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WHO OWNS PRAGMATISM?*

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In the opening years of the twentieth century a furious contest broke out over the meaning of pragmatism in professional philosophical circles in the United States. When William James introduced his idea to the learned public at the University of California in 1898, he credited Charles Peirce as its prime mover. After James's lecture became known, Peirce, an impossible man who did not know on which side his bread was buttered, re-christened his brainchild pragmaticism to make sure no one confused it with the foolishness of James. When John Dewey made his mark and critiques of pragmatism emerged, Dewey said that we should not argue about a brand name. Nonetheless, he still gave his own philosophy a new designation, dubbing it instrumentalism to avoid the charges unleashed against James. Were there, then, three styles of this speculative tendency? Arthur O. Lovejoy was an unrelenting opponent of the tendency. In 1908 he mocked these thinkers, and wrote in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* a captivating and long-cited essay, "The Thirteen Pragmatisms."

Lovejoy's skepticism about one legitimate, cogent doctrine resonates today if we examine the booming industry of studies of pragmatism. These studies spring from university departments of philosophy, of American studies, and of history. This essay looks at how alternative species of doctoral training have predisposed academics to size up pragmatism with a variety of incompatible approaches. These dissimilarities amongst disciplinary visions of the tradition, I believe, can easily be identified. Additionally, those people who are read as the great pragmatists grasped their bookish milieu in a fashion that clashes with how subsequent scholarship has treated them. We have alternative canons of pragmatism, and they are detached from what the great pragmatists made of their own family trees. For this last point, I rely mainly on a case study, and begin with an assessment of the pragmatism of our contemporary, Robert Brandom, who has had a sustained impact on professional philosophy for almost four decades.

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Brandom has not just distinguished himself as an American professor. He is, rather, an internationally illustrious philosopher. His architectonic "inferentialism" has been renown since the 1980s in the United States, where he has received a $1.5 million grant to pursue it. Brandom also has keen readers in South America, Britain, and the Scandinavian countries, and on the Continent. *Between Saying and Doing: Towards an Analytic Pragmatism* (2008) explicitly placed Brandom among the pragmatists, an affiliation he had tacitly adopted for thirty years. His 2011 *Perspectives on Pragmatism* deepened this affirmation with a series of historical papers, which took up themes from an earlier title on forerunners, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (2002). In 2015, in *From Empiricism to Expressivism: Brandom Reads Sellars*, Brandom furthered a self-conscious bid to locate himself in the history of Western philosophy. This history consists of an authoritative record of great books; it runs from Socrates to the present and is still venerated by university professors and many others. In some circles Brandom is recognized as the most eminent living pragmatist, overshadowing individuals such as Hilary Putnam and Stanley Cavell, who have, at one time or another in the recent past, received this accolade. It would be unwise, to say the least, to put Brandom on the pragmatist pedestal. Nonetheless, he is the closest thing we have to a breathing philosopher whose work falls under a pragmatic rubric and might have an enduring readership.

What is the position this master expounds? The explication of Brandom's complex ideas is the least digestible part of this essay, and you might grab your antacid before tackling my elucidation.

Brandom tells us that pragmatism has often conflicted with analytic philosophy. Early in the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore in England, the authors of this emerging form of Anglo-American thought, attacked pragmatism; pragmatists like James and Dewey were the chief critics of early analytic philosophy. Logical positivism, for a while the most significant bearer of analysis, was a form of representationalism. According to Brandom, positivism argued that a scientific clarification of sense experience—the undeniable foundation—could tell us how the world was, how reality was *represented* to us. On the contrary, James and Dewey said over and over, we cannot reach any reality except that to which we contribute through our actions. Ultimately, people claiming to walk in the footsteps of James and Dewey declared the "-ism" of foundational-ism mythic, and they introduced into the twentieth century a measure of subjectivism and cultural constructivism.

Taking another path, Brandom urges that, over the twentieth century, analysts veered more and more to language as the nucleus of their ratiocination. Richard

Rorty, Brandom's doctoral adviser at Princeton, exemplified this trend. Rorty began his career as a linguistic analyst. Then, however, Rorty used his *au courant* ideas about language to endorse pragmatism and to pull the rug out from under analysis. Converted to pragmatism, he attacked analytic philosophy. Brandom, on the contrary, takes the proper next step in maturing what he names "analytic pragmatism," a pragmatism buttressed by attention to the constitution of language.

A good case can be made that, for Rorty, we have no world out there for language to mirror. Brandom, however, begins with practices. These are our undertakings that set out to achieve certain goals, coordinated endeavors that are fundamental to our being members of the human community. Brandom denies any initial division between mind and world. World and mind become dimensions of practices, the starting point. For Brandom, to put matters in a fashion that is helpful for nonphilosophers like myself, this basic supposition of cognizant-human-beings-acting-in-the-world makes for pragmatism. Then, analytic philosophy appropriately uncovers the rule-like regularities by which we talk about these practices. We can get matters right (or wrong) when we describe, evaluate, reform, or appreciate our purposeful pastimes. The analytic pragmatist looks at how linguistic conventions illuminate the composition of practices.

