culture means that it cannot underpin (or debunk) a political programme. The philosophical endeavour, the realm of the “ironist” must remain an individual and private concern. Liberals are just a self-appointed group who happen to think that cruelty is the worst thing one can do. Their public commitment has no basis in theory. The lucky chance that led to liberal, Western, democratic systems proliferating since the Enlightenment, is simply due to a fluke of evolution which provided appropriate grounds for these new metaphors (“re-descriptions”) taking root and flourishing at the time (Rorty, 1989: 16). This would also seem to be very much at odds with Dewey’s regret that in his day “direct preoccupation with contemporary difficulties is left to literature and politics’ rather than being appropriately the concern of philosophy” (Dewey, 1917b: 5).

Rorty’s position also undermines any attempt to bring issues of power into the discussion: “without traditional concepts of metaphysics we cannot make sense of the appearance-reality distinction and without this distinction one cannot make sense of the notion of "what is really going on". "No more metaphysics, no more unmasking" (Rorty in Mouffe, 1996: 14). A political stance that "drops" the notion of power in this way might be seen as equivalent to a theory of mind that "drops" the idea of mental capacity. It may be convenient but it is hardly conducive to conclusive argument! – and each must ensure the continuance of current received wisdom and scientific reality. In this regard, it is perhaps unfortunate that political ideas of "unmasking" the hidden operation of power, initiated by Karl Marx in 1848, have remained almost exclusively within the realm of politics and within the armoury of the far left, when powerful disciplinary positions are equally susceptible to "false consciousness" and both require the exercise of independent, contextualised intelligent thought to disentangle the true from the false.

This political stance of Rorty's was criticised extensively at the time particularly by Nancy Fraser – but also by others, including Simon Critchley who pointed out that "Rorty's definition of liberal as ethico/political … pays no attention to the economic liberalism… which is indeed in the process of rapidly and violently globalising itself, more often than not without any accompanying commitment to tolerance and the abhorrence of cruelty" (Mouffe, 1996: 23).

Although Rorty was never himself active in politics he responded to critics who urged him to make his political position clear in a book developed from lectures he gave at Harvard called *Achieving our Country.* Here he accused the then fashionable post-structural ideas of the continental intellectuals of failing to be involved with politics on the ground – contrasting them with the engaged left supported (and practiced) by Dewey. The most interesting upshot of this book in recent years, however, has been its prophetic foresight of the rise of Donald Trump:

> Members of labor unions, and unorganized unskilled workers, will sooner or later realize that their government is not even trying to prevent wages from sinking or to prevent jobs from being exported. Around the same time, they will realize that suburban white-collar workers – themselves desperately afraid of being downsized – are not going to let themselves be taxed to provide social benefits for anyone else. At that point, something will crack. The non-suburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking for a strongman to vote for – someone willing to assure them that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesmen, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots. (Rorty, 1998, quoted in the *New York Times*, Nov 20, 2016)

While this indicates extraordinary foresight on Rorty's part, the question remains as to whether he provided any philosophical tools for its amelioration, or for the recovery of Dewey's project of achieving true democracy over time. A denial of any possibility of unmasking hidden powerful interests, or entrenched disciplinary knowledge (particularly in disciplines such as economics and genetics), or of drawing on extraordinary human powers of intelligent decision making, it could be argued, must leave the situation unresolved and the current entrenched divisions still in place.

In contrast to Rorty's generally optimistic, forward-looking analysis of the possibilities of American politics at the turn of the century, is Margolis's sobering global vision following 9/11:

> The reduction of extreme disparities in goods and rights affecting survival, quality of life and perceived injustice is no longer a matter of extraneous benevolence but rather one of war and peace and survival itself. *We can no longer live in peace if most of the world does not live nearly as well as its most privileged part* (emphasis in the original). (Margolis, 2004: 199)

5. Pragmatism as the Testing of Truth

I believe that while it cannot be the role of philosophy to offer alternative truths to disciplinary knowledge it can nonetheless be its role to set up for debate the basic assumptions of existing disciplines, and to require their practitioners to justify these on practical and logical grounds. John Maynard Keynes held that the difficulty in progress lies in escaping from old ideas and not so much in developing new ones, while Dewey believed that "we rely on precedent as authority only to our own undoing…final reliance on precedent entails some degree of class interest guiding us by the nose whither it will" (Dewey, 1917a: 69).

This Deweyan approach, while aware of its political implications, serves to distance it from Marxist and related critical approaches. If the kind of informed, experiential, experimental method defended by Dewey at the initiation of modern societies, has recently been successful in landing a "rover" with precision on Mars – the same approach can surely be used to disentangle currently entrenched disciplinary positions. Thus I argue for philosophy to assume the role of arbiter between currently entrenched positions and their logical alternatives and, as an educationalist, for students to be involved in these debates from the outset of their studies. How else can "the best thinking" be separated from the currently most powerful?

6. Economic Determinism

Since the intertwined disciplines of economics and politics are of crucial contemporary interest (and especially from a non-Western viewpoint as Margolis's sobering comment above indicates) I will digress here to indicate the apparent weaknesses in their assumptions which key authorities within the disciplines themselves have pointed to. The object is to argue for the importance of continuing not merely the conversation, but rather initiating a (logical, informed) debate in this field and in others – and from standpoints beyond the West.

The transition of economics from its initial status as a political and social science to its current status of a natural, mathematically determinable discipline, began as early as the 1950s under the influence of the economist Paul Samuelson. As a system supportive of the political regimes of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s this "neo-classical economics" increasingly held sway across the western world and is still the undisputed approach of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and all leading economics departments in the principal universities. Its status as scientific "truth" is illustrated by the fact that undergraduate students of economics are not generally expected now to study either economic history or its theoretical underpinnings. As in any natural science economic approaches are assumed to be the best and most rational currently available (Skinner, 2016). This negates Dewey's understanding that: "Any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles" (Dewey, 1917a: 182). That some of its most respected and successful practitioners are amongst its severest critics should allow for their voices to be heard.

The most successful and respected economist of the mid-twentieth century was almost certainly John Maynard Keynes who, in his book *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, said of classical economic theory that its characteristics "happen not to be those of the economic society in which we actually live, with the result that its teaching is misleading and disastrous if we attempt to apply it to the facts of experience". And of von Hayek's *Prices and Production,* Keynes commented that "It is an extraordinary example of how, starting with a mistake, a remorseless logician can end up in Bedlam" (Harrod, 1972: 513). While this is not an important book of Hayek's, it is significant that his ideas underpinned Thatcher's "TINA doctrine" (There Is No Alternative). Other leading economic thinkers in more recent times have included Paul Ormerod (one-time leading writer for "the Economist"), Ha-Joon Chang (reader in the Political Economy of Development at the University of Cambridge) and Janis Varoufakis (former finance minister of Greece). All have powerfully challenged the underpinning logic of this discipline, without any significant refutation of their arguments – but also without gaining any traction in the political or mainstream academic world.

While there is no space to debate the issues here, the economists involved in disciplines of Development Studies would be able to open up debates on the issue of third world debt which subsumes more than half the revenue of poorer countries – and can extend to European countries (as in the case of Greece) effectively denying any real development. They might require answers as to why the USA has always been open to bankruptcy as a means of reinstating individuals and companies within its borders (viz Donald Trump) but not for countries – although this has been proven successful historically; and why a Tobin Tax of less than one percent levied on all international financial transactions (as suggested by a Nobel prize winner in economics as long ago as the 1970s) could not powerfully address climate change, global epidemics and natural disasters.

Rorty says very little about economics and yet, however democratically inclined he clearly was, his philosophical instinct had to be to "give" economics to the economists, in the same way that he believed that "it would make for philosophical clarity if we just *gave* cognition to predictive science" (Rorty, 1989: 360).

7. Biological and Evolutionary Determinism

Of even longer duration has been the hegemonic standing of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and its attendant rationalist naturalism. This has become ever more entrenched over succeeding decades from a stage in the early 20th century when it lost support. Yet it remains only a theory – and debatable. As its potential implications are strongly supportive of the current economic and political hegemony, I will take my digression a little further before returning to my main arguments. Here also debate on the strength, or otherwise, of these underpinnings has been almost entirely closed down in the academy and thus in the curricula offered to undergraduates in the universities.

Just as Rorty was more tentative in his arguments than are his subsequent supporters – so Darwin was more tentative in his claims than are his current adherents. In order to indicate that his theories are open to debate, I shall therefore consider only two key doubts that Darwin himself expressed as to the soundness of his own theories. He admitted that if it could be shown that a development could only have happened if more than one new element had to appear simultaneously to make it work, then his conception of random mutation as the initiating mechanism of evolutionary advance would fail; and he also realised that to confirm his theories about the origins of new species (that is beyond the obvious truth of successful adaptations) "missing links", not only in the ascent of man but in all other species, would need to be discovered across the fossil records – but subsequent decades, and now centuries, involving huge expansion of the fossil records, have produced no further missing links. The origin of species thus remains obscure.

In connection with Darwin's concern about the simultaneous emergence of complex adaptations, in the early 1990s a group of eminent American scholars in the fields of biochemistry, evolutionary biology and philosophy of science, met to discuss their growing dissatisfaction with the currently accepted neo-Darwinian view of evolution, particularly in the light of recent spectacular discoveries concerning molecular biology. In a video of this meeting and its conclusions, one of the scientists involved, Dr. Behe, describes, as an example, the working of the bacteria flagellum as being "akin to an outboard motor" in its operation although several times more sophisticated and operating at 100 000 rpms. The group concluded that the molecular "machines" within cells, of which the flagellum is only one, are the most efficient machines in the universe – but also that all parts of each machine had not only to be assembled in perfect sequence but all were essential for its operation – that is, they all had to have been initiated simultaneously. This flaw in Darwin's theory thus had to wait 135 years to be exposed by irrefutable scientific evidence – but its significance has yet to be acknowledged. (The scientists themselves retreated to a position in support of "intelligent design" – guaranteed to outlaw them from further serious scientific consideration). Again, I put the opposing arguments simply to indicate that they *are* available, and again, no leading university requires its undergraduate students to debate them.

8. "Student Centred" Teaching and Learning

There is at least a superficially close resemblance between the currently fashionable educational goal of "student-centred teaching and learning" and Dewey's educational vision. In response to the rather diverse understandings which have developed around this idea, Louise Starkey has recently developed a conceptual framework for "student-centred education" which encompasses three overlapping dimensions. These she defines as being humanist, agentive and cognitive (Starkey, 2019). As envisaged by Dewey, in this educational approach each student must be treated as a unique human being whose individual cultural differences are respected, and the aim of education is to empower and develop students in order to enhance their intellectual growth. However, Starkey places these current goals firmly within the framework of neo-liberal thinking whose agenda is market-driven and where competition drives the market – and this is confirmed by wider reading within this literature which centres strongly on the need for student-centred learning to provide the economy with the necessary "twenty-first century skills". These involve the development of flexibility, autonomy and lifelong learning in order to respond to the demands of the future workforce (Guillermo and Humberto, 2018: 2) and to enhance the competitive capacity of the university in the global marketplace. Higher Education Institutions thus face continued political pressure to be "agile and responsive" to societal needs (Doyle and Brady, 2018: 316). However, these "societal needs" are understood as those required by governments and employers rather than those of the universities themselves (now experiencing diminished academic freedom) or of the students whose protests (particularly concerning their economics curriculum) generally go unheeded. While Dewey also saw employability as a legitimate aim of education, it was hardly the principal one.

African countries' universities have for some years sought to adapt to this "learner-centred" agenda, but successful implementation levels have been minimal (Xulu-Gama et al, 2018) – there is simply not enough money available for what is necessarily a highly labour-intensive teaching and learning system. Skilled lecturers, trained tutors, well-adapted learning spaces and small classes are needed for "tailoring teaching interventions and learning interventions to enhance each student's academic achievement… and to give formative feedback" (Starkey, 2019: 6). The reality is that this can only be achieved in elite institutions which must undermine Dewey's parallel democratic intention which sees education as requiring equality within a population if the agenda is not to be set by outsiders beyond the students themselves. And this agenda is increasingly set by political and economic interests, even in the case of the elite institutions.

9. Conclusion

Thus, it appears to a pragmatist living in the southern tip of Africa twenty years into the new century, that John Dewey's century-old agenda for education and for democracy are exactly what we need but that they have hardly progressed. That Richard Rorty's provocative pragmatism, if ultimately unconvincing to this observer, served importantly to revive a global interest in this most practical of philosophies, is universally acknowledged. It also appears that if Dewey's understanding of knowledge seeking and finding can have proven so successful in practical and scientific disciplines over the past century, it can equally be used now to disentangle the true from the false in current assumptions of knowledge where these are clearly failing to produce Deweyan practical, useable, democratic results. "Faith in the power of intelligence to imagine a future which is a projection of the desirable in the present, and to invent instrumentalities of its realization, is our salvation… surely a sufficiently large task for our philosophy" (Dewey, 1917a: 69). The current need appears particularly to be for a philosophy given free rein to *test the truth of current knowledge and no longer to seek it* – and this need is urgent while academic freedom appears increasingly to be compromised. This, I believe, will only be feasible within the bounds of a "robust relativism" of Margolis's type. In this, Margolis's vision of the early 1990s was prescient:

> I regard the defence of relativism as a strategic part of a much larger philosophical venture that is likely to collect the strongest currents at the end of the century and to dominate the best thinking of the new century. I say the "best" thinking because my own comfortable cynicism sees the world bent in the most determined way on deepening everywhere the influence of every benighted vision imaginable, at the same time the planet is being utterly used up. So the "best" thinking is desperately needed. (Margolis, 1991: x)

Viva Joe! Viva your continued influence![1]

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[1] This tribute is in the form of an anti-apartheid salute and rallying cry.

SOCIAL PRACTICE AND SCIENCE

SCIENCE AS CULTURAL PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT: This paper is a contribution to the contemporary understanding of science, which is crucial for understanding the world and humanity. This understanding is the task of philosophy and consists, according to the conception defended by the author, in the understanding of scientific practices. The author gives an account of the turn towards an analysis of scientific practice(s) within contemporary philosophy of science. Based on this, he outlines the concept of science as a sociocultural practice, which itself is conceptualized as two mutually intertwined forms of transactions: causal transactions within natural reality (natural and technical sciences), and meaningful transactions within sociocultural reality (social and human sciences).

Keywords: science, pragmatism, philosophy of science, scientific practice, cultural practice, John Dewey

1. Introduction: The Problem of Science Today and the Need for a New (Pragmatist) Philosophy of Science

The title of my paper might, at first sight, invoke two kinds of reaction: First, what nonsense is this? How could science be cultural practice? Or, second, what banality is this? Who would think of science as anything else? In reply, my claims are as follows: Science has always been cultural practice, but, alas, we have not always understood it this way. And if science is understood this way, what does that mean? Be that as it may, *the pragmatist conception of science as cultural (or sociocultural) practice* has not been common sense, nor has it been widely accepted. And this is why I want to delve into this issue here.

Science is plainly seen as a key phenomenon in the contemporary world, influencing human lives in an unprecedented way. Even more importantly, it has the potential to radically change the human future. On the other hand, science – in combination with technology (the 4th industrial revolution) and, for that matter, under the direction of certain type(s) of politics – could bring humanity to the brink of equally radical *existential risks*. Thus, despite the longstanding efforts of philosophers to understand science, these issues are even more pressing today and require the attention of us pragmatists. John Dewey was already reflecting on this complex situation as early as 1949 (LW 16, 369–382) when he wrote about "the ambiguity, the two-facedness, of science with respect to good and evil in human life". By way of an answer, while rejecting the idea that science is irrelevant to human affairs as such, he proposed "to bend every effort to obtain the kind of knowledge still lacking" – that is "the absence of a knowledge genuinely humane". This absence is to be overcome with the decisive support of philosophy and intelligent politics. And this, according to Dewey, is the crucial intellectual work which "needs to be done". In the end, he called for "a definite change in the direction of philosophical inquiry" in much the same vein as what would become one of the key provocations put forth by Richard Rorty some decades later.

Thus, I want to stress that *science itself is a problem* – not just the solution to all human problems – and that scientific developments present new, serious problems for humans and society. Therefore, the crucial question for our days is this: *how do we see science?* How do we understand it and interpret it? My paper focuses on the pragmatist understanding of science as a kind of cultural practice based on contemporary pragmatist conceptions of practice and culture. Science, technology, politics and philosophy (even ethics) are things we humans practice in various kinds of historical, cultural ways and forms (or patterns). The pragmatist conception of *cultural (or sociocultural) practices* seems to me to offer great promise for conceptualizing science as a phenomenon that is decisively shaping humanity.

2. The Pragmatist Conception of Practice(s)[1]

Let me start with an outline of a pragmatist philosophical theory of practice. It is not identical to the pragmatist concept of human action, although we lack precise and definite criteria for drawing a line between actions that are practical, and actions that are not. The *pragmatist concept of practice* is an expression of a pragmatist concept of the human being as a practical being. According to pragmatism, everything humans do is a kind of practice and, in particular, a kind of social practice, because all human existence is both practical, in the sense that it includes doing, as well as the social, in the sense that it always includes social aspects. There is no such thing as an "impractical human being" or complete "social isolation". Humans must interact with their environments in order to survive. These interactions comprise human agency, which is physical, real, and empirical. The necessary agency of a "practical enterprise" (LW1, 5) aligning its capacities with the requirements of its condition makes it practically necessary to adapt to nature whilst adapting nature to human needs. John Dewey put it as follows: "practical in its proper vital meaning is nothing more nor less than the whole conduct of life with respect to the medium, physical and cultural, in which one lives" (Dewey 2012, 218). Dewey's ontology, abolishing the traditional dualism of nature as object and human as subject, captures this human condition through the concept of experience. Life is practical, through and through. We practically interact with the world and among ourselves. This does not mean that we cease to be "rational animals," but that our thinking, mental activity, and intelligence are also primarily practical, even if not in the sense that they must serve action. Rather, they are practical in the sense of dealing with life-issues. These are the issues we have to deal with, provided we want either to survive or to live a good life.

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[1] In this section I draw on my chapter "Action, Practice, and Theory: Toward Pragmatist Philosophical Framing of Practice Theory", in Anders Buch and Ted Schatzki, eds., 2018. *Questions of Practice in Philosophy and Social Theory.* New York and London: Routledge, 31–48.

This starting point in pragmatism – known as the "practical starting point" (PSP)[2] – does not take practice as the final tribunal of all human efforts, examining their "practical consequences" and inquiring as to whether they make a "practical difference" or show "practical utility". Neither does it consider practice (however defined) to be the exclusive meaning of life (Bernstein 1971, 174). Last but not least, the pragmatist "principle of practice" is anti-dualistic and opposes elevating practice over theory or identifying the practical "solely with physical or mundane labors" (LW4, 223–227). Pragmatism, like any philosophy, is a distinct way of thinking–an intellectual practice – for which "Meaning, Truth, Value, Inquiry, Knowledge, and Action" are the dominant concerns (Thayer 1981, 15). Whether we make practice (within nature) the starting point or maxim or ultimate reality, it should be clear that:

> One major characteristic of pragmatist thought is that pragmatists turn their attention to human practices and habits. Philosophical views and concepts are examined in such practical, experiential terms. However, this is not to say that practice is "prior to" theory; rather no sharp dichotomy between theory and practice is presupposed in the first place. Even the most scientific and philosophical matters are examined in the light of their potential connections with human practical action. (Pihlström 2011, 2)

If there is any meaningful priority of practice, it "is neither in temporality nor in ontology but in functionality. Practice is a test of a theory's value for our practices or habits, which, after all, are constitutive of our lives" (Pihlström 2011, 38).

What, then, is practice according to pragmatism? There are three concepts (at least) that may serve as the foundation of the pragmatist philosophical theory of practice: *experience*, *habit*, and *transaction*. All of them fit into the "ontological-anthropological" anti-dualist turn, with which the concept of practice is to be developed in accordance as an ontological concept alongside the traditional epistemological (and mentalistic) concepts employed in theory of knowledge. Indeed, the concepts of theory, knowledge, truth, value, meaning, inquiry, and so forth, are better framed through the concept of practice, or practices. Thus, the counterparts for developing the pragmatist concept of practice could also be the Wittgensteinian concept of "forms of life" or the Heideggerian concept of "being-in-the-world." Such a strategy even brings the pragmatist concept of practice closer to the theoretical concepts of Bourdieuan practice. From the pragmatist philosophical viewpoint, human practice may be conceptualized via the concepts of experience, habit, and transaction either analytically or synthetically; that is, each of them may serve as the basis for a pragmatist philosophical theory of practice, or they may be taken together as explicating various aspects of practice: experiential, habitual, and transactional. In other words, human life practice may be understood as experience or as habit or as transaction or as all of these in unity. Seeing the former as practice gives them active, existential, social, and transformative dimensions.

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[2] The phrase was coined by Browning (1998) and has since been adopted by contemporary pragmatists in general. It is developed in more detail in the work of Hildebrand (2003, 70–74).

I contend that the most promising option for the pragmatist philosophy of practice is the concept of *transaction* (Dépelteau 2015). It derives from pragmatist ontological holism and interactionism which hold that all reality is a network of interconnections. But transactionism both includes and transcends interactionism when it comes to social practices, which function not only in the context of organism-environment interactions, but also in the context of human social interactions. Transactions are practical because they are relations of active interdependence and exchange between real entities. Transactions cannot be empty; there is always a mutual input/output of exchange involved. Thus, transactions are the source of coordination and of the emergence of new qualities, to which Peirce’s triadic ontology may be applied. Dewey depicted the fundamental meaning of transactions in his *opus magnum* (LW 1) but developed the concept much later by distinguishing between self-action, interaction, and transaction (LW 16). Transactional ontology is an approach which holds that all that exists is what it is on account of its role within the web of transactions between social agents and their environment, as well as among social agents themselves (cf. Garrison 2001; McReynolds 2017).

The important and inseparable part of this pragmatist theory of practice is the concept of *intellectual practice*.[3] Human activities such as scientific research, artistic creation, management planning, political negotiation, pedagogical instruction, spiritual meditation, and many others, include a great part of what has been labeled as “theorizing.” In their social practical contexts, they represent “intellectual practices,” and “immaterial labor” is inherent to these. In terms of Deweyan ontology, they are parts of “secondary experience”, whose role is to reflect on primary experience and to produce artifacts such as ideas, theories, discoveries, explanations, justifications, plans, projects, decisions, images, artworks, books, papers, mental cures, and the like. The concept of theory epitomized as a mental phenomenon, in opposition to practice, has to be abandoned in a pragmatic conception of practice. The line between intellectual and material practices is not to be drawn on the basis of an obsolete classical dualism (the difference between them lies not in the former being unpractical and the latter being practical), but by reference to their function in particular social orders.

From the point of view of (Deweyan) pragmatism, the function of “theorizing,” intellectual practices, and immaterial labor is to foster the growth of human and social life. However, if the role of primary experience is existential, questions about knowledge and values immediately arise concerning how the agents of material practices know what kinds of problems they must solve, what the solutions are, what goals they ought to follow, what values they should cherish, and so forth. In order to know and to have values, they must develop practical intelligence (practical wisdom, *phronesis*) within primary experience, or engage in “theoretical reflection” and thinking within secondary experience. Note: Let us not become confused by the term “secondary.” The sphere of the secondary experience is a real social sphere of life composed of social institutions whose mission includes all kinds of intellectual activities, from scientific research to artistic creation to philosophical thinking to spiritual services and the like. These institutions and their practices are by no means "secondary" in the evaluative sense; in order to function, they all need a relevant social organization, resources, finances, workers, managers, and so on. They perform intellectual practices whose social value is all the more pressing today in the era of the information and knowledge society.

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[3] According to Dewey (MW: 50), “we need to understand the difference between theory and practice as a difference between two kinds of practice”… The so-called separation of theory and practice means in fact the separation of two kinds of practice, one taking place in the outdoor world, the other in the study”. According to Rorty (1991b, 32), the “quest for disinterested theoretical truth is continuation of practice by other means”.

According to the pragmatist conception of practice, everything humans do as intelligent agents is a kind of practice. Theorizing is no exception. Theorists carry out intellectual practices, whereas "practitioners" carry out material and mixed semi-material/semi-intellectual practices. All are parts of the overall web of practical social transactions, including the armchair theorist, whose goal is not to interact with material objects in the outer world, but with ideas, concepts, thoughts, and the like. What do we need for such action other than our heads, minds or brains, and our books and armchairs? These are obviously the standard social conditions of intellectual work.[4]

Thus, theory is better understood as a kind of practice: science (knowledge production) is scientific practice, education (knowledge dissemination) is educational practice, art (beauty production) is artistic practice, and so forth. All are kinds of "creative intellectual practices" which have always played a crucial role in social life and it is a role that is now growing unprecedentedly. It is important to argue that just because scientists, teachers, professors, artists, philosophers, and so on, are "theoreticians," "academics," "intellectuals," and the like, neither they nor their social institutions are "practically useless". It is the other way around: their professional practices are of the utmost practical value, one that cannot be reduced to physical, empirical, economic, or technological significance. Such a reduction would lead to the elimination of creative and intellectual potential from human practices.

Thus, human thought and knowledge can be reconceptualized in terms of social practices. Intellectualization *via* intellectual practices is moving to the forefront of human social life, which now increasingly depends on knowledge and idea-production. Even though these practices "do not bake us bread", they can, nevertheless, tell us how and where to find this bread; that is, how to survive and prosper. These are the key cultural practices – the creative intelligent practices we all depend on (more than ever).

