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Dewey Studies is a peer-reviewed, online, open-access journal of the John Dewey Society, dedicated to furthering understanding of John Dewey's philosophical work and enlivening his unique mode of engagement with the vital philosophical questions of our time.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

LEONARD J. WAKS
Hangzhou Normal University
Editor-in-chief



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Dear readers, please join me in a tour of this new issue of *Dewey Studies*. Like its predecessors, this issue includes original articles, a research note, an interview and book reviews. I invite all of you to consider contributing such articles, notes, interviews and reviews to future issues of *Dewey Studies*, and to encourage your colleagues and students to do so as well.

The issue begins with two original articles. In the first, “John Dewey’s Pragmatic Philosophy as a Critique of Economic Discourse,” Maciej Kassner considers Dewey as a critic of the dominant economic discourses of capitalism. This useful essay gathers materials from Dewey’s corpus and brings them together to forge a coherent critical philosophy of economics. At least one prominent economist, Frank Knight of the University of Chicago, took up and harshly critiqued Dewey’s social and economic views on broad meta-ethical and epistemological grounds, an episode that led to an exchange of letters between the two and subsequently generated some scholarly attention.¹

In the second article, “Field Philosophy: Deweyan Inquiry on Climate Change Adaptation Perspectives,” Anthony Voisard makes the thoroughly Deweyan move of turning from the abstractions of mainstream environmental philosophy to a pressing real-world environmental problem, and marshalling philosophical and empirical resources to generate hypotheses concerning action steps to resolve it.

Shane Ralston contributes a research note on Dewey and Remembrance Education: that is, education promoting respect based on collective remembering of suffering due to war and injustice that must not be forgotten. Ralston continues in a Deweyan mode by generating five ideas from Dewey’s philosophy that can guide effective practices of remembrance education.

In our interview for this issue, Jessica Heybach dialogues

¹ See Luca Fiorito, “Frank Knight, John Dewey. And American Pragmatism: A Further Note,” in Ross B. Emmett, Jeff E. Biddle, eds, *Research In The History Of Economic Thought And Methodology: A Research Annual*, Emerald Group Publishing,

with Clara Fischer, Co-director of the Dewey Studies Research Centre at University College Dublin, on contemporary issues in feminist philosophy and pragmatism. Fischer explains that when she was finishing up her graduate work she drew inspiration from Charlene Seigfried, who “presented pragmatism as a third alternative to the analytic/continental traditions in philosophy, and as a framework that could provide answers to certain impasses in feminist theory at the time, such as between a too rigid, biological essentialism v. a too fluid postmodern constructionism.” Fischer found inspiration from other contemporary pragmatists, including Shannon Sullivan, Marilyn Fischer, Erin McKenna, Lisa Heldke and Maurice Hamington. She concludes that “my passion for pragmatism developed out of feminist theoretical concerns and the need, as I still see it, to develop theory that can speak to and is informed by contemporary social and political problems. I’ve personally admired the activism of Dewey and Addams, in particular, and have thus felt drawn to pragmatism as a philosophy that can marry feminist action with critical thought.”

This issue concludes with three book reviews. In the first, Edward Hackett reviews James Campbell’s *Experiencing William James: Belief in a Pluralistic World*. Then Robin Friedman reviews Anthony Sean Neal’s *Howard Thurman’s Philosophical Mysticism: Love Against Fragmentation*. Finally, Michael Festl surveys all of the contributions included in the *Pragmatism in Transition: Perspectives on C.I. Lewis*, edited by Peter Olen and Carl Sachs.

Festl questions the thesis presented by Olen and Sachs that Lewis should be considered a pragmatist rather than a logical empiricist, insisting that Lewis approached the same questions, and operated within the same conceptual field, as the latter group. He notes, however, that Lewis made distinctly pragmatist moves within that field, and this justifies including him in a broader consideration of 20th century pragmatism though it does not make him a pragmatist.

The Olen/Sachs volume, and Festl’s review, add to the growing body of work on the history of twentieth century

philosophy. It is worthy of note that Lewis did not merely make pragmatist moves within an empiricist field, but that these had significant impact on Carnap, Reichenbach, and other members of the Vienna Circle, nudging them in a broadly pragmatist direction. Murray Murphey, in his authoritative study of Lewis,, concluded that: “It is clear that Lewis found logical positivism both very attractive and unacceptable.”² Festl teases out various strands in Lewis’s system of ideas to question that assertion. His argument re-opens perennial questions about the defining features of pragmatism and of the assignment of individual philosophers to general categories or schools.

This issue of *Dewey Studies* demonstrates the on-going diverse interest in, and influence of, John Dewey throughout the world. The editors ask readers to submit articles to Associate Editor Jared Kemling (jaredkemling@gmail.com), ideas for panels and special issues, interviews, research notes to Leonard Waks (ljwaks@yahoo.com), and book reviews and composite review articles to Reviews Editor: Daniel Brunson (daniel.brunson@morgan.edu).

² Murray Murphey, *C.I. Lewis: The Last Great Pragmatist*, SUNY Press, 2005, p. 233.

JOHN DEWEY'S PRAGMATIC PHILOSOPHY AS A CRITIQUE OF ECONOMIC DISCOURSE

MACIEJ KASSNER
Independent Scholar



This article attempts to mobilize insights derived from John Dewey's pragmatism for the critique of contemporary mainstream economics. The paper identifies four main fallacies of a conventional economic discourse: the fallacy of unchanging human nature, the fallacy of rational choice, the fallacy of natural order, and the fallacy of a separate economic sphere. It is demonstrated that Dewey's pragmatism is consistent with institutional and sociological approaches to economic inquiry as exemplified by the work of such scholars as Karl Polanyi, Karl William Kapp, Amitai Etzioni, and Jens Beckert. An important practical corollary of the proposed argument is the necessity to incorporate values into economic life.

Keywords: Pragmatism, Institutionalism, Philosophy of Economics, Markets



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John Dewey along with Charles Sanders Peirce and William James are often considered the founding figures of the pragmatic movement in philosophy.¹ Among the classical pragmatists it was Dewey, who devoted the most time and energy to the study of social matters. He wrote extensively on democratic education, pragmatic ethics, the future liberalism, and the state of democratic theory. What is more, his social and political writings were animated by heated polemics against *laissez faire* liberalism and profound dissatisfaction with the economic realities of his time.² Therefore, it may come as a surprise that Dewey did not write a single book devoted exclusively to the analysis of the subject matter of economics.

Nevertheless, in his writings we may find many scattered remarks indicating that he was highly critical of the dominant forms of economic thought. The purpose of this paper is to explore the strengths of Dewey's criticism of economic discourse and mobilize his key insights for the critique of contemporary mainstream economics. Historical reconstruction of Dewey's arguments against economics of his time will be treated as a prerequisite for providing a pragmatic critique of neoclassical orthodoxy and allied approaches. In so doing I will seek to demonstrate the relevance of Dewey's version of pragmatism for gaining critical understanding of contemporary economic discourse.

The main argument of this essay revolves around the claim that pragmatic critique of conventional economic thinking reveals a set of four fallacious assumptions. Firstly, the mainstream economic theory is based on erroneous view on human nature, which neglects constitutive role of culturally embedded habits in shaping economic behavior. Secondly, the economic theory is plagued by an inadequate conceptualization of rationality. Following Dewey, we may single out the rigid

¹ This research project was supported by funding from the National Science Centre (DEC-2011/03/N/HS5/02916).

² On Dewey's political views consult Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca N. Y, 1991); and Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and High Tide of American Liberalism*, (WW. Norton, New York, 1995).

separation of means and ends and the neglect of the context of inquiry as the main shortcomings of utilitarian foundations of neoclassical economics. Thirdly, from a Deweyan perspective the dominant forms of economic discourse can be seen as a special case of the spectator theory of knowledge, which is based on the separation of knowing from doing. Dewey's criticism of the metaphysical foundations of the mainstream economics parallels contemporary concerns with the performativity of economic discourse. Finally, Dewey held that a socially disembodied capitalist market economy enforces the dualistic mode of thinking based on sharp distinctions between the material and the ideal, the individual and the society, economics and ethics. For Dewey, such dualisms were among the most significant manifestations of the modern crisis caused by rigid separation of the economy from the society.

For the sake of convenience, we will refer to the four sets of fallacious assumptions identified above as the fallacy of unchanging human nature, the fallacy of rational choice, the fallacy of natural order, and the fallacy of the separate economic sphere. The analysis of those fallacies is prefaced with the brief discussion of the relationship between Dewey's pragmatism and different theories of the economy. The introductory section has two goals. Firstly, it aims to clarify Dewey's attitude towards certain currents of economic thought. Secondly, it singles out neoclassical economics and allied approaches as the main target of subsequent critique. The remaining part of this paper attempts to reconstruct Deweyan critiques and apply them in the present context. The main thrust of the argument is that the influence of Dewey's pragmatism should not be limited to methodological insights, significant as they are in their own rights. Equally important is the overall political and ethical perspective that animates Dewey's critique of economic theorizing. In emphasizing both methodological and political aspects of Dewey's pragmatism the essay seeks to demonstrate its relevance for the contemporary critique of mainstream economics.

Dewey's Pragmatism and Theories about the Economy

Since economics is not a unified discipline, it is worthwhile to consider the relationship between Dewey's pragmatism and various currents of economic thinking. In his writings Dewey criticized classical economics, which he regarded as a combination of outdated natural law philosophy and discredited laissez faire policy. In his magnum opus *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, Dewey maintains that "the net consequence of the classic economics was reinstatement of older conception of natural laws by means of a reinterpretation of their content".³ How had metaphysical ideas entered the realm of economic thinking? Dewey sought to answer this question in considerable detail in his earlier book *Liberalism and Social Action*, published in 1935.

The story begins with John Locke, who invented the doctrine of "natural rights inherent in individuals independent of social organization" and applied it to criticize the abuses of absolute monarchy.⁴ As Dewey observed, Locke's philosophy "gave a directly practical import to the older semi-theological and semi-metaphysical doctrine of natural law as supreme over political law."⁵ Later on, the idea of natural law acquired strictly economic interpretation. In the philosophy of Adam Smith, as Dewey argues, the "Lockean idea of natural laws took on a more concrete, a more directly practical meaning."⁶ In fact, Smith identified natural laws with "the laws of free industrial production and free commercial exchange."⁷ Moreover, he maintained that social order emerges spontaneously as an unintended by-product of individual acts of barter and exchange. Reliance on early liberal ideas was not without consequences for the form and content of economic theory.

³ John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. in, *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953*, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1990), LW 12:498.

⁴ John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, LW 11:7.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷ Ibid., 10.

According to Dewey this metaphysical heritage led economists to frame their theories as if there were “universal principles applicable anywhere and everywhere”.⁸ If the neglect of context is, as Dewey once put it, “the most pervasive fallacy of philosophic thinking”, then economic theorizing in the classical tradition has surely fallen victim to it.⁹

Although Dewey did not explicitly discuss the neoclassical or marginalist school, whose ideas form the basis of contemporary mainstream orthodoxy, arguably his critique may be brought to bear on this approach as well.¹⁰ General equilibrium theory, a crowning achievement of neoclassical economics, can be interpreted as an attempt to provide a rigorous formal proof of Adam Smith’s thesis that social order is created as an unforeseen result of uncoordinated actions of self-interested individuals.¹¹ There is, therefore, an intellectual continuity between general equilibrium theory and the belief in the spontaneous emergence of social order, which Dewey rightly criticized as the “Achilles heel” of an old liberalism.¹² On the micro-level, the notion of individual as a ruthless maximizer of utility is clearly at odds with the main thrust of Dewey’s social psychology. Moreover, one can identify several philosophical assumptions that are common to classical and neoclassical economics. As Philip Mirowski demonstrated in his book *More*

⁸ John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, LW 12: 499.

⁹ See John Dewey, *Context and Thought*, LW 6: 5.

¹⁰ Curiously enough, it is easier to identify mainstream economics than to provide its precise definition. By mainstream, conventional, or orthodox economics I mean various approaches that are basically consistent with the central features of neoclassical analysis (i. e. mathematical formalism, rationality defined as utility maximization, and equilibrium analysis), even if they modify some of its assumptions. On definitional issues see further Christian Arnsperger and Yannis Varoufakis, “Neoclassical Economics. Three Identifying Features,” in *Pluralist Economics*, ed. Edward Fullbrook (London and New York, Zed Books 2008), 13-26; David Dequech, “Neoclassical, mainstream, orthodox and heterodox economics,” *Journal of Post-Keynesian Economics*, vol. 30, No. 2 (2007): 279-302; Tony Lawson, “The Nature of Heterodox Economics”, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, vol. 30 (2006): 483-505.

¹¹ See Frank Hahn, “General Equilibrium Theory,” *The Public Interest*, No 36 (1980): 123.

¹² See John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, LW 11: 40.

Heat Than Light, neoclassical economics also treats markets as natural phenomena, although the particular image of nature it favors owes more to nineteenth century energy physics than to the deistic philosophy of Adam Smith.¹³ What is more, both schools seem to rely on a largely ahistorical image of human beings and dubious context-free notion of rationality. To sum up, from the vantage point of Dewey's pragmatism, neoclassical economics, despite its undeniable technical sophistication, still betrays the presence of unexamined metaphysical assumptions drawn from old natural law and utilitarian philosophies.¹⁴

On the other hand, certain currents of economic thinking were broadly consistent with Dewey's pragmatism and sometimes directly inspired by his writings. This applies primarily to the institutional school of Thorsten Veblen, John Commons, Wesley Mitchell and Clarence Ayres. Pragmatism and institutional economics emerged from the same cultural milieu, marked by the revolt against formalism and the predominance of evolutionary thinking inspired by Darwinism.¹⁵ As many commentators have observed, there are numerous affinities between social thought of John Dewey and Thorsten Veblen.¹⁶ In his writings Dewey frequently employed several Veblen's concepts, including the distinction between industry and

¹³ See Philip Mirowski, *More Heat Than Light. Economics as Social Physics: Physics as Nature's Economics* (Cambridge University Press 1989).

¹⁴ Critics of mainstream economics often stress its quasi-religious character. For instance, Christian Arnsperger and Yannis Varoufakis called neoclassical economics a "religion with equitations". From the point of view of intellectual history however, the expression "metaphysics with equitations" would be more appropriate. See. C. Arnsperger, Y. Varoufakis, "Neoclassical Economics: Three Identifying Features", Christian Arnsperger and Yannis Varoufakis, "Neoclassical Economics. Three Identifying Features," in *Pluralist Economics*, ed. Edward Fullbrook (London and New York, Zed Books 2008), 24.

¹⁵ For an analysis of philosophical underpinnings of institutional economics see Allan Gruchy, *Modern Economic Thought. The American Contribution* (Prentice-Hall, New York, 1947), 1-28; and David Hamilton, *Evolutionary Economics. A Study of Change in Economic Thought* (Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick and London, 1991), 18-28.

¹⁶ See, for example, Rick Tillman, "John Dewey as an User and Critic of Thorstein Veblen Ideas", *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 20, issue 2 (1998): 145-160.

business as well as the concept of “sabotage of production.”¹⁷ Wesley Mitchell was Dewey’s student at the University of Chicago. His articles devoted to the interpretation of Bentham calculus inspired Dewey’s own critique of utilitarian philosophy developed in human *Human Nature and Conduct*.¹⁸ Both John Commons and Wesley Mitchell considered Dewey’s social psychology as an important source of inspiration for institutional economics.¹⁹ As Mitchell put it, “Dewey helped an economist to drag the psychological preconceptions lurking behind theories of value and distribution into consciousness, and to see how they stood the light of current knowledge.”²⁰ Equally influential were the efforts of Clarence Ayres to incorporate certain elements of Dewey’s theory of valuation into the technological theory of value.²¹ Even today, followers of what is now known as the old or original institutional economics continue to draw their inspiration from John Dewey’s writings.²²

¹⁷ Ibid., 147 and 152.

¹⁸ See Wesley C. Mitchell, “Bentham’s Felicific Calculus,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 33, No. 2 (1918): 161-183. Dewey acknowledged his indebtedness to Mitchell for recognizing the affinity between utilitarian calculus and the tendency inherent in economics to treat money and prices as universal units of calculation. See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 148.

¹⁹ See John R. Commons, *Institutional Economics. Its Place in Political Economy*, (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1934), 140-157.

²⁰ See Wesley Mitchell, “Research in Social Science,” in: Wesley Mitchell, *The Backward Art of Spending Money and Other Essays* (Augustus M. Kelly INC, New York 1950), 73.

²¹ Ayres’ efforts were met with Dewey’s approval. In a letter to the editor of *Sturday’s Review of Literature*, Dewey sought to defend Ayres’ book *Theory of Economic Progress* against what he thought to be an unfair criticism on the part of the reviewer. (Critical review was written by Harry Hazlitt, the follower of an Austrian school of economics and a staunch believer in *laissez faire*). See John Dewey, “John Dewey on the *Theory of Economic Progress*” LW 15: 359-360. For a concise presentation of Ayres’s views consult his article “The Co-Ordinates of Institutionalism”, where Dewey’s philosophy is recognized for being the main source of inspiration for institutional economics, on an equal footing with the work of Veblen. See. C. Ayres, “The Co-Ordinates of Institutionalism”, *The American Economic Review*, vol. 41, no. 2 (1951): 47.

²² See, for example, Geoffrey Hodgson, “Reclaiming habit for institutional economics”, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, vol. 25 (2004): 651-660. The

While disenchanted with classical economics, Dewey displayed great interests in what other social sciences had to say about the economy. He reviewed favorably Karl Mannheim's magisterial book *The Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction*, referring to it as the best account of the crisis of liberal-democratic order in the interwar Europe.²³ The main message of this book was that the modern democratic society can survive only at the price of abandoning old economic liberalism and deliberately employing various social techniques to gain a reasonable degree of control over the economy. Mannheim's arguments in favor of "planning for freedom" were consistent with Dewey's belief in the necessity of intelligent planning in a modern democratic society.²⁴ Moreover, Dewey was greatly impressed by Karl Polanyi's classic *The Great Transformation*, devoted to the historical analysis of the rise and fall of free market capitalism in the interwar Europe. In a letter to Sidney Hook Dewey praised Polanyi's work as an antidote to Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, the latter being a bold attempt to reinvigorate *laissez faire* school of liberalism. As Dewey argued, "If Hayek had read one chapter [of *The Great Transformation*] I think he would have been ashamed to write his book – for it is a convincing proof that all the evils and objectionable problems Hayek builds on are the products of the necessity of social protections against a market economy (...)."²⁵

term *old* or *original institutional economics* is used to differentiate this approach from the so called new institutional economics of Ronald Coase, Oliver Williamson, and Douglass North. Interestingly enough, strong Deweyan influence can also be detected in some European followers of old institutionalism. See discussion of Dewey's ideas in the context of institutional economics in Karl William Kapp, *The Foundations of Institutional Economics*, ed. Sebastian Berger and Rolf Steppacher (Routledge, London and New York 2011), 27-28, 74-81, 85-86, and 258-263.

²³ John Dewey, "The Techniques of Reconstruction. Review of Karl Mannheim's *Man and the Society in the Age of Reconstruction*", LW 14: 293-294.

²⁴ See Karl Mannheim, *The Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction* (Rutledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1941), 239-252 and 369-383. Dewey's views on planning were expressed most clearly in an article written jointly with John L Childs. See John L Childs, John Dewey, "The Social-Economic Situation and Education", LW 8: 43-76.

²⁵ John Dewey's letter to Sidney Hook quoted in: Robert Westbrook, *John*

The early work of sociologists Daniel Bell and Nathan Glazer also met with Dewey's approval. In *Liberating Social Scientist*, an important essay devoted to the philosophy of the social sciences, Dewey contrasted articles written by Nathan Glazer, Daniel Bell and Karl Polanyi, all marked by a critical attitude towards free market capitalism, with what he thought to be the limiting tendency to treat existing economic order as given and complete in itself.²⁶ Social researchers Dewey argued, should be free to adopt a broader historical perspective on social problems and to include valuations as an integral part of the research process.

From this brief overview one can glimpse Dewey's taste in economic matters. Dewey had a strong dislike for arid abstractions, "metaphysical" theorizing, and *laissez faire* policy prescriptions. He favored works based on historical or sociological scholarship, advocating social reform and democratic planning. But Dewey's engagement with economic discourse was not limited to discussion of various schools of thought and the works of individual scholars. According to Dewey's famous definition, philosophy is "inherently criticism, having its distinctive position among various modes of criticism

Dewey and American Democracy, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca N. Y, 1991), 461.

²⁶ See John Dewey, "Liberating the Social Scientist.", LW 15: 224-228. Dewey referred to the following articles: Nathan Glazer, "Government by Manipulation," *Commentary*, no. 2 (July 1946); Nathan Glazer, "What is Sociology's Job", *Commentary*, no. 3 (February 1947); Daniel Bell, "Adjusting Man to Machines," *Commentary*, no. 3 (January 1947), Karl Polanyi, "Our Obsolete Market Mentality. Civilization Must Find a New Thought Pattern", no. 3 (*Commentary*, February 1947). In his first essay Glazer described the use made of social science in organizing detention camp for Japanese Americans and Japanese nationals during World War II, noting that similar techniques are used in controlling the behavior of factory workers. Glazer's second article criticizes the tendency of sociology to treat social problems such as crime, race relations or juvenile delinquency as separate issues disconnected from a larger socio-economic order. Daniel Bell exposes the tendency of some social scientists to treat workers like tools to be adjusted in the interests of greater productivity. Finally, Karl Polanyi's essay mobilizes the insights from cultural anthropology for a critique of *laissez faire* capitalism. All the works recommended by Dewey combine social science scholarship with an openly critical attitude towards *status quo* and strong moral commitments.

in its generality; a criticism of criticism as it were.”²⁷ Philosophy conceived as a critique of culture is primarily concerned with the relation between human values and various dimensions of individual and social experience. Such a broad view of the role and scope of philosophy justifies inquiry into the relationship between economic domain and other areas of culture. More specifically, Dewey was concerned with the negative consequences of what he perceived as growing discrepancy between economics and ethics under modern capitalism. In *Individualism Old and New* Dewey argued that economic systems driven by the quest for pecuniary gain stands in stark contrast with the professed idealism of American life. We live, to use Dewey’s apt metaphor, in a house divided against itself, where moral values and individual aspirations are constantly pitted against the economic imperative of capitalist accumulation.²⁸ Although arguments contained in *Individualism Old and New* are targeted at the United States shortly before the Great Depression of 1929, much of what Dewey said in that book can be interpreted as a general assessment of cultural contradictions that are bound to arise whenever market economy is constructed as an independent social sphere separated from ethics and politics.

In this section I have argued that during his career John Dewey took a firm stand in the heated debates between different theories about the nature and the workings of a capitalist economy. In general, he rejected conventional economic theory in favor of institutional and sociological approaches. Moreover, Dewey’s scholarly preferences clearly overlapped with his strong distaste for the social realities of corporate capitalism in the first half of twentieth century. In the remaining part of this paper I will argue that Deweyan pragmatism remains relevant for the contemporary critique of economic orthodoxy. This is hardly a novel suggestion. Indeed, the implications of Dewey’s brand of pragmatism for the study of the economy have been already thoroughly examined from

²⁷ See John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, LW1: 298.

²⁸ See John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New*, LW 5: 45-49

the point of view of institutionalism, economic sociology and the philosophical analysis of economic methodology.²⁹ While this body of literature is on the whole admirable, it has two shortcomings, which will be briefly discussed here. Firstly, it rarely takes any notice of political and ethical reasons that motivated Dewey's writings on social and economic matters. As a result, it tends to diminish the importance of the normative dimension of Dewey's pragmatism. Secondly, theorists often shy away from a broader cultural analysis of the relations between various theoretical positions and the socio-economic realities of modern capitalism. Such arguments, highly speculative as they undoubtedly are, can nevertheless throw an interesting light on the controversies surrounding the role of markets in modern societies. In what follows I will argue that Dewey's pragmatism offers not only methodological but also normative insights that are relevant to the critique of contemporary economic discourse.

The fallacy of unchanging human nature

The argument that conventional economics is based on erroneous views concerning human nature was advanced by John Dewey in his lectures on social psychology, published in 1922 as *Human Nature and Conduct*. The book had considerable influence on the development of institutional economics and it remains a *locus classicus* for the pragmatic critique of economic discourse. The main aim of Dewey's investigations is to establish social psychology based on the analysis of the interplay between impulses, habits and intelligence in human conduct. Clearly, habit is the most important category here. In Dewey's definition *habit* is an acquired disposition to act in a certain way. As Dewey puts it, the word *habit* is used to denote "that kind of human

²⁹ See Allan Gruchy, *Modern Economic Thought. The American Contribution* (Prentice-Hall, New York, 1947); Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996); and essays gathered in *Dewey, Pragmatism and Economic Methodology*, ed. Elias. L. Kahlil (Rutledge, London and New York, 2004).

activity which is influenced by prior activity and in that sense acquired; which contains within itself a certain ordering or systematization of minor elements of action; which is projective, dynamic in quality, ready for overt manifestation; and which is operative in some subdued subordinate form even when not obviously dominating activity.”³⁰ Habits are social and historical, owing their particular shape to prevalent cultural norms and customs. Moreover, Dewey also regards them as infused with meaning, and as such, capable of making human conduct both understandable and morally significant.³¹

As opposed to *habits*, impulses are native. John Dewey is skeptical about various classifications of impulses and instincts. To be more precise, we should speak of a reservoir of impulsive energy that is integrated with a particular set of habits. Although impulses are generally subdued by habits, in a social crisis, such as a war or social revolution, impulsive energy may break out of the habitual constraints. In Dewey’s social theory such moments of breakdown of a given habitual order are called *problematic situations*. They typically occur when agents are confronted with novel and unexpected circumstances. Such circumstances require a proper readjustment between habits and impulses. This is the task that Dewey assigns to intelligence, which he understands as the capacity to reshape habits according to a deliberate plan. One may doubt, however, whether impulsive energy plays any direct role in the process of intelligent reconstruction. It would be more consistent with Dewey’s overall approach to assume that the tension manifesting itself in problematic situations stems from conflicting sets of habits, rather than from the growing discrepancy between the acquired habits and inborn impulses. Whatever the case may be, in Deweyan theory of action a proper role of intelligence is to guide the process of readjustment of a given set of habits, in order to make them more adapted to changing demands of social life.