For Brandom, the analytic project in its most general terms specifies the meaning embedded in one vocabulary by reference to another. So, in one important example, naturalists might use the vocabulary of physics to enunciate a vocabulary of physical objects or of morality. Analysis is a program for reduction. The naturalist exploits analysis to substantiate how we can get our world of things or of ethical deliberation when we assume that the hard sciences are privileged knowledge. Or take Brandom's other major example of empiricism. Empiricists might regard an observational vocabulary as elementary. They maintain that it provides the wherewithal, correctly understood, to legitimate vocabulary that Brandom, along with many philosophers, calls "modal." Empiricists locate for us a world of facts that just *are*. But these thinkers will assert that from what there is, they can construe what is potential, or what must be. Modal assertions deal with possibility or necessity.

The pragmatists, Brandom explains, may at first have challenged analysis, but times have changed. The Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein, who taught at Cambridge University in England, decisively figures here. He recommended that we ignore any agenda for exchanging one vocabulary for another, but instead put our faith in what we do in the "language games" he made famous. The back-and-forth talk of language games allows us to do certain things, and often becomes a shorthand for philosophers alluding to practices. For Brandom, Wittgenstein is pivotal and a pragmatist. The practices intrinsic to language games take us away from fretting over how we mimic the external, and make us concentrate on deeds. Brandom announces his admiration for Wittgenstein, and the admirer demonstrates how linguistic analysis can make pragmatism succeed. Pragmatism does not serve as a relativistic critique of analysis, as it does for Rorty. Instead, analysis strengthens pragmatism. Analytic philosophy is the key contrivance for bolstering pragmatism.

Much of *Between Saying and Doing* sets out the apparatus that can accomplish this bolstering. The publication originated in the John Locke lectures at Oxford University, and Brandom informs us that the print edition very much duplicates his addresses on that occasion. If this is true, I defer to the audience that could attend to his formal and prodigious efforts. He mainly lays out these efforts in symbolic logic; this subfield of philosophy employs a set of signs derived from mathematics to ascertain complicated linguistic relations that might only with great difficulty be put into a standard written language. Brandom holds, if I may drastically abbreviate him, that you can never shrink, for example, a modal vocabulary to a classical empiricist one. You cannot contract the possible or necessary to what is actual. But you can vocalize in the empiricist's language what you must do in order to have a conversation about possibility and necessity. This extended "saying" about how we perform if we speak in modal terms yields a "pragmatic metavocabulary."

Brandom not only builds a system but also sets his philosophy in a long historical context, situating himself in a tradition of the "mighty dead." So who turn up as Brandom's pragmatically inclined predecessors, those on the right track? Here is his directory with his nods to their roles: Kant (the father figure who fatally undermined the empiricism of David Hume); Hegel (about whose *Phenomenology of the Spirit* Brandom has been writing a treatise for some years); Peirce, James, and Dewey (three secondary celebrities); Wittgenstein (the heart of Brandom's chronicle); Wilfrid Sellars (a mid-twentieth-century American who has continuously received respectful attention and who is a particular lodestar for Brandom); and Rorty (a figure Brandom awkwardly hints is a minor and extreme personage but nonetheless a recent prophet of Brandom's pragmatism).

A number of things strike me about this roster of pragmatism. Many eminent philosophers to whom homage is paid have not worried about making their readings of those who came before them historically accurate. Brandom shares this lack of anxiety, and like his forefathers—such as Aristotle, Aquinas, and Leibniz—he reads the history loosely; he is beyond a down-to-earth recitation of the past. His forebears are malleable debating partners to whom Brandom can ascribe ideas he wants to dispute or praise. A related point touches on Brandom's image of W. V. O. Quine. The preeminent philosopher of the late twentieth century residing in the United States, Quine was known during his heyday as *the* carrier of something once defined as "pragmatic analysis." Although Brandom hesitates about Quine, the latter is MIA as a pragmatist. Brandom advises us that

Quine captains the more or less recent anti-pragmatists, the last officer in David Hume's army of empiricists against whom Kant and Hegel rebelled. Brandom tips his hat to Quine for formidably championing Hume. Yet Quine winds up on the wrong side of history, not a pragmatist. A final point is that Brandom's pragmatism is *not* American. His pragmatism evolved from the response of Kant, Hegel, and Wittgenstein to Hume; Sellars and Brandom himself augment the response. Brandom perceives pragmatism as a fragment of the progress of *Western* thought. If Brandom is lifted up to the canon of pragmatism, he will not recognize most of his canonical neighbors who are US nationals.

I want to contrast Brandom's lineage of pragmatism to that exhibited in the writings of three cadres of scholars, the first group in philosophy departments. These professors define their specialty as American philosophy, and they expound American philosophy pragmatism—my tag. If graduate students worry about how to train in American philosophy, their mentors have a rank order of philosophy departments in that field in the United States defined by a notorious online rating system—the Philosophical Gourmet Report. Within the American Philosophical Association, the teachers belong to groups like the Society for the Advancement of American philosophy; the Charles S. Peirce Society; and bodies that pay tribute to James, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana. Nonetheless, these faculty members do not exclusively have jobs in the United States; University College Dublin in Ireland is a stronghold of tutors of American philosophy. The Routledge Press, formerly based in the UK, launched a series in American philosophy, and US citizens write for the *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*.