3. Scientific Practice as Cultural Practice

So, again, what is science? The standard view has defined science as *knowledge* – the best and the highest human knowledge possible (objective, neutral, critical, verified, etc.) – while knowledge is defined as the representation of reality ("mirror of nature"), as propositional knowledge ("true justified belief").[5] In other words, this "static" (even rigid) notion of science is the extension of epistemology, and if it had anything to do with the concept of practice, it traditionally included such activities as: searching for truth and/or certainty; obtaining and collecting data; constructing theories; explaining and interpreting facts and relations; understanding discovered phenomena and discovering new phenomena; solving problems; justifying and proving claims; articulating scientific laws. These are all kinds of epistemic activities, but they were not, however, taken to be "scientific practices" until "the practice turn" came about in science studies in the 1970s.[6] Science, itself a practice, has instead been viewed as the opposite of practice (and *vice versa*). If science has anything to do with practice – is "practical" – it has to be applied, implemented, "materialized", become socially useful and relevant, and so on, as if it were outside of practice (and *vice versa*). But to acquire knowledge (producing it), there must be someone doing science practically in the practice of inquiry.[7]

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[4] The claims about the social organization of intellectual practices might seem obvious to someone living and working within a standard Western liberal democracy; however, the recent neoliberalization of social life, and in particular its creative intellectual spheres, puts the standards and values on which these spheres and their workers depend in jeopardy (see e.g., Ward 2012). These social issues are even more pressing in European post-communist countries like Slovakia, where creative academic workers are confronted by a mixture of neoliberal and post-communist political and economic strategies devaluing their work.

[5] Prof. Hasok Chang aptly shows in his work that in traditional philosophy of science, science has been approached mainly from an epistemological-representationalist point of view, not from an operational-praxeological practice point of view, and from an autonomist rather than a contextual cultural standpoint.

The pragmatist philosophical understanding of science as practice (social and cultural) has, however, a slightly longer history. It is rooted in Peirce's anti-Cartesian concept of the scientific method of inquiry which is always social inquiry; following James's anti-positivistic, pluralistic, and humanistic image of cultural practices in which science has no privilege over other social practices (philosophy, arts, religion, common sense); and culminating in Dewey's instrumentalist embeddedness of science in experience. "According to Dewey's pragmatism, scientific experience is neither elevated and holy nor qualitatively different from experiences people have in their daily lives. Science is always linked to the ordinary qualitative world… and simply represents a concentrated collection of tools that people have developed together in order to master and improve the world" (Brinkmann 2013, 151). These fundamentals were famously and more systematically developed by Kuhn when he attributed historicity to science development and described the socio-cultural mechanisms of its functioning. For Rorty (1991a), science is in no way natural, which means it is a socio-cultural construction on a par with other human inventions. Echoing Nietzsche, all science is "human, all too human", and not an objectivist enterprise producing results that are universally valid for all humans in all times and places. Science itself changes and reflects and concerns various kinds of human interests (including political ones).

Is there anything special about scientific practices in relation to all other human practices? What they have in common is that they are all socio-cultural practices and come in two basic (ontological) forms: 1. Practices in which humans are in causal transactions with nature, and 2. Practices in which humans are in mutual meaningful transactions between themselves. In other words, according to the transactionist paradigm as outlined above, human life practice is to be re-conceptualized as the intersection of practical transactions: (1) between humans and nature (which are causal and primarily nonlinguistic), and (2) between humans and humans (which are meaningful and primarily linguistic). What we have to deal with here are sets of *nonlinguistic causal practices* and of *linguistic meaningful practices*. The complexity of this situation is that these sets of practices overlap; for instance, nonlinguistic practices are substantially mediated by linguistic ones. Humans are intentional socio-cultural agents and so it is through language that they mediate the practices through which they cope with natural causal transactions. Causal nonlinguistic transactions between humans and nature are life-transactions that decide the human lot, but their processes and outcomes depend on meaningful linguistic practices intervening between humans and humans.[8] Both kinds of practices also mutually transact in such a way that practices based on meanings serve as the instruments for practices based on causality.[9]

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[6] For a conception of science as practice see e.g., Pickering (1992; 1995).

[7] This is the focus of the work of such recent authors in the philosophy of science as Joseph Rouse (2002) and Hasok Chang (2011), founding and active members of the Society for Philosophy of Science in Practice (SPSP) since 2006.

[8] This is analogous to Dewey's two kinds of experience: primary and secondary. Within primary experience humans transact with nature through their habits and practices that are causal. Within secondary experience humans transact with nature through their habits and practices that are meaningful. The overall purpose of primary experience is human survival, whereas the purpose of secondary experience is the reflection of the primary experience through intellectual means in order not only to make survival more efficient, but also to make it richer and consummatory.

[9] In this context, we can explain the unfortunate dualism between experience and language, or between Dewey and Rorty (classical pragmatism and neopragmatism). Rorty may have neglected the concept of experience in his desire to replace it with the concept of language; nevertheless, he did use the pragmatist concept of practice, such as the concept of linguistic practice. Moreover, he outlined the pragmatist concept of cultural practices epitomized by philosophy as cultural politics. It is understandable that Rorty himself focused only on "internal"

The concept of scientific practice itself also has two basic forms: 1. Scientific practices that involve and inquire into causal transactions with natural reality (natural and technical sciences), 2. Scientific practices that involve and inquire into meaningful transactions with socio-cultural reality (social and human sciences). Of course, the two forms include both of these, albeit in different measures. Natural and technical sciences (empirical, experimental), which function based on understanding and executing causal transactions, use meaningful transactions as their instruments as well. While human and social sciences, which function based on understanding and executing meaningful transactions, use causal transactions as their instruments as well. Thus, this division between the two kinds of practices should not be seen as absolute, in much the same way as the relative divide between nature and culture is not absolute. Nature provides the ontological framework within which any culture can originate and develop, and all culture is part of nature, but the natural/cultural distinction is given by the distinction between the non-linguistic/linguistic and causal/meaningful transactions humans conduct with the former (nature) and within the latter (culture). This is where the line between the two kinds of human transaction can be drawn, but it does not exclude either their meaningful and linguistic transactions with nature or their causal and non-linguistic transactions among themselves. And this is why human transactions with nature are impossible without culture and outside culture, just as transactions between humans are impossible without and outside nature. All scientific practices have these two dimensions, and so the absolute division between natural/technical and social/human sciences should finally be abandoned.

It is not enough to understand science as practice in its technical and technological meaning. Culture itself is a set of practices (Brinkmann 2013). In pragmatism all human practices are social and cultural, including the practices of natural and technical sciences. On the one hand, every science is and can only be part of culture as a human invention. Science is embedded in culture, the science-culture relationship is internal, not external. Culture provides not only a background or framework for science, which cannot develop any other way than within human culture because all science is human science and nothing more. According to Dewey (2012), culture is all that is the result of human practices within nature; that is, it is humanly "transformed nature". Science is one of the key practical factors in these transformations, while culture is a part of every science-as-practice, and in this respect, we speak of "scientific culture" as a way of doing science.

So, what does the phrase "all science-as-practice is cultural practice" mean? One important characteristic of this pragmatist philosophy of science-as-cultural practice is *historicism*. There is no such thing as a universal and united science; instead, science developed within its historical forms, that is, in a plurality of sciences that both developed historically within societies and cultures and that have been maintained within those societies and cultures. Thus, the criteria for "demarcating" science from non-science (or anti-science) are also historical (and one of the best pragmatist images of the history of science was famously provided by Kuhn).

Another characteristic – the most important one – is the *value-ladenness and normativeness* of science-as-cultural practice. It is not possible to have culture without values and norms.[10] Consequently, we cannot have scientific practice without values and norms. Values – epistemic and non-epistemic, cognitive and non-cognitive, scientific and non-scientific – are inherent to all scientific practice and not brought in from the external context, as pragmatists from Dewey to Putnam have always argued. Brinkmann (2013, 61) writes: "We know

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(horizontal) human transactions, i.e., transactions based on meanings, and in particular linguistic meanings, since he saw them as having a crucial mediatory role in all (vertical) human practices. Moreover, Peirce was also interested in the meanings of actions and practices, not only in the meanings of linguistic structures.

[10] I discriminate between values and norms, but there is insufficient space to discuss the difference here.

something about the world by doing something with it. If we do something good with it, we acquire valid knowledge that can help us solve our problems and move us forward in our life process… Science is not, as the positivists believed, free of values, for value is characteristic of all practical action inasmuch as values are involved in the execution of these activities…" in every way, for good or for bad. This axiological dimension of scientific practice is an inherent part of the pragmatist philosophy of science. We cannot overlook the fact that science as practiced always depends on the culture within which it is practiced. The role of philosophy of science is to "make explicit" the cultural values and norms which frame science-as-practice.

4. Conclusion: Science as Cultural Value

The key philosophical question concerning science, its social mission and progress, is its value for humanity. What is all science good for? From the pragmatist stance, this question cannot be answered beyond the culture and cultural meaning within which all science is practiced and developed. The goals of science are the goals it takes on from and within culture (or cultures) and its (their) values. One example of the cultural value of science is *scientism* or science for science's sake. To reply that the meaning of science is genuine knowledge is no solution, for the same question applies here too: what is the meaning of knowledge? Why and for what do we need knowledge? Even replies such as "Knowledge for knowledge's sake" have their cultural roots in the ancient value of theory as "contemplative practice". But in the modern era, first, science has become the universal tool for social and human progress and, second, scientific progress itself has become the universal goal of social and human progress, as if science has to guarantee humanity that all its other goals and desires will be fulfilled.[11] From the pragmatist philosophical point of view, this appears to be very like "science-as-ideology" or even "science-as-mythology". Perhaps we should go back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and again ask the Academy of Dijon the (somewhat rephrased) question to which he ventured a reply: "Has the progress of the sciences and arts – that is of culture – contributed to the moral progress of humanity?" If we do not understand and describe science as cultural practice, there is no way we can reply.[12]

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[11] Cf. the Slovak Academy of Sciences' slogan: "Science is the future, the future is science!"

[12] This work was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the Contract no. APVV-18-0178.

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ON THE POSSIBILITY OF INTELLIGENT PLANNING: A DEWEYAN PERSPECTIVE ON DISPERSED INTELLIGENCE AND RATIONAL DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION

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ABSTRACT: Liberal scholars have often warned that social planning must not be modeled after the image of individual rational choice. Jon Elster for example alleges that unlike in the case of deliberating individuals who can directly access and query their personal knowledge, in political settings information and intelligence are dispersed amongst the members of a community and cannot be centrally accessed in a useful manner. I outline how Dewey's philosophy of intelligent action and democracy could solve the problem of collective intelligent coordination. Instead of relying on mysterious social self-organization, or piecemeal approaches to social planning, Dewey offers a theoretical foundation for intelligent problem-solving on the societal level. His notion of science plays a central role in modelling a pluralistic democratic and capable process, avoiding the two extremes of technocracy and disintegration.

Keywords: social intelligence, rational social planning, democracy, inquiry, Dewey

Deliberate Planning and Dispersed Intelligence – A Liberal Worry

In his essay, "The Possibility of Rational Politics," Jon Elster (1991) explains why policy-making should refrain from trying to conform to a model of rational action taken after the image of individual rational choice. He voices several indictments against using the same measure of rationality for collective deliberation (planning) and individual forms of decision-making. One of these indictments states that, unlike rational choice in individual decisions, in collective decision situations information and intelligence are dispersed amongst the members of a community, where they remain ultimately beyond the reach of any central planning agency. In this paper I will look at this question and ask what Dewey's notion of collective or "effective" intelligence has offered to mitigate the daunting conclusion that rational or intelligent social policy making should be impossible.

A number of liberal scholars (e.g. Hayek 1945, Popper 1961) made the point against socialist planning, that a central planning bureau cannot make efficient decisions because it lacks access to crucial market information that remains dispersed among both decentralised consumers and producers, and only manifests itself in free equilibrium prices. If rationality were defined as making the best use of all available knowledge in guiding action and strategies, the very idea of rational social planning would be spurious. Some libertarian anarchists and incrementalists argue that centralised planning would fall far behind those decentralised social deliberation mechanisms like free markets, or simply private life choices, which are better apt to employ prevalent intelligence and dispersed knowledge bases. Others tend to trust in incremental patchwork policies that rely on improvisation and offer *ad hoc* solutions to problems in a trial and error fashion (Popper 1961, Lindblom 1973).

A committed liberal, Dewey (1996 [1882–1953])[1] rejects all centralised forms of social control (cf. Ryan 1995 for an extended discussion of Dewey's dispute with Walter Lippman, DeCesare 2012). Planning intelligence cannot be monopolised by a ruling elite. Dewey further acknowledges that many aspects of intelligent social coordination do not require central planning or explicit public deliberation. That is, not all forms of *social* intelligence (i.e. intelligent forms of collective coordination) are necessarily the product of *public* deliberation. However, deliberate public intelligence requires participants to understand and plan their collective action. For Dewey, social benefits of decentralised and individual management of affairs need not be contrasted with public efforts at achieving social coordination.

Dewey rejects the idea that centralised authoritative planning would be the right method for solving the problems of society, but he also opposes those liberals who infer from the decentralised nature of skills and crucial information bases the need to eschew any form of deliberate collective planning (LW 11.32):

> When conditions had changed [transition from authoritarian to early liberal societies] and the problem was one of constructing social organization from individual units that had been released from old social ties, liberalism fell upon evil times. The conception of intelligence as some-

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[1] All references to Dewey refer to the collected works (Dewey 1996 [1882–1953]), and use the standard form of citation.

> thing that arose from the association of isolated elements, sensations and feelings, left no room for far-reaching experiments in construction of a new social order. It was definitely hostile to everything like collective social planning.

Dewey contradicted those who privilege *private* decision-making over the social and collective forms of deliberation because the argument of dispersed knowledge and intelligence does not imply an advantage of private over collective decision-making (LSA LW11).

To understand Dewey's conception of intelligent collective deliberation we must remember the intimate relationship between "knowledge" and "coordination" in his work (e.g. MW14, LW12, LW14)[2]; coordination is a transactional notion that sees agency as a set of processes and relations within a situational whole. According to Dewey, even the most personal beliefs cannot be fully understood as located in a private mind. They comprise a relationship between an agent and her (social) environment. Dewey speaks of "the intelligence, the knowledge, ideas and purposes that have been integrated in the medium in which individuals live" (LSA LW11.49). An IT consultant is dependent on the context of a highly developed technical surrounding and an infrastructure of business processes to which he must continuously adapt. Without this context his training and abilities would not only be useless, they would also be meaningless.

This insight is good enough to refute the claim that decentralised coordination must primarily rest on *private* beliefs or choice. We may also get the sense that decision-making is always a social process. But the argument does not yet indicate how we can rehabilitate the idea of deliberate and intelligent social planning on any significant collective scale.

The Public

Before discussing the possibility of a truly collective form of intelligence as a foundation for rational planning, I will take a brief look at Dewey's concept of the *public*. Dewey defines the public as that space where private actions and interactions have social externalities which require remedial actions and policy intervention (LW 2.252).

This concept can easily be misunderstood as a way of separating the realm of private management (negative freedom) from that of legitimate societal intervention. Here I suggest a slightly different reading. A sharp separation between the *private* and the *public* as two domains of sovereignty contradicts both Dewey's concept of the individual and his concept of a public sphere. According to Dewey, participation is constitutive for individual freedom. This is a stronger claim than saying that the individual is socially embedded or that community relations and a sense of belonging are constitutive for an individual's freedom to choose meaningful actions. For Dewey, participation in collective deliberation processes is necessary for the individual to grow to her full potential, even though Allan Ryan argues that *The Public and its Problems* aims precisely at distancing Dewey's position from the Aristotelian idea of a *zoon politicon* by giving the public a functional definition. I still maintain that Dewey's idea of modelling a nation as a "community of communities" still holds on to an organic understanding of a polity. On Dewey's account, the "public" is not merely a domain of policy intervention, separate from a protected space of individual freedom of choice; it is rather a platform for determining a shared way of life and as a source of genunie individuality.

Dewey's definition of the public as necessitated by externalities of private transactions does not imply the separation between domains of management and influence (state vs. private), but the distinction between two different aspects in human practices. Dewey's philosophy is particularly relevant in contemporary contexts where we are often reminded that most private decisions have unanticipated long term and remote consequences.

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[2] These two are not identical of course, since coordination can be achieved accidentally. Knowledge incorporates the anticipated consequences of our action into our coordination. It is defined as a disposition or a readiness to uphold coordination in a way that is able to "unify" a situation.

Beyond private decision-making and the laws of the market, we need a level of deliberate intelligent planning, because, by definition, we cannot leave these problems up to the chance of self-organisation, since that is precisely where they originate. How can we do justice to the insight that intelligence is potentially decentralised without falling back on the sceptical position of *laissez faire* liberalism or the *post hoc* and *ad hoc* repair workshop of incremental "piecemeal social engineering" (Popper 1961).

If we believe that invisible hands must not remain invisible and that people use intelligence and projective imagination to foresee ramified and long term consequences of their actions; if we, like Dewey, believe that people have a say in their destinies and can improve their situations with foresight and effort, we still need to ask *how* this may be possible. How can there be collective rational or "intelligent" forms of *deliberation*? How can we as collectives employ capacities like projective imagination, deliberate coordination of complex actions, the estimation of side-effects, externalities and long-term consequences, and sensible employment of resources? And how, Dewey would add, can we make sure that all these tools and instruments serve us to grow both individually and as a community?

Disenchantments

For a pragmatist like Dewey, the link between collective intelligence and social planning must be forged by experience and cannot remain an untested theoretical construct if it should inspire sufficient trust to embark on comprehensive social reforms. Sidney Morgenesser's quip that "pragmatism works in theory but not in practice" may yet turn out to be the greatest disparagement of Dewey's trust in the intelligence of deliberative democratic democracy as a form of scientific inquiry. In recent years, voices sceptical of the quality and intelligence of democratic participation in deliberative projects have grown louder (Brennan 2016).

J. S. Mill still imagined that the mere act of participation in democratic processes could enlighten people and enable them to appreciate other perspectives and sharpen their argumentative analytic skills in reasonable debates. Much to the contrary, recent empirical studies show that participation in political processes can narrow people's views and exacerbate ideological rifts and tribalism. Diana Mutz (2011) claims to offer evidence for an inverse relation between exposure to opposing political views in dialogue and the readiness to participate in the political process. People who can be motivated to participate in politics tend to be those who have limited "cross-cutting" political exposure and enforce their view in echo-chambers. This notion may boil down to the truism that individuals who are ready to invest themselves in the political process have an agenda expressing a well-defined political position, which must be one-sided enough to serve as a platform. However, this leaves open the empirical concern that additional exposure to the opposition and meaningful dialogue with other perspectives may dampen people's readiness to get involved in political deliberations.

Dan Kahan and Donald Braman (2006) affirm that non-expert voters have the intelligence or capacity to understand scientific facts and form their judgments independently. Yet People think and vote as members of reference communities. Their frames of reference work as "cultural commitment[s and] operate as a kind of heuristic in the rational processing of information on public policy matters", which does not amount to a disparagement of human intelligence but rests on an analysis of the social psychological *modus operandi* of real participants. Jason Brennan (2016) offers a rationalist explanation of tribal voting against better knowledge and readily accessible information. He claims that due to the low likelihood of having a measurable impact on outcomes in elections, people have a reason to use votes as mere expressions or "banners" of their social identities. I believe the argument from low stakes of swaying decisions to a rational justification of tribal voting is weak and it could easily be turned on its head; the low chance of swaying an outcome could just as well motivate individuals to vote in accordance with their better knowledge even where short-term personal interests were at stake. It would hardly be irrational, by a narrow definition of instrumental rationality, to cast a vote in favour of an environmental policy that demands sacrifices, if there are no good reasons to expect that casting the vote will causally bring about this policy (or that it could be prevented by it). That people clearly do not behave this way in reality requires a different explanation than reference to rational choice. Cultural commitment and identity seem very important here. More important and relevant for the present project is telling just what determinates collective intelligence relies upon; and more specifically, under what conditions the democratic deliberation process will become a source of intelligent planning rather than an expression of prejudice and parochialism.

Sloman and Rabb (2016) argue that we do not distinguish sharply between what “I know” and what “others know”. We rely on a “hive mind” (Fernbach and Sloman 2017) of shared knowledge that individually we can only partially comprehend in forming our action guiding beliefs. Again, but in a more convincing way, these authors argue that the “irrational” confidence in our limited individual knowledge relies on a “rational” trust in collective knowledge. This reliance on a “hive mind” cannot only explain, so Fernbach and Sloman, why people believe fake-news and conspiracy theories, but also why empirically well-founded scientific breakthroughs occur that we can collectively utilize. Perhaps this view underestimates the individual’s capacity to break out of the hive mind, or at least individually to grasp the key theoretical underpinnings that give any rational backing to shared background beliefs. Science must be understood as a shared practice where researchers necessarily rely on previously obtained results (Shapin and Schaffer 1985). These authors see science more as a system of trust than an institutionalized form of scepticism. At the same time, critical inquiry requires a high level of autonomy (Volbers 2018), and this autonomy is at the center of the very idea of science.

From the Scientific Community to Democracy

In his recent work on the rationality of experience, Joerg Volbers (2018) attempts to develop a non-formalist pragmatist theory of empirical scientific rationality. He identifies critical autonomy as the hallmark of modern rationality and he asks how a post-positivist, post-formalist approach to experience can achieve two things: (1) that reason maintains its critical autonomy in theory formation, while (2) experience provides a meaningful grounding and constraint for theorising. After post-analytic anti formalist philosophers like Davidson and McDowell have pointed at the impossibility of separating theory and observation or conceptual scheme and content, Volbers turns to Dewey for a fundamental reorientation of the modern notion of rational scientific autonomy. Volbers concludes a new determination of scientific rationality as a form of critical autonomy that does not see itself as standing beyond experience, but understands itself as part of an experienced situation, in which experience ceases to be mere recorded data and becomes an encompassing transactive process. The criteria and methods for rational empirical theory appraisal are not given independently from the process of making experiences. Dewey makes it clear that the methods (logic) of inquiry cannot be defined from outside the process of experiences, as both rationalists and classical empiricists presumed alike. Scientific rationality is not a separate instance presiding over experience, but it is part of the doings and undergoing that constitutes experience. Experience is itself conceived of as a potentially intelligent process. By the same token, scientific rational autonomy stops being an independent transcendental rational authority and it becomes the freedom to co-shape experience actively and to transform situations reflectively through inquiry. This further means that science cannot be defined by any fixed rational method or critical procedure. According to Dewey, that which makes science a distinguished rational process is the intelligence of inquiry to define and solve problems, to learn and transfer from one problematic situation to another and to develop and revise ever new methods of inquiry on the way.

In an analogous vein Talisse argues that deliberative democracy cannot rely on ultimate theoretical fix points and rational principles established prior to the democratic deliberative process:

> … [A] pragmatist deliberativism cannot be developed fully by a single theorist, and perhaps it cannot be developed fully at all; its continuing development is the work of a deliberating democratic polity (Talisse 2005 p. 98).

Just as does the political community, the scientific community finds itself "thrown" into situations. Science must develop and revise not only hypotheses and experiments but also its methods for testing, criteria for success and failure, values and priorities guiding research, and the paradigms within which it operates. Dewey's deliberative democracy is concerned with re-negotiating its agendas, policies, procedures, communication channels, public symbols, majorities and opportunities for participation. It too is lacking external theoretical anchors or authorities. Yet it has, at every moment, the opportunity to utilise the very same instruments of imagination and self-criticism that make science an intelligent pursuit; and this promise will go a long way in view of obvious prevailing shortcomings such as ineffective problem-solving, inefficiency or wastefulness with resources, poor communication and participation channels, and parochialism & tribalism. Pragmatism is a melioristic philosophy, in which intelligence will be measured by successive restructurings of problematic situations and experimental learning. For this reason, both pragmatist science and politics appear helpless and confused at times, which exposes both to charges irrationality and inefficiency. But this very position enables continuing learning and improvement within complex indeterminate and precarious situations.

Dewey has little use for the idea of science as gradually approximating *the* truth or even gradually "fixing beliefs." However, he agrees with Peirce in that beliefs and ideas can be knowledge in the full sense only when they are shared and owned by a community (PP LW2.371):

> Ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is but broken and imperfect thought.

For Dewey, as for Peirce, scientific inquiry is a practical matter through and through regarding both its occasion ("doubt") and its results ("belief"). But Dewey goes further than Peirce. Peirce never saw everyday challenges of living in a community as a direct source of a doubt which would call upon the scientific attitude and *scientific* inquiry as a response. Dewey's theory of inquiry is not limited to the institutional domain of scientific research, but is a theory of accomplishing life with its vagaries, and thereby very explicitly an approach to developing methods with which to meet intelligently the problems of smaller communities or larger societies. Therefore "doubt," or questions which occupy scientists, are not scientific problems *sui generis* but problems of life (Logic LW12.76):

> …science takes its departure of necessity from the qualitative objects, processes, and instruments of the common sense world of use and concrete enjoyments and sufferings.

It is for this reason that the scientific community inquiries into problems of the scientific *community* rather than merely into *scientific* problems. Science is not only about resolving doubt as a crisis of belief. It is by definition a communal enterprise directed toward inquiring into the problems of the community. It is only in this way that Dewey's idea of a scientific inquiry can become a model for social intelligence and planning.