For the sake of the present argument it is important to realize that Dewey’s notion of habit is similar in meaning to the

³⁰ See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14:31.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

concept of “institution” as it is understood in the economics of Thorstein Veblen and his followers.³² Firstly, both habits and institutions are conceptual tools designed for the study of human behavior from an cultural or anthropological point of view.³³ Institutions are usually defined as “relatively uniform patterns of thought and action” or “rules” governing human conduct.³⁴ It is essential to understand that those rules or patterns are not treated as universal features of human nature but are recognized as culturally specific and, in principle, open to change. Secondly, institutions and habits should be regarded as probabilistic tendencies rather than exact laws. They inform us how people are expected to act in typical social situations. However, the possibility of deviating from the established habits or modifying them can never be excluded. Thirdly, habits and institutions cannot be adequately conceived as expressions of individual motives and desires. On the contrary, prevalent motivations and constellations of wants are themselves reflections of given social environment. In other words, both Dewey and the followers of institutional economics assert the analytical primacy of the social factors over individual ones in explaining human actions. Fourthly, as culturally conditioned patterns of behavior both habits and institutions are at the same

³² Dewey noted the proximity between habits and institutions himself. In *Human Nature and Conduct* Dewey sometimes uses the term *institutions* as a synonym for habit, i. e. when he refers to habits as “embodied institutions”. See J. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 77.

³³In his contribution to the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Dewey credited anthropology with the discovery of the primacy of culture in shaping human behavior. “Anthropology (...), Dewey argued, has made it clear that the varieties of cultural and institutional forms which have existed are not to be traced to anything which can be called original unmodified human nature but are products of interactions with the social environment; they are functions (...) of institutional organization and cultural traditions as these operate to shape raw, biological material into definitively human shape”. See J. Dewey, “Human Nature”, LW 6: 37. On the role of anthropological inspiration in Dewey’s thinking see further Loren Goldman, “Dewey’s Pragmatism from An Anthropological Point of View”, *Transactions of Charles S. Peirce Society*, 2002, vol. 48, no. 1 (2012): 1-31.

³⁴ See Karl William Kapp, *The Foundations of Institutional Economics*, ed. by Sebastian Berger and Rolf Steppacher (Routledge, London and New York 2011), 50; Geoffrey Hodgson, “What are Institutions?”, *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. xl, no. 1, (2006): 2.

time enabling and constraining. To use John Commons' famous expression, institutions can be conceived as a "collective action in control, liberation and expansion of individual action."³⁵ In a similar vein Dewey argued that habits are abilities, not unlike skills displayed by an artist or craftsman.³⁶ In conclusion, we may agree with Wesley Mitchell's remark that the term "institutions" is a convenient name for "the more important among the widely prevalent, highly standardized social habits."³⁷

We shall now consider the contrast between pragmatic social psychology and what Dewey called the "mythological psychology of instincts behind modern economics."³⁸ By artificially separating the human self from its social surroundings the founders of classical political economy created an artificial persona of *homo oeconomicus*, driven exclusively by the the love of gain and aversion to labour. These two motives were singled out as being "economic" in nature. Contemporary mainstream economics, although in many ways very remote from its classical predecessor, is even more ignorant of the institutional context of an economic action. It conceives social actors primarily as maximizers of utility and treats their preferences as exogenous. From the standpoint of Dewey's social theory economics erroneously concentrates on individualistic concepts such as motives, incentives or utility

³⁵ John Commons, "Institutional Economics", *American Economic Review*, vol. 21, no 4 (1931): 648.

³⁶ J. Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW14: 47.

³⁷ Wesley Mitchell, "The Prospects of Economics," in Wesley Mitchell, *The Backward Art of Spending Money and Other Essays* (Augustus M. Kelly INC, New York 1950), 373. It is important to note, however, that both terms have slightly different connotations. For instance, institutions can be characterized as formal and informal. While habits and customs may in some circumstances be passed into law, the term *formal habit* would be a misnomer. More importantly, *habit* is not the right word to use when discussing phenomena at a macro-level. While we may speak of "institutional diversity of modern capitalism", it would be rather queer to employ the word habit in a similar context. On the other hand, habit is a much better choice when we are inclined to discuss questions related to human character and conduct. Habits are also intimately connected with bodily reactions in the way institutions are not.

³⁸ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 145.

maximization at the expense of social categories such as habits and institutions. Neoclassical economics is particularly notorious for its persistent institutional blindness³⁹ Under the influence of utilitarian philosophy theorists of neoclassical school attempted to apply mathematical calculus to the study of economic behavior. However, as Dewey noted, future pleasures and pains are among factors “which are most subject to incalculable accident.”⁴⁰ The same is true, we may add, for marginal utility. Habits and institutions, on the other hand, do not lend themselves easily to mathematical formulation. Nevertheless, they are much better tools for the study of observable regularities of conduct. In fact, from empirical point of view pragmatic analysis of tendencies of behavior expressed in habits and institutions is more reliable guide to understanding economic action than utilitarian analysis conducted in terms of fictional units of preference satisfaction (i.e. utility).⁴¹ If economic analysis were to be based on realistic psychological foundations, it should follow social psychology of habits instead of individualistic psychology of inborn instincts, natural motives or personal preference orderings.

Let us now contrast Dewey’s pragmatism and neoclassical economics with respect to their respective conceptions of reason. Due to its commitment to methodological individualism mainstream economics tends to assume that rationality is essentially an attribute of individuals. Moreover, for neoclassical economics reason is reduced to bare capacity to calculate the most efficient ways for satisfaction of given set of preferences. Such a view of reason assumes a strict separation between the human organism and its natural and social surroundings. However, from the point of view of Dewey’s

³⁹ The expression “institutional blindness” is taken from the title of Geoffrey Hodgson’s essay. See Geoffrey Hodgson, “Institutional Blindness in Modern Economics”, in *Advancing Socio-Economics. An Institutionalist Perspective*, ed. J. Rogers Hollingsworth, Karl H. Müller, and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth (Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham and Oxford 2002), 147-170.

⁴⁰ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 38.

⁴¹ For a persuasive account of social mechanisms in terms of Deweyan habits see Neil Gross, “A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms”, *American Sociological Review*, vol. 74 (2009): 358-379.

pragmatism such an assumption is untenable. For one thing, neoclassical definition of rationality seems to disregard the cognitive limitations of living organisms. In his article devoted to the critique of rational choice model of rationality Herbert Simon argued that it cannot be applied to real life situations due to asymmetries of information, sequential decision making and sheer limits of human calculative ability.⁴² As Simon put it, certain features of the natural environment (i.e. limits of computational capacity) are placed “within the skin of the biological organism.”⁴³ In other words, neoclassical economics seems to ignore biological constraints that necessarily apply to any feasible notion of rationality. On the other hand, mainstream economics also overlooks another possibility, namely that certain features of social environment can make people actions more rather than less rational. This is possible because knowledge and intelligence are embodied in habits prevalent in a given culture. To use one of Dewey’s favorite examples, a contemporary car mechanic “can discourse of ohms and amperes as Sir Isaac Newton could not in his day.”⁴⁴ More generally, people can be as rational (or irrational) as are the habits and folkways, which form their social surroundings. To sum up, from the standpoint of Dewey pragmatism rationality is social rather than individual affair. As such it has to be regarded not as property of individuals but as relation between human beings and their environment.

Another consequence of institutional blindness of mainstream economics is its inability to understand social and economic change. Following Hans Joas, we may say that all human action oscillates between unreflective enactment of established habits and acts of creativity.⁴⁵ On this reading the proper function of intelligence is an innovative reconstruction of the existing set of institutions. In other words, human

⁴² See Herbert Simon, “A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice”, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 69, no. 1 (1955): 99-118.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁴ John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, LW2: 366.

⁴⁵ See Hans Joas, *The Creativity of Action*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996),: 129.

creativity can be understood only against the background of habitual activity.⁴⁶ By treating habits and intuitions as exogenous factors, conventional economics effectively excludes them from the purview of analysis. By doing so it places existing institutional arrangements beyond the scope of critique. Conventional economics can afford to treat habits and institutions as exogenous factors only by assuming that the social environment remains essentially stable in a short run. However, in modern society, where a rapid social and technological change is a norm rather than an exception, this assumption seems rather questionable. Paradoxically enough, petrification of even the most preferable set of social institutions may turn out to be a rather pyrrhic victory. For, if Dewey's account of social change is plausible, the more rigid the particular set of institutional arrangement appears, the more costly any future economic reconstruction is likely to be.

To sum up, from the standpoint of Dewey's social psychology the main fault of classical and neoclassical economics lies in their deliberate neglect of culturally specific habits and institutions. Institutional blindness of mainstream economics not only leads to inadequate analysis of human behavior but also to deficient conceptualization of rationality. From the pragmatic perspective efforts of mainstream economics to discuss rationality in general are likely to be counterproductive. For Dewey human conduct can be assessed properly only if particular social context is taken into account. As James Bohman put it, "without some sense of problematic situation in which judgment is operating, it is hard to see responses as «rational» or «intelligent» and thus as predictive of anything like a permanent tendency of human reasoning within an extended social environment."⁴⁷ Moreover, if a

⁴⁶ For some empirical evidence supporting this claim see Neil Gross, "Pragmatism and the Study of Large Scale Social Phenomena", *Theory and Society*, vol. 47, Issue 1 (2018): 87-111.

⁴⁷ See James Bohman, "Participation Through Publics: Did Dewey Answered Lippmann?", *Contemporary Pragmatism*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2010): 56. Interestingly enough, Bohman's remark is directed against psychological theory of Tversky and Khanemen, whose pessimistic views on human

pragmatic account of the interrelationship between habits and intelligence is correct, then we must conclude that any social theory which fails to take habits and institutions seriously is bound to limit our collective capacity to find creative solutions to pressing socio-economic problems.

The fallacy of instrumental rationality

In the preceding section we already noted that Dewey's pragmatism and neoclassical economics tend to clash over the meaning of rationality. Now we are going to pursue this issue in more detail concentrating on the problem of mutual relationship between means and ends. It will be useful to start with the standard definition of the subject matter of neoclassical economics, which can be found in Lionel Robbins' well-known *Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*. Robbins' defines economics as "the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses."⁴⁸ The three key elements in Robbins's definition of economics are *wants*, conceptualized as unlimited, *means*, considered to be scarce by nature, and *choice*, which may be deliberate or not. It is important to note that Robbins' definition of economics is predicated on a rigid distinction between means and ends. Pure economic analysis is obliged to treat aims as exogenous and concern itself only with the relationship of the means and the ends occurring within a given set of preferences. In particular, interpersonal comparisons of utility are not allowed, as they would contaminate pure economic theory with subjective value judgments.⁴⁹ Rationality of economic action is therefore

cognitive capacities are the main source of inspiration for contemporary behavioral economics. It seems that both excessive optimism and excessive pessimism about human potential for rationality stem from common ignorance of the context of action.

⁴⁸ Lionel Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science*, (Macmillan & Co, London., 1932): 15.

⁴⁹ See Lionel Robbins, "Interpersonal Comparisons of Utility: A Comment", *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 192 (1938).

exclusively a matter of selecting the most appropriate means for the given ends.

Now we shall contrast this account of rational choice with the vision of practical deliberation offered by Dewey in *Human Nature and Conduct*. The key to Dewey's theory lies in the distinction between utilitarian calculation and moral deliberation. As Dewey explains: "Deliberation has its beginning in troubled activity and its conclusion in choice of a course of action that straightens it out. It no more resembles the casting-up of accounts of profits and loss than an actor engaged in drama resembles a clerk recording debit and credit items in his ledger".⁵⁰ Deliberation is conceptualized as a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various possible courses of action in the context of a perplexing dilemma or trouble. The end product of such dramatic rehearsal takes the form of a practical judgment about the course of action in a given situation. Dewey believes that judgments, as the outcomes of inquiry, represent more rational responses to problematic situations than reactions based exclusively on habit, routine or an impulsive urge. Therefore, deliberation makes human conduct more rational not because it leads to maximization of pleasure or utility, but simply because it improves the quality of our practical judgments. From the pragmatic point of view rationality is a practical affair; that is to say, it is largely a matter of making reasonable judgments about the course of action in a particular situation.

While neoclassical economics is based on the assumption that means can be sharply distinguished from ends, the rejection of this very possibility is one of the most original features of Dewey's philosophy. For Dewey, the distinction between means and ends is essentially contextual and temporal: "the end is merely a series of acts viewed at a remote stage; and a means is merely the series viewed at an earlier one."⁵¹ Moreover, what serves as an end in one situation can well become means in another. Hence, means and ends are in

⁵⁰ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 129.

⁵¹ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 34.

principle interchangeable or, as Dewey puts it “means and ends are two names for the same reality.”⁵² To take it further, it seems pointless to talk about ends in general, since such ends would be devoid of any discernible role in directing human conduct. To avoid misunderstanding, John Dewey prefers to speak about end-in-view, serving as an aim in a given context. Moreover, Dewey’s theory of action stresses the possibility that deliberation may result in the formulation of new ends. Ends are not ready made but they are being constantly discovered in the course of inquiry into a given problematic situation. Finally, for Dewey human conduct is future oriented and thus not fully predictable. As Dewey puts it, “all action is invasion of a future, of the unknown.”⁵³ For that reason conflict and uncertainty are recognized by Dewey as the most general features of conduct, which any theory of practical rationality has to take into account.⁵⁴

Ironically, neoclassical economics seems to be based on all the erroneous assumptions that John Dewey so vigorously criticized. To start with, in neoclassical economics maximization of satisfaction or utility is posited as an end independent from a particular context. From the point of view of Dewey’s theory such a general end seems suspiciously close to an empty formula devoid of any discernible role in explaining a given behavior. Moreover, neoclassical theory of action is openly teleological, that is to say it assumes that agents are aware of their preferences before they take action. Following Barry Hindess, Josh Whitford called this conception *a portfolio model of an actor*.⁵⁵ In this view, an economic actor is assumed to have a portfolio consisting of preferences and desires that are well-defined, well-ordered and independent from the context. Rational action is conceptualized as a purely instrumental affair consisting in choosing the most effective means to achieve the

⁵² Ibid., 36.

⁵³ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Josh Whitford “Pragmatism and the untenable dualism of means and ends: Why rational choice theory does not deserve paradigmatic privilege”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 31 Issue 3 (2002):325.

goals in the actor's portfolio. However, from a pragmatic perspective, the idea that actors have a stable set of preferences carried from one situation to another is one of the most problematic assumptions of the neoclassical model. As Josh Withford observed, "when desires are situational, it is nonsensical to build a theory around actors possessing a complete and well-defined preference ordering of all possible end states."⁵⁶ We encounter even more serious problems for means-ends dichotomy when we take into account the uncertainty of the economic environment. As Karl William Kapp pointed out, neoclassical economics presupposes that actors operate under conditions of complete transparency of situation.⁵⁷ That is to say, rational actors are able to correctly estimate future costs and benefits of any possible course of action. However, in real economic situations, marked with uncertainty, this is hardly the case. For instance, in uncertain situations we cannot determine in advance the payoff from buying particular bonds, investing in new technology or learning certain skills.⁵⁸ In such circumstances it is often impossible to assign the optimal means for the given ends, let alone to maximize the desired outcome.⁵⁹ However, if the portfolio view of actor and the assumption of perfect transparency of a situation are rejected, then the rigid dualism of the means and ends becomes untenable.

Jens Beckert argues that Deweyan social psychology can provide social sciences with a plausible alternative to the rational choice theory, associated with neoclassical

⁵⁶ Ibid., 324.

⁵⁷ See Karl William Kapp, "Economic Development in New Perspective: Existential Minima and Substantive Rationality", *Kyklos*, vol. 8, issue 2 (1965): 61.

⁵⁸ See Jens Beckert, *Imagined Futures. Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge and London, 2016), 131-169.

⁵⁹ For the relevance of radical uncertainty for the critique of neoclassical economics see further Jens Beckert, "What is Sociological About Economic Sociology? Uncertainty and Embeddedness of Economic Action", *Theory and Society*, vol. 25, no 6 (1996): 803-840.

economics.⁶⁰ Beckert holds that a teleological framework, with its assumption that ends are identified prior to the action, fails to offer adequate explanations of creative economic behavior, such as, among others, entrepreneurship. Following Schumpeter, Beckert distinguishes a manager and an entrepreneur as two distinctive social types. While managerial action can often be adequately described as maximization of fixed performance goals, the same is not true for entrepreneurial action. This is because an entrepreneurial action is by definition innovative and innovation involves creative reconfiguration of habitual business practice. Having surveyed contemporary empirical studies on innovations, Beckert found them generally in tune with the pragmatic model of action as inherently reconstructive and creative. To take the argument further, we may observe that constant reshaping of the established social routines can be seen as essential for the workings of capitalist economy. From Deweyan perspective the market can be conceptualized as habit-breaker, i.e. a specific institutional device that provides the incentive for an innovative behavior (i.e. additional profits) and punishes those who stick to ineffective routines for too long.⁶¹ More generally, the creativity of human action can be seen as essential for understanding the micro-foundations of capitalist dynamics. As Christoph Deutschmann provocatively argues, capitalism's restless drive for endless accumulation is predicated on the ability of the capitalist class to monopolize the benefits of innovations, resulting from creative reconstructions of the established habits and routines.⁶²

It is sometimes argued that any criticism of neoclassical economics, which concentrates on its unrealistic assumptions, misses the point. Neoclassical economics, so the argument goes, is not an explanatory but a normative theory. In other words, it

⁶⁰ See Jens Beckert, "Economic Sociology and Embeddedness. How Shall We Conceptualize Economic Action?", *Journal of Economic Issues* (2003).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 782.

⁶² See Christoph Deutschmann, "A Pragmatist Theory of Capitalism", *Socio-Economic Review*, Volume 9 Issue 1 (2011).

is not concerned with the explanation of what economic actors are actually doing but in demonstrating what they should do if they wish to remain within the bounds of rationality. However, this response is hardly convincing, since neoclassical theory of rational choice misses what is arguably the most important aspect of human rationality, i.e. the fact that rational behavior is not merely a technical issue of matching means to the given ends. It is above all an effort to criticize and rationally evaluate the ends that we strive to achieve.

This point may be clarified with the aid of Dewey's distinction between the desired and the desirable.⁶³ The term "the desired" refers to a simple fact that people want certain objects, states or performances. Such wishes are at least initially unreflective. The category of "desired" in Dewey's philosophy corresponds rather closely to what in economic theory is known as revealed preferences expressed in actual market behavior. On the contrary, the term "desirable" refers to the objects and activities that are judged worthy of desire in the light of an informed and imaginative deliberation. The distinction between the desired and the desirable creates room for moral inquiry and contestation of patterns of valuations established in the market sphere. Without distinguishing between the desired and the desirable – or between preferences and metapreferences, to use Albert Hirschman's terminology – we would not be able explain the difference between reflective and unreflective changes in behavior.⁶⁴ Following Dewey, we may say that the essence of rational action – and indeed of human freedom – lies in the possibility of critical evaluation of the established ends, and not merely in seeking the most efficient ways to achieve them.

Faced with sociological and institutional critique, proponents of neoclassical economics often respond that their theory does not require an agent to be narrowly selfish or

⁶³ See John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, LW 4: 207-209.

⁶⁴ See Albert Hirschman, "Against Parsimony. Three Easy Ways of Complicating Some Categories of Economic Discourse", *Bulletin of An American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 37 no. 8 (1984): 12-15.

egoistic. The agent may as well strive to maximize the most altruistic or benevolent goals and yet, his or her behavior will still fall under the scope of economic analysis, as long as they attempt to use their limited means in an efficient manner. It should be noted, however, that this typical response fails to fully address Deweyan objections. If Dewey's account of action is correct, then the main problem with mainstream economics is not the alleged selfishness of a homo-oeconomicus but a rigid distinction between means and ends. To be sure, rational behavior may still be broadly conceived as a relation between means and ends, with the caveat that both means and ends may undergone several modifications during the course of action. As Karl William Kapp put it, "for the institutionalist rational action consist not of adaptation of (given) means to (given) ends, but in exploration of ends and means and their mutual adaptation, as both are discovered and evaluated."⁶⁵ To conclude, any sensible notion of rationality would have to take into account the contextual nature of economic deliberation and bring ends as well as means under the purview of socio-economics analysis.

The fallacy of natural law

If the two fallacies discussed up to this point dealt mainly with the utilitarian underpinnings of economic discourse, the two remaining critical arguments are of more general nature. They address the place of economy within society and the constructive role of human reasoning in economic thinking. In this section we will examine the relations between economic inquiry and economic reality. Let us introduce pragmatic argument with a quotation from *The Quest for Certainty*, where Dewey describes deleterious effect that spectator theory of knowledge had on the development of economic science:

The doctrine that nature is inherently rational was a

⁶⁵ Karl William Kapp, *The Foundations of Institutional Economics*, eds. Sebastian Berger and Rolf Steppacher, (Rutledge, London and New York 2011), 28

costly one. It entailed the idea that reason in man is an outside spectator of a rationality already complete in itself. It deprived reason in man of an active and creative office; its business was simply to copy, to re-present symbolically, to view a given rational structure. (...) The doctrine was both an effect of the traditional separation between knowledge and action and a factor in perpetuating it. (...) Its paralysing effect on human action is seen in the part it played in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in the theory of natural laws in human affairs, in social matters. These natural laws were supposed to be inherently fixed; a science of social phenomena and relations was equivalent to discovery of them. Once discovered, nothing remains for man but to conform to them; they were to rule his conduct as physical laws govern physical phenomena. They were sole standard of conduct in economic affairs; the laws of economics are “natural” laws of all political action; other so-called laws were artificial, man-made contrivances in contrast with the normative regulations of nature itself. *Laissez faire* was the logical conclusion. For organized society to attempt to regulate the course of economic affairs, to bring them into service of humanly conceived ends, was a harmful interference.⁶⁶

One way of unpacking Dewey’s argument is to draw attention to the role played by the theory of a natural order in shaping the agenda of economic enquiry. As we have already discussed, for Adam Smith the idea of nature had deistic overtones, with Divine Grace guaranteeing the existence of the natural order in the world. Consequently, the role of human reason was limited to discovering, understanding, and maintaining this pre-established harmony. On a more mundane level, the market system, or, as Smith called it, a natural order of liberty was seen as an equivalent of the cosmic harmony. In fact, Smith’s famous invisible hand was at the time one of the most popular

⁶⁶ John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, LW 4:169.

metaphors of deistic God on par with such phrases as Providence, the Author of Nature, or the final cause.⁶⁷

What John Dewey questioned, was not so much a natural law philosophy as such, but its most significant practical corollary, i.e. the assumption that human reason plays no role in shaping the subject matter of economics. This assumption is present in much of contemporary economic discourse, both popular and scientific. Adam Smith ascribed to a natural order unquestionable ethical authority stemming from its divine origins, and hence he considered the political economy a moral science. However, as Philip Mirowski famously argued, with the marginalist revolution, modern energy physics has replaced astronomy as the role-model for economic science.⁶⁸ This intellectual change gave rise to an entirely different idea of nature. From the perspective of the late nineteenth century physics, the natural world was governed by mechanical laws rather than moral values inscribed in it by the divine creator. Accordingly, economics was reinvented as social physics devoted to an impassionate study of self-equilibrating market mechanism. As Mirowski explains, in the works of Jevons, Walras, and their followers, physical terms such as energy, space and forces, were translated into economic equivalents such as utility, commodity space and prices.⁶⁹ However, the basic idea of mind as a passive spectator of external world has been preserved in the new scientific world view. Part of the legacy of physics envy, to use Mirowski's apt expression, is the assumption that economics is a positive science, whose proper task is to explain the preexisting economic reality. In short, due to the reliance on metaphors drawn from the nineteenth century physics, the spectator theory of knowledge penetrated into the very foundations of mainstream economics. In consequence, the dualism between subject and object has been

⁶⁷ Jacob Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 35 No. 2 (1927): 202.

⁶⁸ See Philip Mirowski, "Physics and the 'marginalist revolution'", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 8 No. 4 (1984).

⁶⁹ Philip Mirowski, "Do economists suffer from physics envy?", *Finish Economic Papers*, Vol. 5, No.1 (1992): 63.

fully persevered in the neoclassical concept of the subject matter of economic science.

