

# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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

we create rather than discover what we know.<sup>4</sup> 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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.”<sup>5</sup> So even

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<sup>5</sup> 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

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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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 119.

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

to the next.<sup>8</sup>

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.<sup>9</sup>

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

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

<sup>9</sup> 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 critique<sup>10</sup>, 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

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<sup>10</sup> 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”.<sup>11</sup> 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.”<sup>12</sup>

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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

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<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.