Another thing that sets Dewey's pragmatism apart from scientific positivism is, according to Shields (2003), that "pragmatism links the scientific attitude with a rich participatory community." Dewey's innovation is not that he understands the importance of the scientific community in the inquiry process, but that he also understands this inquiry process as democratic in nature. This suggests that there must not necessarily be a trade-off between scientific expertise and democratic participation in planning processes. If Dewey is right, we might very well foster democratic participation for cognitive rather than moral reasons.

Alan Ryan explains, the ideal of democracy resembled that of science, as “it excluded the fewest alternatives, allowed all ideas a fair shot at being tried out, encouraged progress, and did not rely on authority. [Moreover] democracy offered no guarantees, any more than science…” (Ryan 1995 p.43). Others add (Talisse 2000 p.76):

> In democratic discourse, ideas are advanced and examined according solely to the evidence that can be marshalled in their support; conclusions and decisions are taken to be tentative hypotheses, proposals for action, subject to the test of future experience and hence to revision, social status and privilege are as irrelevant as is rhetorical skill.

For Dewey (Westbrook 1998 p.131, with a reference to Putnam):

> the quality of inquiry is affected by the degree to which that community is inclusive or exclusive of all the potential, competent participants in that inquiry and by the democratic or undemocratic character of the norms that guide its practice.

Moreover, both science and democracy internalise their self-understanding as *fallible* institutions (cf. Garrison 2000), and it is their unique ability to face up to this fact – to address failure and to improve – that gives them an advantage over known alternatives. In his commitment to *fallibilism* as a source of both scientific and political improvement, Dewey agrees with Popper (1945, 1959). Popper and Dewey differ, however, on the account of the epistemic and political role of community (Ryan 1995 pp.100-101). In contrast to Popper’s fragmented piecemeal engineering, Dewey offers a vision of the public as a “great community” in which people dare to engage in large-scale social reform projects, so long as these fulfil three conditions:

Deliberation must be inclusive and potentially engage all affected participants;

The methods and norms applied in deliberation must be compatible with a democratic commitment;

The deliberation process must be flexible and open-ended. It should neither start by establishing incontrovertible premises nor end with irreversible judgements.

Avoiding Two Extremes

Dewey explicitly encouraged social experiments and did not, like Popper, restrict them to incremental adjustments, while he abhorred large-scale social experiments of the kind he witnessed during his own lifetime. We cannot altogether avoid all large-scale social experiments: the formation of states and democracy itself is for Dewey an “experiment-in-the-making” (Boisvert 1998, 78).

The following quote could be read as a direct rebuttal of both comprehensive utopian social planning and unguided trial and error incrementalism (PP, LW2.257):

> It is not the business of political philosophy and science to determine what the state in general should or must be. What they may do is to aid in creation of methods such that experimentation may go on less blindly, less at the mercy of accident, more intelligently, so that men may learn from their errors and profit by their successes.

In deliberative democracy Dewey sees part of a solution to the dilemma between grand utopian visions and blind trial and error procedures. As we have seen, democratic institutions are for Dewey not merely a guarantee against abusive and dehumanising social experiments, they also incorporate the spirit of free and un-coerced scientific inquiry. Hence democracy promises to be a most effective tool in employing our knowledge, intelligence and foresight to achieve improvements.

For Dewey, intelligence is a social property because it incorporates individual achievements as well as individual failures into a collective method of inquiry and learning. Dewey charges some liberals with confusing complacency with social intelligence and thereby wasting the potential of the scientific attitude (LSA LW 11.32–3):

> The doctrine of *laissez faire* was applied to intelligence as well as to economic action, although the conception of experimental method in science demands a control by comprehensive ideas, projected in possibilities to be realized by action. Scientific method is as much opposed to go-as-you-please in intellectual matters as it is to reliance upon habits of mind whose sanction is that they were formed by ‘experience’ in the past. The theory of mind held by early liberals advanced beyond dependence upon the past but it

> did not arrive at the idea of experimental and constructive intelligence.

Democracy and Effective Social Intelligence

The idea that knowledge and truth can be communicated and shared makes Dewey optimistic about deliberative democracy as a form of scientific inquiry. He makes the important claim that "social-" or "effective intelligence" can be democratic in its very nature. His notion of "effective intelligence" is opposed to the enlightenment understanding of a "fixed and given reason" (Gouinlock 1996, xxxiii). This distinction can be compared with the definition of "intelligence" as either a specific *individually* possessed *talent* to perform complex analytical tasks, or as any effective social *condition* that enables people to apply adequate solutions to their complex problems. The latter depends much on social, technical and infrastructural conditions and less on individual talent to perform mental and computational tasks. As discussed above, sceptics worry much that democratic forms of collective deliberation will suffer severely where too many members have only a modest intellectual capacity. They would raise the concern that any form of participative democracy will manifest collective folly and impudence just as much as collective intelligence or wisdom.

Dewey's "social intelligence" or "intelligence in operation," in contrast, exists in culturally transmitted learned habits and practices. It draws from the stock of available knowledge in a society and it uses instruments of communication and education for their transmission. Moreover, it uses differences in beliefs and opinions as resources in a creative search for viable conceptions of associated life.

Dewey believes in the human powers of reflection, anticipation, and communication as tools of intelligent collective deliberation. He uses Hume's metaphor of stepping 'on the shoulders of giants.' I.e. he claims that our individual intelligence will be greatly enhanced if we live an associated life that enables collective access to sources of knowledge (PP LW 11.38):

> There are few individuals who have the native capacity that was required to invent the stationary steam-engine, locomotive, dynamo or telephone. But there are none so mean that they cannot intelligently utilize these embodiments of intelligence once they are a part of the organized means of associated living. The indictments that are drawn against the intelligence of individuals are in truth indictments of a social order that does not permit the average individual to have access to the rich store of the accumulated wealth of mankind in knowledge, ideas and purposes.

This position is not naïve with respect to the motivation and the quality of individual participation in democratic decisions. In fact, pointing at the role of "social order" as the true culprit of dysfunctionalities in the democratic process is the key for understanding the claim that the cure for the ills of democracy is not less but more democracy. Further, for Dewey this implies a powerful argument against the elitist claim that social planning should rest on experts' superior intelligence (PP LW 2.366):

> A more intelligent state of social affairs, one more informed with knowledge, more directed by intelligence, would not improve original endowments one whit, but it would raise the level upon which the intelligence of all operates. The height of this level is much more important for judgement of public concerns than are differences in intelligence quotients.

And this is evidently discordant with the ideal of "rule of the knower" (Brennan 2016), or with technocratic tendencies to leave the job of planning to a clique of experts.

However, what should planners do when facing a reality of many poorly educated and disinterested clients and a few expensive and well-informed experts? Should they encourage more participation and hope that measures to improve education and communication work? Should they start by engaging large numbers in defining new "public symbols," as Dewey suggests, or is this too hopeful and perhaps naïve?

I do not think so. While merely opening the floodgates of more and faster communication will not help structuring a policy situation, if planners want to benefit from the potentials of effective social intelligence, they should indeed work on the framework-conditions of the planning *process* as well as on the achievements of their ends. Building up the right channels of communication, enabling all actual and potential participants to access debates, and not excluding legitimate critical voices are vital in drawing upon this resource. These measures can be realistically achieved in any planning context. Most importantly, however, as democracy should be understood not as a procedure, but as an unfolding experiment, the planner must understand herself as part of the planning situation. She must cautiously define her role in the "shared experience" that a democratic process constitutes. Institutional re-designing cannot be a top-down process.

Dewey takes his faith in democracy not merely from the fairness of numerical equality in balloting procedures, but from the potential for a high quality of democratic deliberation. This potential cannot be taken for granted, however, but depends on much more than equal suffrage. He agrees with Walter Lippman that democracy can fail, but he draws more optimistic conclusions (LSA LW 11.39):

> It is useless to talk about the failure of democracy until the source of its failure has been grasped and steps are taken to bring about that type of social organization that will encourage the socialized extension of intelligence.

If social intelligence is to be found in the organisation of associated life rather than in the superior minds of experts or leaders, what sort of organisation should this be? Dewey refuses to give a definite answer as to what an intelligence-promoting social organisation should look like. Institutional arrangements must always remain the outcome of specific democratic inquiry in concrete contexts. However, Dewey discusses in detail the meaning of democracy as a form of associated life that employs intelligence as its method and standard.

I have already gathered some practical advice for planning that follows from Dewey's "scientific" understanding of democracy as collective intelligence. It must be added that we need not necessarily discount democratic participation as inferior to experts' rationality from a cognitive point of view. In fact, we might reject the strong opposition between participation and expertise, and rather search for a new role of experts' competences within democratic deliberation processes and as a constitutive part of social intelligence. A community that would discount the contribution of learned experts or scientific evidence would violate the understanding of democracy as an internalised scientific attitude just as much as a Lippman-style technocratic society.

Dewey does not advocate the marginalisation of scientific/technological expertise in his opposition to Lippman's technocratic model. On the contrary, experts occupy a crucial role in the build-up and communication of socially relevant knowledge. Experts must devote themselves constantly to understanding social relations and causal mechanisms, and at the same time refine their methods of inquiry and direct inquiry to "specific social problems" (DeCesare 2012). Experts can mediate and facilitate the democratic deliberation process so that collective intelligent decision-making does not require the "omnicompetent citizen" that Lippman postulated. What is essential is that they understand themselves not as determining the fate of citizens from the vantage point of a managerial elite, but that they define their own place withing the very democratic deliberation process they serve to facilitate. Dewey was an early precursor of what would later be coined an advocacy approach (Davidoff 1965). We may go back to Paul Appleby, as quoted by Shields (2003), to understand the role of experts in a Deweyan democracy: "Experts should be on tap, and not on top."

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HISTORY OF PRAGMATISM

WHY EMERSON?

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ABSTRACT: This paper is an attempt to explore the pragmatic core of Emerson's thought. While this core was evident to such thinkers as William James and John Dewey, it is routinely missed by those who read Emerson as a religious figure or as an idealist. Recovering Emerson's pragmatic core will enable us to recognize his ongoing value. By emphasizing especially "The Divinity School Address," I hope to show the power of Emerson's pragmatic side.

Keywords: Emerson, pragmatism, religion, Soul, Unitarianism

My title for this essay comes from John J. McDermott (1932–2018) who introduced me to Emerson as a philosophical thinker. McDermott once contemplated titling an essay that he was preparing on the importance of Emerson: "Why Emerson?"; but he later decided that, rather than using the question form, he would simply present the influence of Emerson on later American philosophers to demonstrate why he mattered. For McDermott himself, "[t]he central theme of Emerson's life and work is that of possibility." This theme was grounded in two aspects of his thought: (1) Emerson's "extraordinary confidence in the latent powers of the individual soul when related to the symbolic riches of nature," and (2) Emerson's "belief that the comparatively unarticulated history of American experience could act as a vast resource for the energizing of novel and creative spiritual energy."[1] My focus will be different from, although I believe compatible with, McDermott's; and I have reverted to his original title because I believe that his original question still needs to be asked.

I

Ralph Waldo Emerson has long held a secure, if modest, place in familiar histories of American philosophy.[2] He was, as we all know, the driving force behind American Transcendentalism which, with pragmatism, has proven to be one of America's two main philosophical traditions. Attempts to characterize this philosophical movement have been varied; but the majority of approaches would seem to agree that, in Emerson's hands, Transcendentalism represents an amalgam of aspects of at least the following: idealism, pantheism, mysticism, Platonism, Swedenborgianism, and Buddhism. In less rarefied terms, Transcendentalism is often represented as a romantic response to the growing materialism of American society. But what if Transcendentalism, freed from its accidental nineteenth century setting, is not a philosophical tradition that should be seen as an alternative to pragmatism at all? Moreover, what if much of the romanticism of Transcendentalism, that has appealed traditionally to writers and thinkers because of its intellectual intricacy and sheer beauty, is better seen as a distraction from the pragmatic core of Emerson's message: appreciating the sacredness of experience?

Emerson at times emphasizes the romanticism of his perspective.[3] In the essay "The Transcendentalist," for example, he maintains that Transcendentalism is a variant of idealism. "What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us," he notes, "is Idealism; Idealism as it appears in 1842" (193).[4] He then surveys the history of "[t]his way of thinking" in a series of historical situations. "[F]alling on Roman times," he writes, idealism "made Stoic philosophers." He continues that "falling on superstitious times, [idealism] made prophets and apostles; on popish times, made protestants and ascetic monks, preachers of Faith against the preachers of Works."

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[1] McDermott J. J. 1980. 90–91.

[2] I have in mind such volumes as: Isaac Woodbridge Riley, *American Thought: From Puritanism to Pragmatism and Beyond* (2/e 1923); Harvey Gates Townsend, *Philosophical Ideas in the United States* (1934); Herbert Wallace Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (2/e, 1963); William H. Werkmeister, *A History of Philosophical Ideas in America* (1949); Frederick Meyer, *A History of American Thought: An Introduction* (1951); Joseph Leon Blau, *Men and Movements in American Philosophy* (1952); Elizabeth Flower and Murray G. Murphey, *A History of Philosophy in America* (1977), two volumes; and Cornell West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (1989).

[3] Emerson's romanticism is particularly strong at places in such writings as: *Nature* (1834), "The Over-Soul" (1841), "Compensation" (1841), "Circles" (1841), and "The Transcendentalist" (1842).

[4] All of my citations of Emerson will be to Emerson, R. W. 1983.

Closer to his own day, Emerson notes that "on prelatical times, [idealism] made Puritans and Quakers; and falling on Unitarian and commercial times, [it] makes the peculiar shades of Idealism which we know" (198).

Emerson continues that "the Idealism of the present day acquired the name of Transcendental, from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant," who rejected what he saw as "the skeptical philosophy" of John Locke that "insisted that there is nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses." Kant's rejoinder to Locke was to maintain, in Emerson's words, that "there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself; and he [Kant] denominated them *Transcendental* forms" (198). As we know, Emerson never mined Kant's thought deeply for the fine points of his perspective, as many other philosophers have been wont to do. Rather, guided by the simplified reworkings of Kant at the hands of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and James Marsh,[1] Emerson drew from Kant's work the central distinction between Reason and the Understanding, and used it to defend his belief in the superiority of spirit over matter.

Emerson writes that thinkers "have ever divided into two sects, Materialists and Idealists." Members of the former class approach their experience as "the data of the senses"; the members the latter class emphasize consciousness and maintain that "the senses are not final." While the senses offer us "representations of things," they cannot tell us what "the things themselves" are. Hinting at his own position, Emerson indicates that "the materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances, and the animal wants of man," whereas the idealist, who looks for the spiritual aspects of our experience, insists on "the power of Thought and of Will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture." While no idealist would deny "the presence of this table, this chair, and the walls of this room," he continues, the idealist "looks at these things as the reverse side of the tapestry, as the *other end*, each being the sequel or completion of a spiritual fact which nearly concerns him." In this way, the idealist "transfers every object in nature from an independent and anomalous position without there, into the consciousness" (193–194). Materialists, on the contrary, living in a solid world "of sensation," reject the "fine-spun theories" of what they see as the idealistic "star-gazers and dreamers." At the same time, Emerson insists that no materialist can justify the belief that "uniform experience will continue uniform, or on what grounds he founds his faith in his figures, and he will perceive that his mental fabric is built up on just as strange and quaking foundations as his proud edifice of stone" (194–195).

For Emerson, the great mistake of the materialist is to focus exclusively upon "the external world," and to see our human existence "as one product of that." For the idealist, on the contrary, the inner world of consciousness is the source of our true life, and the outer world is ultimately "appearance." While the materialist focuses on the externals of our social life and politics, and on the materials that support our mortal existence, the idealist uses a "metaphysical" standard, "namely, the *rank* which things themselves take in his consciousness," whether higher and lower. "Mind is the only reality, of which men and all other natures are better or worse reflectors," Emerson writes. "Nature, literature, history, are only subjective phenomena." As a consequence, the idealist "does not respect labor, or the products of labor, namely, property, otherwise than as a manifold symbol, illustrating with wonderful fidelity of details the laws of being." Similarly, the idealist has no respect for the government, the church, charities, or the arts "for themselves." The experience of the idealist means that "the procession of facts" that we call "the world" in fact flows "perpetually outward from an invisible, unsounded centre in himself," and requires that we "regard all things as having a subjective or relative existence, relative to that aforesaid Unknown Centre of him" (195). I would suggest, however, that "The Transcendentalist," with its concentration on the negative aspects of materialism rather than on the fullness of experience, is atypical for Emerson, and to focus too closely on the romantic aspects of Emerson's thought will minimize his pragmatism.

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[1] See especially Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and James Marsh, "Preliminary Essay" (1829) to the same volume.

Emerson's position is not always this extreme. More typically, he writes in *Nature* that spiritual truths far outweigh the importance of the facts of the material world. "Idealism is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry or chemistry" (41). Our ideas are the key. For Emerson, "[a]s objects of science" these ideas "are accessible to few men" at present; but he reminds us that "all men are capable of being raised by piety or by passion, into their region." The challenge that we all face is to approach these ideas via Reason rather than the Understanding. If we can realize the full possibilities of our ideas in this way, we can transcend the everyday world of mere facts without rejecting it as unreal. As Emerson continues, "no man touches these divine natures, without becoming, in some degree, himself divine." With this new spark of divinity, "we learn the difference between the absolute and the conditional or relative." In apprehending the absolute, we become fully alive. "We become immortal, for we learn that time and space are relations of matter; that, with a perception of truth, or a virtuous will, they have no affinity" (37–38). While this discussion is not as strongly romantic as Emerson's position in "The Transcendentalist," still it seems to be at a distance from his pragmatism.

II

Given Emerson's general formulation of Transcendentalism, what is its role in the history of American philosophy that – regardless of its diversity – is pragmatic at its core? And what role does Emerson play in any attempt to connect up early pragmatist pioneers like Benjamin Franklin with the central figures of its maturity like William James and John Dewey? I am interested here less in considering what Emerson usually means to us now, when he is so often typecast as a Transcendentalist icon, and more in exploring what Emerson might mean to us if we could recover a more historically contextualized understanding of his thought. One way to approach that broader evaluation might be to consider his work in the company of such other figures as Henry David Thoreau, Sarah Margaret Fuller, and Walt Whitman. (I will leave this comparative path for a later time.) Another way to achieve a fuller recognition of Emerson's place in the American tradition would be to consider what he meant at the time of his death in 1882, or of the centennial of his birth in 1903, when he was still widely considered to be America's sage.

Emerson, as we know, played a role in American thought from the 1830s onward; and, through his lectures and essays, he attained a role as public moralist. His was a voice for pragmatism, for the power of ideas, especially the idea of the primacy of living experience over the dead hand of inherited doctrines. In his context, for example, Emerson challenged religious scriptures of whatever sort that pretended to have final answers and called on us to recognize the direct divine messages that appear within. He was also a proponent of the spirit of meliorism – not of optimism, but of making the most of our situation in a world where false hope of ultimate success draws us ever beyond the horizon. And, above all, Emerson was an experimentalist who did not pretend "to settle any thing as true or false." Nothing inherited was to him decided or closed to further experience. "I simply experiment," he writes, he is "an endless seeker with no Past at my back" (412). To get an initial sense of this pragmatic Emerson, we can turn to two evaluations that considered him as a central figure of the American philosophical tradition. These readings of Emerson were offered in 1903 by William James and John Dewey. (James was 40-years old in 1882 and 61-years old in 1903; Dewey was 23-years old and 44-years old respectively.)

In preparation for a brief address at a centenary ceremony in Concord, James returned to reread Emerson's collected works; and the address that he gave contains a statement of his own partly secularized Transcendentalist appreciation of experience. James notes that, for Emerson, "the effulgence of the Universal Reason" was present in "the individual fact," and that the "Cosmic Intellect" is to be found "in mortal men and passing hours." James continues that, for Emerson, every individual is "an angle of its eternal vision, and the only way to be true to our Maker is to be loyal to ourselves." Because of our connection to this Cosmic Intellect, "there is something in each and all of us, even the lowliest, that ought not to consent to borrowing traditions and living at second hand." Further, James notes that "[t]his faith that in a life at first hand there is something sacred is perhaps the most characteristic note in Emerson's writings." His more explicitly pragmatic appreciation of Emerson emphasizes the centrality of Emerson's "non-conformist persuasion": his belief that, because "[t]he world is still new and untried," we must all find our own way. "In seeing freshly, and not in hearing of what others saw, shall a man find what truth is."[1] He continues that Emerson's proclamation of "the sovereignty of the living individual" – "The present man is the aboriginal reality, the Institution is derivative" – explained his powerful effect on his audience and would continue to be recognized as "the soul of his message."[2] His "revelation" is of the power of the individual, the particular, the novel, the personal. "The point of any pen can be an epitome of reality," James writes, "the commonest person's act, if genuinely actuated, can lay hold on eternity."[3]

To consider a second pragmatic voice, we can turn to John Dewey's fully secularized evaluation of Emerson from that same year. Dewey writes that "reflective thinkers" have a tendency to slip into a world of ideas, and often have mistakenly "taken the way to truth for their truth; the method of life for the conduct of life – in short, have taken means for end."[4] He believes, however, that Emerson refocuses our inquiries away from "the distinctions and classifications which to most philosophers are true in and of and because of their systems," and towards "the common experience of the everyday man." In this way, Dewey sees the pragmatic Emerson urging "the reduction of all the philosophers of the race… to the test of trial by the service rendered the present and immediate experience."[5] Emerson thus, for Dewey, stands "[a]gainst creed and system, convention and institution," and "for restoring to the common man that which in the name of religion, of philosophy, of art and of morality, has been embezzled from the common store and appropriated to sectarian and class use." Dewey confesses that Emerson was his primary guide to recognizing such professional malfeasance, and he condemns "how such malversation makes truth decline from its simplicity, and in becoming partial and owned, become a puzzle of and trick for theologian, metaphysician and litterateur."[6] Rendering this pragmatic point more poetically, Dewey concludes that "[f]or thousands of earth's children, Emerson has taken away the barriers that shut out the sun and has secured the unimpeded, cheerful circulation of the light of heaven, and the wholesome air of day."[7]

More recent commentators have similarly found value in a pragmatic reading of Emerson's ideas. Joseph Leon Blau, for example, considers Emerson to be a "self-consecrated thinker" who put his ideas to work "for the American people"; and he maintains that any attempt "[t]o measure the full impact of Emerson's philosophic imagination, to determine all the outcomes of his work," would require that we "write the history of American culture since his time."[1] In particular, in the face of the familiar readings of Emerson as an individualist, Blau stresses Emerson's view that "the human being is a social being," and that "without rooting in society any person is lost." Thus Emerson requires, Blau continues, that we combine "the sense of individuality and the sense of common humanity," a combination of "uniqueness" and "human solidarity" into a "thoroughgoing humanism." As Blau concludes, the antidote for our "egoistic, false individualism is… culture, education."[2] Robert Channon Pollock offers another pragmatic reading of Emerson. For Pollock, Emerson is a thinker who approaches idealism not as a comprehensive doctrine but as a weapon to counter "the complacency of the materialist."[3] Thus Pollock sees no need for Emerson to articulate a fully functioning idealistic theory. Other pragmatic themes that Pollock emphasizes in Emerson are the latter's assertion that God speaks to us even now if we place ourselves "firmly in the present" with a faith "in the human soul itself through which God makes Himself heard"[4]; and Emerson's call for us to free ourselves from "a deadly fixation on the past."[5] Like Blau, Pollock also stresses that for Emerson an authentic individual is not "a spiritually self-sufficient entity… devoid of all ties to the universe," but rather a person among persons "bound together by common roots which run underground."[6]

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[1] James, W. 1903, 111.
[2] James, W. 1903, 112.
[3] James, W. 1903, 115.
James also writes to his brother Henry at the time of Emerson's pragmatic effect on him: "The reading of the divine Emerson, volume after volume, has done me a lot of good, and, strange to say has thrown a strong practical light on my own path. The incorruptible way in which he followed his own vocation, of seeing such truths as the Universal Soul vouchsafed to him from day to day and month to month, and reporting them in the right literary form, and thereafter kept his limits absolutely, refusing to be entangled with irrelevancies however urging and tempting, knowing both his strength and its limits, and clinging unchangeably to the rural environment which he once for all found to be most propitious, seems to me a moral lesson to all men who have any genius, however small, to foster" (James, W. 1992–2004, 3: 234).
[4] Dewey, J. 1903, 186.
[5] Dewey, J. 1903, 188–189.
[6] Dewey, J. 1903, 190.
[7] Dewey, J. 1903, 191.

Sadly, in our day Emerson is too often stripped of his pragmatic core. Sometimes he is offered as a romantic decoration to the education of unprepared high school students; sometimes he is offered as the idealistic background to the theorizing of settled academics. Otherwise, however, Emerson is generally neglected, even when he could help us to recognize outdated intellectual fashions of the sort that we too often simplify into calcified approaches to questions of race, gender, and class. Similarly, Emerson could also help us to recognize the disastrous level of our crippling attachments to the fancy and the virtual, and to return to the simple and the present. Such a pragmatic Emerson could also reinforce in our work the fact that scholarship need not be an arena of arcane facts, obscure research, and ephemeral answers; rather it could become again an intellectual inquiry that plays a vital role within the community by introducing students to the triumphs and problems of human existence. Too often, however, we inquire at second-hand and quickly are distracted from vital issues by the infinite supply of compelling scholarship: with mastering the literature of medical ethics, or surveying the theories of education, or comparing the dogmas of religions. Emerson, on the contrary, suggests that we engage with our intellectual traditions without being captured by them, that we never lose our focus on the problematic basis of our pragmatic experience in the world.