These professors have Ph.D.s in the subject of philosophy; they hold collegiate appointments; they instruct undergraduate and graduate students; and they publish—often in the magazines attached to their societies. They write about past thinkers who resided in the United States; most of the writing is densely articulated and directed at passages in the texts of these past thinkers; and the writing is intelligent and worth reading. But at the same time these interpreters do not have the same specialty as Brandom. He does not regard himself as working in the field of American philosophy, but deems himself an epistemologist or a metaphysician. The American philosophy men and women do not themselves aspire, as does Brandom, to being dignitaries in a highbrow muster that has stood for well over a century.

For these professors, pragmatism is not the same store as the one Brandom is tending. For a start, American philosophy pragmatism cashes out almost entirely as an American phenomenon. Second, as an American phenomenon, pragmatism has some of the quality of a Platonic idea. A more or less true pragmatism is embryonic in earlier eighteenth- or nineteenth-century thinkers in the United States; then it is more or less birthed by folks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and finally nurtured in the late twentieth century. The pragmatism of American philosophy comes not from the West (as for Brandom) but from the United States. It has a clearer nature than Brandom's fuzzier anti-Humean writings stemming from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1787.

One must be careful in depicting American philosophy pragmatism, for scores of scholars have given us its literature. They disagree, and have sundry biases and abilities. The recent Cambridge *Companion to Pragmatism* (2014) edited by Alan Malachowski is a place to begin. Out of fourteen articles, it devotes three to the "classic" pragmatists, Peirce, James, and Dewey, and three more to more recent practitioners—Quine, Putnam, and Rorty. In addition, some essays reflect on other more or less non-pragmatists who nonetheless can shed light on the genuine article, and the *Companion* prints essays on how pragmatism connects to other aspects of American culture, such as feminism, education, and religion.

Nonetheless, Malachowski is not the strongest volume available. Two older encyclopedic volumes contain better introductions: *The Oxford Handbook of American Philosophy* (2008), edited by Cheryl Misak, and the *Blackwell Companion to Pragmatism* (2009), edited by John Shook and Joseph Margolis. Misak's *Handbook* casts a wide net, but has ten essays on men prominently taken as pragmatists, and the *Blackwell Companion* has a dozen essays devoted to illustrious pragmatists, as well as a number of articles about pragmatic inclinations elsewhere, and articles on pragmatism and society, as in the later *Cambridge Companion* of Malachowski. (The *Continuum Companion to Pragmatism* (2011), edited by Sami Pihlström, is thematically assembled, and the editor has written five of sixteen pieces.)

Variations on introductions of these sorts are volumes of selected writings from the great pragmatists. An example, and an outstanding anthology, is *The Pragmatism Reader: From Peirce through the Present* (2011), edited by Robert B. Talisse and Scott Aiken. This big book even contains an essay by Brandom that is a guide to his difficult magnum opus, *Making It Explicit* (1994).

What kind of portrait do the scholars selected to write for these volumes paint? Pragmatism, many of them claim, orients itself around the topic of experience. However, the experience of the pragmatists does not replicate the sense-data experience of the British empiricists from Locke to Hume, and carried forward by John Stuart Mill and Bertrand Russell. Rather, the pragmatists highlight what I would call the embodied nature of human experience that does not break up into discrete elements, and that involves the doings and undergoings of the organism. Moreover, this experience is not just of the physical realm, but also of the moral and political. Pragmatists reject how old-time empiricists split the experience of facts and values, "is" and "ought," our sensory grasp of the world and our feelings about it. What we know in experience inseparably blends what we bring to life and what life brings to us. Inquiry criticizes the nonmoral and nonpolitical just as it does the moral and political. According to the professors of American philosophy pragmatism, to know something means inevitably for pragmatists that we operate with our own norms and standards in a *process*. There is no innocent eye, and no passive acceptance of something out there. We can only get at this simultaneous creation and discovery of what is by scrutinizing common behavior. For pragmatists, our communal collaboration encompasses mainly, though not exclusively, the pursuits of the physical and social scientists. We have a version of the practices at the heart of Brandom's cogitations.

American philosophy counts as pragmatists a lot of white men, and even a few women and black men, and the above sketch does not fit all of them. But American philosophy pragmatism does stress the arguments of the philosophers. The university lecturers expatiate on how the arguments are protected and attacked—and not incidentally how they sustain a genuine pragmatism. In their treatment of select pragmatists, the professors tend not to perceive revisions over time. A pragmatist has an opinion, stands for some method, or elaborates an idea. American philosophy pragmatism does not have much of a temporal sense, can explore writing over forty to sixty years, and can grasp a vision but not much variation.