As Michael Lawlor observed, one of the most difficult aspects of Dewey's philosophy are his "provocative statements on the open, unfinished, and ultimately plastic character, not of knowledge, but of reality".⁷⁰ What does it mean that reality, including economic reality, is essentially open-ended and changing? On a theoretical level, Dewey's overall stress on malleable character of reality is a consequence of his post-Darwinian evolutionary metaphysics of an open universe marked by genuine novelty, contingency and chance. On a more practical level, as Lawlor's article aptly demonstrates, it means that careful attention needs to be paid to the changing cultural matrix of economic inquiry. From a pragmatic point of view, concepts and theories are instruments to be used in a given context. When successfully applied in inquiry, they contribute to changing an indeterminate and problematic situation into a determinate and resolved one.⁷¹ In other words, concepts and theories are both cultural products as well as important factors shaping cultural milieu in which they operate. Lawlor illustrates this general point with the story of the rise and fall of monetarism in economic theory. Initially, when monetarism emerged and gained popularity, in the 1980s, its basic claim was the existence of a stable relationship between money supply and changes in nominal GDP. However, as Lawlor maintains, this relationship was jeopardized in the early 1990s, when nominal GDP began to grow faster than the money supply. It looks as if the monetarist theory that had been more or less adequate in the 1980s suddenly lost much of its intellectual credibility and predictive power in the 1990s.

How should we interpret this strange reversal of fortune? Has monetarist theory been proven wrong, or, alternatively, have the changes in the social and institutional

⁷⁰ Michael S. Lawlor "Dewey and economic reality" in Dewey, *Pragmatism and Economic Methodology*, ed. Elias. L. Kahlil (Routledge, London and New York, 2004), 304.

⁷¹ See John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, LW 12:108.

context of economic activity rendered it inadequate? Lawlor clearly opts for the second explanation. He cites various factors that contributed to the change of economic environment, such as the birth of new information technology, the lowered costs of transactions, the rise of new financial institutions and, last but not least, self-referential effect of economics, manifested by various attempts by the public to outguess the FED with the use of monetarist theoretical framework.⁷² The lesson to learn from Lawlor's story is that economic reality is being constantly recreated and that economists, central bankers, market professionals and members of the general public all play an important role in this process. One of the advantages of this standpoint is its recognition of economic reality as malleable and open to change. Consequently, it overcomes a paralyzing effect of the spectator theory on economic investigations. In Lawlor's own words, "Dewey's rejection of quest for certainty, his abandonment of simple view of reality, opens up inquiry to the possibility of multiple socially constructed realities."⁷³

A similar point has been recently made by Michel Callon, a French sociologist and philosopher of science, who argued that economics is inherently performative.⁷⁴ The basic idea is that economics contributes to the creation of its subject-matter, i.e. the economy. To support his claim, Callon often refers to the example of a traditional French strawberry market, which was later completely remodeled according to the neoclassical pattern. Personal ties between buyers and sellers were broken, products were standardized and the whole trade was organized as an auction, not unlike the one described in the famous Walras' model. A young counselor of the Regional Chamber of Agriculture, an economist by training, played a crucial role in

⁷² Lawlor "Dewey and economic reality" in *Dewey, Pragmatism and Economic Methodology*, ed. Elias. L. Kahlil (Routledge, London and New York, 2004), 318-320.

⁷³ Ibid., p 323.

⁷⁴ See Michel Callon, "Introduction: the embeddedness of economic markets in economics", *The Laws of the Markets*, ed. Michel Callon (Blackwell Publishers, Oxford and Malden, 1998).

initiating the above changes.⁷⁵ In Callon's view the story of the transformation of a strawberry market is almost a laboratory case of performativity, since it shows that economic theory can actually shape the way in which the actual market operates. To be sure, Callon's argument would not work equally well for many other existing markets, where participants are blissfully ignorant of the claims of economic theory and over which professional economists hold no sway. However, the point is not whether or not economics is always successful in shaping the real world. The main conclusion to be drawn from the examples provided by authors like Lawlor and Callon is that it is impossible to keep economic theory and economic practice separate, even for the sake of seemingly objective inquiry.

It needs to be said that contemporary economics is not completely ignorant of the problem of practical application. Indeed, since Milton Friedman's famous paper 'Methodology of positive economics' it has become customary to divide economics into positive inquiry, which provides an objective account of "what is", and normative inquiry, which offers prescriptions based on particular political and ethical preferences.⁷⁶ However, if the arguments presented above are right, this very distinction does not hold water. This point may be clarified with reference to Dewey's understanding of the role that facts play in the process of inquiry. According to Dewey every inquiry takes place in the context of some problematic situation, which is incomplete in itself and in need of reconstruction. This general feature of problematic situations is even more prominent in the domain of social inquiry, when problems under investigation "grow out of actual tensions, needs, troubles."⁷⁷ The problem-oriented character of research has profound consequences for understanding the interplay between facts, theories and values in the conduct of inquiry. For

⁷⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁶ See Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *The Philosophy of Economics. An Anthology*, ed. D. M. Hausman (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 145-146.

⁷⁷ See John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, LW12:493.

Dewey, observation is not only theory-laden but also problem-laden. In the contexts of given problematic situations certain data are regarded as relevant to ongoing inquiry and admitted into evidence, while others may be rejected as meaningless. However, to regard some facts as relevant to the resolution of a particular problematic situation is to formulate a value judgment, albeit of a rather rudimentary kind. No social or economic inquiry can manage without judgments of relevance, fruitfulness, adequacy, efficiency and the like.

More generally, on Dewey's account of inquiry there are no judgments of fact that do not presuppose some value judgments. Hence, even from a purely methodological point of view, a strict distinction between positive and normative economics cannot be maintained.⁷⁸

While Dewey's arguments about the necessary connection between facts and values apply equally to physical and social sciences, the latter have additional reasons to recognize the normative dimension of inquiry. To wit, in the realm of the human sciences facts and values are connected not only methodologically but also, so to speak, ontologically. As Dewey observed in *The Public and Its Problems*, "political facts are not outside human desire and judgment. Change men's estimate of the value of existing political agencies and forms; and the latter change more or less."⁷⁹ The same, I would argue, is also true for economic facts and institutions. More generally, we can say that social reality consists of social practices, which in turn are partly constituted by explicit or implicit value judgments. For this reason, social inquiry has to have essentially practical, that is to say: moral, character. Dewey made this point rather well, when he wrote:

⁷⁸ On the role value judgment in science in general and in economics in particular consult Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of The Fact-Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 2002); Hilary Putnam, Vivian Walsch, "Entanglement throughout Economic Science: The End of a Separate Welfare Economics", *Review of Political Economy*, Vol. 21 No. 2, (2009): 291-297.

⁷⁹ See John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*, LW 2: 240.

But in the case of study of man, of “social” studies, it should be obvious that subject matter studied consists of human practices or activities; that the study of them is itself one variety of human activity or practice, and that its conclusions always intervene in the pre-existing body of human practices in one direction or another.⁸⁰

In ‘Liberating social scientist’ Dewey used the example of economics to demonstrate how the illusion of social science devoid of evaluative judgments is maintained. Firstly, by saying that the goal of science is to study what is, rather than to speculate about what should be, the contemporary economic regime is treated as quasi-natural phenomena. Secondly, by arbitrarily limiting the time horizon of inquiry, we ignore both historical genesis of present economic order and alternative forms of social organizations. Needless to say, the end product of such methodological percepts is not so much value-free social research but rather economic science with strong but hidden bias towards *status quo*.

To conclude, I have argued that Dewey’s philosophical insights can be used to undermine the distinction between positive and normative economics. In fact, from the vantage point of pragmatism this very distinction can be regarded as an offshoot of the old tradition of the natural law. To be sure, mainstream economics rejects the deistic image of natural order of liberty as reflection of cosmic harmony. However, it retains the crucial element of older conception, namely the idea that economic order is ready made and complete in itself. This tendency is evident in the rigid distinction between facts and values as well as in various attempts to limit the scope of pure economic theory to the positive study of “what is”. In consequence, all value judgments are relegated to a tiny compartment known as “welfare economics”.⁸¹ Ironically, form

⁸⁰ See John Dewey, “Liberating the Social Scientist.”, LW 15:228-229.

⁸¹ On the paradoxical relation between old natural law philosophy and the means-ends schema of modern economics see also Gunnar Myrdal, “Means and Ends in Political Economy.” in Gunnar Myrdal, *Value in Social Theory. A Selection of Essays on Methodology*, ed. by Paul Streeten, (Routledge and

the vantage point of Dewey pragmatism contemporary concerns with “pure” or “positive” economics inadvertently imitate the understanding of theory as a contemplative activity, which dominated Western thought before the advent of modern experimental science.⁸²

Fallacy of a separate economic sphere

In this section we will examine John Dewey’s critique of the separation between the economic and the social. As many historians of ideas and anthropologists have noted, modern market economy has been constructed as a quasi-autonomous sphere, independent from ethics, politics and religion.⁸³ The changes in the way market economy was viewed had the cumulative effect of reversing the traditional position of the economy vis-à-vis the society. As Karl Polanyi put it, “instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system”.⁸⁴ The notion that the economy constitutes an independent system governed by its own laws, has been central to the development of economic science at least since Quesnay’s *tableau économique*. It may also be noted that the very idea of economy as an autonomous sphere was one of the main targets of institutional criticism of orthodox economics.⁸⁵ John Dewey had nothing to add to this line of argument, as far as economic methodology is concerned. However, Dewey’s writings contain various remarks about

Kegan Paul, London 1958), 206-210. There is a striking resemblance between some of Myrdal’s arguments and Dewey’s theory of valuation, although I am not aware of any evidence of direct impact of Deweyan pragmatism on Myrdal’s economic thought.

⁸² See John Dewey, “Social Science and Social Control”, LW 6: 64-69.

⁸³ See Richard Tawney, *Religion and The Rise of Capitalism. A Historical Study* (J. Murray, London 1926); Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: Genesis and Triumph of Economic Methodology* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977).

⁸⁴ See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Beacon Press, Boston, 2011), 60.

⁸⁵ See Karl William Kapp, “The Open-System Character of the Economy and its Implications”, in *Economics in the Future*, ed. Kurt Dopfer (Macmillan Press, London and Basingstoke, 1976)

cultural ramifications of divorcing the economy from the larger social fabric. In particular, the dominant understanding of work and the rigid distinction between ideal and material can be singled out as manifestation of the split between markets and morality. In the further part of this article we will analyze those problems, using illustrations drawn from the writings of John Dewey and Karl Polanyi.

We have already argued that mainstream economics fails to recognize the importance of habits and institutions. However, from the point of view of Dewey's social psychology economics is also guilty of another "monstrous assumption", namely that of regarding men and women as passive and requiring some special incentives to act.⁸⁶ By presupposing that human beings naturally remain in the state of rest, economics ignores the impulsive side of human nature. This tendency is evident in the standard neoclassical definition of work as the opposite of leisure, with the additional assumption that under normal condition people prefer leisure over work.⁸⁷ Work is conceptualized as something inherently costly, which means that people need to be properly incentivized in order to perform it. From the standpoint of pragmatic social psychology this view is manifestly inadequate. As Dewey was keen to point out, children are not lazy or passive by nature.⁸⁸ This fact alone suggests that economic treatment of incentives greatly oversimplifies the situation. In fact, passivity is not native but acquired. In order to understand the alleged need for incentives to work we have to study social conditions in which work is performed. Such research would have to take into account the social organization of work under capitalism marked as it is with unequal distribution of initiative and hierarchical structures of power.

The problem of work can also be approached from the

⁸⁶ See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 84.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of neoclassical treatment of work see Yanis Varoufakis, *Foundations of Economics. A Beginner's Companion* (Routledge, London and New York 1998), 168.

⁸⁸ See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 84.

point of view of the means-ends continuum. In fact, even rudimentary discussion of problems involved in treating labour as mere means will suffice to undermine means-ends dichotomy. On reflection most people would admit that work can be intrinsically rewarding. This is certainly true for the work performed by artists, scientists and artisans. Even ordinary occupations can be and to some extent are the source of meaning and ethical significance for many employees. At the same time, work still remains a goal-oriented activity. Hence, depending on our purpose labour can be described both as means or as an end. Nevertheless, under some circumstances it is accurate to characterize labour only as means. Such a description is true when tasks performed are mechanical and routine or when workers are entirely deprived of the right to show their own initiative. Under such conditions work becomes a purely instrumental activity.

In fact, the neoclassical conception of work can be seen as a symptom of divorce between instrumental and consummatory activities, or between ordinary experience and works of art.⁸⁹ Historically speaking, this experience of work is fairly recent. As Dewey pointed out, it was only with the advent of the modern capitalist economy that production of useful things was entirely stripped of aesthetic elements, which used to be present in the work of skilled artisans.⁹⁰ Seen from this angle economic definition of labour merely reflects the process of de-aesthetization of work under capitalism. Moreover, as Dewey frequently pointed out, the very understanding of labour as mere means to good life has its roots in the conditions of slavery, under which work of some was treated as the means to the ends of others.⁹¹ Hence, the conception of labour as mere means for obtaining some external ends (such as income or leisure) points out to rather serious deficiencies of the

⁸⁹ See John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, LW 1: 271.

⁹⁰ This process is described in considerable detail in Dewey's *Art as Experience*. See John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, LW 10: 12-16.

⁹¹ The analogy between wage labour and slavery occurs frequently in Dewey's writings. See for example John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 78.

organization of work in modern market economy.

A sharp dichotomy between ideal and material, as Karl Polanyi aptly observed, is characteristic of the society based on the institution of a self-regulating market. According to Polanyi the rise of modern market societies was accompanied by a fundamental change in the overall image of a human being: “As regards man, we were made to accept the heresy that his motives can be described as «material» and «ideal», and that the incentives on which everyday life is organized spring from the «material» motives. Both utilitarian liberalism and popular Marxism favored such views.”⁹² John Dewey could not agree more. Both thinkers believed that actual human motivation is a mixture of ideal and material aspirations. In fact, motives that animate people to act are embedded in habits and institutions that constitute their social environment. As Dewey observed, the most surprising fact from the standpoint of modern economic theory is “the small number of people who have any effective interests in the acquisition of wealth.”⁹³ In Dewey’s view such factors as the need for security or desire to have a good time play much more prominent role in directing human behavior than purely monetary incentives. However, mainstream economics tends to focus exclusively on the material side of motivation. Normative and affective factors, to use the phrase introduced by Amitati Entzioni, are almost entirely neglected.⁹⁴ In consequence, mainstream economic theory unwittingly lends its support to various manipulative attempts to influence people’s behavior with carefully designed incentive schemes. However, if we follow Dewey and Polanyi in regarding human motivation as irreducible to material factors, such efforts are bound to bring meager and often paradoxical results.⁹⁵

⁹²See Karl Polanyi, “Our Obsolete Market Mentality: Civilization Must Find a New Thought Pattern”, *Commentary*, No. 3 (1947): 110.

⁹³ See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW14: 100

⁹⁴ See Amitai Etzioni, *The Moral Dimension. Towards a New Economics* (The Free Press, New York, London, 1998), 89-113.

⁹⁵ I believe that “publish or perish” system widespread in academia can serve as a good example of such perverse incentive scheme. For an interesting

Economic determinism, that is the belief that only material or economic factors really matter in social life, is another outcome of the dualism between ideal and material. To be sure, such views are rarely proclaimed openly. However, as Dewey shrewdly observed, although economic determinism may not be extolled in theory it is almost completely realized in practice. "We live, Dewey wrote, as if economic forces determined the growth and decay of institutions and the fate of individuals."⁹⁶ Honest recognition of our objective situation would lead to a "definitely materialistic scheme of values."⁹⁷ However, this is manifestly not the case. According to Dewey the conflict between the aspirations people profess and the "practices of pecuniary culture" is waded into the very fabric of market society.⁹⁸ Essentially the same point was made by Karl Polanyi when he observed that "under market economy human society itself was organized on dualistic lines, everyday life being handed over to material, with Sunday's reserved for ideal".⁹⁹ Karl Polanyi believed that social conditions which gave birth to this way of thinking were rather exceptional. Economic determinism was the nineteenth century phenomenon, born out of *laissez faire* ideology and bound to disappear in a more socialized economic order emerging after World War II. With hindsight, we may regard this judgment as over-optimistic. In the light of the recent triumph of neoliberal policies in the late XX and early XXI century the analysis conducted by Dewey and Polanyi has become topical again. Indeed, we may well describe our contemporary social conditions as a house divided against itself, where widespread concerns with human wellbeing and the protection of the environment seem hopelessly at odds with day-to-day workings of the market economy.

discussion of the manipulative potential of neoclassical view of incentives see Wolfgang Streeck, "Social Science and Moral Dialogue", *Socio-Economic Review*, volume 1, issue 1, (2003): 126-129.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 49.

⁹⁹See Karl Polanyi, "On the Belief in Economic Determinism", *Sociological Review*, vol. 37, no. 1, (1947): 101.

What both Dewey and Polanyi realized is that the growing chasm between the ideal and the material was one of the signs of the interwar crisis of liberal capitalism. In the essay 'The Crisis in Human History,' devoted to the discussion of Polanyi's work, Dewey claimed that totalitarianism "is without paradox a legitimate consequence of and a reaction to the *laissez faire* liberalism that proclaimed the subordination of the political to the economic."¹⁰⁰ The separation between economics and politics has its counterpart in the dualism of material means and ideal ends. On the individual level it manifested itself as the disturbing feeling that daily activities were devoid of meaning and moral significance. On the social and political level, it contributed to the sense of aimlessness and chaos of modern life. Indeed, anti-liberal propaganda has always exploited those motives by flirting with the idea of restoring the unity of society. In Dewey's view, a part of the emotional appeal of fascism was its promise to remove the divisions splitting the modern society apart. The success of Adolf Hitler was partly due to his ability to envisage the way to "overcome that division between inner and outer, the ideal and the actual, between spiritual faith and hard realities of action", endemic to liberal market society.¹⁰¹ Finally, the totalitarian response to the modern crisis aimed to create a unitary community by means of force. The split between the material and the ideal was abolished at the cost of individual freedom. To be sure, economic transformation does not always lead to such catastrophic results. As Karl Polanyi argued, political responses to the failure of free markets in the interwar period ranged from authoritarian and fascist solutions in Southern and Central Europe, to social democracy and American New Deal.¹⁰² Nevertheless, the basic point remains that the construction of self-regulating market as an independent social sphere

¹⁰⁰ See John Dewey, "The Crisis in Human History. The Danger of Retreat to Individualism", LW 15: 218.

¹⁰¹ See John Dewey, "The One World of Hitler's National Socialism", MW 8: 429.

¹⁰² See Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Beacon Press, Boston, 2011), 231-268.

inevitably leads to the political backlash and various attempts to re-embed the economy in the society.

To conclude, we have seen that modern economics betrays a tendency to take for granted certain (rather problematic) features of contemporary economic life. Belief in economic determinism and the prevalent conception of work are arguably among the most contestable aspects of capitalist culture. To the extent that these ideas are reflected in definitions of incentives and labour adopted in conventional economic textbooks, mainstream economics can be regarded as an uncritical expression of modern market mentality.

However, as the analysis conducted by John Dewey and Karl Polanyi demonstrates, such ideas cannot be regarded neither as value-free, nor as unproblematic. Throughout his entire career John Dewey argued that modern dualisms like those between means and ends, the material and the ideal, theory and practice, or work and leisure are something more than just unfortunate reminiscences of bygone philosophies or erroneous assumptions behind the mainstream economic theory. More than that, they are also, at least to some extent, an intellectual expression of the fact that the bulk of economic life in capitalist society remains beyond any effective social control. Although certain functional divisions between different spheres are unavoidable in a modern complex society, when the chasm separating the ideal and the material, the economic and the social becomes too wide, it can become hard to tolerate. Hence, any economic theory, which unreflectively perpetuates such dualisms, only adds confusion to our contemporary social discontents.

Concluding remarks

In this essay I have argued that Dewey pragmatism offers both methodological and normative insights that are relevant for the contemporary critique of economic discourse. Let us start with methodology. As we have seen, Dewey regarded the bulk of human behavior as shaped by socially embedded habits and

institutions. Such a view remains in stark contrast with the approach of modern economics, which either fails to recognize the role of social institutions or assign to them a very limited role in explaining human conduct. Following this further, in Dewey's writings we can find several arguments, which may undermine neoclassical theory of rational behavior. In particular, pragmatic critique demonstrates that any theory of instrumental rationality based on rigid distinction between means and ends is unsatisfactory both for empirical and normative purposes. Related to that line of argument is Dewey's critique of the spectator theory of knowledge and his account of the role of facts in social inquiry, which undermines the distinction between positive and normative economics. Moreover, as I have demonstrated, several Dewey's insights have been successfully utilized by critics of neoclassical economics working within the tradition of institutional economics and economic sociology.

What is often underemphasized in recent literature, however, is the normative dimension of Dewey's pragmatism. As I have attempted to demonstrate, Dewey's arguments against utilitarian and metaphysical assumptions behind classical and neoclassical economics have important normative consequences. To start with, Dewey's account of the habitual nature of social reality has important implications for understanding the role of creativity in directing economic change. His critique of dichotomy of means and ends not only undermines the theory of rational choice but also allows us to formulate a far more comprehensive account of rationality. Getting rid of the fallacy of natural order and an obsolete positive-normative dichotomy makes us more sensitive to the role played by value judgments at all stages of socio-economic inquiry. Finally, close attention paid by Dewey to growing discrepancy between markets and morals helps to uncover cultural contradictions of social life under the capitalist system. It is my contention that making these normative considerations explicit would make the critique of economic discourse inspired by pragmatism not only more persuasive, but also more topical

and urgent. It may also suggest new topics for empirical research. For instance, much of contemporary Deweyan scholarship in economic sociology proceeds on the assumption of the importance of creativity for understanding capitalist dynamics. However, as our brief discussion of the problem of wage labour suggests, many activities under capitalism are poles apart from creativity. More generally, greater attention needs to be paid to the unequal distribution of creativity between different positions in social and organizational hierarchy as well as to the ways in which creative action can be distorted by being subjected to capitalist logic of accumulation.¹⁰³ After all, as Dewey pointed out, it is not the mere fact of creativity but its quality that matters.¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, we may try to cursorily summarize the image of socio-economic inquiry which emerges from Dewey's writings.¹⁰⁵ For John Dewey human beings are basically creatures of habits, whose conduct is regulated to a large extent by established traditions, routines, and customs. But in economic conduct, as well as in other areas of life, people are not slaves of the past. When confronted with the problematic situations they have the creative power necessary to change the inherited institutions and habitual ways of conducting economic affairs. Inquiry into economic affairs, just as any other branch of human thought, is concerned with solving specific problems. However, by finding solutions to contextualized dilemmas we are at the same time introducing institutional changes in our social and economic environment. The task of socio-economic inquiry is to aid us in this endless work of economic transformation by bridging the gap between moral and economic considerations. It may well be true that in a

¹⁰³ See John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, MW 14: 101-102.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ For the origin of the term socio-economics see Amitai Entzoni, *The Moral Dimension. Towards a New Economics* (The Free Press, New York, London, 1998). The term is used here to encompass both institutional and sociological approaches. Moreover, in tune with the argument of the present paper, socio-economics as originally conceived by Amitai Entzoni, puts special emphasis on normative dimension of inquiry into economic affairs.

complex society based on functional differentiation of various social spheres, it is impossible to fully overcome dualism of the economic and the ethical. At any event, it is the task of socio-economics to ensure that the gap between economic means and ethical ends is as narrow as possible.

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FIELD PHILOSOPHY: DEWEYAN INQUIRY ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PERSPECTIVES

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In this study on environmental philosophy, I follow a Deweyan approach to practical philosophy, which aims less for a theorization by itself, for itself, but rather the deployment of methods of inquiry clarifying emerging contemporary environmental situations. As part of this article, I would like to report on a range of distinct perspectives on climate change for a given terrain. To do so, I will first draw a portrait of the specific milieu under consideration, namely the Regional County Municipality of Arthabaska in Quebec and its agricultural sector, and the methodological instruments employed. I will then mobilize this research material in order to construct a relevant epistemic object, by developing some critical reflections from the data obtained. The objective is to provide support for possible interventions in climate change adaptation that are yet to be fully conceived and deployed within this agricultural community, as in many others.

Cette étude de philosophie de l'environnement s'inscrit dans une démarche de philosophie pratique d'inspiration deweyenne, c'est-à-dire qu'elle vise moins une théorisation en soi, pour soi, que le déploiement de méthodes d'enquête contribuant à éclairer des situations environnementales émergentes de nos sociétés contemporaines. Dans le cadre de cet article, je souhaite rendre compte d'un éventail de perspectives distinctes en matière de changements climatiques pour un terrain donné. Pour ce faire, je dresserai d'abord un portrait du milieu à l'étude, soit la municipalité régionale de comté d'Arthabaska au Québec et son monde agricole, et des outils méthodologiques employés. Je mobiliserai ensuite ce matériau de recherche dans le but de construire un objet épistémique pertinent, en développant quelques réflexions critiques émanant des propos répertoriés. L'objectif est d'offrir un appui aux interventions possibles, en matière d'adaptation aux changements climatiques, qu'il reste encore à concevoir et déployer pleinement au sein de cette communauté agricole, comme dans bien d'autres.



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Despite several decades of fine theoretical work and philosophical debates, classical environmental ethics, for example the deep ecology worldview or the assertion of the intrinsic value of the non-human living as philosophical principle, does not seem to have had significant impact in practice.¹ Yet different stakeholders (citizens, researchers, policymakers, etc.) agree that we must respond effectively to the environmental crises we face nowadays, including those related to the pressing problem of climate change. The question of whether philosophy can provide any relevant contribution to these very real environmental problems then arises with seriousness. According to a posture of environmental pragmatism,² an alternative approach in the field of environmental ethics, philosophy may be relevant to the condition that it drives towards the resolution of practical environmental problems, which is not the case when it tries to resolve only theoretical debates within the discipline. As noted by Ben A. Minteer, who is adapting and revisiting John Dewey's famous words in *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy*³:

¹ The French version of this paper was first published in 2018 by Milieu(x). I would like to thank the respective editors for authorizing this translation/adaptation in Dewey Studies. I would also like to thank Profs. Alain Létourneau, Carole Beaulieu and Allison Marchildon for their careful suggestions and helpful comments in preliminary versions of this text.