III

As an explicit example of Emerson's pragmatism, we can consider his religious approach to living, as exemplified primarily in "The Divinity School Address." Emerson, a high-profile Unitarian speaker, offered his address at Harvard's Unitarian Divinity School on 15 July 1838, at the seminary that he had attended intermittently only a few years earlier. He had, of course, left the pulpit of Boston's Second Church in 1832; but he continued to preach here-and-there until the end of the decade, when his thinking carried him from heresy to apostasy. The occasion of this address was a month before the graduation service for six young men who were about to enter the ministry. Also, in attendance were families and friends, members of the faculty and other students, perhaps 100 or so people in total. Emerson had been invited to deliver this address by a committee of students, not by the faculty to whom his talk turned out to be aggressively hostile. It amounted to an attack on Unitarianism at its educational headquarters, and it gave rise to a furor that resulted in his banishment from Harvard for decades.

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[1] Blau, J. L. 1952, 125, 130.
[2] Blau, J. L. 1977, 85, 83, 91.
[3] Pollock, R. C. 1958, 23.
[4] Pollock, R. C. 1958, 38.
[5] Pollock, R. C. 1958, 37.
[6] Pollock, R. C. 1958, 34.

Nineteen years before in Baltimore, when the great Unitarian divine, William Ellery Channing, offered as the ordination sermon for Jared Sparks the classic formulation of Unitarian faith, "Unitarian Christianity," he began with a straight-forward pragmatic text from Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."[1] Emerson at the Divinity School begins differently, with an almost pantheistic invocation of nature, a paean to the perfections of the everyday world. "In this refulgent summer, it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life," he begins his celebration of experience. "The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of pine, the balm-of-Gilead, and the new hay." In such a glorious world, "[n]ight brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays." Each of us who recognizes this magical shroud awaits the new day. "The cool night bathes the world as with a river," he says, "and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn" (75).

For Emerson, our world and we are also thoroughly moral. "The sentiment of virtue is a reverence and delight in the presence of certain divine laws." This sentiment recognizes "that this homely game of life we play, covers, under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish." All of us have learned through play and work "the action of light, motion, gravity, muscular force," and in the processes of living we have come to understand how "love, fear, justice, appetite, man, and God, interact." These divine laws of our natural existence, however, cannot be formulated in words; "[t]hey will not be written out on paper, or spoken by the tongue," and "[t]hey elude our persevering thought." In addition, these divine laws cannot come to us through the Understanding. They can only be intuited. These laws are to be found, for example, "in each other's faces, in each other's actions, in our own remorse." Recognizing these divine laws, and developing them in our lives, makes us moral. "If a man is at heart just, then in so far he is God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice." If, on the contrary, "a man dissemble, deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being" (76–77).

Emerson reminds the would-be ministers that we are instructed by our daily interactions. We delight in the apprehension of Divine laws in nature: we recognize the mind of God present in each ray of light, in each wave of water, and in each breath of life. For Emerson, "the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will, of one mind"; and that mind is active everywhere in nature, "in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool." Further, "whatever opposes that will, is everywhere balked and baffled, because things are made so, and not otherwise" (77–78). Emerson continues that, as we delight in appreciating the wondrous workings of divine nature, we realize that we must do so with our souls (Reason), not with our minds (the Understanding). If we can come to recognize "this law of laws," we will gain access to "the religious sentiment" that yields us "our highest happiness." The Understanding, on the contrary, may give us science and power; but it does not make the world "safe and habitable," nor yield the cherished "end or unity." With "the sentiment of virtue" in our hearts, however, we see "that Law is sovereign over all natures; and the worlds, time, space, eternity, do seem to break out into joy" (78).

Emerson's introduction represents his position on the idealistic ("Transcendental") nature of our existence. Of course, his address at the Divinity School was supposed to be a Unitarian sermon of sorts; and he soon turns to, for him, a more familiar – if perhaps, for the audience, a less welcome – theme: that Unitarianism has lost this sense of intuition, of mystery, and become cold and formulaic. The application of his sermon was that the young preachers assembled needed to forget nearly all the professional training that the faculty had given them. For Emerson, young preachers were too often distracted from their true vocation by academic worries about the proper forms of ceremonies and a concentration on correctly memorized prayers; too much effort had been expended focusing on texts and translations that purported to get closer to the literal meaning of Christ's words. The main result of all of this unfortunate misdirection was mechanical preaching.

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[1] Channing, W. E. 1819, 367.

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For Emerson, there seemed to be no place in the Unitarian church for the mysteries of existence that captivated him. "The doctrine of inspiration is lost," he continues; "the base doctrine of the majority of voices, usurps the place of the doctrine of the soul." The vision of the church has been reduced to that of the Understanding, bereft of "[m]iracles, prophecy, poetry." The life of Reason, "the ideal life, the holy life," is now "ancient history merely." Reason has no living place "in the belief, nor in the aspiration of society"; and the people are so lost that they have forgotten how to look for something higher, or too often even have given up the search. "Whilst the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never," he notes, "it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely; it is an intuition." This gospel, he continues, "cannot be received at second hand." As a pragmatic consequence, the members of the congregation do not need "instruction" in what to believe; they require only "provocation" to pursue their own truth (79).

Thus, Emerson confronts this graduating class of budding ministers with his evaluation of the situation of the Christian religion that they were intending to preach. Their church, he tells them, has fallen into two grave errors. The first is that, while Christ experienced the mysteries of our natural existence, the church would have them teach his words about these mysteries. "Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets," he tells them. "He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there." This is a spiritual message, however, that can only be recognized on a plane higher than that of the church's familiar preaching. "There is no doctrine of the Reason," he continues, "which will bear to be taught by the Understanding." Too much concern is given to the person Christ – to "[t]he idioms of his language, and the figures of his rhetoric" – and too little to "his truth." As a result, our church is "not built on his principles, but on his tropes." Christ, Emerson notes further, "spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that the man doth, and he knew that this daily miracle shines, as the character ascends." But the church's sense of miracles "gives a false impression" that they are scarce. Moreover, the church has made Christ-the-person the focus in the formation of the ministry in its futile attempts "to communicate religion." Rather than a focus on "the doctrine of the soul," the church offers "an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus." Rather than teaching the history of Christ's mission, these young ministers should strive to help the members of their congregations to intuit the meaning of Christ's message. As Emerson notes, "[t]he soul knows no persons" (80–81).

For Emerson, the second grave error of the contemporary church is that it fails to explore the possible spiritual or religious meaning of our lives. It fails to recognize what our experiences can reveal to us. On the contrary, the church treats revelation as finished and done. As he continues, "the Moral Nature, that Law of laws, whose revelations introduce greatness, – yea, God himself, into the open soul, is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society." Because of this failure to appreciate our experience, we now view "revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead. The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice" (82–83). Instead of being moments for mystery and spiritual expansion, our church services reduce us to boredom and regret for time wasted.

While Emerson commends these aspiring ministers for their intention to proclaim the message of the divine meaning of existence, he emphasizes – in the face of all of the important mainstream religious figures present in the front row – that the contemporary church that they are intending to enter is failing to do its proper job. He tells them that "the need was never greater of new revelation than now" because of "the universal decay and now almost death of faith in society," all of which results from the fact that "[t]he soul is not preached." Emerson continues that he would be negligent if he were to tell those "whose hope and commission it is to preach the faith of Christ" that at the present time in our congregations "the faith of Christ is preached." While preaching is supposed to be "the expression of the moral sentiment in application to the duties of life," Emerson wonders, "[i]n how many churches, by how many prophets, … is man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking forever the soul of God?" (83–84). Where is the recognition that our lives are sacred too?

Instead of offering this pragmatic message, Emerson believes that too many preachers in too many congregations are formalists who are serving up only the shell of religion to their undernourished congregants. Not only do the ministers' prayers fail to uplift us, he continues, they also "smite and offend us"; and those who offer them assault us with their preaching. In such congregations, "[w]e shrink as soon as the prayers begin." In such congregations, we cannot tell if the preacher "had ever lived and acted," since "[n]ot one fact in all his experience, had he yet imported into his doctrine." For Emerson, on the contrary, "[t]he true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life, – life passed through the fire of thought" (84–85). He continues that at present too much preaching "comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul," and in consequence it fails to reach "what is necessary and eternal." This preaching has withdrawn "from the exploration of the moral nature of man, where the sublime is, where are the resources of astonishment and power" (86). As a result, Emerson tells the new preachers, the church has fallen into decay.

The litany of criticisms of the church that Emerson offered at the Divinity School was thus designed to lead his audience back to the soul. "In the soul," he tells these young preachers, "let the redemption be sought" (88); and the church will only be salvaged when we recognize that "[t]he remedy to their deformity is, first, soul, and second, soul, and evermore, soul" (91). While he admits that some preachers may be doing an adequate job, and that even bad preaching helps some people, much needs to be done. In his eyes, most of the contemporary preachers are not preaching a living gospel. They preach inherited and dead doctrines, whereas a living gospel would advance a recognition of the fullness of experience. Among his pragmatic suggestions to the young ministers are the following: do not imitate other preachers, however good they may be, and refuse to model your message on the messages of others; recognize that God is still present in all that exists; help the people to find God in their lives since all are part of the Over-soul; and return from second-hand life to the fullness of experience within nature and preach the living soul.

Emerson believes that the awakened individual – minister or congregant – who lives in Reason rather than in the Understanding, brings "revolution." To such an awakened person "all books are legible, all things transparent, [but] all religions are forms." The truly religious person is "the wonderworker," for whom mistaken commitments to "[t]he stationariness of religion; the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed; [and] the fear of degrading the character of Jesus by representing him as a man," all indicate "with sufficient clearness the falsehood" of the beliefs of the unawakened. For Emerson, the job of "a true preacher" is to demonstrate "that God is, not was; that He speaketh, not spake" (88). Rather than repeating the familiar and threadbare in their preaching, it is necessary to preach the Spirit, the Soul, approachable only through Reason. The job that Emerson recommends to the young preachers is to find their own way to enlighten their congregations. He urges each of them to recognize himself as "a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost," and to live by the creed that "[i]mitation cannot go above its model" (89).

IV

Emerson returns twenty-two years later to many of these themes of pragmatic spirituality in his 1860 essay "Worship." Here he points again to the fact that our inherited church is moribund, and that newer, but still inadequate, faiths are growing. "The stern old faiths have all pulverized," he writes, leaving "a whole population of gentlemen and ladies out in search of religions" (1056). He recognizes that our religions are limited by the level of the enlightenment of their believers. As he notes, "the religion cannot arise above the state of the votary" (1057); but, for this, our inherited church is largely responsible because it has demoralized, rather than awakened, us. Emerson writes that "[w]e live in a transition period, when the old faiths which comforted nations, and . . . made nations, seem to have spent their force." Rather than guiding the people upward, "the religions of men at this moment" are "either childish and insignificant, or unmanly and effeminating" (1058).[1] He writes here of the too-often fatal split between thought and action, "between religion and morality," that cuts religious thinking off from a life of action and leaves religious people unable to move forward. "Not knowing what to do, we ape our ancestors"; and, as a result, "the churches stagger backward into the mummeries of the dark ages" (1058–1059). Emerson believes that, because of the failures in our congregations, great numbers of the unawakened will remain lost. "Such as you are, the gods themselves could not help you," he writes. These people suffer "from their obvious inequality to their own necessities," from political or social or medical difficulties, and they would not be disappointed to be "dismissed from the duties of life" (1075). Emerson, however, reminds them and us that death will offer them no benefit.

As before, Emerson maintains that the temple of God will continue to survive within the individual soul. In spite of the severity of our religious problems, he maintains that there is still the moral sense that "reappears to-day with the same morning newness that has been from of old the fountain of beauty and strength." Just as "the multitude of the sick shall not make us deny the existence of health," nor "rainy weather" the existence of the sun (1061), our present low level of living should not cause us to abandon our quest for a higher type of life. Emerson further maintains that "[t]he builder of heaven has not so ill constructed his creature as that the religion, that is, the public nature, should fall out." Rather, the God of Spirit "builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions" (1056). What continues to be missing is adequate spiritual guidance. Recalling his earlier message to the new preachers, Emerson writes that "[i]n all ages, souls out of time, extraordinary, prophetic, are born"; and these enlightened individuals – all of us potentially – have the means to transcend their particular time and locality, and to help others similarly to transcend. If they can overcome the deadening forces from religion's past, by which our potential insights are too often "dragged down into a savage interpretation" (1057) of what our lives might mean, these individuals can help advance the life of spirit. So, Emerson urges us to abandon barren intellectual pursuits like theology, and to try to become more spiritual in our living. "Forget your books and traditions," he writes, "and obey your moral perceptions at this hour." If we can live according to Reason, we will be less likely to confuse the "spiritual" with the "invisible." We will recognize, rather, that "[t]he true meaning of *spiritual* is *real*," and we will come to recognize "that law which executes itself, which works without means, and which cannot be conceived as not existing" (1062).

Emerson re-asserts that "[a]ll the great ages have been ages of belief" (1063); but this belief must come from within. It must arise out of the spirit and recognize and cultivate the mysterious. "That only which we have within," he writes, "can we see without" (1070); and only Reason can bring us to the appreciation of miracles. "Miracles come to the miraculous," he writes, "not to the arithmetician" (1074). As a result, if our lives have no spirituality, he believes that it is because we seek none; and, for this, the church is largely to blame. "If we meet no gods, it is because we harbor none," Emerson continues; but, on the contrary, "[i]f there is grandeur in you, you will find grandeur in porters and sweeps." The individual is only "rightly immortal, to whom all things are immortal" (1070).

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[1] By his choice of words here, Emerson seems to show no recognition of the possibilities for women to help overcome the problems of the church. Rather, he continues to assert in a similar fashion, and in conflict with his own expressed position on the dignity of all humans, that "[w]hat is called religion effeminates and demoralizes us" (Emerson, R. W. 1983, 1075).

Emerson's pragmatic message is that we must reject the dead ends both of materialism and of abstract theology, and focus directly via Reason on the appreciation of human virtues. He writes that "I look on those sentiments which make the glory of the human being, love, humility, faith, as being also the intimacy of Divinity" at the atomic level; and, when the individual has correctly established this relationship of human and divine virtues, "assurances and previsions emanate from the interior of his body and his mind" (1071). The development of this new religious life that Emerson calls for "to guide and fulfil the present and coming ages… must be intellectual," he writes, although not in some abstract and cold sense. His new church will be "founded on moral science." It will further "have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry" (1076).

V

Readers of Emerson realize that it is possible to get caught up in the surface message of his religious discussions, and to focus on his charges of ministerial malpractice in their myriad forms instead of on his positive call for advancing the Spirit. His criticisms are focused and specific, but the repairs that he advocated – working through Reason rather than the Understanding – might appear to be vague and open-ended. It is similarly possible to read Emerson primarily as a poetic metaphysician, and to fixate in wonder on the ideas and the intellectual structures that he and his commentators offer us, without attempting to connect these ideals with our problematic lives. Perhaps this helps to explain why Emerson is so often left out of pragmatic considerations and neglected despite the obvious pragmatic value of his texts to awaken and inspire readers. To concentrate our attention on the fine points of his version of idealism, however, or of his version of religion, seems to me to be a mistake. It is, as Dewey writes, to focus on Emerson's means rather than on his end, to worry about the specific problems that had to be overcome in reaching for a higher life, and to miss the pragmatic core of his message. We are far better off to emphasize, with McDermott, the possibilities inherent in individuals, and in the richness of the American experience, as a means to recognize the power of Emerson's pragmatic thought.

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SANTAYANA: BIOGRAPHY AND THE FUTURE OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT: The revival of Santayana research continues and there is much more to be done. In this essay, I delineate areas of future research relating to Santayana's biography and his philosophy. From his early childhood in Spain to his final residence in Rome, there are significant developments in his life that remain to be explored including his Spanish relations, Harvard colleagues and students, his global travels, and his later personal and philosophical development. Currently, universities are facing economic difficulties and philosophy as a central area of study is being questioned. Santayana expressed concern about American universities increasing businesslike approach to education and the diminishing focus on personal development. In addition, he suggests a number of directions philosophy might take in relation to literature, poetry, and science. He was a century ahead of his time in describing human consciousness in a manner similar to current neuroscience research. Finally, he develops a celebratory view of consciousness that is missing in contemporary neuroscience and philosophy.

Keywords: Santayana, skepticism, biography, Harvard, poetry, literature, neuroscience, consciousness

Santayana is best known as a philosopher, poet, novelist and autobiographer. During his lifetime (1863–1952) he initially gained international status with the publication of *The Sense of Beauty* (1896) and the five-volume *The Life of Reason* (1905–1906). His stature grew significantly after he retired from Harvard in 1912 at the age of forty-eight. Many of his colleagues never understood or forgave him for leaving Harvard at such an early age, but since 1893 he had planned his early retirement citing the university's increasing businesslike atmosphere and decreasing emphasis on personal intellectual development. One can only imagine what he would say about American higher education now. Although offered several distinguished chairs and honors, he never returned to America. He is known as one of the founders of classical American philosophy, even though he was never an American. Indeed, he proudly retained his Spanish passport throughout his life, and only Spanish was spoken in his family home in Boston. In the last two decades of his life, he achieved recognition rarely given to a philosopher by appearing on the front cover of *Time* magazine (3 February 1936), and his novel *The Last Puritan* (1936) and his autobiography *Persons and Places* (1944) were best-selling books in the U.S., England and Europe. Santayana died in Rome, his principal residence since the mid-1920s. He made two requests regarding his burial: not to be buried in the U.S. and not in consecrated ground. Although respecting the better qualities of religious belief, he was an atheist. But at the Campo Verano Cemetery in Rome the unconsecrated ground was reserved for criminals and the homeless – not a place that Daniel Cory, his executor, would choose. Fortunately, the Spanish government came to the rescue, providing a place in the "Panteon de la Obra Pia espanola" reserved for Spanish diplomats and other well-known Spanish figures. Afterwards, this entire gravesite was largely converted into a memorial for Santayana. Santayana's marker was larger than the other names listed, and a quote was etched into a large vertical stone tablet from Santayana's *The Idea of Christ and the Gospels*, perhaps giving the appearance that Santayana was more a believer than he actually was. One can imagine his warm smile at these final arrangements: born in Madrid and buried in Spanish ground in Rome. Charles Frankel wrote in 1956, "I am inclined to believe that what happens to Santayana's reputation will be a touchstone of the quality of our culture, and of our growth in maturity and wisdom" (Frankel 1956, 11). At the same time, the culture of philosophical pursuits was going through a dramatic shift in Europe and America.

In the 1950s philosophers largely turned their focus on either an analysis of language or a phenomenological study of the subjective. As a result, Santayana's literary and naturalistic approach and appeal declined precipitously. In 1963 Arthur Danto called for a revival of Santayana studies, noting that many philosophers were recapitulating "the intellectual crisis which Santayana helped overcome," breaking through "to a view of things not dissimilar to the one he [Santayana] achieved" (Danto 1963, 437–40). Not until the late 1970s did this revitalization emerge, evidenced by the critical edition of *The Works of George Santayana* published by MIT Press, the establishment of the Santayana Society and the publications of *Overheard in Seville: The Bulletin of the Santayana Society*. The first international meeting of the Santayana Society was held in Avila, Spain, 27–30 May 1992. This conference brought together more than one thousand participants from many countries and continents. Because Santayana's works were forbidden to be read under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco, the conference was also a liberation of his thought in his native country. Four additional international conferences followed. Importantly there is a second international journal, *Limbo: Boletín international de estudios sobre Santayana*. This upward spiral of research and investigations into his compositions continue into the twenty-first century.

So, one might suggest that Santayana has regained his place in philosophy. However, rather than resting on laurels, I think there is much more to come and many challenges to meet. Indeed, his principal contributions still may be on the horizon of research in philosophy, biography, literature, and even in modern science. How can this be? In what follows I provide a few suggestions of possible future research regarding Santayana's life and the implications of his philosophical outlook. In all this, one should feel the crosscurrents and undercurrents of philosophical, historical and literary trends as well as the staggering implications of neurological research.

I. Biographical Research

Santayana's personal development remains open for significant research. John McCormick's *George Santayana: A Biography* remains the only extensive account of Santayana's life. But even with this carefully researched and well-written volume, there are sometimes only outlines of important developments. I will mention only a few.

Most of Santayana's childhood writings and letters have not been found, but one hopes that some of these may yet be discovered either in his Spanish family holdings or hidden away in other collections or repositories. The missing letters to his father from the age of seven until his father's death in 1893 would contain important aspects of his life as a Spanish child growing up in protestant Boston, attending kindergarten to learn English, studying at the Boston Latin School and at Harvard University, and becoming a faculty member. Apart from these early letters, there are significant materials at Harvard that now include the Sturgis family files, as well as collections at Columbia University, Complutense University of Madrid, Princeton University and many more public and private collections that may be of assistance. The Santayana Edition now headed by Martin Coleman at Indiana University Indianapolis contains the records of the edition, my correspondence and notes, as well many files from the estate of Richard C. Lyon.

Other phases needing attention are Santayana's years as an undergraduate at Harvard when he was a member of over twenty organizations, including what is rarely noted, being elected Pope of the Laodicean Club named for a biblical description of a lukewarm congregation (*Revelations* 3: 14–22). Some may be surprised that being a cartoonist was the springboard for Santayana's professional career. Little has been done to catalogue and explicate the delightful fifty-one cartoons Santayana drew and captioned for *The Lampoon* between 9 February 1883 and 25 June 1886. The cartoons reveal a significant artistic skill and ironic humor. The British weekly *Punch* served as a model for the *Lampoon* staff, and Santayana had even more complex models. His cartoons likely owe much to his childhood in Àvila and reading *La Risa* (*Laughter*) and the *Enciclopedia de estravangancias*. The first volume, dated 1840, survives in the archives of Complutense University of Madrid among his father's (Augustín Ruiz de Santayana) collection. Moreover, Santayana's early sexual adventures remain something of a mystery. In 1929 Daniel Cory refers to a conversation with Santayana about A.E. Housman's poetry and homosexuality. Santayana told Cory that he may have been an unconscious homosexual during his Harvard days (Cory 1929, 40). Some of his close friends were openly homosexual or bisexual. In an unusual and humorous letter written in 1887 to William Morton Fullerton, perhaps best known for his promiscuity and later as the bi-sexual lover of Edith Wharton, Santayana explores the amorous options open to men: "1. Wet dreams and the fidgets. 2. Mastibation [sic]. 3. Paiderastia. 4. Whoring. 5. Seductions or a mistress. 6. Matrimony." He notes "I don't put a mistress as a separate heading because it really comes under 4, 5, or 6, as the case may be." He concludes "Oh matrimony, truly thou art an inevitable evil!" (Santayana, *Letters, Book One*, 91–3) And there are indications of his pursuit of women including the wife of a midwestern clergyman that is described in his "Notebooks" (Columbia University) and mentioned in his autobiography with her identity not revealed. In addition, little has been done with the meetings he held in his room for students exploring socialism as a political stance and only brief attention has been given to his friendships with many Jewish students who were considered "different" and lived in separate dorms. There is considerable correspondence revealing Santayana's longstanding and complicated relationship with Horace Meyer Kallen who was the first Jew to ever teach at Princeton University in 1903 after studying with Santayana at Harvard. When his contract was not renewed at Princeton for being an avowed unbeliever, Kallen returned to Harvard to complete his doctorate and served as Santayana's graduate assistant. Kallen was a founding member of The New School in New York City and worked closely with Sidney Hook serving on the ACLU's academic freedom committee. Although Santayana and Kallen worked together at Harvard and maintained their friendship long after, their politics and outlook differed, and their correspondence reveals both respect and difference. The bulk of Kallen's papers are in the American Jewish Archives at Hebrew Union College (Kallen Papers 1902–1982). Also, little has been researched regarding Santayana's work with W.E.B. Du Bois and with Mary Whiton Calkins who completed her education at Harvard with William James but was not awarded a degree because she was a female. And, of course, there are the more obvious areas needing exploration that include his relationships with his colleagues including William James, Josiah Royce, George Palmer, Hugo Munsterberg, to name a few. He was an admirer of Charles Sanders Peirce and was asked by Maurice Firuski to edit Peirce's papers in 1926, but he indicated he was not the appropriate person for doing that, adding that he had met Peirce at one of his 1903 lectures at Harvard and "As a philosopher Peirce[1] has come late to be recognized, but his quality is unmistakably good, far better logically than Wm. James's, and anything speculative from his pen would be welcomed, I think, by the learned public"(Santayana, *Letters, Book Three*, 312). These Harvard relationships would also have important bearings on the influences of Santayana on his colleagues and vice versa. In addition, the marginalia in Santayana's books are quite revealing and provide a clear sense of his different philosophical orientation with his colleagues as well as other significant figures in philosophy and literature. No matter what approach one takes, Santayana's Harvard days were full of activity, social gatherings, intellectual pursuits, and delight in the company of others. This is quite a different picture than the often portrayal of an isolated, monk-like Santayana in his later years.