This predisposition of students of American philosophy pragmatism misses, for me, some of what transpires. I have now read much recent work on Charles Peirce, yet little of it does much with the revisions in his thinking from the late 1860s to the 1910s. The standard work confronting these vicissitudes is still Murray G. Murphey's *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (1961). A session of the Charles S. Peirce International Centennial Conference of 2014 revisited *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy*, which has not been replaced. The exposition of William James is likewise truncated. We get, over and over, debates over what he wrote from about 1897 to 1907, the time during which he published his wonderful *Pragmatism*. In this period, he was most realistic in his loyalties and hostile to the absolute idealism of Hegel, the British Hegelians, and his colleague Josiah Royce. But we have almost no mention of his early, though uncomfortable, allegiance to Royce, unmistakably in the background of James's *Principles of Psychology* (1890), or of James's later espousal of a subjective idealism in *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), which embarrassed his realist disciples. Last, John Dewey cannot be disregarded. Everyone mentions his early Hegelianism, and there are two recent monographs on the topic: James Good's *A Search for Unity in Diversity: The "Permanent Hegelian Deposit" in the Philosophy of John Dewey* (2005), and Donald J. Morse's *Faith in Life: John Dewey's Early Philosophy* (2011). But Morton White's treatment of 1943, *The Origins of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, is still dispositive. We regularly get fifty years of Dewey's philosophy as if it was set forth at one time. Dewey's pragmatic *floruit* occurred between 1900 and 1930. After 1935 his abilities decay, most conspicuously in his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, published in 1938 when Dewey was almost eighty, not to mention in material that he wrote when close to ninety. Among other undertakings, scholars of American philosophy pragmatism indulge in much hagiography; they ignore metamorphosis and also decline.

Mention of Dewey's *Logic* brings up a trouble associated with the flouting of historical transformation. Specialists in American philosophy pragmatism recognize that Dewey knew nothing of the then new field of symbolic logic. He never participated in the twentieth-century explosion of the subject, which attracted so many professionals in departments of mathematics, philosophy, and economics. This subject gave "logic" a novel denotation and made it a philosophical area of expertise. As I have noted, Brandom uses it as a vital tool to outline his analytic pragmatism. Dewey's logic in the late 1930s was what he designated the theory of inquiry, our collective engagement in experimentalism; Dewey had been talking about it since the 1890s. He was unschooled in symbolic logic, and his expositors have varied estimates about his illiteracy. Most of these people, I would say, share his contempt for the rise of technical thinking as the be-all and end-all of much professional philosophy, and sympathy with them and with Dewey comes easily.

One has to overlook much, however, if one does not command some proficiency in symbolic logic, and, more important, to overlook much in pragmatism. Symbolic logic was the spine of Peirce's thought, and as he fiddled with his logic, it influenced his philosophy and various adaptations of his pragmatism. We have very, very few exegeses of Peirce's logic, and none that allies its growth to the modifications of his thinking, pragmatic or not. This minor fault indicates a larger defect. Royce at Harvard carried on Peirce's logical pursuits, and Royce's logic kindled his philosophy. This philosophy included what he nicknamed "absolute pragmatism," an outlook that some of the researchers into American philosophy have applauded. C. I. Lewis, a student of Royce often discussed in American philosophy pragmatism, defended "conceptual pragmatism." Lewis also invented modal symbolic logic. As usually studied, symbolic logic at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth dealt with the factually true and false. The possibly or necessarily true and false were not sorted out; it was often assumed that insurmountable obstructions arose in signifying such notions. But Lewis came along, generating a number of impressive systems of modal logic. And then Quine, who was mentored by Lewis, denied Lewis's modal logic. The various substitutes Quine had for it shaped his own pragmatism. For 150 years, symbolic logic and improvements in that field were bedrock to at least one group that the interlocutors of American philosophy think of as pragmatists. You will find no ruminations about these links—from logician to logician, from logic to philosophy, or from one logically inspired pragmatic interrogation to the next—in American philosophy pragmatism.

This lack bothers me because Brandom's work bristles with modal logic. With most other figures adept at technique, Brandom has deserted Quine's "extensional"—that is, non-modal—logic. As I have already said, Brandom has published his results in the idiom of modal logic, following the strategy of a great number of highly touted logicians, pragmatist or not. Beyond my power to evaluate, Brandom's reasoning hinges on the purport of counterfactual conditionals—if–then statements in the subjunctive: if my life had taken a very different direction, I would still have had the same parents as I have now (the necessary); if I were to have dropped this glass, it would have broken (the possible). "Possible-worlds theory" is rife among university philosophers today. Here's the kicker: before Brandom, analogous ideas run through the writings of Peirce, James and Royce, Lewis, and Quine. Alas, neither symbolic logic, nor its modal variants, nor the counterfactual has drawn much notice from American philosophy pragmatism. I have my doubts that we have any grip at all on what might count as pragmatism if we don't have a handle on these interests.