² See Andrew Light and Eric Katz, eds., *Environmental Pragmatism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996); Bryan G. Norton, *Searching for Sustainability: Interdisciplinary Essays in the Philosophy of Conservation Biology* (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Bryan G. Norton, *Sustainable Values, Sustainable Change: A Guide to Environmental Decision Making* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Nicolas Milot, Alain Létourneau and Laurent Lepage, "La gestion de l'eau par bassin versant au Québec: d'une théorie à sa pratique par les acteurs locaux," [From a theoretical definition of watershed management to its practice by local actors in Quebec]. *Territoire en mouvement*, no. 25-26 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.4000/tem.2803>; Ben A. Minteer, "Environmental Ethics, Sustainability Science, and the Recovery of Pragmatism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*, eds. Stephen M. Gardiner and Allen Thompson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 528-40.

³ John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," in *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1990), MW 10: 46.

“*Environmental* philosophy recovers itself when it ceases to be a device for dealing with the problems of philosophers, and becomes a method, cultivated by philosophers *and others*, for dealing with the *environmental* problems of *society*.”⁴

Taking this claim seriously, environmental pragmatism advocates try to deflect, to a greater or lesser extent, the classic ontological disputes in environmental ethics (e.g. the debates over ecocentrism/anthropocentrism or over intrinsic values/instrumental values) by opening an interdisciplinary, pluralistic, and democratic space identifying a primary interest to the practical problems concerning human actions and its relationship with the natural world. The “practical” orientation of environmental pragmatism does not preclude the rigor of theorizing concepts. Saying otherwise would amount to misunderstanding what a Deweyan approach can be in the field of environmental philosophy. It may be to establish a certain reflexive inquiry between theory and empirical data by making the ethical project perhaps more credible:

Empirical research on environmental ethics can make an important contribution to the philosophical and social-science literature, bringing empirical data to bear on key questions in environmental philosophy while also demonstrating the relevance of the discipline for discussion of public policy and management. This opens up new possibilities for the field, particularly with respect to its utility for environmental professionals, which in my experience are often deeply interested in and intrigued by environmental ethics but find the highly theoretical tone of the discussion unappealing and the argumentation incompatible with the social-scientific approach to studying

⁴ Ben A. Minteer, *Refounding Environmental Ethics: Pragmatism, Principle, and Practice* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 4.

environmental values.⁵

Following this experimental point of view in practical philosophy,⁶ I report in this article on a range of distinct perspectives on climate change for a given terrain. To do so, I will first draw a portrait of the specific milieu under consideration, namely the Regional County Municipality (RCM) of Arthabaska in Quebec and its agricultural sector, and the methodological instruments employed. I will then mobilize this research material to construct a relevant epistemic object, by developing some critical reflections from the data obtained. The objective is to provide support for possible interventions⁷ in climate change adaptation that are yet to be fully conceived and deployed within this agricultural community, as in many others. This empirical pathway can be taken as an experimentation in the field of environmental philosophy.

⁵ Minteer, *Refounding Environmental Ethics*, 116.

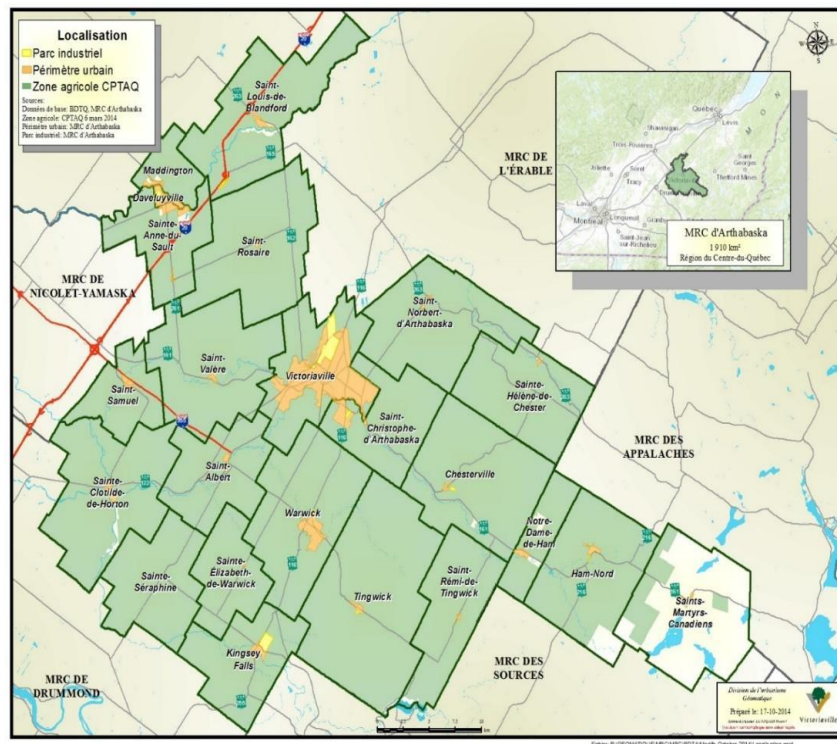
⁶ I define this pragmatist approach as follows: a field of reflection at the junction of several philosophical branches (e.g. ethics, political philosophy and epistemology) and other disciplines (e.g. environmental sciences, climate sciences and social sciences). It prioritizes the resolution of contextualized problems by the deployment of conceptual tools, in particular to clarify the ethical and normative issues encountered and to contribute to the formulation of democratic policies. In that sense, the decompartmentalized philosophical discourse can be nourished by other disciplines in the immediate periphery of particular questions. From this point of view, philosophy is not predominant over other disciplines, but rather a guide to reflect on different practices and knowledge.

⁷ The task of continuing in the direction of mitigation — human and political interventions to decrease the production of greenhouse gases (GHG) — is crucial to reduce the human impact on the climate. However, it should be noted that even if there is a rapid reduction in GHG emissions down to a zero threshold, which is doubtfully feasible in the short term unless an unexpected technological leap were to happen, the adverse effects of the accumulation of these gases would continue to be felt due to their extended life span in the Earth system and their remote effects on climate. This explains the inevitable adaptation to climate change, which remains a major challenge from which we cannot escape, at least for the short-medium term future. For more details on the physical basis of climate change, see: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *Climate Change 2013 – The Physical Science Basis*, Working Group I Contributions to the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Terrain’s specificities

The Arthabaska Regional County Municipality,⁸ also called *Victoriaville and its region*, is composed of 22 municipalities in the Centre-du-Québec region (Arthabaska, Bécancour, Drummond, L’Érable, and Nicolet-Yamaska) covering an area of approximately 1,900 km² within the physiographic regions of the Appalachian Uplands and the St. Lawrence Lowlands. The population of the RCM totaled 71,271 residents in 2014.

Location of Arthabaska RCM



Source: Arthabaska RCM

The decreed agricultural zone represents 91.53% of the total

⁸ This portrait is notably based on the *Plan de développement de la zone agricole* (PDZA) of the Arthabaska RCM. See the following document: MRC d’Arthabaska, *Plan de développement de la zone agricole de la MRC d’Arthabaska* (2016), <https://www.munidata.ca/upload/contentsFile/file/lng/2430fr-CA.pdf>

area of the RCM territory. Proportionally speaking, the agricultural sector,⁹ as well as the manufacturing sector, including paper and food production, is important in the RCM, with first-rank regional poles in the Centre-du-Québec regarding animal and plant production: apiculture (74%), sheep (46%), dairy cattle (36%), beef cattle (36%), swine (24%), cranberries and berries (53%), and forage (38%). Taking all (5) RCMs of the administrative region as a benchmark, maple syrup production in Arthabaska ranks in second place, with a proportion of 39%, which is not negligible. Some of the RCM's agricultural productions are present in world markets, helping to feed international populations.

As the climate system is a determining factor for agricultural activities, it seemed relevant to target this specific sector in a municipal context surrounded by rural life, like Arthabaska. From a specific regional perspective, in the Centre-du-Québec¹⁰ several impacts of climate change are anticipated: despite a climate that is becoming more favorable for certain crops, there are some negative consequences to be feared, particularly in regard to water scarcity caused by eventual droughts, resulting in, among other things, a decline in yield for vegetable and cereal crops, as well as in milk, poultry, and pork production.

Other consequences are expected, including a 15% to 20% decrease in maple sap production over the 2050-2090 period and an increase in mean temperatures of 3.2°C by 2050, resulting in species migration — a potentially positive impact

⁹ It should be noted that the Centre-du-Québec administrative region, of which the Arthabaska RCM is part, is the third largest agricultural sector in the province of Quebec. Taking GDP as an indicator (422 million CAD), the Arthabaska RCM ranks behind the Montérégie (1.1 billion CAD) and Chaudière-Appalaches (616 million CAD) RCMs. It surpasses Chaudière-Appalaches if the indicator is GDP per square kilometer (\$61,000 / km² vs. \$41,000 / km²). These three regions generate 41% of the total GDP of the province's agricultural production.

¹⁰ See the following document: Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec (RNCREQ), *Faire face aux changements climatiques au Centre-du-Québec* (2014), http://www.rncreq.org/images/UserFiles/files/Feuilleton_RNCREQ_CentreQuebec.pdf

on forest growth — but also a resurgence and intensification of natural disturbances, a proliferation of pathogens and insect pests, and an increase in the frequency of extreme climatic events. In this regard, some adverse climatic events in recent years can be recalled, such as the heavy rains that led to flooding in 2003 in the Bois-Francs region, which in turn caused significant damage in the municipalities of Victoriaville, Tingwick, and Chesterville, or the spring thaw of 2014, which also caused flooding. Such events will become potentially more frequent in the region in the future. However, the Arthabaska RCM was somewhat spared by the 2017 spring floods that caused significant damage in several other locations in the province of Quebec. Climate change is expected to be a challenge for years to come in terms of mitigation as well as local and regional preventive adaptation.¹¹

Method of Inquiry

Drawing upon an interactive framework in qualitative research,¹² this study was developed as a form of “social inquiry”¹³ processing conjointly the empirical and theoretical collected data. These two research components were able to enrich each other in a nonlinear reflexive manner while a textual analysis was conducted on pertinent literature from philosophy, climate change adaptation sciences, and social sciences. Meanwhile, a field survey was carried out with different participants on the subject of climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation in the Arthabaska RCM.

The sampling of participants was developed using a

¹¹ See the following document: Ouranos, *Vers l'adaptation. Synthèse des connaissances sur les changements climatiques au Québec* (2015), <https://www.ouranos.ca/publication-scientifique/SyntheseRapportfinal.pdf>

¹² Joseph A. Maxwell, *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 3rd ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012).

¹³ John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), 487-512.

method called “snowball.”¹⁴ The term “snowball” is used because participants in the study, as well as other stakeholders, could assist in recruiting by suggesting pertinent potential contributors. To the possible extent, the proportional representation of a diversity of sectors in the community was the main criterion for participants’ selection. It remains difficult to quantify the exact number of people requested due to third-party recruitment exercised during the study. It can be noted, however, that more than 100 stakeholders or organizations have been directly solicited, with the mode of communication adapted to the sectors.¹⁵ A total of 21 participants completed the survey between the months of April and July 2015.

All of the comments collected are anonymized to fulfill the commitments made in this respect to the participants. A general portrait of their role in the community of inquiry is described in Table 1. The participants are identified with a code letter. They are also classified into subcategories to easily allow the reader to observe the distribution of the actors solicited. Generally speaking, they are either residents of the RCM of Arthabaska or are involved with it to various degrees as part of their professional functions,¹⁶ or they find themselves in both categories. The exception to this rule concerns an agronomist working in the field of climate change adaptation, designated here as Participant A, who seemed relevant to include in the context of this study given this participant’s expertise on climate change.

¹⁴ Alvaro Pires, “Échantillonnage et recherche qualitative : essai théorique et méthodologique” in *La recherche qualitative : Enjeux épistémologiques et méthodologiques*, ed. J. Poupart and *al.* (Saguenay: Les classiques des sciences sociales, 1997), 72.

¹⁵ The agricultural business sector was more difficult to mobilize at the outset. If more formal recruitment by email could work well with policymakers, professionals and researchers, farmers in the region seemed more difficult to reach in this way. A more personalized contact has therefore proven necessary to interest them in the project. This is equally true for some citizens who preferred to exchange first by telephone or in person for a contextualization of the study.

¹⁶ In some cases, the Arthabaska RCM territory is a workplace only. It should not be understood that these participants are necessarily engaged in the community at the regional level.

Table 1: Anonymized Participants

Residents	Participants C, G, I, P
Farm producers	Participant E (co-owner of a farming company in the region and deputy director general of a municipality) Participant K (agronomist and head of a farming company in the region) Participant S (co-owner of a farming company in the region)
Employees of municipalities and government departments	Participant D (mayor of a municipality) Participant F (regional adviser of a provincial department) Participant H (executive of a municipality working in the field of environment) Participant J (regional adviser of a provincial department) Participant M (deputy director general of a municipality and biologist) Participant N (municipal councilor)
Experts	Participant A (agronomist and climate change adaptation specialist) Participant B (entomologist and geneticist) Participant L (agro-economist) Participant O (project manager in the field of biological agriculture) Participant U (project manager assistant in the field of biological agriculture)
Teachers and student at the CEGEP level (pre-college university program)	Participant Q (college student studying in the field of agriculture) Participant R (college teacher and researcher in the field of agriculture) Participant T (college teacher in the field of agriculture)

Content analysis of empirical data began when the first questionnaires were received. A preliminary analysis of the data

collected made it possible to develop certain lines of thought, thus specifying the anticipated results. In a more systematic way, I proceeded to a complete reading of the documentation by treating the data according to a numbering scheme corresponding to the ten questions of the survey. A compilation of the data was carried out, taking the form of a synthesis of the comments collected. For this step, some features of the NVivo content analysis software were used to avoid blind spots when performing this synthesis. Only then could an interpretation of the content take place.

Reflexive Commentaries

A number of 21 stakeholders from different backgrounds agreed to participate in this study, thus allowing the examination of a variety of perspectives, from perhaps less informed opinion to expert opinion, on certain environmental issues in the region or elsewhere. The majority of participants fall between these two poles. Participants are interested, to various degrees, in different aspects of the environment: future generations, collective action, agriculture, organic agriculture, regional projects, public safety, public cost of disasters, recycling, preservation of ecological systems, conservation of resources, and world population growth. Some participants expressed concern about citizen neglect (like M), and others expressed concern because environmental issues “are largely ignored by the majority of the population and the media” (like L). Our sample of participants represents very few of those less likely to invest their time in an environmental investigation such as climate change. Interest seems variable, but it is present.

All participants in the study, with the exception of participant I who defends climate skepticism, argue that the issue of climate change is important. More specifically, it is referred to by Participant A as “the greatest challenge that humanity will face (and already faces) in the coming decades.” Other participants refer to it as “extremely important,” “very important,” “important,” and a “concern.” Several possible

reasons are given to explain the interest in this issue for this group of participants, especially in the medium and long term for the community: possibility of exacerbating other problems (ethnic conflicts, impacts on human health, and spread of diseases, especially among herds); decrease in the quality and quantity of available food; negative impacts on the economy and finances of citizens; responsibility towards future generations; loss of biodiversity; more frequent extreme climatic events; and water supply difficulties. Finally, for participant U, mitigation and adaptation measures must be taken in time to avoid major economic and environmental problems.

In terms of the possible impacts of climate change, Participant A, who works in the field and contributes to producing important documentation, particularly for the Province of Quebec territory, mentions certain projected effects for an agricultural zone including the region concerned by this study (2041-2070 horizon): an increase in mean temperature compared to 1971-2000 (1.7°C to 4.6°C), a two to four-week extension of the growing season that can have positive effects on crop yields (and the potential to introduce new plant species further north), more frequent intense heat in summer and less intense and frequent cold winters, reduced accumulation and duration of snow cover and, finally, more extreme rainfall and water stress during summer. For example, the yield of maple syrup production could decrease because of the less favorable climatic context; dairy production, also important in the region, could be affected by a decrease in forage due to droughts and by the spread of insect pests, potential vectors of new diseases for herds. Emerging crops, especially vegetable crops, may also not be able to withstand potential episodes of water stress or heavy rainfall, which is also true for all plant crops. For the time being, however, it is difficult to specify or quantify (according to Participant J), the future impacts and vulnerabilities of the region, which will depend, according to Participant A, “on the intensity and speed of these changes, the sensitivity of the agricultural system under consideration, and the adaptability of agricultural producers and other stakeholders in the sector.”

In recent years, the failure of the Conservative Party of Canada's¹⁷ government to recognize the problem of climate change has been an obstacle to our ability to act, if not an element that has literally increased the vulnerability of our communities, said Participant B. In this regard, we can recall Canada's withdrawal in 2012 from the Kyoto Protocol, which aims to reduce greenhouse gases globally, weaken environmental legislation, close scientific libraries, cut research budgets, and dismiss federal scientists and muzzle them. At the level of agricultural producers in the region, Participant G stated that there would be a lack of interest, or at the very least, a lack of information on the issue of climate change. The first of the two routes was observed when contacting potential farmer participants in this study. Added to this are difficulties of exhaustion and discouragement, major investments (C and N), and a succession that is becoming rare for farmers. The lack of genetic diversity for some crops, particularly in the cranberry sector, is a vulnerability factor, as is the risk of pest proliferation. The safety and health of agricultural producers, animals, and the general population could also be undermined if extreme weather events (heat waves, floods, droughts, ice storms, etc.) were to occur. Forests (windthrow), soils (erosion), water (degradation of drinking water sources), and infrastructure (breakage of buildings, roads, and power lines) could also be negatively affected.

Participant T said that the agricultural sector could be less affected by climate change because of the importance of livestock production in the region. While it can be argued, as T states, that "some perennial forage crops for livestock feed" may have a higher yield potential, it should also be remembered that periods of prolonged heat waves and droughts could, as A asserts, "have a significant impact on the productivity (weight gain, milk or egg production, among others), reproduction, health, and welfare of livestock, and may even cause their death." Also, Participant P seems to confuse the phenomenon of

¹⁷ Participant B refers in the responses to the Canadian federal government under Stephen Harper between 2006 and 2015.

global warming with that of ozone layer depletion.

In terms of resilience, according to Participant A, agricultural producers, with the support of other stakeholders, have demonstrated a good capacity to adapt to both climatic and non-climatic stressors, including economic ones. However, just because seeds adapt to environments, such as K states, or because the sector has adapted well so far, as N says, it does not mean that we cannot actively prepare for the current climate change. Several measures already contributing to the resilience of the RCM and its agricultural community were outlined by participants: good organization at the municipal level (specifically Victoriaville and its sustainable development program), a well-developed economic system, a diversity of agricultural production, access to the expertise of research centers (CETAB+ and CISA),¹⁸ and qualified stakeholders. Several participants also mentioned the relevance of collective action as an element that can increase community resilience. Other stated elements (by F and O), such as invasive species control and maple syrup calendar adjustment, should be understood as resilience factors only by extension by placing them more directly as climate change adaptation strategies.

A majority of participants highlighted various actions undertaken in the RCM, not directly related to climate change but to sustainable development, of which Victoriaville would be the cradle of Quebec, according to the slogan.¹⁹ On this subject, Participant E questions the financial and marketing approach combined with the sustainable development actions in place in the region: waste management, research activities in organic agriculture, park development, fleet of electric cars for municipal employees and public transit (TaxiBus) in Victoriaville, awareness-raising activities, and a sustainable housing program. According to several participants (E, G, L, R, O, U), there are few targeted climate change adaptation

¹⁸ *Centre d'expertise et de transfert en agriculture biologique et de proximité, Centre d'innovation sociale en agriculture.*

¹⁹ Victoriaville, "cradle of sustainable development" can be read in various places, due in particular to initiatives in the area of recycling and sustainable development.

strategies. H and N note, however, that a GHG mitigation plan has been in place since 2011 in Victoriaville and that a climate change adaptation plan were awaiting funding in 2015.²⁰

A few ethical issues were identified by the group of participants: Participant B raised the conflict between science and politics that had caused damage to the Canadian science institution in recent years. The Canadian science institution was likely disturbing to the Conservative federal government, which was presumably looking for economic prosperity at all costs. Participant E highlights the at least seemingly apparent problem of political actors sometimes favoring ideological interests over other considerations. Participants K and O mentioned that the organic sector is interested in climate change, but Q says the sector is not representative of the farming community. Other participants (L, M, R) testify, in one way or another, to the lack of interest or ignorance of the general population regarding the issue of climate change. From a municipal point of view, Participant N mentioned the possible tensions between deforestation for the construction of infrastructure (sports, industrial, residential) and the conservation or creation of green spaces.

In terms of challenges related to climate change for the region, several participants (G, P, O, R) maintain that one of them will certainly be educating the population about this phenomenon and Participant A evokes the relevance of accompanying (agricultural) stakeholders in an effort to identify courses of action. Other elements that seemed to be a priority were also mentioned by the participants: consultation between different stakeholders; research on climate change, its impacts and opportunities for agricultural activities; better management to cope with extreme weather events; the risk of greater pressure for the use of pesticides; the acceleration of silting up of an important drinking water source in the region

²⁰ It should be noted, however, that at the time this article was rewritten in English, a climate change adaptation plan was being developed to protect an important drinking-water source (Beaudet Reservoir) in the city of Victoriaville.

(Beaudet Reservoir); and access to insurance and risk management coverage.

With respect to recommendations for better adaptation, participants suggested the following avenues, among others, which were not fully addressed in previous responses: reduce our dependence on oil; encourage active transportation and public transit; reduce street width; control GHG emissions and enforce environmental laws for the region's industries; invest in geothermal energy; ration drinking water; encourage domestic agriculture, agricultural education, and research; promote sustainable and organic farming practices; consult available documentation; and, finally, participate in seminars and information days.

Concluding discussion

The heterogeneity of the participants involved in this study and their varying degrees of knowledge, from experts to laypeople, were observed in addressing the issue of climate change. It is important to question the expertise of the stakeholder to judge the credibility of the answers, and this, of course, by carefully examining the discursive content to determine its relevance and acceptability. The fact that a layperson formulates an opinion does not immediately discredit the remark, but nevertheless requires special attention. That said, expert opinion does not guarantee the truth. It can be fallible in many ways.

Participants in the study expressed interest in environmental issues at various levels. Most are well documented on several environmental issues, including climate change, sometimes from a personal perspective, sometimes from a professional perspective. However, this is not always the case, as it can be observed, for example, with Participant P, who appears to confuse the problem of anthropogenic climate change with the problem of ozone layer degradation, which is in the direction of what Participant L argues when stating that the problem of climate change would be misunderstood. The comments of some participants (e.g., S and N) are sometimes

incomplete or not very explicit and suggest a lack of knowledge on the subject of climate change. Also, Participant I, in particular, supports throughout the answers the climate sceptic theory,²¹ according to which humans are not responsible for the phenomenon of climate change, a theory that remains to this day refuted by the scientific community working on the problem of climate change. Without proposing any credible leads, Participant I unnecessarily polarized the discussion by appealing to several fallacious arguments (ad hominem, straw man, false analogy, appeal to tradition, appeal to conspiracy, red herring, etc.), and by using nicknames such as “disciples of the green religion”, “*peurologues*” (fear mongerers), “*verdoyants*” (tree huggers), and “*réchauffistes*” (global warming believers). For Participant I, “nature is on our side.” Although this participant does not put it this way, we can draw from the remarks that certain opportunities related to climate change in the short and medium term for the agricultural community

²¹ A survey conducted by the *Centre interuniversitaire de recherche en analyse des organisations* (CIRANO) and the *Institut de l'énergie Trottier* among 1,010 Quebec respondents indicates that an average of 25%, or one in four Quebecers, maintains that global warming is not scientifically proven (6%) or that it is not caused by human activity (19%). The proportion of climatologists differs according to the administrative region surveyed, climbing to 44% in the greater Quebec City area, compared to only 21% of residents in the greater Montreal area. The proportion of climatologists in the Centre-du-Québec region where the research field is located is 25.2%, indicates a co-author of the study in a correspondence (Ingrid Peignier, July 23, 2015). This is very close to the Quebec average. According to this study, more men (28%) than women (22%) are skeptical about climate change. More climatologists have a primary, secondary or college education (27%) than a university education (20%). Respondents (30%) with family incomes under \$40,000 are more likely to be represented. Finally, Anglophones (16%) are less likely to be climatologists, compared to Francophones (25%) and Allophones (34%). For more details, see this document: Nathalie De Marcellis-Warin and *al.*, *L'énergie et les changements climatiques : perceptions Québécoises* (2015),

<http://www.cirano.qc.ca/files/publications/2015RP-08.pdf>

To continue this analysis, we can also refer to the Yale Climate Opinion Maps. Regarding the federal electoral district of Richmond-Arthabaska, it states that 38% of the population surveyed does not believe that global warming is anthropogenic in nature. See: “Yale Climate Opinion Maps,” Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, accessed July 26, 2018, http://environment.yale.edu/ycom/canada/2016/?lan=both&est=real_hu man&type=value&geo=riding&id=24061

could arise only on the condition that certain critical thresholds are not reached. This issue of opportunities and critical thresholds is raised by Participant A, who avoids obscuring the adverse impacts of climate change on the agricultural sector, which are largely addressed by several other participants also identifying relevant elements of vulnerability, resilience, and adaptation for the region under study.