Another worthwhile area would focus on Santayana's development during WWI while he was stranded in England. This appears to be another turning point in his life, as he briefly abandoned long-term philosophical pursuits that would be published much later such as his notes for *Dominations and Powers* (1951) and the four books of *The Realms of Being* (1927, 1930, 1938, 1940). Instead, he turned to writing *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916), which some have seen as a partisan effort because of its sharp critique of German philosophy. And he began lecturing on his experiences in America and published *Character and Opinion in the United States: With Reminiscences of William James and Josiah Royce and Academic Life in America* (1920). He had abandoned poetry in the early 1900s calling himself almost a poet. But during WWI he briefly returned to writing some of his best poetry. One poem, “The Undergraduate Killed in Battle,” was included in Edith Wharton’s 1915 *The Book of the Homeless* that raised money for American Hostels and the Children of Flanders Rescue Committee. Another, “To a Pacifist Friend” was likely written for Bertrand Russell in 1916 when Russell was removed from his academic position at Trinity College, Cambridge because of his pacifism. During this time Santayana seems to turn to a more partisan approach to politics, supporting English efforts in the war while still in the embryonic stages of a more naturalistic approach to politics, governmental organization, war, and individual freedom and responsibility. And little has been written about his relationships with the Vatican before and during WWII when his manuscripts were typed by a Miss Tindall who also worked at the Vatican, and in 1942 the Vatican helped smuggle the typescript of the first book of *Persons and Places* out of Rome and eventually to Scribner’s in New York. Scribner’s wanted to publish an account of how they received the typescript through the efforts of the Vatican and several Spanish diplomats, but Hugh S. Cummings, Jr., Assistant Chief of the United States Division of European Affairs, asked that such a statement not be released because of the ongoing war.

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[1] *Letters, Book Three* has a misspelling of 'Peirce' as 'Pierce'. Earlier transcriptions have the correct spelling, and It appears the transcription in *Letters, Book Three* may be in error, e.g., see McCormick 90–91. I have used the correct spelling.

These are only hints at what is left to be done in biographical research. Even so, I want to emphasize the delight in investigating and understanding the development of Santayana’s life and thought, and I await those who will rise to the task.

II. The Future of Philosophy

Many scholars are worried about the future of philosophy and the humanities in the twenty-first century. Philosophy has been a long-standing aspect of human inquiry and higher education, although it has worn many coats and taken different pathways. But now many universities are facing serious financial issues because of the coronavirus pandemic coupled with dwindling state and national funding. To survive some are emphasizing preparing students for employment and job training while limiting or eliminating core courses in the liberal arts. Faculty in the liberal arts are being furloughed or dismissed, and fragile institutions may not survive. The institutions most vulnerable have small endowments, low or declining student enrollment, and too often a serious lack of long-range planning with significant faculty and staff input. The institutions that are best prepared have substantial endowments and external funding for research and teaching. They will need major investments supporting inclusive and equitable online-learning experiences, a carefully drafted business model with a focus on fundraising while expanding faculty development in online teaching as well as expanding health services.

During Santayana’s Harvard years, he experienced an administrative oversight that focused on enrollments, gifts, and recognition, but he never faced the prospect of Harvard not surviving or of philosophy being eliminated from the curriculum. Even so, his encounters with President Eliot are telling. Eliot was energetic and ambitious and wanted to transform Harvard into a great modern university. Early in Santayana’s career, he encountered Eliot in the Harvard Yard. Upon meeting, Eliot asked Santayana how his classes were going. Santayana began to detail how his students were completing work on Plato and advancing to Aristotle, and specifics about the intellectual growth of his students. Eliot interrupted, “No, no, Santayana, what I mean by my enquiry is, how many students have enrolled for you lectures?” (Santayana, *Character and Opinion*, 186). In *Persons and Places* Santayana writes that President Eliot “once said to me that we should teach *the facts*, not merely convey *ideas*.” Santayana describes the President as an anti-humanist, and that he could have “replied that the only facts in philosophy were historical facts, namely the fact that people had or had had certain ideas. But of course, I only smiled and took note of *his idea*” (392). Santayana’s ironic smile is evident. He then continues, “The history of philosophy is the only philosophy that should be taught in a university. *Systems* of philosophy are taught only by sects or by individuals setting out to be prophets and to found a sect. I now have a system of philosophy, which I hadn't dreamt of then, although the reasons for it lay all in me; but this system is not intended to found a sect and will never do so. It aspires to be only a contribution to the humanities, the expression of a reflective, selective, and free mind" (392–3). Santayana persisted in his belief that philosophy cannot be taught. He saw teaching as an art, "a delightful paternal art, and especially teaching intelligent youngsters, as most American collegians are; but it is an art like acting, where the performance, often rehearsed, must be adapted to an audience hearing it only once… The best that is in him, as Mephistopheles says in *Faust*, he dare not tell them" (Santayana, *Character and Opinion*, 42). Santayana's concerns about the teaching of philosophy are echoed in the present day, but with the new undercurrent of downsizing and even elimination.

Although one cannot say with certainty what Santayana might say about our current circumstances at American universities or even globally, perhaps one can draw from his writings what may apply to our current circumstances and begin to draw some conclusions about the future of philosophy. However, in doing so one should feel Santayana's presence and hear him whisper the last words of his novel: "After life is over and the world has gone up in smoke, what realities might the spirit in us still call its own without illusion save the form of those very illusions which have made up our story?" (Santayana, *The Last Puritan*, 572) With that cautionary note, I suggest a number of possible insights or illusions into the future and longevity of the study of philosophy.

From the pre-Socratics till now, philosophy served many roles and fostered its findings as revealing the foundations of knowledge, of personal experience, and of the underlying realities of the universe. From these beginnings, philosophy has offered advice as to how to live, make decisions, create social environments, as well as highlighting what to avoid and what to foster. Some have taken philosophy more as poetry written in prose, providing insight without attempting to describe reality. Others have seen it as critical reasoning, training oneself and others to analyze arguments and circumstances to determine a reasonable approach when others seem more bent on unthoughtful responses to difficult situations. Santayana grasped these approaches and did not endorse them although he seems at times to have tilted in various directions.

Perhaps the future of philosophy is to be understood as another form of literature or poetry. In the *Epilogue* to his novel, Santayana continues his fiction with an imaginary meeting with Mario Van de Weyer who asked him to document the life of Oliver Alden, the last puritan. There is a discussion as to whether Santayana should publish the book or not. Mario is not pleased with some of the accounts of his adventuresome sexual life, but he agrees that the book should be published, and he adds, "It's all your invention; but perhaps there's a better philosophy in it than in your other books." When Santayana asks why it is better than in his other books, Mario replies, "Because now you're not arguing or proving or criticising anything, but painting a picture. The trouble with you philosophers is that you misunderstand your vocation. You ought to be poets, but you insist on laying down the law for the universe, physical and moral, and are vexed with one another because your inspirations are not identical" (Santayana, *The Last Puritan,* 572).

If we take philosophy more as poetry, then it would be a literary work in which the expression of ideas is given an intensity through distinctive styles and cadence. Certainly, some of the best of philosophical works are captivating and having ventured through the first pages it is difficult to turn back. At the same time, some of the best philosophy is tedious, even boring, and the cadence is ponderous and not intense. As a result, I fear we would lose much of the major literature of philosophy.

Perhaps a better approach would be to revive parts of classical American philosophy that provide advice on how to make decisions and to live well. Undoubtedly, there are traits of Santayana, James, Dewey, Royce, and even Peirce that move in this direction. And some contemporary philosophers influenced by American thought have moved in this direction. They largely take aspects of human life and social well-being and explore and illuminate their meaning and the consequences of individual actions and social activities. My mentor and friend, John Lachs,[2] is a preeminent Santayana scholar and has taken something like this approach as found in his works such as *Intermediate Man*, *A Community of Individuals* (1981), *Relevance of Philosophy to Life* (1995), *In Love with* Life (1998), *Stoic Pragmatism* (2012), *Freedom and Limits* (2014), *Meddling: On the Virtue of Leaving Others Alone* (2014), and *The Cost of Comfort* (2019). These books stretch the boundaries of academic philosophy and make philosophical considerations relevant for contemporary life and for understanding our world. But one may ask whether this is the proper role of philosophical discourse. Santayana thought that one of the perils of American philosophy was its effort to replace religious mentoring with the philosopher taking the place of one's minister, priest, rabbi or imam. So, there are questions about this approach as valuable as it is. The principal question is what standing the philosopher has to provide such analysis, insight and advice. Perhaps it is best to let this approach move forward and to see how well it is accepted beyond the academic world. After all, it is the acceptance of this approach that will assure its longevity. Of course, Santayana would be pleased that such an approach provides distinctive and often singular insights into living well that are shared by many inside and outside the academic world.

There is another approach to advice, that is, advising on what not to do. In *The Last Puritan* Oliver suggests to Mario that he should take a course from Santayana while at Harvard. Mario's reply is telling, indicating that he can see Santayana as much as he wants at tea.[3] And he notes that Santayana will not say, take my course or any other, but that "he will tell you that it doesn't very much matter; because in any system of philosophy you can find something important – to avoid: and you're much less likely to fall into the snare if you've seen it spread out plainly before your eyes than if you were wandering about unsuspectingly with your nose in the clouds" (Santayana, *The Last Puritan*, 412). Hence, one might conclude that the purpose of philosophy is to help you make wise decisions by knowing what to avoid. And that is not a bad purpose. But there is more.

III. Reason and Pragmatism Versus Santayana's Complete Naturalism

Santayana turned philosophy upside down, a point often missed by readers and scholars, and in doing so he opened the door for coordination between modern neurological science and philosophy – a point that will be discussed later. Historically, much of philosophy has been focused on reason as foundational in living well. Indeed, Santayana's five books of *The Life of Reason* catapulted him into being a leading figure in American and European philosophy. And although this work reveals hints and seeds of his later, fully developed naturalism, some have explicated it merely as another exposition on reason and its importance to living well, and Scribner's had even advertised the volume as a work of pragmatism to enhance sales. Santayana understood that sales were important, but he wanted to make clear that he was not a pragmatist nor a rationalist. He indicated he had a list of emendations and offered to write a new preface to any future editions that would make his stance clear. "Critics, and the sophisticated part of the public, seem to have been misled by these omissions, beginning by the friendly, and I daresay useful, advertisement prepared by yourselves in which my philosophy is called a kind of 'Pragmatism'. Mr. Dickinson also put me in the same class, so that the fault evidently lay in my not stating explicitly enough that this book – long as it is – represents, to my mind, but a very casual and human aspect of the universe" (Santayana, *Letters, Book One*, 361–2).

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[2] One of the tragedies of Santayana scholarship is the loss of John Lachs's manuscript on Santayana's philosophy. While attending a conference in Paris in the late 1960s, Lachs' briefcase was taken from a cab. These were the days before computer use and electronic copies. The single copy of the manuscript was in the briefcase. Lachs partially recovered his efforts in a short volume, *George Santayana*, Twayne Publishers, 1988.

[3] Santayana hosted students in his room on the Harvard Yard for teatime and discussion.

He writes to Sterling P. Lamprecht in 1933, "the whole Life of Reason… was written with an eye to describing experience, not the cosmos. It was inspired partly by Greek ethics and partly by modern psychology and critical philosophy… But you are also right in feeling that I was rather carried away, at that time, by a kind of humanism and like[d] to degrade, or exalt, all things into the human notions of them, and the part they played, as counters, in the game of thought. It was a modern attitude which I hope I have outgrown – 'Schlecht und Modern,' as Goethe says, or Mephistopheles (Santayana, *Letters, Book Five*, 61). Santayana's marginalia in his copy of James's *Pragmatism* (1907) are also important.[4] Where "truth in science" was in the text, Santayana wrote "orthodoxy." James wrote "I have already insisted on the fact that truth is made largely out of previous truth" (p. 223), and Santayana's marginalia substituted "belief" for "truth" both times. Where James notes the temporary nature of apparently permanent phenomena such as rights, wrongs, prohibitions, penalties, words, forms, idioms, or beliefs, Santayana comments, "The events related in history are not ambiguous because they are not simultaneous: the truth about them neither arises nor disappears with them. It is their form + the fact that they possess or shall possess it." In short, Santayana was not a pragmatist, "Pragmatism seems to involve a confusion between the test and the meaning of truth," he had written in 1905 (Santayana, *Letters, Book One*, 324), and to Horace Kallen he said in no uncertain terms, "I am no pragmatist" (Santayana, *Letters, Book Two*, 263).

Although Santayana is not a member of the pragmatic school of thought, there are elements of pragmatism in his philosophy. He does not believe that pragmatic tests and reasoning necessarily lead to the truth or that pragmatism is an automatic progression towards a better society, but he does hold that the pragmatic method may be one path toward truth but not the only one. His view of truth is a form of correspondence theory holding that the truth or falsity of a belief is determined only by whether it accurately describes (i.e., corresponds with) the world. The material world does have a particular form and that form may change over time. Only a disembodied, non-relational being not bound by any particular circumstance or material relations could compare the forms of the material world with the form a person is conscious of in reasoning or even simply viewing a material object. No such being exists since all existing beings are embodied in a particular material setting. A human being, embodied and located in specific material circumstances, may attempt various tests for the truth of his or her conscious reasoning. A pragmatic approach is one method of testing. The scientific methods (emphasis is on the plural) approach truth in a variety of ways, but their work is never complete as one waits for further collaboration and counter evidence. Hence, Santayana holds a correspondence theory of truth while also believing that pragmatic tests for ascertaining the truth may be legitimate.

If one takes the view that Santayana is a pragmatist or humanistic rationalist, then he would simply be another figure in the early twentieth century who prizes reason and engages in philosophical discourse to highlight the importance of a rational life and pragmatic values. However, that is not Santayana. His naturalism in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and *The Realms of Being* eliminates consciousness (or spirit) and reason as causes of human or animal action. With a resounding emphasis, reason becomes secondary and non-causal instead of being primary. For Santayana, human consciousness is an aftereffect caused by one's psyche (physical being) interacting with one's material environment. To the surprise of many of his contemporaries and some current scholars, he describes consciousness as a byproduct of one's physical being that is without causal efficacy in human action. As a result, philosophy is turned on its head, and reason and consciousness are viewed as secondary effects of material causes within our physical being (our psyche). They are more like the sound of music coming from a symphony orchestra. The musical instruments and musicians are the material causes of the music just as our physical being interacting with the material environment is the cause of consciousness and thought. Music is temporary, transitory, and ends when the instruments are no longer played, and consciousness and reason do the same. They are aftereffects of material causes. Actions are not the result of rational thought. Instead, rational thought is a result and perhaps a reflection of our psyche interacting with the material world.

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[4] See McCormick, p. 446. I was contacted by Georgetown University when they purchased Charles Augustus Strong's Villa La Balze at Fiesole, Italy. During WWII the estate had been overrun by Nazi forces and all of the library and papers, including many of Santayana's works, had been thrown into the yard. Thanks to the work of the gardener, they were recovered and placed back into the house. I asked John McCormick to visit the estate before the Santayana material was shipped and placed in the Georgetown University Archives. McCormick catalogued several of the items, and he and I had significant discussions about the marginalia, particularly that found in Santayana's copy of James's *Pragmatism*.

Some may view this as a form of intellectual metaphysics, but Santayana did not. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith* he makes this clear.

> Moreover, my system, save in the mocking literary sense of the word, is not metaphysical. Now in natural philosophy I am a decided materialist – apparently the only one living; and I am well aware that idealists are fond of calling materialism, too, metaphysics, in rather an angry tone, so as to cast discredit upon it by assimilating it to their own systems. But my materialism, for all that, is not metaphysical. I do not profess to know what matter is in itself, and feel no confidence in the divination of those *esprits forts* who, leading a life of vice, thought the universe must be composed of nothing but dice and billiard-balls. I wait for the men of science to tell me what matter is, in so far as they can discover it, and am not at all surprised or troubled at the abstractness and vagueness of their ultimate conceptions: how should our notions of things so remote from the scale and scope of our senses be anything but schematic? But whatever matter may be, I call it matter boldly, as I call my acquaintances Smith and Jones without knowing their secrets: whatever it may be, it must present the aspects and undergo the motions of the gross objects that fill the world: and if belief in the existence of hidden parts and movements in nature be metaphysics, then the kitchen-maid is a metaphysician whenever she peels a potato. (Santayana, *Scepticism*, vii–viii)

By the 1920s, Santayana articulated his complete materialism or naturalism. He often uses the terms interchangeably. And his humor comes through as he notes he is apparently the only "decided materialist" living and compares his view to the kitchen maid. He is not trying to describe the material makeup of the universe, rather he leaves that to science and, as he says, he is willing to wait and see what science discovers. The sciences will describe the causal structures of the world, not philosophy or any intellectual metaphysics. But where does this leave reason as a common thread in philosophical history. Reason and consciousness become aftereffects but not unimportant in human life as I will describe later, they are celebrational and add quality and value to life.

Many scholars, including myself, have described Santayana as an epiphenomenalist, but he was not. In epiphenomenalism, consciousness is an entity generated by our physical being, but Santayana did not characterize consciousness as an entity. For Santayana, the only entities are physical, and awareness or consciousness is not physical and in modern terms is perhaps best understood as a general characteristic of certain neuron interactions in our central nervous system, possibly like the temperature of the body that is not located in any place. In 1913 Santayana writes to Horace Kallen:

> Therefore I am no epiphenomenalist, but a naturalist pure and simple, recognizing a material world, not a phenomenon but a substance, and a mental life struck off from it in its operation, like a spark from the flint and steel, having no other substance than that material world, but having a distinct existence of its own (as it is emitted continually out of bodily life as music is emitted from an instrument) and having a very different kind of being, since it is immaterial and moral and cognitive. (Santayana, *Letters*, *Book Two*, 127)

If consciousness is impotent, non-causal, and not an entity of any kind, where does that leave us. One might suggest a stoic approach to life, accepting the truth that our circumstances and actions are caused by determinants beyond our conscious awareness and generated by hidden causes. Although there are clearly stoic aspects in some of Santayana's philosophy, there is much more. He suggests that we should delight in the conscious celebration of life. The spiritual life as he calls it.

IV. Celebration of Life, Consciousness, Spirit, Spiritual Life

Consciousness as an aftereffect of material causes is now being advanced by neurological science. Santayana's insight was far ahead of his time. Stephen Hawking in 2016 (Burton), for example, emphasized this view. He cited neurologist Ben Libet of the University of California, San Francisco, who found that there are brain processes that occur nearly half a second before a person is aware of the decision to act. In other words, there are action-specific electrical activities in the brain that precede any awareness of a decision being made to act. This seems consistent with Santayana's non-scientific view that consciousness, thought, reason are aftereffects of physical activities that precede them.

What is missing in these neurophysiological explanations is a singularly important element that Santayana highlighted. Conscious life is not only an aftereffect of physical interactions, it is celebrational. Consciousness may be momentary and fragmented, but it is the art and music of the human psyche. It often is momentary as when a fragrance ushers back wonderful memories of times past, or it can be lengthy as when one is totally enveloped in symphonic music. Either way, it is temporary as one must get back to action in order to live, eat, survive and thrive. Instead of being rational agents, we, like all animals, are decision makers and our decisions are revealed in our actions. These fragmented conscious moments, if cultivated, are a delight. For Santayana, developing a life that fosters such moments is the spiritual life, temporary, non-causal, but eternal in the moment of celebration and delight.

Growing older often highlights the celebration of conscious life. As one's roles in business, parenting, universities, government, and social life are reduced, one may become more of an observer than a participant. Then the delight of consciousness may become more obvious than in our youthful active life. Waking up and looking out across a valley to hills and mountains may be an image one carries for the day or simply is enthralled with it at the moment. Watching one's grandchildren mature while a flood of memories of one's own children color this very experience and make it more delightful. Cultivating this festive consciousness in one's last years gives delight that is not diminished by the decline of one's health or the growing isolation of age. Santayana cultivated his spiritual life from an early age until his death. Something that should be admired as a unique contribution to the spiritual life for all human beings.

V. Prospects for Collaborative Efforts between Philosophy and Science

Clearly Santayana was ahead of his time in a way that many of his contemporaries could not grasp. His view of human action, consciousness, reason and thought were revolutionary while at the same time these views made his thought more difficult to accept or build on in the first half of the twentieth century. But now, there are many neurological research efforts that seem to confirm Santayana's perspective as well as raise questions about Santayana's account of consciousness. And here one may begin to see the prospects for philosophers and scientists to coordinate efforts on understanding human consciousness as well as the ethical issues raised by neurological advances. Santayana's views provide some evidence as to how such collaboration might begin.

Consciousness and the objects of consciousness are not entities for Santayana but are "immaterial and moral and cognitive." However, if they are aftereffects of physical causes, that would seem to locate them as happening within the nearly 100 billion neurons that make up the brain. Historically, the mind and thoughts have been considered private and personal. But if thought is a causal effect of electrical impulses within our central nervous system, then perhaps we could locate these effects and even translate them into the thoughts that are occurring. That is, perhaps we can develop technology that will read our thoughts and even change or develop them in some fashion. Obviously, not a simple or easy task and if successful will carry numerous difficult issues regarding how we understand human nature, consciousness, reason, and more. The research may be complicated by the brain as living organism that changes over time and perhaps frequently, so much so that would have to recalibrate to decode what a person was thinking, and perhaps this would become more individualistic and problematic. Even so, there are several companies and scientists working on discovering the neuron interaction associated with individual thoughts and human action. If they are successful with mapping the human brain in this way, then the result could be that one may need only to have a brain-reading machine to know what a person is thinking.

Moises Velasquez-Manoff wrote an opinion piece for the *New York Times* in which he cites a few companies and researchers working on brain implants as well as examining the brain without significant physical penetration into our skull (Velasquez-Manoff). The companies he references include Openwater, Synchron, Neuralink, BrainGate, Neurable, Facebook Reality Labs and several university researchers. Some of the research has significant practical bearing, for example, the abilities of amputees to move artificial limbs by connecting their brain neurons to electrical impulses that move the limbs when the person wants them to move, or stroke victims with restored connections to their natural limbs that they can move based on their own desire to walk, raise an arm, or pick up a piece of fruit. But suppose one could also determine what a person was seeing or thinking simply by examining parts of the brain. In a limited sense this is already possible and as such raises not only questions about our traditional understanding of the consciousness but also highlights concerns over the public nature of our thoughts and reasons. Velasquez-Manoff highlights the work of Dr. Jack Gallant, a computational neuroscientist at the University of California, Berkeley. For some time, there have been experiments showing us the kind of thing a person may be looking at from the way the brain was functioning, e.g., was the person looking at a human face or a cat. But only recently have Gallant and his colleagues been able to determine the exact image a person was viewing by examining the way the brain was functioning. In brief, Gallant and his colleagues have been successful in identifying the particular image a person is viewing by matching brain activation prompted by moving images. Limiting the focus to a subsection of the visual cortex, there were some failures in translating what the person was seeing. But where they were successful, it was a dramatic achievement: “a machine translating patterns of brain activity into a moving image understandable by other people – a machine that can read the brain” (Gallant 2011, 1641–1646). The practical implications for such a machine are significant, notably for people with Lou Gehrig’s disease, or incapacitated by strokes, or with locked-in syndrome (LIS).[5] And beyond the practical implications, the impact on our understanding of consciousness, thought and reason are dramatic and, for some, alarming.

Gallant wondered what might follow such discoveries. Could we develop technology that could read the human thoughts and make them open to public scrutiny, even thoughts the person may not be aware of or perhaps we could see and understand people’s memories? Speculatively, Gallant called such technology the “Google Cap.” Clearly no such technology now exists and it may be sometime before it does, if ever. But brain-machine research is continuing and one may expect significant discoveries that will have a major impacts on our understanding of thought, consciousness and the human mind.

The prospect of interventions or writing to the brain and correcting or enhancing certain aspects of human behavior are appealing to some. For example, based on his work with Parkinson’s disease, Casey Halpern successfully intervened in the overeating and obesity patterns in mice (Chow). Perhaps similar interventions will be successful for human impulse control not only dealing with obesity, but alcoholism, aggressiveness, depression, and more. If one generalizes one may ask what if we were able to enhance our mathematical ability, or the ability to concentrate on reading or listening, or other aspects of human personality. Indeed, we might begin to ask what are the limits of our own personality and the enhanced one. Such advances would also raise the questions of ownership of our thoughts, of our personality, or our impulses. Would there be a need for public rights to what was previously known as the privacy of our thoughts? In a court of law would a prosecutor have the right to incriminate a defendant on the basis of what is discovered in his or her brain?

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[5] LIS is also known as pseudocoma. The patient is aware but cannot move or communicate due to paralysis of nearly all voluntary muscles in the body except for vertical eye movements and blinking.

Such concerns caused Dr. Rafael Yuste, Professor of Biological Sciences and Director of Neurotechnology Center at Columbia University, and twenty-four other signatories to call for "neurorights" as a protection against threats posed by machines that read our brains and our thoughts.[6] Neurorights would protect brain information as medical data and perhaps would also protect one from self-incrimination in a court of law.

In part, these efforts at brain reading and translation into what a person is thinking confirm Santayana's account of consciousness and thought. They are aftereffects of material causes. But this also calls into question whether thoughts are "immaterial and moral and cognitive" as Santayana suggests. If brain activity can be identified and translated into a public account of what a person is thinking, then one may wonder whether it is best to simply identify the thought and the brain activity as one, or should one maintain Santayana's account that the objects of consciousness are not material? Hence, perhaps the beginning of some collaboration between philosophy and science that furthers our understanding of ourselves.