So far, I have not paid much attention to what counts as canonical to these scholars. How, so to speak, do they integrate the pragmatists? Many chronologically ordered collections of pragmatist writings provide an inventory. John Shook and his Internet *Pragmatism Cybrary* have supplied the most extended attempt, in both the online and hard-copy worlds. We have a number of printed anthologies widely available. Moreover, professors of American philosophy write histories of pragmatism. In this respect two publications of some time ago by much-admired professionals set the standard for students of American philosophy: Morton White of Harvard and the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies wrote *Science and Sentiment in America: Philosophical Thought from Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (1972), and John E. Smith of Yale wrote *The Spirit of American Philosophy: Peirce, James, Royce, Dewey, Whitehead* (1983). Closer to the present are Russell Goodman's *American Philosophy and the Romantic Tradition* (1990), Robert Talisse and Scott Aiken's *Pragmatism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2008), and Michael Bacon's *Pragmatism: An Introduction* (2012). I need also mention a beautiful and affecting treatment that takes us away from pragmatism—and from linear thinking—John Kaag's *American Philosophy: A Love Story* (2106). Here I focus on one particularly smart and mildly eccentric treatment by Cheryl Misak in her important *The American Pragmatists* (2014).

Misak looks at what she believes to be the kernel of pragmatism, its theory of knowledge, of how we know what we know, and what we mean by knowing. She points out the enhanced experience that many attribute to pragmatists, and the accent on shared cognitive accomplishments. Within the pragmatist camp, she says, a divide so dramatic exists that she questions whether the gentlemen on one side of the divide deserve the appellation "pragmatist."

The more authentic pragmatists urge that our *praxis* is about something that we don't entirely make up, although we are irrevocably implicated in social construction. The other would-be, dubious, pragmatists have forgotten that we do not determine what is, but only contribute to it. To make Misak's attitude somewhat more present-minded than it perhaps is, we might label the less authentic as the postmodern pragmatists. They mull over our conversations, habitual occupations, and customs of inquiry to the exclusion of what these conversations, habits, and customs are about; they lose what is not us. The impulse to get matters right vanishes, for no right survives beyond what we say or do. These (*faux*?) pragmatists think that culture goes all the way down, even though in their terms there is no "down" to go to. One gets something of the same idea in the compendium of sources edited by Susan Haack and Robert Lane, *Pragmatism Old and New: Selected Writing* (2006). Haack, a teacher and researcher of some merit, fabricates an interview between Peirce and Rorty across time, the first in a white hat and the second in a black one. Peirce believes in an object of inquiry; Rorty—in a slight caricature of Brandom's view of the man—has the gift of the gab.

So here are Misak's canons, with which Haack sympathizes. We have some unfortunate pragmatists who drift toward the postmodern: James, Dewey, and Rorty. And then we have the more legitimate pragmatists, those who in my terminology best illustrate, for Misak, the pragmatism of American philosophy: Chauncey Wright, an often overlooked peer of Charles Peirce; Peirce himself; C. I. Lewis; and with some ambivalence, Quine. For Brandom, Quine nobly falls as the last anti-pragmatist. For Misak, he unnervingly stands as the most recent addition to the tradition.

What can be said about the American-ness of American philosophy pragmatism? Scholars of American philosophy assume this American-ness, and with some justice. European intellectual historians speak of German idealism in the nineteenth century, and no defense is needed even though this classification erases the materialist Marxists in Germany. We can also review the more powerful aforementioned scheme of British empiricism, which has three long phases, from Locke to Hume in early modern Europe, from Jeremy Bentham to John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century, and then to Russell and A. J. Ayer in the twentieth. Yet this potent historical convention omits, in the United Kingdom, English Platonism of the seventeenth century, Scottish realism of the eighteenth, and British Hegelianism of the nineteenth.

The professionals who have assembled American philosophy pragmatism postulate a political background out of which their pragmatically inclined champions come. Pragmatism did not just accidentally ripen in the United States or by chance receive accolades from US nationals. The scholars fancy pragmatism as the distinctive contemplative emanation of America, just as idealism demarcates Germany, and empiricism demarcates Britain. Every once in a while, especially in respect to Dewey, the practitioners of American philosophy pragmatism hazard judgments about the join between pragmatism and democracy in the United States. Yet, for the most part, the practitioners evidence restraint. These American philosophy academics consider their primary job as appraising the claims and probing the arguments of the philosophers who fall under their purview, not yoking the philosophers to a culture.

A powerful example of this restraint surfaces when we delve into the many essays that link American pragmatists or pragmatism to thinkers in other countries who are said to have more or less matching standpoints. In the companions discussed above and in other works, two professional acquaintances of James, Giovanni Papini in Italy and F. C. S. Schiller in England, are taken up. We also get inspections of Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger, although Nietzsche (surprisingly) was not mentioned. Secondary figures like Hans Vaihinger, Henri Bergson, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Jürgen Habermas scarcely rate parallel assessment. When American philosophy scouts non-Americans for their pragmatic partialities, the endeavor does not disclose the participation of foreign citizens in a cosmopolitan debate, or their influence on American pragmatism. The juxtapositions are structural, and by and large do not make a case for national characteristics that separate American thought from that of other countries. The teachers of American philosophy may have unspoken assumptions about how peculiar philosophies display a society. Nonetheless, they leave it to others to expound on these assumptions, and disdain the free-and-easy transgressing of boundaries conveyed in Brandom's ponderings on the history of philosophy. One amazing exception to these generalizations must, however, be cited. Cheryl Misak is the jewel in the crown of the scholars of American philosophy. Her latest book, *Cambridge Pragmatism: From Peirce and James to Ramsey and Wittgenstein* (2016) is a tour de force, highly to be recommended in its coupling of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Cambridge, England.