This leads to believe, as do several stakeholders in the study, that adaptation to climate change in the Arthabaska region, and most probably in many others, should, at one time or another, involve an ambitious initiative to raise awareness and mobilize²² the various sectors of the population that do not seem to pay sufficient attention to the phenomenon of climate change. To this end, the participants' comments indicate, intentionally or unintentionally, the need to develop critical thinking on the issue of climate change, according to at least three possible stakeholder profiles: the problem of climate change as i) a unclear problem, ii) an irrelevant problem, and iii) a false problem. Scientific outreach activities would undoubtedly be enlightening to promote a better understanding by the population on the problem of climate change. This would aim in particular to open up possibilities other than that of a single "consumerist lifestyle" (L).

Some adaptation strategies could therefore be thought of in terms of environmental education, ensuring that they are accompanied by mitigation policies emanating from the serious will of decision makers. Adaptation measures should not be limited to economic and environmental plans alone. A more inclusive perspective could include other aspects of the

²² The September 2019 world climate strikes are an excellent example of such efforts. Between September 20 and 27, millions of people, from large cities and smaller municipalities around the globe, took to the streets to ask the world's leaders for climate action. On September 27, in Montreal alone, nearly half a million people, according to organizers, marched through the streets to demand ambitious actions to fight the climate crisis. This would make it one of the largest demonstrations in the history of Quebec. More locally, in Victoriaville, about 1,000 people participated in this march, far exceeding the expectations of the organizers, who initially hoped to gather about a hundred people.

adaptation process (social, scientific, technological, psychological, health, etc.). It would also be desirable to provide these policies with a *climate change adaptation ethics*,²³ i.e. a reflexive instrument to guide action and clarify eventual tensions or conflicts between values and/or norms in the context of climate change adaptation planning.²⁴ According to this perspective, ethics is much more than a narrow formula of recommendations for "right or wrong" behaviours in relation to climate change, nor is it reduced to the edification of idealized conceptions of the Good, the Just and the Virtuous, which are said to be applied *a posteriori*. Ethics is considered here above all as an interpretative model of contexts of action from which emerge a plurality of values and norms to be mobilized to reflect on complex, ambiguous, difficult, or indeterminate situations. If there are already discussions on the disappointing results of standard normative theories in the face of climate change moral complexities,²⁵ this does not mean that ethical concepts should

²³ This interdisciplinary issue may arise in a variety of ways from a moral point of view; for example, from a perspective of virtue ethics; distributive justice; intergenerational and global responsibilities; human rights; or from a pragmatist perspective in climate policy. To date, work in climate ethics has focused primarily on mitigation matters (i.e. emissions reduction principles of justice) and remains fragmentary in the field of climate change adaptation even in recent contributions seeking to expand climate ethics beyond the Anglo-Saxon horizon, where it is largely confined today.

²⁴ Within the horizon of environmental pragmatism, worth noting is an ongoing research project (2017-2020) aimed at developing sustainable climate change adaptation strategies at the scale of an RCM in Quebec (project leaders: Profs. Alain Létourneau and Isabelle Thomas). See Alain Létourneau, "L'adaptation aux changements climatiques devant la gouvernance de l'eau". *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* 61, no. 174, 2017 (2018): 447-467; Alain Létourneau, "L'autogouvernement et la gouvernance. Réflexion à partir d'un projet d'adaptation aux changements climatiques sur le territoire de la MRC Memphrémagog". *Sens public*, August 2019, <http://sens-public.org/article1408.html>.

²⁵ See the following:

Andrew Light, "Climate Ethics for Climate Action," in *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters*, eds. D. Schmidtz and E. Willot (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 557-566;

Michel Bourban, "Vers une éthique climatique plus efficace : motivations et incitations," *Les ateliers de l'éthique/The Ethics Forum* 9, no. 2 (2014): 4-28, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1026675ar>;

Dale Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed — and What It Means for Our Future* (Oxford; New York:

be excluded from climate policy. On the contrary, as suggested by Stephen M. Gardiner, if the “ethical” category is absent from political interventions on climate change, drifts in governance could generate potential systemic problems within our institutions (moral corruption, tyranny of the contemporaries, etc.). In this sense, an important ethical problem seems to emerge from the comments and suggestions of participants in this study: how should we act to resolve a problematic situation, such as climate change, when a critical mass of people do not see the pertinence of the problem (or have no interest in recognizing its importance), particularly when some of these people are decision makers with a large capacity for action?

To demagogy, we may oppose pedagogy in order to make possible depolarized communication, shared democratic experiences as well as the creation of a “public”.²⁶ From this point of view, the role of the pragmatist philosopher is to ensure a committed path of experimental learning and creative processes, not complacent to established powers, and the adoption of a critical posture when important interests are at stake. To this end, the construction of democratic spaces in the public sphere is necessary to position informed educational practices in a context where citizens are confronted, on the one hand, to expert discourses, and, on the other hand, to campaigns of misinformation, alternative facts, and misleading opinions (Participant I), far too present. This type of complication requires the public to have a sufficient level of climate literacy,²⁷ provided by the social sciences and a plurality of other disciplines.

Oxford University Press, 2014);

Stephen Mark Gardiner and David Weisbach, *Debating Climate Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016);

Pierre André and Michel Bourban, “Éthique et justice climatique: entre motivations morales et amoraes,” *Les ateliers de l'éthique* 11, no. 2 (2016): 4–27, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1041764ar>.

²⁶ John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens: OH: Swallow Press, 1927).

²⁷ Rachael Shwom and *al.*, “Integrating the Social Sciences to Enhance Climate Literacy,” *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 15, no. 7 (2017): 377–84, <https://doi.org/10.1002/fee.1519>.

The confusion, sophistry, and bigotry surrounding the public debate on anthropogenic climate change are signs of a current need for the input of the critical methods of philosophy. Certainly, particular philosophical attention should be turned first to human affairs and its problems if one wishes to ensure that the discipline is pragmatically relevant and effective, especially in the field of climate change where the measured urgency faces political inertia, in sum:

the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's [and women's] ideas as to the social and moral strife of their own day. Its aim is to become so far as is humanly possible an organ for dealing with these conflicts. That which may be pretentiously unreal when it is formulated in metaphysical distinctions becomes intensely significant when connected with the drama of the struggle of social beliefs and ideals.²⁸

²⁸ John Dewey, "Reconstruction in Philosophy," in *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press), 1967-1990, MW 12: 94.

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RESEARCH NOTE—LEST WE FORGET: JOHN DEWEY AND REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION

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Remembrance Education (RE) indicates “an attitude of active respect in contemporary society based on the collective remembrance of human suffering that is caused by forms of human behavior such as war, intolerance or exploitation, and that must not be forgotten.” Unlike traditional history education, the point of RE is not the straightforward teaching of historical facts (if that is even possible). Instead, RE’s purpose is to integrate learners into a community, a *community of memory*, where they are witnesses, judges and guardians of the memories of tragic past events. Writings on RE are conspicuously absent from Dewey studies. In this bibliographic essay, I offer an overview of RE, including a sample of its programs, initiatives and curricula. In addition, I propose that five concepts from Dewey’s educational philosophy can helpfully inform a theory of RE. Rather than articulate a definitive account of Dewey-inspired RE, my intention is only to draw a tentative ground map to motivate future research.

Keywords: Remembrance, Pragmatism, Education, Dewey, History, Collective Memory



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Event is a term of judgment, not of existence apart from judgment. The origin and development of the Appalachian Mountain Range is an event, and so is the loosening and rolling of a particular pebble . . . That these are distinguished as particular events involves human judgment as to their event-ness.

—John Dewey¹

Remembrance Education (RE) indicates “an attitude of active respect in contemporary society based on the collective remembrance of human suffering that is caused by forms of human behavior such as war, intolerance or exploitation, and that must not be forgotten.”² Unlike traditional history education, the point of RE is not the straightforward teaching of historical facts (if that is even possible). Instead, RE’s purpose is to integrate learners into a community, a *community of memory*, where they are witnesses, judges and guardians of the memories of tragic past events. Writings on RE are conspicuously absent from Dewey studies.

In this brief bibliographic essay, I offer an overview of RE, including a sample of its programs, initiatives and curricula. In addition, I propose that five concepts from Dewey’s educational philosophy can helpfully inform a theory of RE. Rather than articulate a definitive account of Dewey-inspired RE, my intention is only to draw a tentative ground map to motivate future research.

¹ John Dewey, *The Collected Works, 1882-1953*, ed. By Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1990), *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), LW 12:222.

² This is the definition of RE provided by the Flemish Special Committee for Remembrance Education. Quoted in Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse and Kat Wils, “Remembrance Education between History Teaching and Citizenship Education,” *Citizenship Teaching & Learning* 7, no. 2 (2012): 157-171, 164.

Teaching to Remember

In the wake of human tragedy—such as the Holocaust, Chicago’s dark history of police torture and the New Zealand mosque attack—public calls for remembrance are commonplace. *Lest we forget* the events and relive the horrors, the reasoning goes, it is necessary to teach younger generations about these terrible past events, their antecedent conditions and the grotesque consequences of collective amnesia and malaise. According to Ann Chinnery, “if students are going to grapple with some of the more unsettling realities of the past, they will need a different kind of history education and a different experience of our ethical obligations to and for the past.”³

I highlight three representative areas of RE, identifying specific goals, programs and curricula: (i) Holocaust education, (ii) human rights education and (iii) police violence/torture education. Each illustrates how RE activists, teachers and survivors share the memory of tragic past events with learners and thereby co-create communities of memory.

Holocaust Education

Perhaps the most widely recognized RE projects are holocaust education programs.⁴ Given the scale and horror of Nazi Germany’s genocidal campaign as well as the sheer number of communities affected by this tragedy, educating students about the Holocaust is treated as the paradigmatic case for RE.⁵ On

³ Ann Chinnery, “On History Education and the Moral Demands of Remembrance,” in *Philosophy of Education 2011*, ed. by R. Kunzman, pp. 127-135 (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois: Philosophy of Education Society, 2011), p. 132.

⁴ According to Van Nieuwhuyse and Wils, “the Holocaust now seems in many countries to have become the most important instance of the concept of remembrance in the school context.” K. Van Nieuwhuyse and K. Wils, “Remembrance Education between History Teaching and Citizenship Education,” 159.

⁵ Aleida Assmann echoes this point: “Given the transnational nature of the crime [mass genocide of the Holocaust], one that not only pulled together and concentrated millions of victims in the bureaucratic machinery of death, but also unleashed a centrifugal effect of scattering the families of victims across

May 7, 1998, the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) was founded at the 'Meeting on the Holocaust' hosted by Sweden and attended by historians and diplomats from U.S. and Britain. On January 27, 2000, the ITF was revisited, once again in Sweden, but this time involving experts and politicians from 13 nations. A dense network of associations and non-governmental organizations committed to Holocaust education sprung out of the ITF meetings.⁶

Although there is relative consensus on the need for Holocaust programs, the rationale for them varies. Some Holocaust historians and educators insist that the primary reason for learners to study this mass genocide event is to prevent the tragedy from reoccurring.⁷ Others see it as a way to remind students that they have an individual moral duty "to remember" the Holocaust, its perpetrators and its victims.⁸ Still others believe that the point of Holocaust education is to facilitate the interaction between young people and survivors, who have the "experiential authority of being there and telling it like it was."⁹

Human Rights Education

Human rights educators have also employed RE to share the

five continents, it is to be expected that this mega-event should find its resonance in transnational memory." "The Holocaust — A Global Memory? Extensions and Limits of a New Memory Community," in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. by A. Assmann and S. Conrad, pp. 97-117 (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), p. 97.

⁶ Association of Holocaust Organizations. "An International Network for the Advancement of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research." <https://www.ahoinfo.org/> (accessed September 4, 2019).

⁷ David H. Lindquist, "Meeting a Moral Imperative: A Rationale for Teaching the Holocaust," *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas* 84, no. 1 (2011):26-30. Samuel Totten, "A Note: Why Teach about the Holocaust?" *Canadian Social Studies* 31, no. 4 (1997): 176-177.

⁸ Thomas D. Fallace, "The Origins of Holocaust Education in American Public Schools," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20, no. 1 (2006): 80-102, 92.

⁹ Stacey Zembrzycki and Steve High, "'When I was your age': Bearing Witness in Holocaust Education in Montréal," *The Canadian Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (2012): 408-435, 411.

experiences of refugees traumatized by state violence, civil war and genocide. The Montréal Life Stories Project (MLSP) in Canada collects oral histories from refugees who fled high-conflict zones (e.g. Rwanda, Syria, Haiti and Cambodia). With these oral histories, they develop a curriculum to teach youths in Montréal.¹⁰ The twin purposes of the project are (i) to safeguard the refugees' memories for future generations and (ii) to provide the educational means to help Canadian citizens and policymakers empathize with the plight of refugees in the immigrant community.

According to the MLSP's co-directors, Bronwen E. Low and Emmanuelle Sonntag, the project promotes shared understanding. "First-person accounts bring world history and politics to life," they explain, "helping us to understand the processes and human costs of violence and war, and expanding our awareness of our fellow residents and citizens."¹¹ The MLSP curriculum includes a series of engaged listening and learning activities, such as reading a graphic narrative created by a survivor of the Rwandan genocide, conducting research and then supplementing the narrative with new materials.¹² The Montréal RE program permits students to connect tragic past events through contact with human voices, comprehending, in Low and Sonntag's words, "the legacy of trauma, the place of memory in everyday life, and the interconnectedness of human experience through the coexistence of different life trajectories and stories in Montréal."¹³ Besides Montréal, human rights-related RE plays a prominent role in other parts of the world, especially where it coincides with transitional justice projects—for instance, in South Africa (apartheid), Kosovo (ethnic

¹⁰ Life Stories Montreal. "Histoires de Vie Montréal." <http://lifestoriesmontreal.ca/> (Accessed September 7, 2019).

¹¹ Bronwen E. Low and Emmanuelle Sonntag, "Listening in Human Rights Education: Learning from Life Stories of Survivors of Atrocities," in *Listening to Teach: Beyond Didactic Pedagogy*, ed. by L. J. Waks, pp. 137-147 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), p. 138.

¹² Low and Sonntag, p. 141.

¹³ Low and Sonntag, p. 145.

cleansing) and Rwanda (genocide).¹⁴

Police Violence/Torture Education

The third area of RE I wish to highlight addresses the harm police inflict upon community members through unjustified violence and torture. An example is the “Reparations Won” curriculum in Chicago Public Schools, which aims to inform students about the Burge police torture controversy and the hard-fought grassroots campaign to compensate victims.¹⁵ Between 1972 and 1991, Chicago Police Detective and then-Commander John Burge and a group of fellow police officers and detectives detained and tortured crime suspects, mainly black residents from the poorest areas of Chicago. After Burge’s conviction, hundreds of survivors and activists came forward to demand reparations. After a long, hard-fought political struggle with the City of Chicago their demands were partially met and a process of memorializing, healing and educating began.¹⁶ One demand the City met was for the Chicago public schools to collaborate with community members in the development and teaching of a curriculum about the city’s dark history of police

¹⁴ Patryk Wawrzyński and Alicja Stańco-Wawrzyńska, “South African Post-Apartheid Remembrance Policy (1994-1999),” *Polish Political Science Yearbook* 45, no. 1 (2016): 145-154. Gëzim Visoka, “Arrested Truth: Transitional Justice and the Politics of Remembrance in Kosovo,” *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 8, no. 1 (2016): 62-80. Rachel Ibreck, “International Constructions of National Memory: The Aims and Effects of Foreign Donors’ Support for Genocidal Remembrance in Rwanda,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 7, no. 2 (2013): 149-169.

¹⁵ Chicago Public Schools, “CPS and CPD Unveil Burge Reparations Curriculum for All CPS Schools.” August 28, 2017. https://cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/PR1_08_28_2017.aspx (accessed September 3, 2019).

¹⁶ Ashvini Kartik-Narayan and Maddie Anderson explain: “Part of that renewal begins with remembrance. For decades, survivors of the Burge torture scandal tried to make their harm known, to no avail. Now, activist organizations in Chicago, families of torture survivors, and torture survivors themselves are working to enact truly meaningful reparations and to ensure that these stories are never forgotten.” A. Kartik-Narayan and M. Anderson “Never Can You Compensate Nobody for Their Life,” *Southside Weekly*, July 24, 2019. <https://southsideweekly.com/never-can-compensate-nobody-life-burge-chicago-police-torture/> (accessed September 3, 2019).

torture: “The ‘Reparations Won’ curriculum was established by the ordinance and requires all Chicago Public Schools to educate students about the Burge torture scandal and the path to reparations. The curriculum has been established successfully in majority Black and Latinx communities but largely delayed in majority white communities where parents are extremely resistant.”¹⁷ While it has not been universally welcomed (as predominantly white schools opt out), the RE curriculum ‘Reparations Won’ nevertheless created a vibrant community of memory in Chicago, offering hope that episodes like the Burge torture episode would never happen again.

Dewey’s Educational Philosophy

In order to theorize RE, five concepts that feature strongly in Dewey’s educational philosophy are deployed: (i) habit, (ii) communication, (iii) hope, (iv) growth, and (v) progress.¹⁸

Habit

Dewey defined a ‘habit’ as “a way or manner of action, not a particular act or deed.”¹⁹ The closest Dewey comes to invoking a habit to remember is in chapter 16 of *Democracy and Education*. There he states that certain habits are “taken up” by the individual from the group through “sufferings and trials over long periods of time.” This uptake can also occur as a result of careful instruction, for it is the “business of educators to supply an environment” suitable for the formation of proper habits.²⁰ Educators teach new members their “history” or “the body of

¹⁷ A. Kartik-Narayan and M. Anderson, “Never Can You Compensate Nobody for Their Life.”

¹⁸ These five concepts are inspired by Jim Garrison’s similar account. J. Garrison, “John Dewey’s Philosophy as Education,” ed. by L. A. Hickman, *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation*, pp. 63-81 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 63-4. I alter Garrison’s list of Deweyan educational-philosophical notions (habit, environment, growth, communication and democracy), substituting hope and progress for environment and democracy, respectively.

¹⁹ J. Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), LW 12:21.

²⁰ J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), MW 9:221.

known facts about the activities and sufferings of the social groups with which . . . [their] own lives are continuous.” The rationale for cultivating a habit to remember and learn about a group’s past, Dewey contends, is that “knowledge of the past is the key to understanding the present.”²¹ Likewise, the point of RE is to induct new members into a community of memory, so that knowing a group’s history, even one fraught with tragedy, helps inform the individual about the group’s present circumstances.²²

One assumption guiding RE is that instruction prepares learners to act in a specific way, namely, to “prevent the past [tragic event] from being repeated.”²³ Habits of hearing testimony, reading stories, and relating to survivors’ experiences, however, are not identical to future action that would stop a tragic event from reoccurring. To appreciate how RE facilitates tragedy prevention requires a more refined notion of habit than simply a tendency to act. Dewey recommended learning-by-doing or supplying the learner with an environment rich in material and social conditions analogous to those in future life situations: “What he [the student] has learned in the way of knowledge and skill [or habit] in one situation becomes an instrument for understanding and dealing with the situations that follow.”²⁴ While RE instruction cannot

²¹ Dewey also insists that this knowledge of the past for the sake of the present has moral value: “The assistance which may be given by history to a more intelligent sympathetic understanding of the social situations of the present in which individuals share is a permanent and constructive moral asset.” J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), MW 9:221-222.

²² One possible objection to this account is that pragmatists such as Dewey are too forward-looking to appreciate the past on its own terms. According to Richard Rorty, “[n]ostalgia is unbecoming to pragmatists, who are supposed to look forward rather than back.” R. Rorty, “Remembering John Dewey and Sidney Hook,” *Free Inquiry* 16 (1995). While there is some truth to Rorty’s characterization, RE is, similar to pragmatism, *both* backward- and forward-looking, for it aims to cultivate the conditions for a community of memory to induct new members and educate them about their shared history, thereby preserving the memories of past tragic events and preventing their reoccurrence in the present and future.

²³ K. Van Nieuwhuyse and K. Wils, “Remembrance Education between History Teaching and Citizenship Education,” 168.

²⁴ J. Dewey, *Experience and Education* (1938), LW 13:25-26.

guarantee that a learner's future self will undertake action to prevent an imminent tragedy, it can cultivate a disposition to anticipate similarly tragic events by, for instance, modeling the historical situation and the pattern of prior conditions that precipitated the original event.²⁵

Communication

In RE, students, teachers and survivors participate in the communicative give-and-take of telling stories and actively listening. The communication and reception of traumatic narratives has been widely theorized. Teresa Strong-Wilson calls the process "storied formation" or the telling of stories of others' past experiences, relating them to more recent and familiar narratives and thereby bridging the gulf between the self and the other.²⁶ Also, survivors and their relatives share their own stories, while listeners accept what Simon and Eppert call their "ethical obligation to witness [their] testimony."²⁷ Dewey scholar and educational theorist Leonard Waks writes about the importance of deep listening, quieting the mind and being aware of "situations and the opportunities they present," all skills crucial for teachers, students and survivors participating in RE.²⁸ Likewise, while demonstrating the

²⁵ RE also disrupts "our culturally inscribed habits of reading, listening, and attending to the voices of the other" in ways that foster new, more refined habits, such as heightened empathy, selfless devotion to the less fortunate and personal growth through public service. A. Chinnery, "On History Education and the Moral Demands of Remembrance," p. 132. Garrison also suggests that habit cultivation is regulated by values that foster growth, involving "the critical acquisition of habits of conduct, controlled by the ideal values that nurture human growth." J. Garrison, "John Dewey's Philosophy as Education," p. 63.

²⁶ Teresa Strong-Wilson, *Bringing Memory Forward: Storied Remembrance in Social Justice Education with Teachers* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), p. 89.

²⁷ Roger I. Simon and Claudia Eppert, "Remembering Obligation: Pedagogy and the Witnessing of Testimony of Historical Trauma," *Canadian Journal of Education* 22, no. 2 (1997): 175-191, 175.

²⁸ Leonard J. Waks, "John Dewey on Listening and Friendship in School and Society," *Educational Theory* 61, no. 2 (2011): 191-205, 195. Waks also explores a Deweyan distinction between straight listening and transactional

relevance of Dewey's educational ideas for contemporary citizen education, Sarah Stitzlein remarks that storytelling is "a helpful tool for nurturing the habit of hope in schools."²⁹

Telling stories contributes to collective identity formation and community building. According to Chinnery, "public practices of remembrance function in much the same way as family stories and the narratives surrounding family photos do to ensure an ongoing family identity."³⁰ With the help of RE, affected communities integrate survivors' recollections of past tragedies into their collective consciousness and construct a shared identity around the shared memories. Through ongoing education, they build a community of memory, a process that parallels the development of a Deweyan community of inquiry.³¹ Dewey claimed that the formation of "common meanings" contribute to the creation of a "community

listening.

²⁹ Stitzlein writes: "Stories, especially when presented under the guidance of teachers, help students to see how their worlds could be different. Stories of struggle and success develop children's sensitivity to the lives of other people and provide examples of creative solutions that others have crafted to solve their social problems. When students see how others have worked to improve their lives, they are provided fodder for how they might try out ideas in their own situations. But more than just reading the stories of others, students should be encouraged to create stories as well." S. Stitzlein, "Habits of Democracy: A Deweyan Approach to Citizen Education in American Today," *Education and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2014): 61-86, 78.

³⁰ A. Chinnery, p. 128.

³¹ 'Community of memory' is a recurring phrase in the RE literature. Assmann notes that the "collective emotional trauma" of the Holocaust has contributed to the creation of a "transnational memory" and with it a "memory community." A. Assmann, "The Holocaust - a Global Memory," pp. 112-113. Chinnery asks, "instead of thinking about history as a process of individual knowledge acquisition, what if we were to see the history classroom as a space where students and teachers come together as a community of memory?" A. Chinnery, "On History Education and the Moral Demands of Remembrance," p. 132. Referring to Holocaust education, Zembrzycki and High mention the importance of welcoming new generations into a "community of remembering." S. Zembrzycki and S. High, "When I was your age," 411. A similar focus on collective memory can be found in the Transitional Justice literature, which similar to RE addresses the trauma experienced by survivors of violence. For example, see Magdalana Zolkos, "Redressive Politics and the Nexus of Trauma, Transitional Justice and Reconciliation," in *Theories of Transitional Justice*, ed. by S. Buckley-Zistel, T.K. Beck, C. Braun and F. Mieth, pp. 163-183 (New York: Routledge, 2014).

of interest and endeavor.”³² In a community of memory, the school functions much like it does in a community of inquiry, that is, as a site for what Dewey describes as the “intermingling of youth of different races, differing religions, and unlike customs” as well as a “broader environment” for sharing ideas, experiences and, of course, memories.³³

Hope, Growth and Progress

Due to their relatedness, the last three concepts—hope, growth and progress (which I have elsewhere termed the “three cornerstones of pragmatism”)—are treated together.³⁴ Growth for Dewey has many meanings,³⁵ but for our purposes the most important of them connects hope and progress in a biological metaphor. Growth here is understood as context-sensitive development. An organism grows when it overcomes a disruption to the harmonious balance it maintains with its environment.³⁶ Hope motivates the organism to restore balance to the unsettled environment. Progress indicates the organism’s

³² J. Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), LW 2:124. James H. Tufts and Dewey note how birth and death events are capable of unifying a community around common sympathies and judgments: “The [birth or death] event, as often as it occurs, appeals by both sympathy and awe to the common feeling, and brings to consciousness the unity of the group and the control exercised by its judgments.” *Ethics* (1908), MW 5:64.