Conclusion: A Complete Humanist in a Complete Naturalist

I have described only some of the prospects for philosophy that are rooted in Santayana's naturalism, and I am confident others will find more. Indeed, there are many more possibilities in approaches that continue work in epistemology, logic, the history of philosophy, etc., as well as many other areas to explore the relationships between philosophy and the natural sciences as well as the social sciences. Despite all the challenges facing philosophy and academic programs in the liberal arts, I remain hopeful that the captivating as well as the ponderous aspects of philosophy will continue both inside and outside of higher education. Even if we go through a significant nadir in courses being offered and departments and faculty being secure, even if the public recognition of philosophical endeavors experiences a decline, I believe the underlying concerns raised in philosophical studies and debates are essential to human development and growth. Philosophers may have to open new doorways, take new paths, and find more collaboration with scholars in other areas of research.

One may wonder how best to judge any philosophical approach whether existing now or in the future. Santayana suggests there are two principal criteria. First, is the philosopher like Spinoza in being a complete naturalist allowing science to determine the causes of all events including human actions or is she or he superstitious and confused on this subject. And second, "how humane and representative is his sense of the good, and how far, by his disposition or sympathetic intelligence, does he appreciate all the types of excellence toward which life may be directed?... The complete moralist must not only be sound in physics, but must be inwardly inspired by a normal human soul and an adequate human tradition; he must be a complete humanist in a complete naturalist" (Santayana, *Persons and Places*, 235).

Regardless of the direction taken by philosophy in the future, whether it exists inside and/or outside of academia, whether it is another form of literature or a collaboration with neurological sciences or takes on any other form, these two tests remain important criteria for judging the value of philosophical endeavors. And this is another of Santayana's contributions to the work of philosophers.

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[6] See the following website for more information: https://nri.ntc.columbia.edu/content/our-story-0

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LANGUAGE, BEHAVIOR AND CREATIVITY: G. H. MEAD'S RENEWED NATURALISM

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ABSTRACT: George Herbert Mead delineates a post-Darwinian naturalism that brings decisive elements of novelty to the empirical and naturalistic tradition of modernity, typically represented by David Hume. I will try to enlighten the continuity as well as the differences between Mead's and Hume's naturalisms, focusing mainly on the concepts of experience, epistemological foundation, and individuality. Mead's work shows a treatment of these concepts that is in line with the theoretical-methodological structure that characterizes the pragmatist movement. At the same time, he introduces a behaviorist theory of language and meaning that opens new research lines not only of naturalism but also of the philosophical project of classical pragmatists.

Keywords: naturalism, behaviorism, experience, language, foundationalism, creativity.

1. In the Wake of Darwin and Hume

The philosophical structure of Mead's "symbolic interactionism" or "social behaviorism" represents a post-Darwinian naturalism that brings decisive new elements to the empirical and naturalist tradition of modernity. A pivotal aspect of his work consists in the Darwinian connotation of the idea of process as a decisive factor in overcoming the traditional empiricist view, which, in extreme synthesis, tends to conceive experience as a sort of collector of the sensory inputs of mental activity. In other words, Mead tends to enhance the anti-determinist component of Darwinian biology, which he implements by drawing an image of the human being as a *socio-bio-logical* entity. This means that the human subject is 'inside' nature yet overcomes its purely reproductive mechanisms. In particular, it means that humans are not 'spectators' but 'actors' in the realm of knowledge, to use the famous words of James, from whom Mead drew the initial directive of his own naturalism.[1] Equally fundamental, is the fact that Mead's *socio-bio-logical* image of the human implies a renewed version of Peirce's so-called "logical socialism", precisely because it insists on the social quality of the cognitive and value processes of the human subject as well as on his peculiar ability to identify himself.[2]

I shall try to point out the convergence of all these aspects in a theory of language that favors the notion of 'creativity of the I' in such a way as to exhibit the exceeding of the human subject over the presumed mechanical rigidity of natural phenomena, showing, at the same time, the empirical-natural root of human 'creative' performances. Thus, he delineates a post-Darwinian naturalism that brings decisive elements of novelty to the empirical and naturalistic tradition of modernity, typically represented by David Hume. Compared to Hume's position, Mead introduces as a completely new element his naturalistic theory of language that, in turn, is supported by a description of the genesis of self-consciousness in which the normative value of language emerges. In other words, he shifts Hume's thesis of the 'natural legality' of human mental processes towards a point of view that identifies a normativity intrinsic to the emergence and mature exercise of human language. This is, in fact, a very significant contribution to the twentieth-century developments of philosophical naturalism.

To illustrate my interpretative hypothesis, it will be worth recalling some essential passages from Hume's naturalism. First of all, let us consider that, according to Hume, the human being is an entity of the natural world, certainly a rather peculiar entity and yet profoundly continuous with the vital components of animality. We therefore speak of Hume's so-called 'non-specism', of which both his *Treatise on Human Nature* and the *Research on the Human Intellect* present very eloquent pages. In this philosophical framework, the Scottish philosopher theorizes the 'natural legality' of the human intellect's functioning: the exercise of ideas, as well as that of memory and imagination, imply universal principles, i.e. "laws of the association of ideas" which operate "in the same way in all human beings" and whose criteria of similarity, space-time contiguity, cause-effect can certainly be indicated Surprisingly in advance of Wittgenstein's well-known invitation to philosophize by formulating examples rather than definitions, Hume points out that his list of legal principles of the association of ideas, i.e. the normative criteria of the functioning of the human mind, has no claim to completeness. On the contrary – he argues – it is very difficult to prove that there are no other principles of association than those he lists. In short, "All we can do in these cases is to scroll through examples, to examine carefully the principle that links the different thoughts to each other and not to stop until we have made the principle as general as possible".[3]

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[1] For Mead's relations with James, please allow me to mention my *Pragmatismo: i valori dell'esperienza*, Carocci, Roma 2003, pp. 117–132.

[2] This aspect is discussed in R. M. Calcaterra, *Individual and Sociality in Science: J. H. Mead's 'Social Realism'*, "Cognitio. Revista de Filosofia", vol. 9, n. 1, 2008, pp. 27–39. Cfr. also H. Joas, *The objective reality of subjective perspectives. Rosa Calcaterra's defense of Meadian social realism,* in G. Baggio, M. Bella, G. Maddalena, M. Santarelli (eds), *Esperienza, Contingenza, Valori,* Quodlibet, 2020, pp.107–111.

There is a semantic ambiguity in Hume's use of the concepts of "universality" and "generality" to be annexed to logical-normative principles. However, it is important to notice the lively attention Hume pays to the social nature of the human being, by setting the sentiment of *sympathy* as a sort of universal groundwork or, we could say, transversal principle, of the social and cultural institutions that qualify the human world. It follows that the norms of human knowledge and action are determined not only by the physical-natural constitution of individuals but also by their social nature or their 'natural' placement in a relational and cultural context.[4] As we will see later, the Humiana notion of sympathy is a crucial aspect of the naturalist behaviorist theory of language and meaning proposed by Mead.

Turning now to the question of Hume's anti-specism, it is worth pointing out how it is in some respects harmonious with, though divergent from the view presented by Leibniz. The two positions are in fact indicative of the different philosophical modes, still paradigmatic today, with which one can give prominence to the 'natural' constitution of the human being; 'modes' which, moreover, seem to coexist tacitly in Mead's naturalism precisely where he focuses on the notion of the creativity of the ego. As we know, for Leibniz animals have organs structured in such a way that they receive refined and distinct impressions from the outside world. The perceptions corresponding to these impressions are also refined and distinct, so much so that the soul of the animal is "accompagnée de mémoire" of which a certain echo remains for a long time, capable of being heard on certain occasions".[5] The animal therefore has a thought through images, connects the content of its memory to external events whenever they occur and acts accordingly. The clarity of the feeling depends mainly both on the repetition of the same perception that produces a corresponding habit and on the intensity of a given perception, even if experienced only once. However, Leibniz strongly denies that this mnemonic concatenation can be understood as a rational cognitive process precisely because it is based only on facts and not on the knowledge of their causes.

For his part, Hume, too, believes that animals possess an empirical capacity for reasoning: they expect, by analogy with past observations, similar effects from similar causes and thus acquire knowledge in the course of their lives. This can be noticed from the simple observation – Hume says – that the puppies' actions are less perfected than those of adult animals, and it is interesting that he remarks how puppies can learn rules of behavior through discipline and education, as well as through spontaneous experience. Animals not only possess knowledge acquired through experience, but also benefit from an "original hand of nature", to which "many parts" of the animal's knowledge are owed. This knowledge in itself exceeds "the capacity that they possess on ordinary occasions"; moreover, it shows little or no susceptibility to the influence of practice or experience. We denominate these 'parts' of animal knowledge – continues Hume – "*Instincts*" and tend to admire them "as something very extraordinary, and inexplicable by all the disquisitions of human understanding". Then he concludes that "our wonder will, perhaps, cease or diminish when we consider that the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves".[6]

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[3] Cf. D. Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp. 16 ff.

[4] The sentiment of "sympathy" is focused particularly in D. Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* e in *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*.

[5] G. W. Leibniz, *Principes de la nature et de la grâce fondés en raison. Principes de la philosophie ou monadologie*, ed. A. Robinet, PUF, Parigi, 1986, p. 80.

In order to better understand the position of Mead, let us point out a relevant difference between Hume's and Leibnitz's ideas of the animal-human knowledge continuity. The latter, in fact, supports the extraordinary nature of human reason as the ability to lead to the knowledge of causes and certain truths, despite the recognition of the continuity between the empirical reasoning of animals and that of humans. Hume, on the other hand, mainly focuses on the relationship between empirical knowledge and instinctual endowment to sanction its strong impact "on the entire conduct of life" both animal and human, thus assigning to the operations of the intellect a complementary bio-logical role that is, however, far from dispensable. As if to say that on the level of intellect or reason we play much more complicated and significant games with scientific progress, than those dictated by the concreteness of experience and instinctual powers. Most importantly, according to Humian empiricism, these games must inevitably draw on the naturalness of experience in order to be able to aspire to the qualification of logical correctness. It is not here the case to dwell on the rule that Hume establishes regarding the formulation and verification of the correctness of ideas and theories: to trace their origin in sensory impressions and, where they are not found, to set them aside.

2. Pragmatist Constituent Elements

We do not know to which extent George Herbert Mead recognized himself as a theorist representative of pragmatism. However, his adherence to the theoretical-methodological project of the pragmatist movement seems quite clear if one considers, in addition to his Darwinian concept of process, the use he makes of the concept of experience, which he in fact defined similarly to Peirce, James and Dewey, i.e., according to a plurality of semantic and epistemological values.

Overall, it can be said that, unlike the modern empiricism, the pragmatist notion of experience coincides with a form of epistemological holism that excludes the priority of sensory data over ideas or their foundational role in the formation of beliefs and, therefore, also their function as the ultimate or self-sufficient criterion for defining their validity. In other words, for classical pragmatists as for Mead, it is necessary to adopt an inter-relational and dynamic view of cognitive processes, for which Humian isolationist theory of sensations, on which classical empiricism rests, is unsustainable.[7] The pragmatists, on the other hand, try to assert the irreducible interweaving of the sensory sphere with the intellectual one and, more precisely, the virtuous circularity between the concrete field of action, the logical-semantic sphere and the cognitive sphere. This point of view paves the way for a pragmatic meaning of the notion of 'foundation', which tends to combine the epistemic and ethical criteria of truth and objectivity with the field of action as a socially tangible testament to the polyvalence of the concept of experience, i.e., of its functioning as an instrument for the formation of beliefs as well as a concrete source of their correction or denial.

It should be stressed that the pragmatic notion of 'foundation' does not correspond to a pure and simple reversal of the terms of the rationalist/idealist relationship between conceptual and empirical plans or, more generally, between theory and practice. Rather, it is a question of giving a much more substantial meaning to the usual statement that ideas or theories have reflected in practice, recognizing in the latter a constitutive factor not only of the building of knowledge but also of the awareness of its fallibility in principle. Here we touch on a typical aspect of both classical and contemporary pragmatist thought, although we must bear in mind that some leading representatives of the latter, such as Richard Rorty and Robert Brandom, tend to detach fallibility from the notion of experience. Indeed, by virtue of the important contaminations between pragmatism and analytic philosophy, there is an invitation to take leave of the term experience because it is apparently too vague and, in any case, too compromised by its strong association with the 'internalist' logic that underpins the philosophies centered on the idea of conscience. In contrast, philosophical analysis should be confined to the field of problems regarding the function of language, its forms, its structural devices, its limits and its potentials, precisely because all this would offer greater epistemic guarantees or reliability.[8]

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[6] D. Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

[7] James develops his criticism to classical empiricism and particularly to the atomistic conception of sensations in his *Principles of Psychology*. See M. Bella, *Ontology after Philosophical Psychology. The Continuity of Consciousness in William James's Philosophy of Mind*, Lexington Books, Lanham–Boulder–New York–London, 2019, pp. 23ff.

However, the contrast between 'experience' and 'language' is increasingly proving to be inconsistent and pretentious in the context of recent developments in pragmatist philosophy.[9] In particular, such a contrast seems to obscure some of Peirce, James, and Dewey's important insights, which have shown the actual impossibility of clearly distinguishing the semantic fields indicated by the two terms in question – experience and language.[10] Mead's work is emblematic in this respect. Indeed, a cornerstone of his thought is the assertion of continuity between the biological sphere, sociality and intellectual processes. It is an assertion based on a theory of perception that also ascribes a kind of intentionality to the body level, which is however structured by the linguistic-symbolic space generated from inter-individual experiences.[11] In other words, Mead's basic idea is that the objects perceived by the human individual are selected according to his or her specific biological needs and nevertheless framed in a context of meanings deriving from the linguistic interactions that characterize the specificity of inter-individual human relationships.[12] It is an idea that Mead consolidated by the rejection of the substantialist conception of conscience, a conception that he found at work also in the new 'scientific psychology' established in Europe and America at the time, despite the great innovative efforts promoted by experimental methodologies. In particular, the new scientific psychology seemed to him implicitly dependent on the Cartesian notion of consciousness as an autonomous substance with respect to the physical-natural world, just because the 'new' psychologists tended to explain perceptive experience in terms of the mechanical relationship between 'external' and 'internal', between object-stimulus and psychic states.

In the initial part of his best-known work, *Mind, Self and Society,*[13] Mead states his intention to follow the methodological criteria of John Watson's behaviorism, which in turn derived from the experimental psychology carried out by Wundt, James and Galton in the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, Mead shared with Watson the idea that the study of the mental is better guaranteed by an 'externalist' approach, i.e., by the observation of behavior. At the same time, he strongly contested Watson's intention to eliminate the concept of consciousness, arguing rather that it should constitute a central moment of behaviorism itself. In his view, "Watson's attitude was similar to that of Alice's Queen in Wonderland: 'cut off their heads!'".[14]

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[8] See R. M. Calcaterra (ed.), *New Perspectives on Pragmatism and Analytic Philosophy*, Rodopi, Amsterdam–New York, 2011.

[9] For an account of most recent positions on the matter, see D. Hildebrand (ed.), *Language or Experience: Charting Pragmatism's Course for the 21st Century*, in «European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy», Vol. 6, N. 2, 2014.

[10] A detailed analysis of the matter is in R. M. Calcaterra, *Contingency and Normativity. The Challenges of Richard Rorty*, Brill-Rodopi, Leiden–Boston 2019, pp. 31–36.

[11] Cf. S. B. Rosenthal, P. L. Bourgeois, *Mead and Merleau-Ponty: Toward a Common Vision*, State University Press, Albany 1991.

[12] A synthetic presentation of this argument is in G. H. Mead, *A Behaviourist Account of the Significant Symbol*, in A. J. Reck (ed.), *Selected Writings. George Herbert Mead*, University of Chicago Press, 1964, pp. 240–247.

[13] G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: The Definitive Edition*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 2015 (MSS).

The line of this argument is typically pragmatist: in order to renew philosophical and psychological research, it is necessary to emancipate oneself from the Cartesian dualism that orients the traditional theories of conscience and mind, without however falling back into physicalist reductionism. According to Mead, the existence of the mind or conscience as a psychic entity or substance, ontologically separate from the field of physical-natural phenomena – as the Watsonians intended – can be denied, but it cannot be denied that mind and conscience are an integral part of human action. Indeed, mind and conscience must be conceived as functional elements of behavior, which, as such, lend themselves to an objective or scientific description. The quarrel with Watson closes with a statement of principle:

> Mental behavior is not reducible to non-mental behavior. But mental behavior or phenomena can be explained in terms of non-mental behavior or phenomena, as arising out of, and as resulting from complications in, the latter.[15]

Contemporary philosophy has advanced as much criticism as approval of this type of reasoning, which however is far from resolutive. On the other hand, precisely in light of the current debate on the mental, Mead's anti-reductionist naturalism presents itself as an exemplary symptom of the difficulty of closing a series of 'classical' philosophical problems and, at the same time, as a remarkable step in the process of changing the conceptual paradigms of our tradition.

As an alternative to Watsonian behaviorism, Mead's proposal supported a 'functionalist' view of the sphere of psychic facts, on the basis of James and Dewey's psychological research.[16] Mead endeavored to offer concrete justifications for functionalism by exploring the theme of action in conjunction with a cohesive group of philosophical intuitions.[17] The most important items of his works are in fact strictly connected to some important philosophical questions to which Mead tries to answer from a new naturalist perspective: the theory of human language as the evolution of the "conversation of gestures" that takes place in the animal world; the description of the social genesis of the Self; the definition of thinking as the "internalization" of the "significant vocal gestures" that qualify human life and of which action is, according to Mead, the matrix and parameter of objective cognitions. Overall, just like Dewey, he clearly maintains that language is a form of behavior and, since language is an eminently social activity, the analysis of human behavior must necessarily pass through the verification of the structural devices of intersubjective verbal communication.

In all this, the choice to adopt the empirical precept of sticking to experience is evident. "Experience," wrote Peirce, "is our only teacher" and Mead, like the classical representatives of pragmatism, intended to show the dynamic and procedural nature of experience. Through his theory of language, the latter is configured as an interpretative process of reality, and it is assumed as a fallible source of our cognitive criteria as well as the place where the 'subjective' inevitably fades into the intersubjective and vice versa. In other words, according to Mead's analysis, what forms the field of subjectivity appears inseparable from the concreteness of the social interactions from which it stands out and in which the very possibility of handling the concepts of consciousness and self-consciousness, traditionally constitutive of the philosophical discourse on subjectivity, falls.

3. Self, Society, and Creativity

As noted above, Mead's theory of language exhibits an image of the human being as a *socio-bio-logical* entity.

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[14] G. H. Mead, MSS, pp. 22.

[15] Ibid., p. 11.

[16] A detailed analysis of the origins, developments, and current importance of Mead's and Dewey's form of functionalism is in G. Baggio, *La mente bio-sociale. Filosofia e psicologia in G. H. Mead*, ETS, Pisa 2015, pp. 7–55.

[17] G. H. Mead, *The Philosophy of the Act*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1938.

The pivotal point of this proposal is the idea that the human being regulates his conduct through the ability to use meaningful symbols, which reflect the constructive and intentional character – in the biological sense of the term – of the relations she/he has with the surrounding reality, i.e., with physical objects and with her/his fellow human beings. The linguistic-symbolic factor is decisive for the specific 'natural' constitution of the human being, who is configured as a social subject by virtue of his ability to produce and use linguistic symbols. In other words, unlike the social relations observable in the animal world, the relations between human individuals, as well as between them and the surrounding physical world, are not simply relations of interaction but of *linguistic interaction*, i.e., they include the symbolic transposition of the experiences that weave the development of both personal and collective reality. These realities are, for Mead, eminently 'historical'. First, historicity is the necessary correlate of pragmatist criticism of essentialism and of philosophical or scientific dogmatism; in addition, historicity is an implicit factor of the concept of symbolic activity on which Mead bases his notion of the 'I' as a free and 'creative' agency.

Like Chauncey Wright – the lively defender of Darwinism, whom Peirce defined as the "coryphaeus" of the meetings of the "Metaphysical Club" from which the pragmatist movement took shape – Mead interprets the capacity of language as the "resultant of a long evolutionary path". More precisely, it would be the passage from the "conversation of vocal gestures" observable in the animal world to the exercise of "symbolic or significant vocal gestures", whose functioning – according to Mead – can be described according to the stimulus-response model. However, Mead's use of the stimulus-response model excludes its classic mechanistic character: signifying vocal gestures act as intermediaries in the relationship between two or more individuals and what counts is the mutual adjustment of their behavior to which linguistic communication gives rise. To put it differently, the intersubjective exchange of linguistic expressions does not only consist in knowing how to respond to them as others would respond. Rather, linguistic communication consists in the ability to indicate to others the response we wish to provoke, that is to say, the ability to circumscribe the impulsive components of the linguistic act and therefore to have a constructive impact on the social situation. The suspension of the mechanism implicit in the stimulus-response model is in fact constitutive of Mead's definition of the concept of meaning:

> Meaning is thus a development of something objectively there as a relation between certain phases of the social act; it is not a psychic addition to that act and it is not an "idea" as traditionally conceived. A gesture by an organism, the resultant of the social act in which the gesture is an early phase, and a response of another organism to the gesture, are the relata of a triple or threefold relationship of gesture to first organism, of gesture to second organism, and of gestures to subsequent phases of the given social act, respectively [...]. The gesture stands for a certain resultant of the social act, a resultant to which there is a definite response on the part of the individuals involved therein; so that meaning is given or stated in terms of response.[18]

To sum up, as it already was for Peirce, the meaning of symbolic-linguistic entities has a triadic structure that – by definition – goes beyond the idea of an immediate relationship between denoting and denoted. Moreover, Mead's conception of *language as a gesture* also offers important cues for a pragmatic integration of the theories of meaning developed within analytical philosophy. Indeed, the decisive aspect of linguistic communication lies – according to Mead – in the reference to one's self, i.e., self-consciousness, which precisely qualifies the level of "meaningful vocal gestures" as the exclusive prerogative of the human world (at least according to current scientific knowledge). Self-consciousness coincides with what he identifies as the basic device of the functioning of language: the ability to "take the role of the other" in the communicative interaction and, therefore, to anticipate the reaction of the interlocutor to her/his own expressions. It is not, however, a mere imitation, since the space of mutual understanding clearly borders on that of the interpretation of linguistic acts and the constructive activity of human intelligence, which feeds the symbolic plane of language.

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[18] G. H. Mead, MSS, p. 76.

The ability of 'taking the role of the other' is, in fact, the basic factor of the emergence of meaning, which Mead theorizes drawing on the concept of sympathy theorized by Hume.[19] The passage from animal 'conversation of gesture' to the human vocal communication is nothing but a "*sympathetic*" inter-subjective relation:

> If the gesture simply indicates the object to another, it has no meaning to the individual who makes it, nor does the response, which the other individual carries out, become a meaning to him, unless he assumes the attitude of having his attention directed by an individual to whom it has a meaning. Then he takes his own response to be the meaning of the indication. Through this sympathetic placing of themselves in each other's roles, and finding thus in their own experiences the response of the others, what would otherwise be an unintelligent gesture, acquires just the value which is connoted by signification, both in its specific applications and in its universality.[20]

Accordingly, the phenomenon of 'role-taking' is the core of the whole activity of thought, where it acquires the position of objective foundation of the ethical responsibility of the individual towards social reality.[21] We are tackling here the notion of the *Generalized Other,* which Mead introduces to indicate human ability to internalize the set of behavioral attitudes of the social group to which she/he belongs. On the one hand, the notion of the *Generalized Other* is the precondition of human possibility to establish a society with their fellows, namely is to arrange a group of individuals according to cooperative relationships or a *Koinoia*. On the other hand, the human capacity of internalization represents the primary condition for the possibility of relating to one's own individuality and, above all, of conceiving oneself as a subject aware of one's own actions and needs.

From the latter point of view, the *Generalized Other* represents a grounding experience of the rational subject, since Mead's analysis underlines the normative function of this experience in the development of thought, placing it as the condition of the "universe of discourse" that constitutes thinking, namely the "system of common or social meanings that thinking presupposes in its context". The normative value of the experience of the *Generalized Other* is therefore closely linked to Mead's theory of the social genesis of the Self, which he provides in order to counterbalance the influence of the social dimension with the safeguard of individual initiative. Mead's argument is the following: the experience of the *Generalized Other* is the primary condition for the possibility of recognizing oneself as a subject; however, the individual can obtain "his unity as Self" only through the dialectic between a "Me", namely the individual dimension which collects the socially pre-constituted cognitive and value patterns, and an "I", which instead is the functioning aspect of subjectivity that can offer free and creative answers to such patterns. Indeed, the 'unity of the Self' is nothing but the subject's self-identification as a member of a real universe that not only incorporates him, but of which he is himself an effectual instrument of development. For Mead, the "I" matches with the bio-logical capacity of the human being to relate constructively to a given objective situation, i.e., to grasp its possible problems and overtake them. More precisely, this ability is the distinctive factor of human intelligence, which Mead conceives of in the same way as Dewey, i.e., as a problem-solving activity.