To comprehend an only-one-of-its-kind American pragmatism, we must look to another mountain of literature. Those whom I call the American studies students of pragmatism have produced this prose. American studies pragmatism is occasionally ransacked for confirmation of the attitudes of American philosophy pragmatism, and the landscapes of American philosophy and American studies pragmatism sometimes merge. Nonetheless, in critical areas the professors of American studies pragmatism function independently of the professors of American philosophy pragmatism, and vice versa.

American studies pragmatism finds its ancestors in the old-time American studies movement of the post-World War II period. Two groups made up that movement—Perry Miller and those grappling with high intellectual history, and the "myth and symbol" school more committed to the understanding of popular culture. The latter school of Henry Nash Smith, Leo Marx, Alan Trachtenberg, and John William Ward contributed to at least a semi-glowing portrait of an essential American temperament. While the proponents of myth and symbol themselves did not look at the lofty thought of the Puritans, the Enlightenment, the Transcendentalists, and not least the pragmatists, Perry Miller did. He and his peers bequeathed to American studies an exclusively American elevated thinking in which Peirce, James, and Dewey were *primus inter pares*. They have been the undisputed members of American studies pragmatism since the 1950s. The conventions were reestablished in Louis Menand's *Pragmatism: A Reader* (1997) and his Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (2001).

American studies pragmatism today shares some significant features with Miller's canon and with myth-and-symbol premises. American studies scholars extrapolate from individual artifacts to a wider culture that may even be national in scope. So we could read off the psychic ordeal of Civil War America from a grasp of *Moby-Dick*. We can unlock the understanding of nature in the United States with an educated enjoyment of the paintings of the Hudson River school. Or, to get to the nitty-gritty, if we read William James with some finesse, we will have a handle on what American studies pragmatism calls "the American experience."

One amplification of American studies pragmatism can be found in Cornel West's *The American Evasion of Philosophy*: *A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (1989), but West is an outlier. For the most recent expressions of American studies pragmatism, and one that is mainstream, I have relied on the discernment of Joan Richardson in *A Natural History of Pragmatism: The Fact of Feeling from Jonathan Edwards to Gertrude Stein* (2006); and *Pragmatism and American Experience: An Introduction* (2014). Richardson holds a chair in English and comparative literature but, rather than being anomalous, this affiliation suggests the origins of American studies in departments of English and in post-World War II plans of how such departments might enlarge the scope of their scholarship. The ambitions of American studies, at first spread between departments of English and history, foreshadowed the evolution of cultural studies in departments of language.

Richardson focuses on pragmatism as a method for experiencing what is around us. Could we reckon matters as clearly as William James (and Ralph Waldo Emerson) did, we would come upon communities of thought-cum-feeling that extend outward from diverse personalities. Coinciding platforms for action connote ideas mutually held. In pragmatism, Richardson wants to capture an aesthetic of America. She posits a family resemblance between Buddhism and pragmatism, for each is a philosophy of life premised on accepting one's place in the world. Yet pushing this comparison would make pragmatism too passive. Culture in the United States consists of a continuing conversation, or an ongoing experiment. America is not apprehended as a place but as an event, an extended duration, an idea unfolding in time. These formulations encapsulate Richardson's embrace of the hypotheses of some recent French savants. For these theorists, like Foucault and Derrida, "Amerika" with a "k" is a baleful entity, in our heads as much as in corrupted domestic civic engagement and in global politics. Richardson has a friendlier and more bounded version of this accent on the discursive as primary in our awareness of national character. For her, America is benign, and she does not intend to take pragmatism to life outside the United States.

Richardson rarely dwells on the political. Nevertheless, while the religious and the psychoanalytic weigh heavily in her presentation of pragmatism, American experience defines, for Richardson, democratic being. She finishes her account of pragmatism by testifying that former president Barack Obama expressed its principles. He had a nimble and flexible adaptation to his job, managed ambiguity and uncertainty well, and ably moved between joint and singular reactions. Pragmatism can be about politics, but even when it is, as in the case of Obama, it is about the kind of non-private experiencing he encouraged. The victories of pragmatism show that Americans, because of the genius of William James, have come to take in hand the perplexities of life; they manipulate experience to serve wide needs. Yet the verb phrases "take in hand" and "manipulate" lean too much to the mechanical. For Richardson, pragmatism steers between the impassive and the merely practical, and instructs us on how to flourish, but to flourish with a kind of artistic delight.