³³ Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (1916), MW 9:25-26. See also Waks, “Rereading Democracy and Education Today: John Dewey on Globalization, Multiculturalism, and Democratic Education,” *Education and Culture* 23, no. 1(2007):27-37, 34.

³⁴ Shane J. Ralston, “Hope, Growth and Progress: Three Cornerstones of Pragmatism.” *Social Science Research Network*, 2011.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1927216 (accessed September 5, 2019).

³⁵ S. J. Ralston, “A More Practical Pedagogical Ideal: Searching for a Criterion of Deweyan Growth,” *Educational Theory* 61, no. 3 (2011): 351-364.

³⁶ According to Tom Burke, the “basic picture, generally speaking, is that of a given organism/environment system performing a wide range of operations as a normal matter of course—scanning, probing, ingesting, discharging, adapting to, approaching, avoiding, or otherwise moving about and altering things in routine ways, in order to maintain itself.” T. Burke, *Dewey’s New Logic: A Reply to Russell* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 23.

steady advance towards reunification of the whole. Without an awareness of context, especially the nature of the problem that initiated the disruption, there is no way for the organism to successfully reunify the whole and, in turn, grow. Without an appreciation of the context, hope or anticipation that the whole will be reunited recedes from view (usually replaced by its opposite, fear). In relation to RE, hope for a better future motivates a community's calls for remembrance. Growth regulates students' learning, the refinement of simple habits of reading, witnessing, listening and relating to others into more refined habits or virtues. A community of memory achieves progress in roughly the same way as a Deweyan community of inquiry.³⁷ Both carefully respond to the conditions out of which, in the case of the community of memory, the tragic past event occurred and is later recollected and, in a community of inquiry, the problematic situation emerges and is subsequently resolved.³⁸ Both aim to restore balance after a critical disruption (whether a tragedy or felt difficulty) through education, understanding and, in the case of RE, remembrance and healing.³⁹

³⁷ Peter Seixas, "The Community of Inquiry as a Basis for Knowledge and Learning: The Case of History," *American Educational Research Journal* 30, no. 2 (1993):305-324, 312.

³⁸ Dewey claims that "the writing of history is an instance of judgment as a resolution through inquiry of a problematic situation." J. Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), LW 12:231.

³⁹ A possible objection to this account is that Dewey lacks an appreciation of the tragic dimension of human experience, which is a precondition for RE. However, Dewey does acknowledge the tragic in his experiential metaphysics, specifically, in the precarious (secondary) mode of human experience (see *Experience and Nature*) and in the risks associated with finite human existence, risks that the ancient Greeks sought to evade by positing fixed truths and stable foundations to all knowledge and existence (see *The Quest for Certainty*). J. Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (1925), LW 1:3-4 and *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), LW 4:76-80. According to Melvin Rogers, Dewey's theory of action betrays a "tragic point of view," especially in its "aleatory" (risk managing) mode. M. Rogers, *The Undiscovered Dewey: Religion, Morality, and the Ethos of Democracy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), pp. 86-7. For Corey McCall, not only is the objection mistaken, but Dewey's sense of the tragic also aligns with the notion of tragic sensibility: "The objection that Dewey's thought leaves no room for the tragic dimension of existence misses its mark. Indeed, Dewey's emphasis on

Final Thoughts

Tragic historical events are not objectively true apart from human judgment. ‘Event’ is, as Dewey reminds us in the *Logic*, “a term of judgment.”⁴⁰ By adjudging a past event, it is not simply decreed good or bad. Its “event-ness” or significance is (re-)constructed when the judge selectively emphasizes some factors and deemphasizes others.⁴¹ Members of a community of memory—activists, teachers, students and survivors—make tragic past events meaningful by selective de/emphasis. Through judgment, they remake the event for themselves (in light of their own experience and memory) and for each other (through collective experience and memory), and then convey its significance (its event-ness) to new members and others outside the community. Historical judgments or reconstructions of the past always reflect underlying agendas—in the case of RE, (i) the desire to heal those who have suffered as a consequence of a tragic past event, (ii) the need to form a community of memory and (iii) the hope that a similar event will never occur again.⁴²

experience as novel, contingent, and unpredictable has much in common with the tragic sensibility.” C. McCall, “John Dewey and James Baldwin on History, Tragedy, and the Forgetting of Race,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 13(2019): 343-362, 352.

⁴⁰ Op. cit. note 1.

⁴¹ Dewey writes: “All historical construction is necessarily selective. Since the past cannot be reproduced in toto and lived over again, this principle might seem too obvious to be worthy of being called important. But it is of importance because its acknowledgment compels attention to the fact that everything in the writing of history depends upon the principle use to control selection.” *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, LW 12:234. On how to pragmatically reconstruct a past event, see the introduction to S. J. Ralston, *John Dewey’s Great Debates—Reconstructed* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2011), pp. 9-14.

⁴² Given their politicized objectives, both RE and citizenship education have come under increasing scrutiny by historians, some of whom insist that objective truth alone should inform history curricula. Niewenhuyse and Wils explain: “Although academic historians are increasingly inclined to acknowledge that there is no hard and fast dividing line between collective memory and professional historiography, they do not always welcome the increasing pressure from national governments and international organizations to guide the collective memory and in some cases even to

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JESSICA HEYBACH INTERVIEWS CLARA FISCHER

CLARA FISCHER (University College Dublin) &
JESSICA HEYBACH (Aurora University)



Clara Fischer is an EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Centre for Gender, Feminisms, and Sexualities, and Co-director of the Dewey Studies Research Centre at University College Dublin. She is the author of *Gendered Readings of Change: A Feminist-Pragmatist Approach* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), and co-editor of *Irish Feminisms: Past, Present and Future* (Arlen House/Syracuse University Press, 2015), *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), and *Philosophical Perspectives on Contemporary Ireland* (Routledge, 2019). She has published widely on feminist-pragmatism, Irish feminisms, reproduction and sexuality in Ireland, gender and nationalism, institutionalisation and containment, and shame, emotion, and embodiment, and has recently published a special issue of *Hypatia* on "Gender and the Politics of Shame" (2018), and of *Contemporary Pragmatism* on "John Dewey and Critical Philosophies for Critical Political Times" (2019).

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Q (Heybach): How did you come to study philosophy and become attracted to Dewey's work/thought?

A (Fischer): I developed an interest in philosophy while still at school, being generally interested in the big 'why' questions. At university, I chose an Arts degree, that is, an undergraduate degree course that allows you to pick three subjects in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and philosophy was one of those subjects. My encounter with pragmatism and Dewey's work came much later, though. I'd already completed two Masters degrees and was doing a Ph.D. in feminism, when I came across Charlene Seigfried's work.¹ Seigfried presented pragmatism as a third alternative to the analytic/continental traditions in philosophy, and as a framework that could provide answers to certain impasses in feminist theory at the time, such as between a too rigid, biological essentialism v. a too fluid postmodern constructionism. I subsequently developed a deep interest in feminist-pragmatism, and in the classical pragmatists, especially John Dewey's work. This was always driven, though, with a view to addressing contemporary, political problems and feminist debates. My Ph.D. and the book that arose from it, *Gendered Readings of Change: A Feminist-Pragmatist Approach*,² drew on Dewey's, Addams's, and contemporary pragmatist work to examine some of the feminist theoretical impasses already mentioned, specifically as these related to questions of change. Perhaps unusually, my route into pragmatism thus came from feminist theory, and Seigfried's work in particular.

¹ See, for example, Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). And Charlene Haddock Seigfried, "Where Are All the Pragmatist Feminists?," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (1991): 1-20.

² Clara Fischer, *Gendered Readings of Change: A Feminist-Pragmatist Approach* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

Q: What other intellectual figures influenced your thinking on Contemporary Pragmatism?

I read a lot of feminist-pragmatist work, including, of course Seigfried's, but also Shannon Sullivan's, Marilyn Fischer's, Erin McKenna's, Lisa Heldke's, and Maurice Hamington's,³ and also frequently delve into the classical pragmatist women and feminist thinkers, such as Jane Addams and Jesse Taft. I've always found Dewey to be the most "feminist-friendly" male, classical pragmatist thinker, and so have maintained a strong interest in Dewey's work over the years, and in theorists who use his philosophy to address contemporary social, political, and ethical problems, such as Judith Greene and Gregory Fernando Pappas.⁴ More recently, I've also been very engaged with William James's thought, particularly on emotion, and in conversation with Dewey's work, as this relates to current developments in feminist theory.

Q: Describe your current work on feminist pragmatism. What aspects of this work do you think all pragmatists should be paying attention to?

My current work in feminist-pragmatism is in the broad area of emotion and embodiment in the context of emerging feminist theories. There is a long tradition, in feminist thought, of looking

³ See Shannon Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001). Marilyn Fischer, "Addams's Internationalist Pacifism and the Rhetoric of Maternalism," *NWSA Journal* 18, no. 3 (2006): 1–19. Erin McKenna, *The Task of Utopia: A Pragmatist and Feminist Perspective* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). Lisa Heldke, "How Practical Is John Dewey?," in *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey*, ed. Charlene Haddock Seigfried (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002). And Maurice Hamington, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Jane Addams* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).

⁴ See Judith Greene, *Deep Democracy: Community, Diversity and Transformation* (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999). And Gregory Fernando Pappas, *John Dewey's Ethics: Democracy as Experience* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008).

at the social, political, and moral import of emotions and embodiment. More recently, however, a number of theorists in a variety of fields have coined the “affect theory” and “new materialism” paradigms, which explicitly claim affects and embodiment, respectively, as cornerstones of a new way of doing theory. These recent trajectories in feminist thought often position themselves in opposition to poststructuralism and the linguistic turn, and form what I call a “new school” of feminist thought that seeks to redress what is viewed as a maligning of emotion and embodiment. While much of this work is very interesting and original, I have developed some critiques that highlight a continuity rather than a rupture of feminist concern with emotion and embodiment, and have also brought affect theory and new materialism into conversation with pragmatism. With regard to the latter, John Dewey’s naturalist ontology and epistemology chimes well with new materialist work on the environment as agentic,⁵ while affect theory can speak to William James’s and Dewey’s respective models of emotion.⁶ Although I would like to refrain from imposing myself on “all pragmatists,” I do think that both pragmatists and feminists with an interest in critical thought can gain from examining these new theoretical developments in light of what pragmatism brings to the table in order to contribute to a broader interrogation of the linguistic turn and the status of critical theory today.

Q: Given this particular political-social moment, describe how current world affairs have influenced your work within feminism and pragmatism, and the questions you think philosophy should take up.

⁵ See Clara Fischer, “Revisiting Feminist Matters in the Post-Linguistic Turn: John Dewey, New Materialisms, and Contemporary Feminist Thought,” in *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment*, ed. Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

⁶ Clara Fischer, “Feminist Philosophy, Pragmatism, and the ‘Turn to Affect’: A Genealogical Critique,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 31, no. 4 (2016): 810–26.

My preoccupation with emotion and embodiment stems not just from the recent developments in critical thought already mentioned above, but is also prompted by current social and political events. I have written quite a bit about shame, in particular, and how this manifests itself through gender, but also through other intersecting structures,⁷ and in the context of specific policy failures and injustices. My focus here has largely been on Ireland, which has a rather dreary history of state and church-sponsored injustices committed against women and children – especially in relation to reproduction and the regulation of women’s bodies and sexuality. My work here has explored certain topics that have recently come to prominence, owing largely to advocacy and media work by women directly affected by these issues: the mass-institutionalisation of women throughout the 20th century,⁸ and Ireland’s abortion ban,⁹ which was overturned only last year, mainly owing to feminist activist efforts. More generally, I think that questions on the politics of emotion are vital for understanding contemporary political problems and for countering some of the more insidious and dangerous tendencies among self-interested, populist, right-wing movements. Sadly, we are increasingly witnessing a politics of fear, hatred and shame that inflames ill will, even violence, toward women, migrants, LGBT+ people, and a host of Others, who are dehumanised and degraded for political gain. Unless we examine how emotions, and the mobilisation of particular emotions against certain people, function in this context, we will not be able to develop social and political analyses that are sophisticated enough to deal with this right-

⁷ Clara Fischer, ed., “Gender and the Politics of Shame,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy [Special Issue]* 33, no. 3 (2018).

⁸ Clara Fischer, “Gender, Nation, and the Politics of Shame: Magdalen Laundries and the Institutionalisation of Feminine Transgression in Modern Ireland,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 41, no. 4 (2016): 821–43. And Clara Fischer, “Revealing Ireland’s ‘Proper’ Heart: Apology, Shame, Nation,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 32, no. 4 (2017): 751–67.

⁹ Clara Fischer, “Abortion and Reproduction in Ireland: Shame, Nation-Building, and the Affective Politics of Place,” *Feminist Review* 122, no. 1 (2019).

wing onslaught and the threat it poses to all of us.

Q: What do you feel women (as well as gender non-conforming individuals) in philosophy should be working towards within the profession moving forward?

I'm loath to answer a question on what women should do. Sadly the issue of women in philosophy is sometimes mistakenly interpreted as a question about what women are doing 'wrong', rather than about the institutional and scholarly obstacles that women and gender non-conforming individuals, as well as minority academics more generally, sadly still face. So I think the question should be addressed to the profession and to institutions, rather than to women. With that in mind, it is obvious that there are still major problems and structural barriers facing women within philosophy, but also within academia more generally. It is true that there is a lot of advocacy work going on in that regard that is having a real impact – societies for women in philosophy, for example, being a great example of an initiative that has several benefits for women and the profession of philosophy, including raised profiles for women's work, and opportunities for mentoring, networking, and support for younger women philosophers. However, institutionally, women continue to be disproportionately affected by the neoliberal university model, meaning that they are more likely to be in insecure employment and therefore vulnerable to exploitation and excluded from receiving benefits, even those that most immediately affect them, such as maternity leave provision. Unless women's precarious status within universities is addressed – and that means hiring women on contracts that have a clear career path and provide job security within philosophy departments, as elsewhere – women and minority academics will continue to face structural barriers to research, teaching, and, ultimately their ability to lead healthy and fulfilled lives – and this is not just to their detriment, but also to the detriment of philosophy itself.

Q: What other questions/answers might be useful for our readers to consider about your work?

As a general comment, my passion for pragmatism developed out of feminist theoretical concerns and the need, as I still see it, to develop theory that can speak to and is informed by contemporary social and political problems. I've personally admired the activism of Dewey and Addams, in particular, and have thus felt drawn to pragmatism as a philosophy that can marry feminist action with critical thought. Pragmatism as a fundamentally lived philosophy is so appealing for those of us interested in achieving feminist ends, and I try, in my work, to apply and develop its lessons and insights to do just that. Given what I've said about the contemporary political moment we find ourselves in,¹⁰ I hope that I and other contemporary pragmatist thinkers can do justice to the strong scholarly and lived example set by several of the classical pragmatists who were themselves deeply committed to achieving progressive intellectual and socio-political goals.

¹⁰ For a collection of articles on the importance of John Dewey's work in the contemporary, political moment, see Clara Fischer and Conor Morris, eds., *John Dewey and Critical Philosophies for Critical Political Times (Special Issue)*, *Contemporary Pragmatism*, Vol. 16, 2019.

BOOK REVIEW: EXPERIENCING WILLIAM JAMES

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James Campbell. *Experiencing William James: Belief in A Pluralistic World*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2017. 398 pp. ISBN: 9780813940472 (Hardback, \$75); 9780813940489 (Paper, \$35); 9780813940496 (Ebook, \$75).

<http://www.upress.virginia.edu/title/5123>

Review by J. Edward Hackett, Savannah State University



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James Campbell makes his entrance into William James scholarship with a comprehensive study of the entirety of James's thought in his *Experiencing William James: Belief in a Pluralistic World*. In this review, I will first state the book's most promising feature, then offer a criticism about the style of the work, and finally outline its overall structure in the third section. In this third section, I should note that I only disagree about Campbell's choice to tease out the terms "subjective" and "objective" in Chapter 5. Along the way in the chapter summaries, I will highlight its overall promise and draw attention to where exactly Campbell is at his best regarding James's thought.

Most Promising Overall General Features

Unlike most other books that have an axe to grind about James or against James, one doesn't know where Campbell is going in the very beginning—which is an honest approach to providing a comprehensive introduction to James's thought. Campbell is not driving home some type of Gale-driven schizophrenic criticism of the James that wants it all, or the phenomenologically-driven interpretation of Bruce Wilshire. In fact, we might call Wilshire and Gale's efforts scholarly reconstructions of James, the type of critical reconstructions that takes its point of departure from some Jamesian ground and then *that James* becomes molded to fit the demands of the particular scholar *rather than a book about James's ideas*. James Campbell has written a comprehensive book about James's ideas.

Still, Campbell cannot help but using some measure of interpretation as the book is peppered slightly with John McDermott's process-oriented James in the very beginning, but less so throughout. More than that, Campbell's James is the outcome of a scholar who has spent an earlier two volumes introducing Benjamin Franklin and John Dewey, and now James deep down in the murky-muck of history.¹ This is a refreshing

¹ His earlier works include: *Understanding John Dewey: Nature and*

change of pace against some of the other books in the secondary literature.

Campbell is a wonderful scholar gifted at striking a balance between intellectual history and philosophical exploration. *Experiencing William James* is a welcome text to provide specialists and non-specialists insight into James and knowledge about the major issues in Jamesian scholarship without succumbing to narrow attention to James. The readability of the text is suited for advanced undergraduate and American philosophy topical survey classes. Specialist texts often run the gambit of being written to specialist audiences of scholars and graduate students, and that doesn't happen here. If anything is limiting Campbell's volume, it's that Campbell didn't have time to write more. After reading it, I want more Campbell on James, not less. Entire chapters could have been expounded into books on their own, especially Chapters 3 and 4. The themes that connect rationality and belief open up so many doors to understanding James's pragmatism that inroads from that chapter can connect to any other specialized theme in the subsequent chapters.

The Style of the Book

At the very outset, I can only pinpoint one objection *about the style* of his book, which may be a strength or weakness depending upon if the reader has strong opinions regarding the role of a scholar's place in a comprehensive book about a thinker. Campbell will often simply reproduce original quotations in entire paragraphs and arrange James to speak for himself when he merits it. Consequently, Campbell abandons the synthesizing many critical reconstructions engage in causing Campbell's voice to take a backseat to James's own words. Many might expect the voice of the scholar to be more present in a comprehensive introduction.

I'd argue that Campbell's strategy makes the presentation of James's thought more sincere, honest, and more

Cooperative Intelligence (1995) and *Recovering Benjamin Franklin* (1999).

hermeneutically grounded than a book that relies upon summary to make its point about a particular thinker.² For instance, in Chapter 3, Campbell meanders between “The Will to Believe” and *Essays in Philosophy* in entire paragraphs, yet Campbell is not interested in simply summarizing James. He lets James speak for himself. I find this refreshing since it is my view that an immersion into the full vocabulary of the thinker is necessary to understand them fully, and this is also not a scholarly reconstruction about James, but *a book that is attempting to explain William James in his own words*. On that score, it succeeds, but something may get lost when the scholarly voice recedes from view. I’ll leave it to the reader if letting James speak in his own words is a failure for Campbell’s comprehensive introduction.

Overall Structure and Highlights

Experiencing William James is divided into seven chapters: Chapter 1: Preliminary Considerations, Chapter 2: Psychology and Philosophy, Chapter 3: Rationality and Belief, Chapter 4: Pragmatism, Chapter 5: Radical Empiricism and Pluralism, Chapter 6: Ethics and Social Thought, Chapter 7: Religion, and an Afterword.

In Chapter 1, Campbell attempts to articulate two larger themes in the first chapter. He wants the reader to understand how controversial James is, and that not everyone is friendly to James and the fact that James *qua* philosopher embodies a shift or break from tradition. Instead, James turned philosophy towards the experiential demands of human existence. Indeed, James can often be read as a non-philosopher to the point that, according to F.C.S. Schiller, James was “one of a long stream of glorious amateurs” which allowed James to be “freed from ‘the dull mechanical routine of academic philosophy [such that] he

² The distinction between critical reconstruction and a book that is about James came from Joseph Campbell himself in his Author Meets Critics Section of *Experiencing William James* I attended at the 2017 Indianapolis meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy.

could approach philosophical problems freshly” (4). In this way, James’s break with tradition is seen as more positive than negative despite the fact that it was common amongst “professional philosophers” to say that James “was a brilliant psychologist with an unfortunate habit of going on philosophical binges.”³ Despite this wide array of contemporary opinion, Campbell ends Chapter 1 with a brief biography and emphasizes the hermeneutic truth that a philosopher cannot be understood without illuminating the background and climate of one’s life. He emphasizes the contrarian nature of James to tradition. Unlike someone motivated by piecemeal technical problems, James was driven to pursue “the big question of the place of human existence within the cosmos” (21). Accordingly, then, Campbell posits a tension between centrality of the scientific side and the determinism and pessimism it implies about the universe weighed against “a world of possibility and hope.” For Campbell, “this tension and his ongoing attempts at resolution, run throughout his intellectual work” (21). This ending feels like it could become its own text, and this feeling occurs throughout several chapters.

Chapter 2: Psychology and Philosophy starts where any introduction about James must start. James is often called “the Father of American Psychology.” He founded the first psychology lab and department at Harvard, and became ultimately influenced by contemporary naturalistic and Darwinian accounts of evolution. Organic growth and becoming of self and consciousness are major themes in James’s thought as well as the closing gaps between both psychology and philosophy. Campbell relies upon his own neologism “Psycholopher” to suggest James’s collapse of the distinction between philosophy and psychology, and philosophy and science more generally—especially when we pay attention to his remarks in *Some Philosophical Problems* and *A Pluralistic Universe*.⁴

³ Bode, Boyd Henry. “William James in the American Tradition,” in *William James: The Man and the Thinker*. See his 101, cf. 108-9 especially.

⁴ After attending James Campbell’s “Author Meets Critics Session” at the

Needless to say, Chapter 2 links several major themes together in a straightforward way, but its real strength and insight lies in dealing with the mystic and psychically-friendly James, the James who was after the widest conception of experience possible. Many scholars eschew this psychically-friendly James. For instance, in Graham Bird's entry on James and moral philosophy in the *Cambridge Companion to William James*, Bird ignores the role of religion in the last section of "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" and how James ties belief in God to living a morally strenuous life.⁵ Bird's analytically sanitized James misses the actual James better captured in Campbell's book. As Campbell reminds, James is a thinker involved in risks. "[F]ollowing his pragmatic principle that called for the pursuit of truth over the avoidance of error, he was willing to risk mistakes to try to answer them" (76). For James, consciousness appeared like a continuum against the backdrop of a cosmic consciousness against which our individuality formed. Lurking at the corners of this consciousness gap between cosmic and individual consciousness, persons feel things on the *fringe*. The *fringe* became a formal notion for all the experiences that exist in the vague and indirect orders of experience. Accordingly, James thought science tended to ignore these vague and indirect experiences. Campbell articulates well the sense of openness and hesitation of James never adequately finding full confirmation about those indirect and vague orders of experience to which he hoped psychological science and philosophy might address. What's more, many historic reactions to James's openness were seen as a threat to the establishment and authority of the potential of psychology itself.

Chapter 3: Rationality and Belief shows the same dedication of openness to experience that impacted how James's contemporaries regarded him, though here Campbell explains

2018 Society for Advancement of American Philosophy conference before writing this review, I heard that this neologism, "psycholopher" was coined by him.

⁵ See Graham Bird, "Moral Philosophy and the Development of Morality" in *The Cambridge Companion to William James* ed. Ruth Ann Putnam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 260-281.

the wider view of rationality and its relationship to sentiment in James. This chapter is the most original and creative in the whole book since it sets up all the other chapters that follow it. What's more, Campbell could have written an entire book on James's rationality connecting up the themes presented in Chapters 3 and 4 as I have already hinted. Let me explain.

James overturns the Western opposition of reasons and emotions, and reveals how wrong we are to oppose these forces to each other. For James, this overturning and openness to experience is articulated in terms of religious faith, and this is the James everyone knows above all else, the William James of "The Will to Believe." In Campbell's scholarship, however, the reader is warned off from this oversimplification of that everyone knows so well since it is wrong to think that this insight of rationality-qua-sentiment did not have appeal and anchor elsewhere in James's thought. This appeal about the primacy of the rationality-qua-sentiment James runs throughout his entire work and life, especially considering that James started his career as a chemist-turned-naturalist-turned-medical-doctor-turned-psychologist-turned-philosopher.⁶

Importantly, rationality is connected to need and the demands of how reality is felt, and here is where we hear the echoes of John McDermott giving pride of place to James's felt relations in Campbell's James. Thus, rather than simply engaging James's "The Will to Believe", we should go to "The Sentiment of Rationality" (originally published in 1879 several months prior to James's appointment as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy in 1880). Through an analysis of both essays, Campbell is correct. James "applies this sense of rationality as systematic satisfaction in a descriptive fashion to consider the sorts of beliefs that tend to function successfully in our lives" (82). For James, rationality smoothes out the needs of our beliefs. Rationality can reduce the felt chaos of the world or it can focus on particulars. James favors this latter process out of the modesty he thinks the rationality of the philosopher can

⁶ This statement avoids the fact that James was also keenly interested first in becoming a painter.

achieve. No system of philosophy can unify the complexity of the whole for all people. James is more humble about its powers. Instead, philosophy embodies a type of sentiment, a way of being mindful about what needs are being met, and the fact that the universe will speak to differing temperaments in varying ways. Despite the varying ways that the universe will speak to each person, we want and hope for a sense of order, and philosophers will be drawn to systematize their insights. Accordingly, James regarded our philosophical ideas as tentative and revisable hypotheses that help us cope with the existential tension in our lives, and it's undoubtedly for this reason that Campbell ends this chapter by outlining three aesthetic and practical criteria to explain how rationality and beliefs are connected.