The innovative role assigned to the 'I' in the process of Self formation is a leitmotiv of Mead's social philosophy, action theory and epistemology.[22] Unlike the perspectives that tend to withdraw the sphere of individuality from that of the ethical-political organization of human life, he focuses on the "natural" dialectic between "Me" and "I" to claim the indissolubility of public and private dimensions as well as to confer on the "I" an epistemic and ethical value that appears more consistent than that of the "Me", precisely because it represents a tangible factor of social improvement. It is important to underline that the innovative function of the "I" is conceived in terms of linguistic interaction: the new experiences and the new epistemic and value criteria of which the "I" can be the bearer, count precisely to the extent that, once introduced into the social communication circuit, they lend themselves to intersubjective recognition. In brief, everything that concerns the operativeness of the "I" is closely linked to the functioning of the "significant symbols" in the context of intersubjective and infra-subjective relations. It is by virtue of these relationships that the 'I' can be perceived as individual subjectivity, as a singular and unrepeatable agent belonging to the "universe of discourse" which, as said, is for Mead the basic condition both of social reality and of the most peculiar expressions of human intelligence.

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[19] Ibid., p. 300. Mead's concept of sympathy also recalls the development of the Hume version of this concept in Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. An interesting comparison between Mead's implication of sympathy in the emergence of symbolic meaning and Quine's use of the concept of empathy in his own theory of meaning is in G. Baggio, *Language, Behaviour, and Empathy. G. H. Mead's and W. V. O. Quine's Naturalized Theories of Meaning*, International Journal of Philosophical Studies, 27: 2, 180–200.

[20] G. H. Mead, MSS, p. 246.

[21] See A. Nieddu, The Universal Meanings of Common Discourse. Intra-subjective and Inter-subjective Communication in George H. Mead, in European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, VII–1, 2015.

On the other hand, Mead's insistence on the creative character of the "I" and his concept of "affirmation of self" tend to focus on the link between individual autonomy and social norms. The innovations produced by the "I" are indeed a sort of rebellion against some criteria of the current normative context, which – according to Mead's theory of the social genesis of the Self – must be understood and evaluated by the subject before he can contrast it. However, producing an innovation does not mean eliminating the cooperative matrix of one's own social group in favor of one's individuality. Rather, the creativity of the 'I' and the self-affirmation of the Self imply an ethical quality for which the validity of its expressions must be justified in light of the discursive or intersubjective canon of the 'Me'.[23] This is precisely because the creative component of subjectivity is not activated, according to Mead, automatically or by virtue of a metaphysical principle, but rather depends on the linguistic dimension of the "Me", which mediates the productions of the "I" [24].

In conclusion, language, behavior and creativity of the 'I' form an indissoluble whole for a vision that insists on the non-predetermined character of our cognitive and evaluative practices. In Mead's perspective, this amounts to granting an ethical meaning to the potential of the human mind to respond constructively to the suggestions of experience, especially to the problematic situations that it can present, to those "real and living doubts" to which Charles Sanders Peirce referred the positive development of our knowledge.

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[22] See the paradigmatic text by H. Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, Oxford, Polity Press, 1996.

[23] See A. M. Nieddu, *Il Sé 'creativo' e i processi di universalizzazione*, in R. M. Calcaterra (ed), *Semiotica e fenomenologia del Sé*, Nino Aragno Editore, Torino 2005, pp. 123–146. For a detailed account of theoretical meaning of creativity in pragmatist tradition, see G. Maddalena, F. Zalamea (eds), *Pragmatism and Creativity*, European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, V–1, 2013

[24] See on this argument G. Baggio, Pragmatism and Verbal Behaviourism. Mead's and Sellars' Theories of meaning and Introspection. Contemporary Pragmatism, 2020, 17: 4, pp. 243–267.

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BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE AS A FORM OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT: The paper focuses on a unique experiment in education that was realized in Black Mountain College (North Carolina) in 1933–1957 and seeks to find answers to a number of questions. What connects the notions of democracy, education, and the arts? To what extent is Dewey's version of pragmatism, known as instrumentalism, applicable to education in the arts? And finally, what makes Black Mountain College a revolutionary experiment in education, the importance and memory of which considerably outlasts its less than a quarter of a century existence?

Keywords: Black Mountain College, John Andrew Rice, Joseph Albers, John Dewey, progressive education, art, democracy, democratic man

> "The democratic man,
> we said, must be an artist"
> (John Andrew Rice)[1]

In 1940 John Dewey called Black Mountain College "a living example of democracy in action" standing "at the very 'grass roots' of a democratic way of life" (Dewey to Dreier, 18 July 1940)[2]. Falling back on Dewey's educational ideas and theory of art, John Andrew Rice, the founder of the College, stated, "the democratic man […] must be an artist. The integrity […] of the democratic man was the integrity of the artist, an integrity of relationship" (Rice 1942/2014, 328). Similarly, Josef Albers, the Bauhaus artist who in 1933 fled from Germany and joined the College, professed later that the principal aim of Black Mountain College was to "to educate a student as a person and as a citizen" (Kurtz 1944, 3). What connects the notions of democracy, education, and the arts? To what extent is Dewey's version of pragmatism, known as instrumentalism, applicable to education in the arts? And finally, what makes Black Mountain College a revolutionary experiment in education, the importance and memory of which considerably outlast its less than a quarter of a century (1933–1957) existence?

Education as Experience

Pragmatist ideas that were shaped and employed in unique practices of teaching and organizing students' life in Black Mountain College came from several sources – directly from John Dewey's writings, and indirectly channeled through John Andrew Rice and Josef Albers. In the 1930s John Dewey visited the College on several occasions. In 1936 he was elected a member of the Advisory Council of Black Mountain College and served for three years, and in 1939 was re-elected for the next term. The library comprised many of Dewey's writings donated by the author during his visits. Dewey attended classes, advised on the curriculum, and enjoyed formal and informal communication with students and faculty, who had meals and extracurricular activities together. In a letter to Myrtle B. McGraw, a psychologist and researcher in child development as well as his friend and correspondent, Dewey reflected on the educational model at Black Mountain College, which was drastically different from others with a fixed or close to fixed curriculum that liberal arts colleges usually had at the time. Despite some reservations about the freedom the students had, Dewey was rather optimistic in his account of the environment created at the College:

> The new students, twenty or so are younger than the former ones, just out of high school mostly, and I am trying to find out how they fit in but don't know yet; I am wondering how they react to the seeming lack of pressure to do "school work". But the young people are conclusive evidence how much education is derivable from a[s]sociation with intelligent people whether they do much of what is called work or not (Dewey to McGraw, 8 March 1936).

In contrast, Dewey's friend Albert Barnes, an art collector and educator, had doubts about Black Mountain College; in his view, freedom in selecting nearly every course did not lead to better outcomes but produced chaos. Discussing it with Dewey, Barnes expressed serious concerns about the methods of teaching, primarily about the role of the art class instructor:

> From my observations of the course in operation I felt that there was a confusion between activity on the part of the student and the results of the activity, judged in the terms of educational val-

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[1] Rice 1942/2014, 328.
[2] Letters to and from Dewey are quoted from *The Correspondence of John Dewey*, electronic edition (Dewey 2008).

> ues. There could be no question that the people in the art class were up on their toes, but equally unquestionable is the fact that their activities were not directed in an intelligent way, but were led by the imposition of the personality of the teacher. […] His ideas, his methods, as embodied in both his teaching and in his own paintings, represent to me a very low order of academism. In short, in the development of the human faculties, I see very little advantage in keeping them active, unless the activities are either intelligently guided or the student has within himself the powers of selection to lead his activities into fruitful and intelligent channels (Barnes to Dewey, 25 March 1936).

However, Dewey, who closely followed the ups and downs of the college,[3] stayed positive; he thought of Black Mountain College as a critical institution "in the long run interests of democracy" and of its "work and life" as a path to a "democratic way of life" (Dewey to Dreier, 18 July 1940). When the College experienced a hardship, Dewey remarked: "No matter how the present crisis comes out the need for the kind of work the College does is imperative in the long run interests of democracy" (Dewey to Dreier, 18 July 1940). Rice in his memoirs portrayed Dewey as an attentive listener who "had respect for the process of learning," as a person who asked questions rather than provide standard answers (Rice 1942/2014, 331). Besides, Dewey was more than an honorable visitor; his writings were the principal source of inspiration for the Black Mountain College teachers. Several key concepts of Dewey's pragmatism resonate in the methods and ideas of the College's educational model, above all the concepts of experience and of inquiry based on the organism-environment interaction and of inquiry.

In 1896, Dewey wrote a short but important article, "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology" (1896), where he argued against the conception of the reflex arc, common in psychology at the end of the 19th century. The reflex arc conception treats sensory stimulus, central connections, and motor responses as separate entities (sensation – idea – movement), while for Dewey such separation is an erroneous evocation of the mind/body distinction. Assuming the continuity of body and consciousness, he argues for the wholeness of experience. For instance, in the situation when the child sees the candle-flame, reaches for it and withdraws his hand when the fingers are burnt, Dewey states, "the real beginning is with the act of seeing; it is looking, and not a sensation of light" (Dewey 1896, 358–359). Accordingly,

> if one is reading a book, if one is hunting, if one is watching in a dark place on a lonely night, if one is performing a chemical experiment, in each case, the noise has a very different psychical value; it is a different experience. In any case, what proceeds the 'stimulus' is a whole act, a sensori-motor coordination (ibid., 361).

Therefore, the experience is "the result of interaction between a live creature and some aspect of the world in which he lives" (Dewey 1934/1987, 50). Situations include objects as well as relations, i.e., a complex that Dewey calls "environment." As he puts it, "in actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; *an* object or event is always a special part, phase, or aspect, of an environing experienced world – a situation" (Dewey 1938/1986, 72; italics in the original). So, experience in the first place is "the manifestation of interactions of organism and environment" (Dewey 1939–1941/1988, 16); interactions are necessary conditions for defining "the self" that is "a factor *within* experience and not something outside of it to which experiences are attached as the self's private property" (ibid., 17; italics in the original). Experience rests at the heart of how people think and imagine the world. However, not every interaction counts as experience. For example, when the child burns his finger in the flame, the burn is the result of the interaction of the organism (the child) with the environment; however, physical change (burn) becomes an experience only if movement is connected with pain as the result of this movement (Dewey 1916/1980, 146).

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[3] In correspondence with Ted Dreier, a college treasurer, and Robert Wunsch, a lecturer in literature and drama, Dewey showed knowledge of the difficulties that the College experienced from time to time. Thus, Dewey writes to Dreier, "I hope, earnestly, that your efforts to get adequate support for Black Mountain College will be successful" (Dewey to Dreier, 18 July 1940); Dewey writes to Wunsch, "naturally sorry to hear of the College's troubles" (Dewey to Wunsch, 19 August 1944).

Such an understanding of experience is the core of the educational model at Black Mountain College. The strategy of John Andrew Rice, the founder of the College, was to create an environment that allows students (organisms in Dewey's terminology) to interact with their teachers, who traditionally lived on campus and shared many extracurricular activities with students, with guests of the College, including John Dewey, with various materials they used in their art classes, i.e. with the environment in narrow and broader senses. All interactions imaginable were aimed at enriching their experiences. Rice, inspired by Dewey's pragmatist ideas that got his attention in the 1930s and drawing on his own experience, both as a student and as a teacher, developed a model of education that he tried to apply at Black Mountain College. Disappointed in traditional methods of academic research that seemed to him too distant from life, Rice was looking for the educational model that would put students in the very midst of life:

> Research is the report of what one has found out rather than of what one knows. The area of exploration is outside oneself, and, if not already dead, must be deadened; for, just as the herbalist cannot recognize a living specimen but must have it first pressed and dried, so the psychologist, who might, of all the scientists, report what he knows inside himself, prepares his specimen by expressing life. I knew, at the end of my stay in England, that, whatever I should do, I could not spend my life apart from life (Rice 1942/2014, 296).

His assumption was that the acquisition of new knowledge and enrichment of experience were outcomes of students' continuous interaction with the permanently changing educational environment. In Black Mountain College this environment was loosely structured, multifocal, and in an on-going process of transfiguration and transformation. During the time of Dewey's close involvement with the college, there were only two compulsory courses in the curriculum and a number of electives; one course taught by Rice was on Plato, and Albers taught a drawing class. The choice of optional courses varied from economics and mathematics to literature and music, and advisors, assigned to each student, provided guidance. Of greatest importance was to develop in students the ability and the habit of independent reasoning: "The aim of the college in the academic area is to give students a sound introduction to major subjects that lie in the four areas of the curriculum and to develop sufficient grasp of a special field so that a student may be able to form independent judgments within it" (Kurtz 1944, 5). Almost all classes took place in informal settings, even theoretical ones, e.g. Rice's course on Plato; and art classes entailed a lot of creativity from students and teachers. Besides, students were not given grades during the period of study, although they had very serious graduating examinations conducted by external experts that were specially invited for the finals. Groups were small (from four or five to twelve students) and schedules were individually customized as each student had his or her own work plan developed by the student with a help of the advisor. Rice believed it was the way to educate "a whole man:"

> In other places education was part of the day and part of the man; in Black Mountain it was round the clock and all of a man. There was no escape. Three meals together, passing in the hall, meeting in classes, meeting everywhere, a man taught by the way he walked, by the sound of his voice, by every movement. That was what it was intended to be, the fulfillment of an old idea, the education of the whole man: by a whole man (Rice 1942/2014, 322).

The process of study at Black Mountain College could be interpreted, using Dewey's language, as "a continuously ordered sequence of acts, all adapted in themselves and in the order of their sequence, to reach a certain objective end" (Dewey 1896, 366). Reaching an objective end presupposes inquiry, since the self in the process of interacting with the environment, can encounter unfamiliar situations, which Dewey calls problematic, that require non-conventional responses. The subject of the situation is not a passive spectator but an active participant looking for solutions of problems. The result of his or her inquiry is the "*transformation of an indeterminate situation*" into "*a unified whole*" (Dewey 1938/1986, 108; italics in the original), i.e., making sense of the contextual relations that shape the situation.

One of the examples of inciting in students the appetite for problem solving can be found in Anni Albers's description of her teaching method. The artist put students into a hypothetical problematic situation and encouraged them to find the way out:

> I tried to put my students at the point of zero. I tried to have them imagine, let's say, that they are in a desert in Peru, no clothing, no nothing, no pottery even at that time, and to imagine themselves at the beach with nothing… And it's hot and windy. So what do you do? You wear the skin of some kind of animal maybe to protect yourself from too much sun or maybe the wind occasionally. And you want a roof over something and so on. And how do you gradually come to realize what a textile can be? And we start at that point (cited in Smith/South 2014, 30).

Albers emphases the acquisition of experience rather than any definite outcomes of a problem-solving process. She sees her task in stimulating students' imagination that would help them to solve problems. This coincides with Dewey's view of the educational process as making the subject matter of a particular class a part of student's experience. Dewey understood teachers' guidance in the classroom not as "external imposition" but as *"freeing the life-process for its own most adequate fulfillment*" (Dewey 1902–1903/1976, 281; italics in the original).

Art as Education

In Dewey's natural metaphysics of experience art occupies a special role. Comparing art and nature, Dewey defines art as "a natural event in which nature otherwise partial and incomplete comes fully to itself" (Dewey 1925/1981, 269). Every experience, including an aesthetic one, is a result of "vital interaction of a live creature with the environment in which he exists" (Dewey 1934/1987, 138). Art is born out of interaction of the organism (the artist) with the environment and is a part of the environment with which the organism interacts. For Dewey art is a kind of practice similar to inquiry and is different not from a theory but from practice, which is not based on experience. The main trait of art is reliance on experience, which is an integral part of various live activities in which "the whole creature is alive" (Dewey 1934/1987, 33). Dewey sees experience as a response "to imbalance and dissonance in our environment;" for him "the creation of harmony and unity is an inherent feature of experience and the root of the aesthetic" (Ryder 2020, 119). Thus, the "generation through active manipulation of the environment of unity and harmony produces order and form" (ibid.), which are "a function of what is in the actual scene in its interaction with what the beholder brings with him" (Dewey 1934/1987, 93).

Black Mountain College never aspired to be an art school; from the very start it was accredited and operated as a liberal arts college. At this period in US education, the creative arts were taught in specialized art academies and not in liberal arts colleges. Black Mountain College was the first college that placed creative arts on a par with liberal arts. Arts and crafts were seen as a way to provide the wholeness of experience and give it an aesthetic dimension. The main advantage of putting the arts on a par with the sciences, languages and literatures was "that the arts, like literature, social studies, or the sciences when widely conceived, are treated as a focus for many aspects of life;" therefore the goal of including creative arts into the liberal arts college's curriculum was "not so much to produce artists as to develop an understanding of the worlds and the languages with which the various arts have to do" (Kurtz 1944, 1).

Black Mountain College in its not very long history experienced several different approaches to experimentation[4] that were introduced by the German artist Josef Albers, the American composer John Cage, the American architect, designer and inventor Richard Buckminster Fuller, and the American poet Charles Olson. Each of the approaches put creative arts or poetry in the center of the educational model.

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[4] On experiments in art at Black Mountain College see: Díaz 2014.

In his essay titled *"Art as Experience"* (1935), which draws heavily on Dewey's aesthetic theory and the notion of experience, Josef Albers explains the rationale for including the creative arts in the curriculum:

> I believe it is now time to make a similar change of method in our art teaching: that we move from looking at art as a part of historical science to an understanding of art as a part of life. Under the term "art" I include all fields of artistic purposes – the fine arts and applied arts, also music, dramatics, dancing, the theatre, photography, movies, literature and so on. […] If art is an essential part of culture and life, then we must no longer educate our students either to be art historians or to be imitators of antiquities, but for artistic seeing, artistic working, and more, for artistic living. Since artistic seeing and artistic living are a deeper seeing and living – and school has to be life – since we know that culture is more than knowledge, we in the school have the duty to remove all the fields of art from their decorative side-place into the center of education – as we are trying to do at Black Mountain College (J. Albers 2014, 231).

Albers describes an ideal student as one "who sees art as neither a beauty shop nor imitation of nature, […] but as a spiritual documentation of life; one who sees that real art is essential life and essential life is art" (ibid., 232). Albers' famous motto, "I want to open eyes,"[5] fosters an educational model that favors creativity and encourages experimentation, since it is "only through experimenting with the elements in various distinct branches of art that students first recognized their real abilities" (J. Albers 1934, 3). The virtue of experiment is that it "leads us to the most decisive factor in education – experience" (J. Albers 2014, 264). It is clear that Albers here means experience in Dewey's sense, i.e., based on interaction with the environment and on inquiry that in Dewey's sense presupposes the activity of an artist, who expands his experience in the process of creating a work of art, as well as the activity of a recipient of this work of art (a spectator). There are two inquiries and two inquirers, one is the artist, and another is the spectator. Black Mountain College was creating opportunities for students to try on both roles, each one being inquiry.

In his art classes Josef Albers endorsed "manual work," (cf. J. Albers 1944) advocating experimentation and "learning by doing." Anni Albers also linked manual work with liberating students' imagination:

> Material, that is to say unformed or unshaped matter, is the field where authority blocks independent experimentation less than in many other fields, and for this reason it seems well fitted to become the training ground for invention and free speculation. It is here that even the shyest beginner can catch a glimpse of exhilaration of creating, by being a creator while at the same time he is checked by irrevocable laws set by nature of the material, not by man (A. Albers 1938, 3).

"Learning by doing", whose advocates in the College were the Alberses, is the concept that Dewey proposed in *"Democracy and Education"*,[6] stating that:

> When education, under the influence of a scholastic conception of knowledge which ignores everything but scientifically formulated facts and truths, fails to recognize that primary or initial subject matter always exists as matter of active doing, involving the use of the body and the handling of material, the subject matter of instruction is isolated from the needs and purposes of the learner, and so becomes just a something to be memorized and reproduced upon demand. Recognition of the natural course of development, on the contrary, always sets out with situations which involve learning by doing. Arts and occupations form the initial stage of the curriculum, corresponding as they do to knowing how to go about the accomplishment of ends (Dewey 1916/1980, 192).

"Learning by doing" creates experiences and so is called '*an* experience', which is marked by the presence of "aesthetic quality." Dewey's well-known definition of '*an* experience' underlines its completeness: "we have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment […] a problem receives its solution; a game is played through" (Dewey 1934/1987, 42; italics in the original). When experience reaches such consummation, it is "a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience" (ibid.).

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[5] Albers spoke this phrase at the first general meeting of Black Mountain College at the beginning of the new college year on the 22nd of September 1941.

[6] The German translation of *Democracy and Education* (*Demokratie und Erziehung. Eine Einleitung in die philosophische Pädagogik*) was published in 1930; Albers supposedly read the book in German.

An experience happens in a problematic situation, the subject of which is not a passive spectator but an active participant. *An* experience is qualitatively unique experience. It includes an emotional component and means intensive living of one's life. What is of importance for understanding the flexible structure of the educational model at Black Mountain College is Dewey's conviction that *an* experience is impossible in "a world of mere flux," and that "a world that is finished, ended, would have no traits of suspense and crisis, and would offer no opportunity for resolution" (ibid.). The world that makes an experience possible is "the actual world", which is "a combination of movement and culmination, of breaks and re-unions" (ibid.). Black Mountain College was designed as a world facilitating activities that lead to *an* experience; it was structured accordingly. It was an institution where the student found himself in problematic situations and had to reestablish "equilibrium with his surroundings", experiencing "intensest life" in "the moment of passage from disturbance into harmony" (ibid.). Including the creative arts in the curriculum was the way to develop students' independent thinking and enriching their experiences:

> Black Mountain, we said, would be a means; the end was the individual. That sounded well, but I was not satisfied. I knew that the life span of an idea in a college was at most ten years; that at the end of that time, or earlier, the institution sank back into mere existence. I asked John Dewey about that. He reassured me; said, "As long as you keep your eye on the individual, that won't happen" (Rice 1942/2014, 324).

Democracy as a Form of Life

The aspiration of the Black Mountain College teaching community was "to educate a student as a person and as a citizen" (Kurtz 1944, 3). Life was considered to be "more important than school", and the student and the learning to be "more important than the teacher and the teaching" (J. Albers 1934, 8). Orientation towards educating students to be responsible citizens was proclaimed as one of the College's primary tasks: "If we accept education as life and as preparation for life, we must relate all school work, including work in art, as closely as possible to modern problems" (ibid., 2).

Dewey identifies democratic society as "an inclusive and permeating community of action and thought" (Dewey 1916/1980, 88). He understands democracy as openness for various relationships contributing to enrichment of the experience of society's members. Therefore, democracy is not an ideal state but a process and an action. In democratic society "interests are mutually interpenetrating" and social groups in the process of free interaction undergo "continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse" (ibid., 92). Thus, Dewey's definition of democracy

> rests on two observations: that all communities require some interests held in common by their members, and that healthy communities are characterized by their members' pursuit of communication and further interests held in common with those beyond the borders of their own communities (Ryder 2020, 174–175).

Black Mountain College, on one hand, attempted to educate students for democratic society as described by Dewey, and on the other, aspired to be such a kind of society itself.

Democracy was believed to be at the very core of the university structure. The founders hoped to eliminate separations between students and faculty, as well as faculty and administration, i.e. to create a self-governed institution without hierarchical distinctions. It never had a board of directors; governing was executed by a Board of Fellows, which included faculty members and one student, and was headed by the elected rector. No important decision affecting the students was made without students' approval. Education at Black Mountain College was supposed to raise a generation that would be able to build a democratic society and to live in it: "We need citizens who have toughness of mind, a capacity for meeting the unexpected with clear eye, and a steadiness of purpose that is based on the sure knowledge derived from experience, understanding, and practical competence" (Kurtz 1944, 4). Rice called Black Mountain College "a pure democracy" and associated the community that it formed with communitas, i.e., a group of equal members sharing a common experience in a kind of rite of passage (Rice 1942/2014, 324). As he said, "We were, without intending to become or calling ourselves, a big family; or, if you choose, a tribe" (ibid., 334). Dewey does not bring communitas into his discussion of democracy; however, there is some resemblance between Rice's interpretation of the College as communitas and Dewey's view on democratic society. The similarity is in the open character of Black Mountain College community and its ability to change "through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse."

Albers underscored "openness" as one of the desirable features of a student educated for democracy:

> Our aim is a general development of an open-eyed and open-minded youth seeking out the growing spiritual problems of our days, not closed to his environment; and forward-looking, with the experience that interests and needs are changing; a youth with criticism enough to recognize that so-called "good old forms" sometimes can be over-used, that perhaps some great art important to our parents does not say anything to us; one who has reverence for earnest work and working, even though it seems at first new and strange to him, and is able to withhold judgment until clearer perception comes; who knows that one's own experience and discovery and independent judgment are much more than repeated book knowledge (J. Albers 2014, 232).

Black Mountain College put an emphasis on the aesthetic dimension of experience, and the "openness" of eyes and minds that characterizes "a person and a citizen", was seen as the main goal of education:

> Black Mountain College aims to educate persons as well as minds. Life in a community, with its attendant work and the social awareness and competences derived therefrom, and the development of esthetic sensibilities that enrich individual living, are regarded as parts of that education. Direct experience of the democratic processes and of some of the common tasks of the world, in a context of intensive liberal arts study, seem to the faculty of this college to provide one significant way to educate American citizens (Kurtz 1944, 5).