We can fairly expect in Richardson a blooming family tree of pragmatists, and we get it. Her catalogue encompasses John Winthrop; Jonathan Edwards; Emerson (a crucial figure); James (the chief progenitor); Peirce, Dewey, and Reinhold Niebuhr (somewhat to the side); Gertrude Stein and Wallace Stevens (who bring James to one fruition, and who take us back to Richardson's earlier work in American letters); Rorty; Cavell; Hilary Putnam; Obama. Readers will note that the epistemologists favored by American philosophy pragmatism—Chauncey Wright, Lewis, and Quine—are not incorporated. And certainly Brandom could make no claim for inclusion.

Before moving on to a final class of depictions of pragmatism, those of intellectual historians, I need carefully to take stock of the biographical center of American studies pragmatism. It spends little time on Peirce, and for him one has to look to American philosophy pragmatism and Joseph Brent's *Charles Sanders Peirce: A Life* (rev. 2nd edn, 1998). Dewey generates a bit more curiosity consolidated in American studies pragmatism by a professor of English and American studies, Jay Martin, in his *The Education of John Dewey: A Biography* (2002).

Easily the thriving area of inquiry fixes on William James, at the crux of American studies pragmatism. The open quality of his personal life and the generous welcome he gave to other patterns of reflection have made the man revered, if that word is not too strong. American studies pragmatism, as Richardson illustrates, finds everything in him, and him in everything. The scholarship on James that cherishes him as central to an American experience is a region of growth. The research has perhaps been fertilized by a big—622 pages—biography of over a decade ago. *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism* by Robert D. Richardson (a professor of English and American studies) came out in 2006. Yet an earlier study may be better: English professor Linda Simon's *Genuine Reality: A Life of William James*, of 1998. Any number of volumes by amateurs on James, some self-published, many available only as e-books, can be found; check out James Sloan Allen's *William James on Habit, Will, Truth, and the Meaning of Life* (2014). But we also have academic tomes. Susanne Rohr and Miriam Strube's *Revisioning Pragmatism: William James in the New Millennium* (2012) stems almost entirely from German academics, and demonstrates how American studies pragmatism, specifically with regard to William James, has cropped up on the Continent as an invasive species. John J. Stuhr's edited collection, *100 Years of Pragmatism: William James's Revolutionary Philosophy* (2010), is more of a mixed bag, but does not avoid a single-minded emphasis on James as the guardian of the American personality and as the expositor of archetypical American thinking. As of 2016, an upgraded journal, *William James Studies*, pays tribute to James as the quintessential native American flower.

There is, however, the atypical *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation: Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Philosophy of Religion* (2014). It demands unique attention and only clumsily fits into in the Jamseian subfield of American studies pragmatism as I have constructed it, or into any of the disciplinary pragmatisms. Martin Halliwell and Joel D. S. Rasmussen edited this volume of essays. The book tests my thesis about the restrictions on the various kinds of pragmatism that the erudite have demarcated. *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation* is an obstinate incongruity. With an ambitious intercontinental approach that eschews cultural nationalism, it does not rally around pragmatism. The thirteen essays in this collection resulted from the labors of scholars from five countries in six disciplines. The James who emerges is unrecognizable as many academics have depicted him. William and his brother Henry do not inhabit the United States but the Atlantic West. The philosopher has a dialogue not just with his fellow citizens but with intellectuals, as James calls them, in Britain and on the Continent. Pragmatism hardly defines him. Rather, James is enlisted as an "experientialist" Protestant. He resembles earlier nineteenth-century American religious thinkers whom students of pragmatism never mention: William Ellery Channing, Horace Bushnell, or Henry Ward Beecher. From this perspective, James looks into the twentieth century like another one of these religious thinkers, Shailer Mathews. Mathews, a liberal Protestant theologian, served as dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School from 1908 to 1933. Shailer and James loosely attempted to have science fortify a generic religiosity. Such an ersatz Protestantism—grounded in emotional states that are nonetheless cognitive—certainly does not embrace the whole James. Yet the portrait in *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation* reminds us of the limits in defining the man as the ur-pragmatist.

Where do the intellectual historians, gentlefolk in departments of history, fit in this expanding picture of disciplinary expositors of pragmatism? There is indeed an American intellectual history pragmatism, the last of my ideal types. It diverges from the others that I have laid out.

Some thirty to forty years ago, American intellectual history promised to inaugurate in the United States a genre like that created by European historians of ideas, working from Rousseau to Heidegger. This American intellectual history culminated a period in which Perry Miller's influence on the study of ideas hit its zenith, although the history differed from Miller's American studies approach. A number of books centered around pragmatism appeared: Darnell Rucker, *The Chicago Pragmatists: Dewey, Ames, Angell, Mead, Tufts, Moore* (1969); R. Jackson Wilson, *In Quest of Community* (1970); Paul Conkin, *Puritans and Pragmatists: Eight Eminent American Thinkers* (1976); two entries of mine, *The Rise of American Philosophy: Cambridge Massachusetts, 1860–1930* (1977) and *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (1985); James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1930* (1986); Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (1991); John Patrick Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority* (1994); and Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (1995). These tomes revealed a flood of interest by historians in the intellectual life of the United States. This interest often went beyond pragmatism but also often focused on it. In addition, David A. Hollinger wrote essays in learned journals about the nature of pragmatism and its role in America that attracted general attention from all historians. See, for example, "The Problem of Pragmatism in American History," *Journal of American History* 67 (1980), 88–107; and "William James and the Culture of Inquiry," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 20 (1981), 264–83.