According to Campbell, "an idea or belief or plan will more likely be adopted if it helps us project some order into future experience" (85). Central to James's pragmatism is the "conceivable effects" an idea or belief will possess. Second, "an idea, belief, or plan will be more likely to succeed if it contains a place for us and nourishes our hopes" (85). Any philosophy fails or succeeds in how it complements our ability to act, and it must match our spontaneous capacity and powers. Fourthly, we must avoid excess simplicity, and finally excess particularity (95). When a philosophy fails to speak to us, it is often too simple in its construction, and if it is too narrow, it cannot offer us tools for future action and hope. The heart of James's pragmatism is recognizing just how much our beliefs are connected to practical action, and the existential need his philosophy serves.

Finally, Campbell introduces a helpful distinction that many people miss in their discussions concerning James's nature of truth—everyone from Bertrand Russell to G.E. Moore constantly have read James wrongly on the nature of truth, and it's for this misreading that most of my personal disagreements with analytic philosophers have been about whenever the topic turns to William James. Campbell's distinctions about truth help immensely in these continuing and unabated misreadings. Let me explain. For Campbell, there are two types of truth

operating in James's corpus. On the first, there are "(a) truths or facts that are what they are independently of what we do and what we believe, and (b) truths about those things that are dependent on our actions for their existence" (102). The former he calls *recording cases*, the latter *contribution cases*. Initially, James made this distinction in his "The Sentiment of Rationality" in which practical action always outstrips scientific evidence.

Contribution cases are the places where faith and values enter into the picture, and it's the fact that being a subject, having shared intersubjective experiences, and noting that we all collectively have a role to play in their determination is the site of pragmatism. In this intersubjective space of shared meanings, it's here that pragmatic philosophy aids us the most. By contrast most dogmas in the history of philosophy occur when we reify the insights within these dogmas, pretending that these reifications are just the way the world is irrespective of the true social nature human beings play in determining the shape, texture, and ultimate meaning of their world. In this way, contribution cases constitute human reality. When philosophers deny this, they are guilty of the vicious intellectualism we see in James's reading of Hegelian rationalists in his *A Pluralistic Universe*, or as he puts intellectualism in *Some Problems of Philosophy* as "the belief that our mind comes upon a world complete in itself, and has the duty of ascertaining its contents."⁷

Chapter 4 details James's pragmatism, and there are few, if any, surprises here. If there is one central work to which James is most read beyond "The Will to Believe", it's his *Pragmatism* lectures. Campbell spends a great deal of time showing James's development and deployment of Peirce's ideas, the growing reception of that deployment along with the central themes and inroads James thought pragmatism could make into many philosophical debates. Rather than review its major contents, I would like to draw attention to an objection I had at this point in the book.

Campbell preserved the language of subject and object

⁷ William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 111.

when talking about his metaphysics of experience. “Our reality is thus subjective,” he writes (150). Campbell should have said that selective interest and subjectivity allow for everyone to gain access to a level of intersubjectivity rather than buying into and deploying the term “subjective.” This use should be avoided since James’s later endorsement of pure experience is one of felt relations only. The fact that we have some limit into truth and access cannot be denied, and I do not think there is a substantial disagreement in the way that Campbell talks about James’s use of reality in the social sense. The interpretive moment, however, is clear. Pragmatism is a way to overcome old disagreements—including the subjective and objective distinction, and show the experiential side of knowledge insofar as pragmatism leads directly into his radical empiricism. However, Campbell regards pure experience as either being “subjective or objective” (175). A page later, he discusses James’s painting example employing James himself saying that “we have every right to speak of it as subjective and objective at once.”⁸ However, this example is not preserving the distinction as much as showing that our ontology is more experientially complex than our traditional philosophical distinctions have conceived. Campbell ignores the “at once” in the previous quote. Both the subjective and the objective are in constant relation, much like the intentionality of Husserl, or the interconnection of intentional feeling of Max Scheler. Thus, Campbell misrepresents how James should be understood as someone trying to push past the subject-object distinction into a more dynamic “double-barreled” terms rather than regarding pure experience wrongly as that which can become either subjective or objective. Pure experience is, then, a metaphysics of the flow, limited to the perceived relationships subjects enter into.

In Chapter 5, Campbell misses the point of this directedness and its phenomenological implication. James’s *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, Campbell cites the familiar definition of radical empiricism as “the relations that connect

⁸ As cited in Campbell, *Experiencing William James*. William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 7

experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as real as anything else in the system [of philosophy].”⁹ For this reason, our sense of reality is subjective and with others, but our experience is always an entering-into-this-unfolding and streamingness that also points beyond the mere subjective. At this point, the subject dissolves only to be a relational term of the subject-relating-to-an-object. From this subjective-into-objective relationship, James finds common ground with someone like Husserl whose process of sedimentation is almost this very relation contribution cases lead to, and what’s more an appropriate understanding of James would preserve this insight by describing these relationships in his proto-phenomenological language. A pragmatic phenomenology would describe, then, how contribution cases solidify from beliefs to rules, and then to habits.

Apart from the earlier mistake about the unfoldingness of selective interested and the felt relations, Campbell rightly identifies James’s treatment of vicious intellectualisms as beginning with substituting pre-determined ready-made concepts of “a block universe” for the flux (what James also applies to forms of *rationalism*), and this follows upon the heels of examining the ways in which we ultimately know the world given the limitations of experience as bound to knowledge of particulars only and the time and place of such knowing.

For the rest of Chapter 5, Campbell gives us an accurate rendering about the relationship between percepts and concepts. Human knowledge originates, as it were, from two sources of knowledge. First, philosophers have talked about immediate acquaintance or intuitive apprehension, and second, knowledge from concepts and representations. This distinction follows upon the heels of James’s discussion between the relationship between concepts and percepts. Initially, both percepts and concepts are the medium from which we move back and forth so freely that we engage in this movement without so much as thinking about it. For our minds, according

⁹ James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, 22.

to James, acquire teleological interest in a phenomenon. Our percepts connect us to the flux of the natural world and to our current selective attendant interest, yet our concepts can alter what we take to be perceived. Our concepts are, then, always a danger as well as the more problematic side of this relationship, but concepts are also the site of possible pragmatic experimentation in experience. In fact, experience is just these flowing and dynamic possible relationships that consciousness navigates by making concepts. "Concepts bring new values into our perceptual life, reanimate our wills, and make our action turn upon new points of emphasis."¹⁰ The danger comes when conceptual systems are substituted for perceptual richness. Conception is substituted for perception. In Campbell's words, "concepts have a kind of permanence but precisely because of this, they are unable to adapt to the flux of experience" (169). James can only talk about parts of experience. For the rest of Chapter 5, then, Campbell excellently summarizes the implications of the limits of experience, and why this warrants a type of pluralism as the in-between philosophy of idealistic rationalistic monism on the one hand and a too narrowly confined British empiricism on the other hand.

Chapter 6 is the one chapter that should be divided into two different chapters, and as far as I can tell, this is a weakness not of Campbell's scholarship as much as managing the eclectic topic of James's ethics and social thought together. Given that James himself didn't compose a lengthy ethical treatise like other philosophers, we are left reading a series of essays together for his moral philosophy alongside personal correspondences and speeches for his social thought. For James's ethics, Campbell identifies these as "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," and "What Makes Life Significant." Campbell includes thoughts in this chapter about race, war, imperialism, and I would have appreciated the social thought chapter as standing on its own proceeding after James's ethics. It felt a little rushed given the complexity of earlier chapters.

¹⁰ James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, 43.

Interestingly, Campbell advances James's ethics as one of personal fulfillment and an attempt to develop "a community of tolerance based on recognizing and overcoming our animal partiality" (200). Campbell refuses rightly the utilitarian interpretations of Richard Gale and Wesley Cooper, and for good reason.¹¹ These vocabularies are imposed upon James from the outside without listening to James's texts from the inside.

Campbell identifies that James advocates a democratic principle of inclusiveness that stretches all the way into his often misunderstood claim: "the most universal principle—that the essence of good is simply to satisfy demand...the guiding principle for ethical philosophy [given that not all can be satisfied]" is "to satisfy at all times *as many demands as we can*."¹² Without imposing desire-satisfaction utilitarianism nor ideal-satisfaction utilitarianism, Campbell describes James as fostering the conditions for pluralism in much the same way that I understand de Beauvoir as wanting us to promote the conditions of everyone's freedom. Practically, we cannot help but be partisan regarding our own moral vision (tacitly, it seems, part of our moral psychology). Thus, the James we get thinks we should promote the conditions of our own personal fulfillment in much the same way that the Beauvoirian existentialist spoke about being free. Over time, we may be able to loosen the grips on our own partisan natures and become more inclusive such that we can experiment through democracy and take up projects that do not impinge on another's freedom. James thinks there is a certain power to ideals (212).

While James say these things about inclusivity, his promotion of the individual cannot meet the challenge of being

¹¹ See Wesley Cooper, *Unity of William James's Thought* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2002) and Richard Gale, *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Both works take up privileging either ideals or demands. James's "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" is not clear which one should be elevated, and the semantic tension to which both of these scholars are drawn to in this debate about these words also spurs different forms of utilitarianism seen in James's text.

¹² William James, *Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 153.

anything other than an ethics of the individual and personal fulfillment—forever the consummate artist even philosophically.¹³ For an ethics of reforming social institutions, Dewey should be your model, and Campbell rightly identifies the need for both an ethics of personal fulfillment from James and an ethics of reform from Dewey as well as a need to pay attention to institutions in ways that James is skeptical of them.

Chapter 7 is the final chapter that brings Campbell's efforts to a close. This chapter is almost exclusively about *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and exactly what James claims regarding religious experience. As I said earlier, many discussions in philosophy that concern Jamesian thought almost always exclusively center on "The Will to Believe," but rarely—if ever—proceed farther into *The Varieties* despite that text being essential to the radical openness of James's philosophy.

Campbell first notes that James's definition is very open, standing for "experiential religion" since no principle or essence can be found (243, 247). The lack of essence, though, contributes to an increasing awareness of how personal religion is given the effects it has on experience (278). In this way, James treated any religious object almost as God-like and never limits what religion can mean apart from the focus on its experiential nature. For James, then, religion "shall mean for us *the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.*"¹⁴ For James, individuality is rooted in feeling, and "religion is not something we should hope to move beyond" (264). Instead, there is a deep existential need to be in contact with larger absolute realities of which we may never know in full. This openness to reality gives James "a sense of presence" as Campbell describes. "For the religious person, the natural world is only partial, and beyond it stretches another reality about which nothing is known, even though it is assumed

¹³ Campbell seems on board with this when he states in the Afterword: "James's philosophical style owes less to the scientist and more to the artist or poet" (285).

¹⁴ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 34.

that the true meaning of present life is only to be found in relation to that larger reality" (265).

What is more, this reality is open-ended, in constant growth of its potential (which is the most important feature of James's *Some Problems in Philosophy*), and we have a sense of that growth in the *mystical more*. Campbell is at his best right here in this chapter. He connects the sense of more to the "unseen order" and the pragmatic personal risk that often gets confused for "reckless faith" (or reckless subjectivism as the case may be). We often have to decide the risk of beliefs even when we do not have complete knowledge, and regarding religious belief, we may not ever have complete knowledge as we do in recording cases. Instead we are allowed to risk all for happiness. As Campbell puts it, "James writes that happiness is at the core of our being" (274). James is offering us a chance to put experiential religion front and center, and test religious belief in much the same way that James's critique of representational metaphysics would fair and mirrors his criticisms of "theological ideas."¹⁵

James develops three tests: immediate luminousness, philosophical reasonableness, and moral helpfulness. Campbell excels at explaining the last of these, and James himself doesn't really develop them. What's important, however, is that connections be made between pragmatically testing religious beliefs and the live options spoken about in "The Will to Believe." The connection is that distortions of James's openness to religion rely upon regarding James's philosophy of religion as a recording case. Instead, as Campbell insists, James "thus treats the whole matter of our relations with God as a contribution rather than recording case" (277). Campbell ends his book, then, on a deep meditation on how meliorism is connected to the whole matter of our contributions.

In the end, this book is just marvelous despite my disagreements about Chapter 5. It should be part of every James scholar's library, and it may very well be the best introductory book to the overwhelming complexity of James's tensions,

¹⁵ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 23.

contradictions, and ruptures. The most important aspect of this work is the offered correction regarding James's theory of truth and the need to read "The Will to Believe" and the "Sentiment of Rationality" together.

BOOK REVIEW: HOWARD THURMAN'S PHILOSOPHICAL MYSTICISM

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Meeting an African American Philosophical Mystic

The African American religious thinker Howard Thurman (1899–1981) has been receiving attention of late with the release of a PBS documentary “Backs Against the Wall” which focuses upon Thurman’s 1949 book, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, and his influence on the Civil Rights Movement. Some recent books have also focused on Thurman, including Gary Dorrien’s 2018 study *Breaking White Supremacy: Martin Luther King and the Black Social Gospel*. In Dorrien’s account, the Black Social Gospel movement began in the 1920’s and taught a non-fundamentalist liberal theology using the findings of science and Biblical criticism. Black Social Gospel saw God as immanent in human activity rather than as only other-worldly, and it focused on the improvement of social conditions of the racially marginalized poor, oppressed, and downtrodden. Dorrien’s book studies the Black Social Gospel movement through six important figures, including Thurman. Dorrien’s treatment of Thurman leapt out at me. I became fascinated with Thurman’s combination of mysticism and social activism. Dorrien quotes the following words of Thurman from late in his life: “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive” (Dorrien 162). Dorrien’s book inspired me to explore Thurman for myself and to read this new book by Anthony Sean Neal, Assistant professor of philosophy at Mississippi State University, on Thurman, the aptly titled *Howard Thurman’s Philosophical Mysticism: Love Against Fragmentation*. Neal’s book might be read as a commentary on the above words from Thurman as it explores what Thurman might mean by “people who have come alive”.

Some background may be appropriate for those approaching Thurman for the first time. Thurman left a great deal of information about his life in his autobiography, *With Head and Heart*, published two years before his death. Thurman spent his childhood in the heavily segregated community of Daytona, Florida and was heavily influenced by the religious spirit of his grandmother, a former slave. Thurman’s intellectual

ability was recognized early, and he left home to attend high school in Jacksonville. Thurman graduated as valedictorian both from high school and from Morehouse College and then graduated in 1926 as valedictorian from the Rochester Theological Union. He studied philosophy for a summer at Columbia University and became influenced by the works of John Dewey at a time when Dewey was in Japan. In 1929, Thurman studied as a special student with the Quaker philosopher and mystic Rufus Jones at Haverford University. Jones' mystical philosophy also deeply influenced Thurman.

From 1932–1944, Thurman served as the first Dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University. During this time, he travelled to India and met Gandhi. In 1953, Thurman became Dean of Marsh Chapel and Professor of Theology at Boston University and served in this position until 1965. But it is the position Thurman held between his appointments at Howard and Boston University that is most revealing. In 1944, Thurman left his tenured position at Howard to become the co-founder and pastor of the Church of the Fellowship of all Peoples in San Francisco. This was the first inter-racial, inter-faith, and intercultural house of worship in the United States. It aimed at a broad ecumenicism by welcoming and learning from people of all races and religions without asking any participant to give up his or her prior identities or religious commitments. Thurman became known for his sermons and meditations and for the creativity he encouraged in forms of worship. Thurman did not publish his first book until 1944. He would ultimately write 22 books, with his 1949 work *Jesus and the Disinherited* still the best-known.

In his book, Neal offers a scholarly exposition of Thurman as a philosopher together with a discussion of why Thurman's philosophy is worth knowing. Neal's book weaves together two threads. First, Neal states that his goal is the better understanding of the experience of blackness in American society. He approaches Thurman to understand Thurman's response to being black at what Neal terms the beginning of the Modern Era of the African American Freedom Struggle, (1896–

1975). Second, Neal argues that Thurman's experience of his blackness with its loneliness, rejection, and objectification resulted in a "fragmentation" of Thurman from himself, from others, and from the world. Thurman's blackness together with his reflections on his experience led him to a mystical philosophy which stressed the underlying unity and interconnectedness of all reality in God and to the fulfillment of the potential of each individual in community.

In his study, Neal relies on the body of Thurman's published writings as well as on unpublished writings, sermons, and lectures. He finds three of Thurman's books, together with the autobiography, philosophically significant in giving an understanding of the breadth and purpose of Thurman's thinking.

The first of these books is *Jesus and the Disinherited* which arose from a challenge Thurman received from a Hindu sage when he visited India in the mid-1930s. Thurman was asked to explain how he could be devoted to Christianity as the dominant religion in a country where African Americans were mistreated and marginalized. Thurman replied by distinguishing between the religion of Jesus and much present-day Christianity. As Neal writes, for Thurman "the religion of Jesus was not an abstract myth, it was a religious movement, which developed in a historical context. In this context, the subject of the text was himself a member of the underprivileged, the disinherited" (28). With its emphasis on the religion of Jesus as a religion of the disinherited rather than of the privileged, Neal sees Thurman as a predecessor of the black theology movement associated with James Cone.

The second book is Thurman's 1963 *Disciplines of the Spirit*. This short book consists of five dense chapters in which Thurman studied broad aspects of human experience he deemed universal and of special value for teaching the human spirit in its understanding of God: commitment, growth, suffering, prayer, and reconciliation. Neal stresses the mystical, universalizing character of this book. He writes:

For Thurman, this is a living world, there is also commonality stemming from the agent of life, and this agent is also alive. This agent, which has its origin in God, is expressed in all things that are living. These premises are quite common to many, who can be thought of as mystics, but Thurman extends this line of reasoning to include the realization of the unity or commonness in all living things as they actualize their full potential. Thurman basis his acceptance of the fundamental unity of living things in the observation of the rhythm or repetition of basic patterns within all living things. For Thurman, living things begin to pursue their potential from a desire towards unity. Once unity is reach(ed), the living entities are now able to fully actualize their potential (39).

The third and most important of Thurman's philosophical writings is *The Search for Common Ground* (1971) which Thurman described as his "lifelong working paper". In this short, spare book, Thurman set forth his quest, as a lonely, fragmented, and finite individual to find unity and wholeness in life through understanding his relationship to other persons in community and, more broadly, to the whole of reality. Neal finds that the book explores how a "common ground of existence subsists and is what causes the interconnectedness between all things, especially that which is living" (39). Neal continues:

This idea of interconnectedness is also a result of Thurman's belief that the pinnacle of human existence is in human community...Therefore, it can be inferred, that it is counter to the aim of life for that which resides at the highest tier of life (human community or humans in community) to also be destructive to life (i.e. war). Simply put, the highest tier should stand the best possibility for the continuation of life and the God Vision (which is simply to see as God sees), which is given, if the

goal of unity is to actualize full potential.

In the four chapters of his book, Neal offers a variety of perspectives on the relationship between the two poles of Thurman's philosophy: his experience as a black individual living in a frequently hostile white society on the one hand and his quest to resolve his sense of fragmentation through love, human community and a sense of the unity of being on the other hand. Thus, in the first chapter, Neal develops the black sources of Thurman's thought in, for example, his relationship with Grandma Nancy, his research on Negro Spirituals, and his interest in Africa. Thurman used his experiences as an African American to delve for a deeper meaning through the use of symbols which led him to conclude that his experiences could best be understood when viewed from the aspect of an interconnected total reality, as in Neoplatonism.

In the book's second chapter, "Creatively Encountering Oneness", Neal makes his case for Thurman as a systematic philosopher. Neal develops and defends what he sees as Thurman's "mystical logic" which sees intuition as a philosophically legitimate means of understanding the basic totality and interrelatedness of being. Neal draws on sources including Neoplatonism, Spinoza, and Bergson which he combines with Thurman's own *The Search for Common Ground* and other writings.

Neal's third chapter "Deepening the Hunger" explores Thurman's meditations and poems and their relationship to his more overtly philosophical works. Neal offers an extended discussion of the relationship between reason and imagination which culminates in a study of Richard Rorty's view that philosophy may be viewed as a form of poetry. Neal argues that Thurman's intuitive approach to unity and interrelatedness works within the realm of imagination which, as the Romantics and Rorty suggest, has a priority to the use of discursive reason. Neal studies several of Thurman's poetic meditations to suggest how they enhance the mystical philosophy Thurman develops in his more systematic writings.

The study's fourth chapter, "Intrinsic Love" discusses, as indicated by the book's subtitle, how Thurman understood "Love against Fragmentation". Neal draws from a range of Thurman's writings including *Jesus and the Disinherited*, in which Thurman developed the "love ethic" of Jesus, a 1961 essay, "Mysticism and the Experience of Love" and *The Search for Common Ground*, with its quest for community and wholeness. Intrinsic love, for Thurman, is the tie that binds people to one another and to act to promote each other's welfare in family, community, and nature. Neal again stresses that Thurman's understanding of the unifying power of love arose from Thurman's experience of blackness and of the nature of black experience in a society plagued by racism. Neal acknowledges the important and in part contrarian nature of Thurman's stress on love and interdependency at a time when many in the African American community were advocating separatism. Neal perceptively concludes that:

Thurman quite reasonably desires to move beyond the blackness lens to the human lens of 'universal' life or being/oneness. It's not that he dislikes his own skin but that he desires more to be one with the ALL. The Modern Era's production of scars on his soul may be contributed to his writing in such a manner, just as he commented that the first twenty-three years of his life were affected in such a manner (83).

Although the writing is frequently awkward, Neal succeeds in his goal of showing Thurman's importance as a philosopher. I was especially moved the passion Neal shows for his subject. This book is valuable for readers interested in African American philosophy. Even more so, the book serves as a reminder of the breadth and variety of living philosophical approaches in the United States, including a broadly holistic approach based on philosophical mysticism.

BOOK REVIEW: PRAGMATISM IN TRANSITION

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C.I. Lewis: Pragmatist Moves in the Paradigm of Logical Positivism

Two goals unite the contributions to the anthology by Peter Olen and Carl Sachs *Pragmatism in Transition. Contemporary Perspectives on C.I. Lewis*. First, to determine that the philosophy of Clarence Irving Lewis (1883–1964) deserves more attention than it gets today. Second, to demonstrate that Lewis’s philosophy belongs to the school of pragmatism. Thereby the majority of contributors seems to assume that the first goal depends on the second: proving that Lewis belongs to pragmatism—and not, as convention has it, to logical positivism—is a prerequisite for him deserving more attention. In this review, besides dealing with every contribution’s main points, I will argue against coupling these two goals in this way. Instead, I will reconcile the conventional interpretation of Lewis’s philosophy with the pragmatic reading of Lewis. To be more precise, I argue that Lewis belongs to the paradigm of logical positivism (the conventional view) but within that paradigm makes a number of pragmatic moves (the pragmatic reading that unites the anthology). This is to say that Lewis elaborates on the questions of logical positivism, relies on its concepts, and takes for granted its assumptions of what philosophy ought to do. However, in answering these very questions Lewis, on numerous occasions, invokes core ideas of pragmatism. On this *alternative* basis, I will try to show why we should still concur with the anthology’s first goal: Lewis deserves more attention than he gets today.

Kegley’s article is an apt start. It reliably informs about Lewis’s education in Harvard and underscores how philosophically formative his experience was to visit the famous ‘philosophy 9’ course that William James and Josiah Royce co-taught (15). Moreover, Kegley introduces the reader to the anthology’s recurrent theme that we need to count Lewis among the pragmatists. She does this by sketching a couple of similarities between Lewis and pragmatism on issues like experience, metaphysics, and the fact/value dichotomy (21-26).

As the most important of these similarities are treated in depth by the contributions that follow, I will engage with them below.

Heney, in the subsequent article, reminds us that values, and hence the discipline of ethics, was of special interest to Lewis (35). Indeed, Lewis has spent significantly more time on this issue than the rest of the logical positivists (with the possible exception of Ayers). Heney also points out that Lewis's major contributions within that field are in metaethics (45). Both of these claims are convincing and important.

However, I am not convinced by Heney's contention that Lewis's metaethics squarely fits into the ethical theory of pragmatism. While Heney is surely right that Lewis shares with the pragmatists a farewell to ethical theories that search for values in the "transcendent or mysterious" (47), Lewis is more cognitivist regarding values than pragmatism allows. Lewis firmly states that value judgments are based on observation and that therefore a scientific standpoint should take them seriously (50). In qualifying values as cognitive in this (moral realist) sense, Lewis parts way with major strains of logical positivism (though by far not with all logical positivists), especially with Ayer's boo-hoorah theory of moral sentences. Yet with logical positivism and against pragmatism he shares the more basic belief that values are either observable or not a topic fit for scientific investigation. However, as values are, according to Lewis, "'directly findable' in experience" (47) and in this sense real (barely a line of argument famous with Dewey or Peirce, let alone James), they qualify for scientific investigation. Opposed to that, classical pragmatists reject realism about values; values are not 'directly findable' in experience (and if they were that would not be what makes them pertinent). Nevertheless, we can take values seriously from a scientific perspective since the scientific method (what, for example, Dewey calls the theory of inquiry) can be applied to questions about morality just as well as to other scientific investigations, such as the investigations of physics.