Art was in the center of the curriculum of the college because it was seen as the principle vehicle to "open eyes" and thus to reach the educational goal, "the democratic man." The notions of democracy and art were tightly linked:

> The democratic man, we said, must be an artist. The integrity, we said, of the democratic man was the integrity of the artist, an integrity of relationship. The history of man had been the struggle between man and his environment, that is, the corporation of his fellows; sometimes one was winner, sometimes the other. When the individual won, he found himself the individualist, when the corporation, a polyp. That was the struggle then on in Europe, now in the whole world (Rice 1942/2014, 328).

Expectably, Rice does not see a place for competition in the democratic society. On the contrary, for him teaching the arts means teaching harmony, which excludes competition:

> The artist, we said, was not a competitor. He competed only with himself. His struggle was inside, not against his fellows, but against his own ignorance and clumsiness. The painting was his integrity, the score, the words of a play, and, at last, understanding, the will and the skill to do with his fellows, with the corporation, what he had done with paints and sounds: the integrity that was a relationship between himself and the corporation. But just as the painter must learn to paint, starting with ignorance and clumsiness, so this new artist, this creator of integrity between himself and his fellows, must know and know how, must have knowledge and skill. Also, just as the artist would not paint his picture with muddy colors, so this artist must see clear colors in humanity; and must himself be clear color, for he too was his fellow artist's color, sound, form, the material of his art. But, different from pigment, bow, granite, not used up in the use; rather, made more of what he would be, a note within the symphony, the clearer for having been written; giving up, and asked to give up, nothing of himself. That was the integrity of the artist as artist. That should be the integrity of man as man (ibid., 329).

Dewey thought that ultimately

> all education is experimental, whether we call it that or not. We simply can't help that and we are experimenting with very precious and valuable

> material in the lives of these young people. […] practically everything we do, every course we lay out, every class we meet, is in its effects an experiment for good or for bad (Dewey 1931–1932/1985, 423).

However, Black Mountain College stands out from other attempts to include art in education and educate a student as a democratic citizen, e.g. Albert Barnes Foundation, where Dewey was a director and which was also opened for various innovations and experiments in teaching art.

To understand Black Mountain College, it is necessary to see it as a complex existing in a context (the environment). The College was shaped by a number of ideas, not just a single one, including Dewey's ideas of the organism-environment interaction, inquiry, art as education, and art as experience. It was a complex phenomenon, a multi-universe, based on its own rules. Of the more than 1,000 students that attended the College, only around 60 graduated. However, Black Mountain College can be named one of the most successful experiments in education. There are several facts that speak for this evaluation and graduation numbers are not among them. The College existed for 24 years. It survived the departure of its founder Rice without changing its principal nature. It produced many serious artists, despite the fact that such results were never seen as its goal. It never became single-personality centered; the general idea of experimental and practice-based education was greater than personal ambitions. It turned out to be more successful in generating a creative atmosphere than many specialized art schools, and became an attraction for artists. Art, especially innovative experimental art, needs co-thinkers and an audience, and the College provided both. Black Mountain College was an example of progressive education but it was also more than that. It was a form of life.

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BOOK REVIEW

*The Network Self: Relation, Process, and Personal Identity (*Kathleen Wallace, Routledge, 2019*)*

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In *The Network Self* Kathleen Wallace develops a relational theory of the self. When stated this way the idea may not sound unusual or new because we are familiar with many conceptions of the self in which social relations play a defining role. This view, however, is different in that the relations are not limited to the social, and more centrally, the relations are not simply important to the nature of the self but are in fact constitutive of it. This is a theory of the self in which the self is constituted by its relations. Moreover, in addition to being relationally constituted, the self on this theory is a process, which suggests that at any point in time, the character of the self is cumulative. Wallace refers to her view, then, as the CNM, or Cumulative Network Model of the self.

The CNM is a naturalist, though not physicalist, approach to the nature of the self. Because the self is understood as constituted by its relations, the self is inextricably enmeshed in its many contexts and environments – material, biological, historical, social, cultural, linguistic, etc. And because it is constituted by its relations, all of them, the self cannot be described entirely in terms of any one of its features, which is the reason that this cannot be a physicalist theory. The self is not a body, or any bodily organ, nor is it removed in any ontologically meaningful way from its contextual locations; it is fully and pluralistically natural.

In developing this naturalistic view of the self, Wallace draws significantly from the American naturalist and to a considerable extent pragmatist philosophical traditions, though the position and the argument are not designed as defenses of pragmatism or naturalism, and the reader is not expected to be familiar with those traditions in order to engage with the book. The figures who stand in the background are, most importantly, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, and Justus Buchler, though again, the book is not an explicit defense of any of their philosophical legacies, at least not directly. They provide the conceptual underpinning that Wallace puts to use, and goes to considerable lengths to defend, in the theory's development.

The background on which Wallace draws is itself pluralistically naturalistic, and it is this philosophical tradition that more than any other (with the possible exception of some versions of Hegelianism) has developed and put to use the idea that entities are constituted by their relations. The emphasis on relations has also been extensive in feminist approaches to the self in recent decades, and Wallace explicitly draws on insights derived from feminist theory as well. She realizes, though, that in emphasizing the constitutive character of relations she is pushing feminist theory in new directions.

The Network Self, then, is the articulation, justification, and application of a theory according to which the self is relationally constituted and processive. In these respects, it is in some ways an unusual and original conception, and one that will be of value to philosophers interested in the related issues of the self, personhood, and personal identity. Those, indeed, are the people for whom the book is written. Though Wallace draws on the American naturalist and pragmatist traditions, her analyses are placed in the context of analytic literature on the subject, and in fact it is clear that the primary audience for the book is analytic philosophers. The rest of us can benefit from it a great deal, but the explication of the position and the arguments in support of it are expressed in the context of the analytic tradition.

This becomes clear in interesting ways. The most obvious is that Wallace goes to considerable lengths to clarify points that an analytic audience might be likely to misinterpret or to question, but that for an audience of pragmatists or pragmatic naturalists would need no clarification. The most persistent illustration of this is the way she discusses relational constitution. She makes the point repeatedly that the relations that constitute the self are not only social, but of many other sorts. Anyone steeped in the pragmatist or American, Columbia naturalist tradition would take this as a given. Another example is that she has to demonstrate fairly extensively that her understanding of relations is not susceptible to the criticisms commonly made of relational conceptions in the analytic literature. She makes the point, for example, that relations as she understands them are not necessarily fixed or atemporal, and she avoids the idea that relations are essential (necessary) or accidental (contingent), or that they are intrinsic or extrinsic, or pure or impure, or that relations cannot be ascribed to properties because properties are abstract universals. Again, a pragmatist or American naturalist would not worry these points.

So far this is all by way of introduction, and we should dwell a bit longer on the idea of constitutive relations that is so important for Wallace and for CNM. One of the reasons this conception of the self is unusual for analytic philosophers may be that the general conception of constitutive relations as it developed in the American tradition cuts across the more common approaches to mereology in analytic philosophy, and therefore analytic philosophers may find it odd. Mereological theories, which is to say theories about part-whole and part-part relations, have been a staple of analytic metaphysics for nearly a century, and in all that time the idea that a whole is constituted by its relations, and that any two or more terms in a relation are mutually constituted by that relation, has had very little development or support. To offer one illustration, a commonly accepted though not universally endorsed principle in mereological theory and formal ontology is that two distinct things cannot be parts of each other. Even if we assume a fairly restricted meaning and applicability of the term ‘part’, such that not all constitutive elements of a whole are necessarily parts, it is still the case that if the principle that two distinct things cannot be parts of one another holds, then an ontology of constitutive relations is, if not impossible, then at least much more difficult to accept than it would be without that principle. This may well be among the reasons that a theory in which the self is constituted relationally, and that relations are mutually constitutive, could be jarring to anyone steeped in analytic metaphysics. Consequently, Wallace must take pains to explicate and justify her basic conception, a task in which she succeeds admirably.

CNM is both a descriptive and normative theory, and Wallace is careful to pursue both aspects. The descriptive aspect of the theory is its account of what a self is, which is to say a cumulative network of reciprocally constitutive relations. Chapters 1through 4 develop and argue for this account of the self. Chapter 1 offers an overview of the issue and the theory; Chapter 2 develops the details of the relationally cumulative network that is the self; Chapter 3 accounts for how identity, a category critical for a coherent conception of the self, is understood in terms of the theory’s rejection of an essentialist or substantive idea of the self; and Chapter 4 elaborates on the details of the theory through a discussion of typically counter-factual thought experiments that have been common in the analytic literature, specifically fusion and fission scenarios in which two or more selves might be ‘fused’ into one, or in which a self may be divided into more than one.

The approach is normative in the sense that one of the desirable implications of a network self is that it makes it possible to account for a range of practical aspects of the self, such as a first-person perspective, autonomy, and responsibility, both individual and collective, as well as continuity in the face of impairments. These normative features of the theory are aspects of a pragmatic argument in its favor, i.e. that it recommends itself because, among other reasons, it has these valuable practical ramifications.

It is one of the strengths of the theory is that it proceeds on the assumption that an adequate theory of the self must answer to both practical (normative) and ‘metaphysical’ (descriptive) criteria. The reason, basically, is that every self has agency, which means that any theory of the self must account for agency, and thereby for autonomy and responsibility of some sort; and every theory of the self, even one with an emphasis on agency and practicality, necessarily makes some metaphysical assumptions. As Wallace demonstrates, the descriptive, metaphysical details of CNM are precisely what allow the theory to account for the practical aspects that a living self embodies.

The Metaphysics of CNM

Wallace says that her view was prompted by 1) certain developments in analytic metaphysics, specifically four-dimensionalism, and 2) feminist relational conceptions. The virtue of feminist theories for Wallace is that they take seriously the centrality of relations, social relations for the most part, in understanding the self. This is why from a feminist point of view, traditional philosophical conceptions of the self fail to do justice to women's experience, which is to say that they have not taken seriously the distinctive relational social contexts in which women find themselves and which go to considerable lengths in characterizing what it is to be a female self. Wallace appropriates these insights, but, as we have seen, expands them into a view in which all of any self's relations, not only the social, are constitutive of it.

A word about four-dimensionalism is in order because it may not be familiar to readers not versed in recent analytic literature. In offering us a conception of the self that is relational and cumulatively developing, Wallace is aware that she shares that conceptual terrain with other non-substantivist theories of the self. One that she finds interesting is four-dimensionalism, which holds, basically, that in the temporal dimension there are what are effectively 'stages' of the person, and these stages are more or less causally related to their subsequent stage. This conception avoids a substantivist notion of the self and recognizes its passage through time. Wallace argues, though, that four-dimensionalism does not and cannot provide a conception of identity that is sufficiently robust to handle the practical needs of a conception of the self. One of the motivations for the CNM for Wallace is to develop a view of the self that is more fluid than the fairly static conception that results from four-dimensionalism, and that thereby allows for a more acceptable conceptions of identity through time and, as we will see below, responsibility. It is the cumulative character of the self, which accommodates the fact that selves, whole selves, prevail over time, that enables the preferable understanding of identity.

Wallace is careful to distinguish two senses of identity. One of them is the metaphysical sense of the term, in which identity refers to a formal relation of a certain kind. The second sense is that used when we speak of identity politics, or for example one's ethnic identity. The primary concern of the theory, especially in its descriptive moments, is identity in its metaphysical sense, though she makes the point that identity in the second sense is related to identity in the first in that the various 'identities' one may point to for a given person are among the relational contexts that provide the individual with identity in the first sense.

Wallace avoids common understandings of the self, or the person, in psychological terms, or in terms of consciousness or conscious states, or in strictly bodily terms. She wants to develop, rather, a coherent conception of the self and of identity that enables the various ways in which we appeal to and use the concept of the self, or the person, in ordinary life. Numerical identity and identity over time are understood in terms of unity, and what she calls "that-one-thing-ness" of any given self. The details, though she does not use the technical vocabulary, are drawn from the general ontology of ordinality, which is to say Buchler's general ontology, and its treatment of identity. She has the ordinal concepts in mind, but she uses, where she can, the terminology of the analytic debates in which she is engaged. For example, one of the ordinal concepts Wallace relies on is integrity, which indicates the unity and coherence of a complex of relations, in this case a self, and enables a notion of identity. The adequacy of the theory requires the capacity to describe the coherent unity of a relational self and maintain its identity through time. Wallace demonstrates that the necessary unity and identity can be sustained when we understand the self as cumulatively developing, so that for a given self the past is not simply causally related to, but is integrated as a constitutive relation into, subsequent moments in the self's cumulative process.

Wallace further clarifies the meaning and import of CNM by contrasting it with approaches to the self that have used various thought experiments in their analyses, primarily concerning fusion and fission. She rightly points out that thought experiments are of limited value in philosophical analyses because, we may say, they tend to beg relevant questions in the very structure of the experiments. If, for example, you design a thought experiment in order to find an essential trait of the self, you have already ruled out of court a view, like CNM, that does not posit such a trait. In some respects, too, it seems as if such thought experiments have little value other than to help us clarify our intuitions, which is useful but by itself does not help to settle any philosophical questions. Somewhat more sympathetically, we might say that the purpose of thought experiments is to test intuitions, though that raises its own set of questions. We are likely to think through a thought experiment in terms of our intuitions, so it is hard to see how such experiments can test them. But because such thought experiments are common in the relevant literature, Wallace goes to considerable lengths to address the more familiar of them; and she does so with admirable patience and thoughtfulness.

We will not take the time here to go into any of the details. Suffice it to say that there are many ways, generally fanciful and counter-factual, in which people have imagined two or more selves combined into one, or one self split into two or more. By exploring how CNM would handle such thought experiments Wallace further clarifies the details of the theory, which provides the opportunity to assert repeatedly that the critical point for understanding a person, and therefore for deciding how to handle such fusion and fission cases, is the status of the network that is the person. If, in any fusion cases, the initial network can be ascribed to the new being, then the self is so situated; and for fission cases, if the network that constitutes the person initially survives whatever process to which it is subjected, then the self can be identified. If the network does not survive fusion or fission, then the self is not sustained. Perhaps a new self or selves will emerge in such cases, but the survival of the original requires the survival of the network.

The self, then, is a cumulative network of relations. Such a constitutively relational view allows Wallace to build the many relations of the self – social, but also material, cultural, historical, biological, and many others – into the self's identity. Moreover, because the identity of the network is sustained over time and thus the self is cumulatively constituted, the theory can successfully account for the critical practical aspects of the self. To this point Wallace has demonstrated that CNM is a coherent and plausible conception of the self. What comes next helps to establish the third pillar of a pragmatic argument, which is its usefulness and value.

The Practical Ramifications of CNM

Chapters 1-4 have worked out the relational conception of the person or self that is captured in CNM. In so far as it has done so through an engagement with prominent recent analytic accounts of the self, it has made a valuable contribution to the philosophical literature. The genuinely original analysis, though, begins from this point. In showing how a self *a la* CNM has a first-person perspective, autonomy, and responsibility, Wallace has developed this constitutive relational and processive conception of the self in ways that have not been accomplished before. We can begin the explication with a look at how she handles first-person perspective.

The relational self for CNM is understood as "a functional capacity for communication among self-perspectives." (115) Others have developed the idea of a multiple self, for example Freud, Mead, and even Plato, so in itself this is not new, though among these three figures it is only Mead who had a reasonably developed relational conception. In fact, Wallace explicitly draws on Mead and his idea of the social self; she also draws on Josiah Royce for a conception of interpretation, and most crucially on Buchler and his concept of reflexive communication. Each has a relational conception of the self, and each to some extent works out ways that a relational self generates meaning. Wallace takes these background ideas in new and more fully ramified directions.

In its multiple traits, the self is to be understood as a community, where community means a common, or parallel, set of experiences among the members. So, for example, there is a community of opera lovers, or of subway riders, to offer examples that Wallace uses. Such ‘experiential parallelism’ is a condition of communication. This parallelism, moreover, prompts ‘signifying activity’ on the part of members in relation to the common object that enables the community. The signifying activity need not be uniform - there can be diverse meanings, disagreements, etc. But some signifying activity in the context of experiential parallelism is what enables community.

The self as community is understood as experiential parallelism among the various perspectives, or traits, that constitute the self, many of which are capable of serving as a perspective from which other traits, or other aspects of the world, may be engaged. The ongoing interaction among perspectives is what generates the unified self that persists through space and time. The ‘I’, then, is precisely this unified ‘plurality of traits’.

Following Buchler in this respect, Wallace holds that the communication among the self’s multiple perspectives is reflexive communication: “Experiences such as self-criticism, self-identification, self-discipline, self-representation, self-conflict, self-deception, are all species of reflexive communication.” (125) In other words, the understanding of a relational self through reflexive communication is able to account for the range of first-person experiences that we have. The communication, symmetrical or asymmetrical, among the self’s perspectives is reflexive communication. In this highly general sense, communication is not necessarily reflective, conscious, and certainly not necessarily linguistic. Selves, and perspectives of a single unified self, engage one another in many ways that generate meaning. The process is not always smooth, and not “always felicitous or orderly.” (135)

Reflexive communication is a broad notion, and in the generation of meaning it is not limited to linguistic assertions, or to giving reasons. It may consist of those activities, “But, it could also include day-dreaming, emotion modulation, warring with oneself, battling an addiction, experimenting with self-representations, simply exploring the meaning of something, say a painting or a piece of music, or pushing oneself to improve athletic performance.” (137) Wallace does not say it here, though she does elsewhere, but she clearly wants to accommodate the breadth of human activity, in communication and experience generally, that Buchler was trying to express in his theory of judgment, where he distinguishes three forms of judgment, or active manipulation of one’s environment - assertive, exhibitive, and active.

The critical point is that a relational self is fully capable of first-person perspective, and the way we can understand that is through the reflexive communication among the self’s many perspectives or, more technically, among some of its ordinal locations and constituent traits. To this point Wallace has appropriated Mead and Buchler, primarily, and placed their understandings of the relational self within her broader CNM. When she turns to autonomy and responsibility, she shows how the relational and cumulatively processive self accounts for autonomy and responsibility, without which it would not be a workable theory.

Though acknowledging that some recent philosophical work has preferred ‘agency’ to ‘autonomy’, Wallace prefers to make the case for the latter. Those who have made a point of recognizing social influences on selves have understood autonomy as ‘making one’s own’ the social and cultural influences on the self. Because CNM is not a theory about social influences but about relational constitution, Wallace needs a more developed way to articulate and locate autonomy. In her hands, the self's autonomy is a form of reflexive communication, and more specifically it is "engaged in generating and acting on norms for self-guidance and self-rule." (144)

Autonomy, or self-rule/self-determination, means that in the process of reflexive communication, the self from one or more of its perspectives distances itself from one or more of the others; in the process, the self reflects on, evaluates, critiques, and generally assesses one or more perspectives of the self, or the self as a whole. The self thereby is able to develop normative and regulative principles for itself. In this way, relational constitution, including social and cultural influences, does not preclude self-rule, i.e. autonomy.

Wallace distinguishes between doing what one wants and self-rule. An example she uses is eating vegetables. If one likes eating vegetables and does so regularly, then one is typically doing what one wants. But this is not necessarily autonomy, because autonomy requires a self-generated norm to which one establishes commitment. There could be such a norm with respect to eating vegetables, in which case complying with it would be an illustration of a person acting autonomously. (149)

In the process of reflexive communication, a perspective of the self can become an object for the self, which in that respect is functioning as subject from one or more other perspectives. Thus the self can become an object for itself (as Mead made much of), and in doing so can reflect on itself. Such self-reflection can have a number of different results, including self-criticism, self-praise, etc. It is also the way that the self develops expectations for itself, as well as the norms, regulations, and rules it commits itself to in order to realize those aspirations. This is how autonomy works according to CNM. Though Wallace doesn't mention it, we might point out that this is also how the self achieves novelty and creates itself in the process of its experience. The autonomy that we want to be able to accommodate in our conception of the self, as well as the fact of creativity and novelty in the self, are not at all impeded by the fact of relational constitution of the self and the many social, biological, cultural, and historical relations that constitute us. On the contrary, autonomy and self-development are enabled by that very relational constitution, a point that accounts for the value of CNM in practice. And it is worth remembering, as Wallace herself points out, that the self-assessment that occurs in reflexive communication need not be assertive. The assertive is not the only mode in which people judge; we also do so in exhibitive and active modes, and reflexive communication takes place in and through all three, depending on the case. (151) The generation of norms that accounts for autonomy works, she argues, in the same plurality of ways.

Some theories of the self require that there be some higher' or 'authoritative' aspect of the self in which lies responsibility and authority for norm generation. CNM rejects this approach, primarily because the perspectives that constitute the self are not themselves hierarchically ordered, unless with respect to a particular function. If my concern at a given point is with physical exercise, for example, then some perspectives of the self will be in a more authoritative position than others. In different contexts, however, the relative authority of any of the relevant perspectives could be differently ordered. There is for CNM no absolutely 'higher' or 'authoritative' aspect of the self.

Several other issues that warrant mention are discussed along the way, for example authenticity, and the pervasiveness of power, and Wallace shows how the CNM handles them. At one point Wallace takes up the question whether an individual can give oneself over to the authority of another and remain autonomous, for example by joining the military, or a strict religious order, or simply following certain religious/cultural expectations, or for that matter selling oneself into slavery or, along similar lines, a willing addiction. Such issues are of course relevant for an adequate conception of the self and the centrality of autonomy, though they are not a problem because of any unique aspects of CNM. They are relevant issues for any conception of the self. In other words, the issue in such cases is not whether CNM is up to the task, but whether and to what extent autonomy is in fact central to our understanding of the self. CNM is flexible in these sorts of cases, allowing for the attribution of autonomy in some circumstances and not in others. In this regard it seems to answer well to our intuitions about such matters. For example, in some sorts of cases willing addiction can be an autonomous choice, while in other circumstances it would not be.

Interestingly, Wallace is prepared to grant the possibility that some people may be more or less autonomous than others, in the sense that some may have stronger capacities for the sort of reflexive communication and self-assessment that self-rule requires. This is an interesting point that deserves more consideration, largely because it bears directly on political theory and possibilities. Much of the Deweyan tradition, for example, rests the possibility of democracy on the ability of an electorate to exercise the method of intelligence in the handling of issues related to the polity. This is one of the reasons Dewey thought education to be so important. But if the capacity for autonomy is not more or less equally distributed, then there seem to be problems for Deweyan democratic theory. On the other hand, if Dewey was right that all people can be assumed to be educable, even if we do not all share the same skills in equal measure, then we presumably would be educable with respect to our capacities for self-rule and autonomy. One wonders what impact that might have on how CNM handles this sort of question.

The final topic that Wallace takes up is responsibility. The aspect of responsibility most under consideration here is responsibility as an identity-presupposing condition. Other aspects of responsibility, for example responsibility through time, and collective responsibility, are also pertinent. On Wallace's view, though it has some virtues, the four-dimensionalist approach to the person has trouble establishing identity, for example, in ascribing criminal responsibility to a person, and therefore cannot adequately account for the sense of responsibility that we need in social, in this case legal, situations. The problem is that four-dimensionalism treats selves at separate times as 'person-stages', each of which is then causally related a subsequent stage to create a 'person-career'. CNM, in part because it treats the person at any given time as a cumulative process, can handle this better.

Responsibility in a temporal sense, i.e. forward as well as backward in time, is also better accounted for by the processive and cumulative nature of the self. It can assume responsibility for past actions because its past is a constituent of the self, and as a process, for which its possibilities at any given time are among its constitutive traits, it can project responsibility into the future.

Collective responsibility, similarly, is implied by CNM. The self is relational, and among its constitutive relations are its social relations. Moreover, the relations that constitute the self are mutually constitutive, so that one's social locations constitute to some degree the self, and the self constitutes to some degree its social locations. For example, by virtue of being a philosopher one is relationally constituted by the various meanings and implications of that trait. At the same time, those traits, i.e. the various meanings and implications of being a philosopher, are constituted by the self, indeed by the many selves that are related to it. In most respects, a single individual's relevance to the traits of being a philosopher are minimal, but they could be considerable. The same points could be made if we use one's neighborhood as an example, in which case one's relevance to the traits of the neighborhood may easily be greater. In both cases, though, the relational constitution is mutual. This fact enables, and perhaps in some cases implies, collective responsibility. (181-182)

Finally, Wallace devotes considerable time to a discussion of responsibility within the several thought-experiments that she discussed earlier in the book. The details are many, and we will leave them aside. There are two important points, though. One is that the ascription of responsibility assumes ongoing identity, and identity is located in the network, not in any single trait or set of traits. Second, given that identity is in the network, responsibility can be located in or ascribed to the various forms of fission and fusion that she discusses, only if in any given case it is reasonable to claim that the network prevails as the same network, which is to say that identity is maintained through the process. If that can be reasonably claimed in any given case, then ascription of responsibility is at least possible, and whether it is appropriate or reasonable would depend on the details of the case.

Wallace has done a great service for those of us who are interested in the philosophical details of the conception of the self. With considerable rigor and admirable clarity, she has developed the idea of a cumulative, relational self in detail, and has demonstrated, convincingly in my opinion, the coherence of the idea, its plausibility, and its value. The analysis is a success on both its metaphysical and practical sides. Equally importantly, she has accomplished this within the contexts in which this sort of view is rarely developed, by which I mean the context of analytic discussions of the issue. Her command of the expansive literature is firm, and her treatment of it is sensitive and careful; she takes from it what she can, rejects what she cannot, and offers improvements when the theory provides them. For all of these reasons, this is a book that deserves a close reading by all those, regardless of one's philosophical background, who understand that an adequate conception of the self is important for anyone who is interested in human beings and how we engage our worlds.

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