Seen in this light, the difference between Lewis and logical positivism on values is merely one of subsuming. Lewis

and logical positivism concur that only observable entities qualify for scientific treatment. Yet the majority of logical positivists believe that values *are not* observable in this sense and hence not a topic for the sciences, whereas Lewis assumes that values *are* observable in this sense and thus a topic for the sciences. The difference between Lewis and pragmatism on the other hand is a difference of principle. Pragmatism rejects the idea that only observable entities qualify for scientific discourse. At the same time, on a less fundamental level, and from the opposed starting points just elaborated, Lewis and pragmatism, in the face of the majority of logical positivists, converge on the thought that values are a matter for the sciences. This is an instance of what I mean when I say that Lewis belongs to the paradigm of logical positivism but within that paradigm makes pragmatic moves.

Moreover, when Heney reports that Lewis's ethical theory culminates in an effort "to work out a full system of [ethical] imperatives" (54), imperatives that are right because rejecting them is self-contradictory (53), this is hardly beneficial for making the case that Lewis is a pragmatist. Regarding ethical theory, the central goal of classical pragmatists was to move away from a focus on imperatives. Pragmatism rather emphasizes that ethics must be conceived as a living, hence, changing, and still not subjective body of wisdom, wisdom that needs to be improved in the light of new experiences in ethically challenging situations.¹ Closest among the classical pragmatists to ethical imperatives comes Mead in some of his fragments. However, also Mead argues—in opposition to Kant as Mead emphasizes—that if we think about universality in ethics our views must derive from a social foundation.² Heney's implied argument that Lewis is a pragmatist in his search for ethical imperatives since his ethical theory is Kantian *and* since pragmatism is roughly Kantian in

¹ See for example *Ethics* by Dewey and Tufts. *The Collected Works of John Dewey, 1882-1953*, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-1990), LW 7.

² Michael G. Festl, "Ethik," in *Handbuch Pragmatismus*, ed. Michael G. Festl (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2018), 138-147, here 147.

epistemology in that it combines elements of rationalism and empiricism is not convincing. After all, one can be roughly Kantian in epistemology (as pragmatism indeed is) but anti-Kantian in ethics (as pragmatism also is). Finally, Heney's nod to a note of Peirce (54) is not helpful either, I think. Since Peirce never showed serious interest in ethical theory proper, we should not take him as an authority on the ethics of pragmatism. Overall, when it comes to ethics, Lewis and pragmatism differ strongly: the former assumes ethical realism and searches for irrefutable imperatives; the latter rejects realism and argues that the quest for undeniable principles is fruitless.

Regarding the issue whether Lewis belongs to pragmatism, Olen's essay is the linchpin of the anthology in that it prepares a more ambitious setting for making this point. Kegley and Heney, the two preceding contributors, follow Misak's effort to revive Lewis as a pragmatist. Misak assumes that there are two opposing strains within pragmatism: a subjective strain represented by James and Dewey versus a scientific strain represented by Peirce, Lewis and a close connection to logical positivism.³ Heney explicitly connects to this dualistic understanding of pragmatism when she ends her paper claiming that Lewis is the "bridge" that connects pragmatism and logical positivism (59). Opposed to that, Olen reaches the conclusion that the difference between pragmatism and logical positivism "is a gap too wide to bridge" (72, see also 64 and Olen's quote of Misak there). Olen assumes that there is just one pragmatism and that this pragmatism is decisively different from logical positivism. This monistic assumption about pragmatism, that there is just one pragmatism, is, in my view, superior to Misak's dualistic setting for discussing the affiliation of Lewis. It saves Olen from making dubious claims about Peirce; for example, that Peirce's epistemology strongly separates this discipline from biology and psychology, and borderline absurd claims about Dewey; for example, that Dewey's theory of inquiry is subjectivist because it assumes that

³ Cheryl Misak, *The American Pragmatists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), e.g. 116.

we create rather than discover what we know.⁴ Of course, the issue whether there is more than one pragmatism is too large to deal with here (I am currently working on a book project about it) but it is clear that there are strong arguments in favor of Olen's monistic account. Anyway, based on this account—that there is one unified pragmatism spanning Peirce, James, and Dewey (e.g. 72), a pragmatism that is very different from logical positivism—Olen has the ambition to argue that Lewis stands on the pragmatist side of that rift.

So how does Olen support this? His basic strategic move is to boil down the issue to the concept of verification (64). Distinctive for Lewis's concept of verification, according to Olen, is that verification limits our claims on knowledge but not our claims on meaning: "meaningful issues may outstrip even the possibility of verification", and this "runs roughshod over Schlick's claim [as an instance of logical positivism, M.F.] that all meaningful hypotheses can be constructed as either analytic or empirical. The trouble [...] is that Lewis cannot make sense of the idea that certain statements (metaphysical, normative, or otherwise) are simply meaningless because they outstrip possible verification in experience" (69). The difference is that for Lewis verification is only "a limitation on knowledge, but not meaning" (68), whereas for logical positivists verification also limits meaning. Hence, Lewis leaves room for counting metaphysical ideas, including religious claims, as at least meaningful (74). This broad, plural, and open understanding of meaning makes Lewis pragmatist and, at the same time, separates him from logical positivism, argues Olen. It is basically, one could add, the kind of pragmatism that guides James's work on religious experience; such experience is meaningful, albeit likely untrue.

This is not only a strong argument in itself but also proof for the setting of Olen's argument that the gap between

⁴ Misak, although she treats Dewey carefully, comes at least close to making such absurd claims about him and, in general, overemphasizes the differences between Peirce and Dewey in a way that does justice to neither of them but especially not to Dewey. *Ibid.*, 113-122.

pragmatism and logical positivism is a wide one. Both schools “disagree as to whether entire branches of inquiry count as legitimate branches of exploration” (67). As already stated, I fully agree with this basic setting for clearing the affiliations of Lewis. However, also here, just as in the case of metaethics above, I think it makes at least as good or even better sense, to argue that Lewis works within the paradigm of logical positivism but within that paradigm makes a number of pragmatic moves. Olen’s argument catches the pragmatic moves very well: Lewis’s concept of verification, just as the philosophy of pragmatism, leaves ample room for a whole range of meaningful experiences, whereas logical positivism tends to be restrictive, restrictive towards values, let alone towards religious experience.

However, if we zoom out and take the matter to a more abstract level, we stumble across differences between Lewis and pragmatism. For once, what is the pertinence of verification in the first place? Lewis and logical positivism share the idea that the concept of verification is what philosophy revolves around. Philosophy is all about verification. This is the shared background, the paradigm, within which the differences between Lewis and logical positivism arise. Pragmatism, on the other hand, does not buy into that paradigm. Of course, also for pragmatism, verification is an interesting topic in the philosophy of science, but it is far from core to philosophy as such. Let us just look at Peirce who is surely the classical pragmatist who put the heaviest emphasis on the philosophy of science. Yet, also for him, philosophy does not revolve around verification. It revolves around finding methods for successful coping in engagement with a reality that puts limits on what we can achieve and how. The search for verification can even be a mere “fancy”: “We may fancy [...] that we seek, not merely an opinion, but a true opinion. But put this fancy to the test, and it proves groundless; for as soon as a firm belief is reached we are entirely satisfied, whether the belief be true or false.”⁵ So even

⁵ Charles S. Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief,” in *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings Volume 1 (1867-1893)*, ed. Nathan Houser and

when it comes to knowledge, and this is where Lewis and logical positivism agree, as Olen emphasis, verification is not central to pragmatism. Again, in my opinion, an instance where Lewis works in the paradigm of logical positivism—verification is key—but within that paradigm makes moves reminiscent of pragmatism—be open-minded about meaning.

Mayoral's contribution credits Lewis with expounding the conceptual tools behind Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions. Kuhn is Lewis's conceptual pragmatism in action (80). Kuhn who was familiar with the work of Lewis (82) follows Lewis in the Kantian view that "any statement whatsoever passes through the sieve of a conceptual scheme" (91). Even more importantly, Kuhn's crucial idea of paradigm changes in the sciences is directly out of Lewis's playbook. 'Paradigm', Mayoral determines, is just a different term for Lewis's 'pragmatic a priori', the conceptual scheme that we use to make sense of our experiences (91). Mayoral's paper is a clear exposition of these similarities and culminates in the idea that the theories by Lewis and Kuhn can shed light on each other (99). Mayoral hence makes an important contribution to the anthology's first goal: it is worthwhile to take a closer look at Lewis's work again.

Regarding the second goal of the anthology—making Lewis a pragmatist—Mayoral is right to point out that Kuhn and Lewis are pragmatist in the sense that both believe that, first, concepts guide our experience of the outer world, that, second, these concepts undergo changes, and that, third, these two views do not lead to "alethic relativism" (88). Yet my main theme for this review also applies here: a closer look reveals crucial differences between Lewis and Kuhn on the one hand and pragmatism on the other. Again, I will focus on the early Peirce to make my point since he, among the classical pragmatists, is closest to the issues within the philosophy of science that are at stake in Mayoral's essay. The first thing that might come to mind when comparing Lewis's a priori to Peirce

Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 108-123, here 115.

is Peirce's demolition of what he calls the a priori method in fixing belief. This method is merely about "taste" and "fashion" and does hence not reach the realm of the sciences.⁶ In general, the term 'a priori' has a bad reputation in pragmatism. But of course this is just terminology. What Peirce sometimes calls common sensism, the idea that to start an investigation we must rely on a number of propositions that we hold to be true, can be seen as congruent to Lewis's concept of the a priori in the sense of beliefs that structure experience. Something similar is found in Dewey as well as in James. This is the Kantian heritage of pragmatism.

However, taking things further, there are at least two important differences between Peirce, James, and Dewey on the one hand, Lewis and Kuhn on the other. These differences have to do with the fact that the pragmatists speak not only of common sensism but of *critical* common sensism.⁷ The addition of 'critical' connotes two things. First, our common sense beliefs, i.e. the beliefs that we need to make sense of the external world, change, if only slightly, almost all the time, with almost every single observation. The pragmatists conceive of change to be more permanent but less extreme in every single instance. Lewis and Kuhn in explaining the dynamics of the sciences instead focus on ruptures that happen only very rarely, maybe once a generation, and are consequently extreme changes. Fast versus slow science. (Of course, these two different foci regarding the speed of change, on neither side exclude that the other kind of change can happen.) Recent theories on changes in the sciences, by the way, seem to move things rather into the pragmatist direction. Friedman, for example, argues that Kuhn overdoes the abruptness of paradigm changes in the sciences and holds that we need to take "meta-frameworks" into account which function like bridges that slowly lead from one paradigm

⁶ Ibid., 119.

⁷ On this concept see Michael G. Festl, "Problembasierte Gerechtigkeitstheorie - pragmatistisch ausbuchstabiert," *Studia philosophica. Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 76 (2017): 263-272.

to the next.⁸

The second thing that the ‘critical’ in critical common sensism connotes is that to change, or to be more precise, to improve our common sense beliefs, to grow, is an existential normative demand. The pragmatists, in other words, apply the concept of changing ones *common sense* beliefs, ones *paradigm* in Kuhn’s term, ones *a priori* in Lewis’s, to life as a whole. Unlike Lewis and Kuhn, they do not restrict it to the sciences. The change of the beliefs that structure our experiences is not only something that, in fact, happens in the sciences, it is something that we should have the ambition to make happen in our daily life. It is a normative ideal, an existential human task. This is most heavily emphasized in the work of James but it is also clearly present in Peirce. To live according to this rule is, according to Peirce, an existential choice for every person. Peirce’s decisive factor for relying on the scientific method to fix belief, for relying on critical common sensism is that it is the most promising method for making us happy.⁹

Unfortunately, regarding Shieh’s paper I lack the training in logic to evaluate its credentials. In any case it corroborates that there was something to my undergraduate skepticism—which my teacher was completely unable to dissolve—regarding the part of Boolean logic that holds that a conditional statement is true if its antecedent is false and its consequent true. This is exactly where Lewis disagrees with Russell and the main theme of Shieh’s contribution. Russell defined truth-values in the slightly unintuitive way that puzzled me as a student—and probably many other students too. Of the two types of criticism that Lewis invokes against Russell’s definition the one that Shieh calls ‘pragmatic’ is of especial interest to the second goal of the anthology. Lewis argues that defining conditional statements in Russell’s way is neither true nor false since it does “not represent anything” (115). However, the problem is that it is not useful for guiding actual science. If conditionals are

⁸ Michael Friedman, *Dynamics of Reason. The 1999 Kant Lectures at Stanford University* (Stanford: CSLI, 2001), 44.

⁹ Peirce, “Fixation,” 122.

defined in Russell's way an application of this logic to actual science implies that the importance of the consequences of a scientific statement are downgraded since in the case in which the hypothesis (here representing the antecedent in Boolean algebra) is false, the consequences do not matter for assessing the truth of the respective statement (114). This criticism of Lewis against Russell sounds very right to my pragmatist ears. Moreover, it shows that Lewis evaluates logic by its fruits, in this instance, its possibilities for ameliorating actual scientific investigation. Regarding the second goal of the anthology, though it is not as central to Shieh's article as to most of the others of the anthology, Shieh shows that Lewis's concept of logic is closer to pragmatism than the concept of Russell.

It is one of the many virtues of Olen and Sachs's anthology that, despite its goal of demonstrating the values of Lewis's thought, it includes a voice as critical of Lewis as Stump's. Stump lays bare a number of weaknesses in Lewis's interpretation of physics especially that Lewis's elaboration on the a priori in physics relies on merely one example, which is a shaky one at that (153). Regarding the assimilation of Lewis to pragmatism, Stump suggests that we should drop the term 'a priori' due to its anti-pragmatist connotations and replace it with "constitutive elements" for experiencing the world (148). According to Stump, this is what Lewis wants to express but in words that can be reconciled to pragmatism more easily. Given what I said above about Peirce and his attitude to the notion of a priori, it is surprising that Stump is the first and only contributor of the anthology to make this point.

However, Stump's pivotal point is that when we are interested in a pragmatic theory of the a priori (no matter how you want to call it), we should rather turn to Arthur Pap's (1921-1959) functional theory of the a priori than to Lewis. Pap's theory, Stump argues, is not only closer to pragmatism but also closer to the truth. Pap proclaims that he intends to work out a theory of the a priori based on Lewis's conceptual pragmatism but enrich it with more insight from Dewey's theory of inquiry (159). The main point is to overcome Lewis's strict separation

between the judgments that we take for granted in investigations, i.e. the judgments that make up the conceptual a priori in Lewis's sense, and the judgments that are under scrutiny. Pap relies on Dewey's theory of inquiry to argue that the judgments that we take for granted in a certain inquiry are judgments that were once dubitable but became taken for granted—for now and in this particular context—since they proved useful in prior inquiries. Hence, the line between the conceptual a priori judgments and other judgments is blurred. The difference is not one of principle but one of time and context. Stump comments: on the Dewey-Pap-view “everything is ultimately provisional, but some elements of our knowledge must be taken as fixed at a given point in order to pursue further inquiry” (157). Pap's theory is in the footsteps of Dewey and hence more dynamic than Lewis's. In defense of Lewis one should probably add that Lewis does not exclude the possibility that the claims that constitute our conceptual a priori now were dubitable once; that the conceptual a priori is not absolute is Lewis's main invention after all. However, Stump's argument that the blurredness of the status of our concepts is more central to Pap and to Dewey than to Lewis is, in my view, impeccable.

Explicitly underscoring my argument about the relation between Lewis and pragmatism, Stump determines that even Pap still needs to be qualified as belonging to logical positivism rather than to pragmatism. This is, according to Stump, due to “the questions that are being posed and the distinctions that are being used” by Pap (160). So Stump makes clear that there is still a lot of space between Pap and pragmatism, and, by extension, even more space between Lewis and pragmatism. In other words, both, Lewis and Pap, write within the paradigm of logical positivism, and juxtaposing the moves that the two make within this paradigm, Pap's moves are more pragmatic than Lewis's.

Westphal's paper is a treasure trove brimming with insight. It depicts Lewis going against “Russell's appeal to aconceptual knowledge” (180). It draws connections from Lewis to Reichenbach's elaborations on the need for

“coordinating principles” in the sciences and emphasizes this point with Einstein (190 and 175). It even manages to portray commonalities between Lewis and Nietzsche: both share the same kind of naturalism (178). Moreover, the paper paints a more complex picture of Lewis’s oeuvre. It argues that Lewis’s 1929 *Mind and the World Order* is Lewis’s great achievement, whereas, the work that is usually considered Lewis’s magnum opus, *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* from 1946, in fact, constitutes an “empiricist relapse” (170). Westphal hence excels in contributing to the anthology’s first goal: determining that Lewis’s philosophy deserves more attention than it gets today. Lewis belongs, so I am tempted to add based on Westphal’s elaborations, to the canon of thinkers that is important for overcoming the often-harmful dichotomy between continental and analytic philosophy.

Given this expertise, I would have liked to know more from Westphal about the anthology’s second goal: affiliating Lewis with pragmatism. Hereby the reader is only acquainted with a negative case and the punchy conclusion that Lewis’s early work “*Mind and the World Order* is a milestone of classical American pragmatism and its robust common sense and scientific realism” (193). Westphal shows in an extensive as well as convincing passage that Lewis has significant disagreements with Carnap as the major representative of logical positivism (170-175). Carnap’s strong empiricism is deeply flawed and at least the early, the *Mind-and-the-World-Order*-Lewis understood this. Westphal manages to demonstrate that the early Lewis is far from being an empiricist since he “rejected three basic empiricist principles: Concept Empiricism, Verification Empiricism, and Meaning Empiricism” (181).

However, to show that (the early) Lewis is not the textbook logical positivist that Carnap was, is not enough to demonstrate that he is a pragmatist. One is not by default a pragmatist if one is not a logical positivist. Westphal is surely right to point out that there are similarities between Lewis and pragmatism such as embracing insights of empiricism and of

rationalism. The great way in which Westphal formulates this point under the heading of 'Lewis's pragmatic realism' reads: "Understanding Lewis's views (and not only his views) requires rejecting the widespread notion that empiricism has a monopoly upon the empirical. (Conversely, neither do rationalism, deduction, or 'induction' monopolise reason or reasoning)" (182). Also regarding pragmatism, Westphal has the sophisticated, anti-Misak view that also Olen demonstrated (see above) in that he assumes that there is only *one* pragmatism, Peirce *and* Dewey, and that this one pragmatism reconciles empiricist and rational elements. Nevertheless, to be as convincing on the second goal as on the first goal of the anthology, Westphal should have provided a robust positive account of what pragmatism stands for and why Lewis is a part of that. This lacking, Westphal's essay does not refute my point (and Stump's; see above) that even the early Lewis, despite his pragmatic moves as described by Westphal, is securely ensconced in the framework of logical positivism; he asks its questions and employs its concepts.

Zarebski in the concluding chapter of the anthology builds the case that Lewis's epistemology does not fall under the scope of Wilfrid Sellars's critique of 'the myth of the given'. Sellars's myth of the given is an argument against strong forms of empiricism. It basically reveals what could be called the empiricist's dilemma. Either the empiricist assumes that there are unanalyzable, and hence infallible observations, like 'chair', but then she cannot show in what sense these infallible observations could build a foundation for the sciences since the sciences are necessarily about relations (for example in the sense of 'if x, then y'). Or she assumes that observations are not unanalyzable, i.e. we can never just experience a chair but only a chair with a certain color or chained to the insight that the chair is in a room, etc. Then observation can be a foundation for the sciences (like weak forms of empiricism hold) but never an infallible one since the sciences are, under this premise, based on analyzable observations and therefore observations exposed to potential error. Though Sellars does not mention names, it

was conventionally assumed that with this critique he had his former teacher Lewis in mind since Lewis emphasizes the importance of a given for scientific research.

Zarebski argues that this cannot be the case since the critique is simply not applicable to Lewis's position. Quite the opposite, regarding the given, Lewis and Sellars are on the same—anti-foundationalist—page (199). Although Lewis determines that every scientific observation has a given at its core, just like Sellars, he does not think that this given could serve as a foundation for knowledge: "in Lewis the given does not play a directly justificatory role in the acquiring of empirical knowledge, and as such it does not enter the epistemic sphere. Instead, what plays such a justificatory role is our interpretation of the given" (207). Whom Sellars really targeted, according to Zarebski, was Russell and his concept of non-propositional 'knowledge by acquaintance', not Lewis and his given (201).

Zarebski's paper is very helpful in that it provides a deep, thoughtful, and in itself fully consistent interpretation of Sellars's myth of the given as well as of Lewis's concept of the given. Yet, the paper leaves the reader out in the rain when it comes to a number of natural follow-up questions. First and foremost, why did Sellars speak of a 'myth of the given', and thereby explicitly took up Lewis's terminology, if he did not intend to criticize Lewis? That would be very misleading on Sellars's side. Why would Sellars so willingly take into account that his former teacher would be alienated by his critique (as Lewis in fact was) if he did not even mean to criticize him? Okay, 'myth of the given' sounds pretty cool, but 'myth of acquaintance' would not be bad either, and much more pertinent if Lewis really meant to target Russell, as Zarebski assumes (see above). Or *did* Sellars intend to criticize Lewis but simply got his teacher all wrong? Also rather unlikely. Maybe Westphal's distinction between an old and a young Lewis (see above) would be helpful. The young Lewis of *Mind and the World Order* being against strong empiricism, the old one of *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation* suffering an 'empiricist relapse'. If that were true, it could mean that Sellars merely

criticized the late Lewis. This alternative is corroborated by the fact that Zarebski exclusively relies on Lewis's early work (207-211) when he explains what Lewis's given means. Furthermore, Zarebski simply assumes that Westphal is not right and that there is only one Lewis (207, n. 4).

In contrast to the other contributors, Zarebski does not explicitly deal with the Lewis-pragmatism-conundrum.

However, in demonstrating that Lewis is not affected by Sellars's critique, which is undoubtedly a pragmatist critique¹⁰, Zarebski provides important advance work for pushing Lewis into the pragmatist camp. Yet, even if Zarebski is hereby successful (which we should not take for granted, see above), this is only a necessary not a sufficient condition for achieving this. Furthermore, assuming for the sake of the argument that Lewis's given is not subject to Sellars's critique in that it is not meant to provide the empirical sciences with an unanalyzable and hence infallible foundation, from a pragmatist perspective it is baffling why Lewis makes so much fuss about the given.

The best sense a pragmatist could possibly make of Lewis's emphasis on the given is that it protects us from strong idealism. Lewis's given "assures us", so Zarebski, "that our thoughts have objective purport" (210). Yet, this, the fear that we could not be in touch with reality and hence the effort to absolutely make sure that we are, is typical for the paradigm of logical positivism. In contrast to that, one of the unique, at bottom Hegelian, selling points of pragmatism is being casual about this issue. We must—and are able to—start philosophizing without a guarantee against strong idealism. We are made for advancing on boggy grounds.

If we, for example, try to translate Lewis's given into pragmatism, our best try would be Peirce's categories of firstness, secondness, and thirdness. If assimilated to that terminology we could probably say that Lewis's given is

¹⁰ See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1979/2009) and Michael G. Festl, *Gerechtigkeit als historischer Pragmatismus. Gerechtigkeitstheorie nach der pragmatistischen Wende der Erkenntnistheorie* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2015).

analogous to ‘zeroness’. Yet Peirce starts with firstness for a reason, with the thought that we are struck by something: “The first category [...] is *Quality of Feeling*, or whatever is such as it is positively and regardless of aught else”.¹¹ He does not start with ‘zeroness’, the thought that there must be something we can be struck by, Lewis’s given. Lewis’s given does not register in Peirce’s pragmatism because Peirce, setting the pragmatist agenda, does not think that it can be seriously doubted that we are in touch with the outer world. Quite the opposite, doubt of the existence of the outer world and us being in touch with it, is pragmatism’s prime example for pseudo-doubt whereas real doubt, meaningful doubt must come from the heart: “Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts.”¹²

Overall, Olen’s and Sach’s anthology is a must-read for everyone interested in the history of American philosophy of that period. It masters its first and foremost goal of showing that we should pay attention to Lewis again—definitely for understanding the history of our profession and possibly also for our current problems in philosophy which are, in the first place, not so different from the problems Lewis, the logical positivists, and the pragmatists grappled with. From a historic perspective, the main reason in favor of Lewis is that we can read his philosophy as *pars pro toto* for understanding the drift of American philosophy in the middle of the 20th century—from the arrival of key members of logical positivism in the 1930s until the rejection of logical positivism in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Working in the paradigm of logical positivism but making pragmatist moves in that paradigm might turn out to be not only true for Lewis but also for Charles W. Morris, Arthur

¹¹ Charles S. Peirce, “On Phenomenology,” in *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings Volume 2 (1893-1913)*, ed. the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 145-159, here 150 my emphasis.

¹² Charles S. Peirce, “Some Consequences of Four Incapacities,” in *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings Volume 1 (1867-1893)*, ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 28-55, here 29.

Pap, Morton White and others.

Regarding the anthology's second goal, affiliating Lewis with pragmatism, I argued that there is an alternative, and in my view better, understanding of the relation, namely that Lewis comes from and safely remains in the paradigm of logical positivism in that he subscribes to its core questions but that within that paradigm he makes a number of interesting pragmatic moves. Be that as it may, Olen's and Sachs's anthology definitely forces us to give up the conventional understanding that Lewis is a textbook representative of logical positivism, an understanding that is present until today and that thinkers as important as Quine, White, Goodman, Rorty, and probably also Sellars had. At the same time, the anthology increases not only our understanding of Lewis but also of logical positivism, pragmatism, and how these two schools relate to each other. For all these reasons, if not for the reason that Lewis is a pragmatist, the "Lewis revival" that Olen and Sachs call for—and saliently contribute to with their anthology—is not only "in order" (1) but overdue.