Common threads in this outpouring among these post-1960s historians of American ideas can be delineated. The authors dedicated time to unraveling the intricacies of pragmatism, but over and over again these intellectual historians also devoted themselves to grasping the social locus of the ideas—in the university, in professional organizations, in editorial boards of magazines, in a clique of students, and in a region or urban area.

Among these many approaches the one that stands out for me with respect to pragmatism is Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory*. Kloppenberg confirmed that pragmatists had social utility, but he understood the movement as multinational. He illuminated a nexus of thinkers—in the United States, Britain, France, and Germany—who were classed as modernizers and moderates, struggling to situate themselves in a transnational debate over spirituality and politics. These people took a middle road between religious reaction and technocracy, secularism and authoritarianism, and they included those in the United States who have been called pragmatists. Kloppenberg's emphases on a border-crossing Willian James crop up in the recent edited volume *William James and the Transatlantic Conversation*, although many differences can be seen.

This kind of history of ideas in America, however, did not survive the cyclone of social history that swept over the profession of history. Intellectual historians endured this storm by retreating from complicated exegesis and contextualization, and from the celebration of the influence of one thinker on another. The dominance of the earlier intellectual history and the sophistication of Kloppenberg's approach did not much outlast the 1980s. More recently, Kloppenberg himself has upheld a more heroic James and a more essential American pragmatism, for example in "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?", *Journal of American History* 83 (1996) 100–38. One collection in which this essay was reprinted, *A Pragmatist's Progress: Richard Rorty and American Intellectual History* (2000), edited by John Pettegrew, exhibits how historians were moving away from their love affair with speculative complexity.

Later works in the tradition of high intellectual history did not grip the profession. For example, two books of 2012 took up the impact of the complex ideas of pragmatists, usually housed in departments of philosophy, on other disciplines and on higher education: Joel Isaac's *Working Knowledge: Making the Human Sciences from Parsons to Kuhn*, and Andrew Jewett's *Science, Democracy, and the American University: From the Civil War to the Cold War*. These publications, whatever their merits, came to occupy only a niche market.

The pragmatism of intellectual historians that became dominant I call American intellectual history pragmatism. Social history in the United States did not kill the history of ideas, but rather altered and oversimplified it; and then cultural studies destabilized the search for the intent of thinkers in any event. According to social historians, ideas floating around in the heads of philosophers, unrooted in the world or trivial in the world, were not worth study. Many intellectual historians accepted this judgment in fact, if not in theory. This stance is approved by the scholars who wrote for a series of the 1990s on American Thought and Culture: George Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism . . . 1880–1900* (1992); Terry A. Cooney, *Balancing Acts . . . the 1930s* (1995); Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction . . . the 1960s* (1998); and J. David Hoeveler Jr, *The Postmodernist Turn . . . the 1970s* (1996).

Intellectual historians in the post-social-history era of cultural studies grabbed onto those protagonists of pragmatism who made the doctrine socially relevant. American intellectual history pragmatism honors James and Dewey beyond all others, and cultivates a carefully pruned pragmatic bush. Intellectual historians looking at the sweep of American thought through the twentieth century also grafted on public intellectuals who had pragmatic tinges. Jane Addams, a Chicago-based reformer and acquaintance of John Dewey made the cut, and so did African American activists W. E. B. Du Bois and Alain Locke, whom James stimulated; and Horace Kallen, an acolyte of James, and Sidney Hook, a student of Dewey's, both of whom were forces in the intellectual life of New York City. At the end of the twentieth century, intellectual history pragmatists acclaimed Richard Rorty—rightly or wrongly notorious for his postmodernism—as the person who had given new life to James and Dewey. I sometimes call intellectual history pragmatism "1960s pragmatism" to allude to the fact that, for some American intellectual historians, pragmatism cannot be ripped away from politics and cannot be burdened with logic-chopping.

American intellectual history pragmatism differs from American studies pragmatism. The core of the former is involvement; the core of the latter is a peculiar kind of experiencing. American studies pragmatism, in addition to throwing its net wider in terms of individuals, has a poetic cast; intellectual history pragmatism is more political. To discriminate intellectual history pragmatism still further, I would emphasize that it does not intersect much with American philosophy pragmatism: American philosophy pragmatism has a social dimension, but its proponents lean toward a detailed inquest into the armature of pragmatism, and especially its theory of knowledge, about which American intellectual historians care almost nothing. Robert Brandom's pragmatism, which has no tilt toward politics and a big tilt toward epistemology, is unrecognizable in American intellectual history pragmatism.

What, in conclusion, are we to make of the disorder of this historiographical terrain? Investigating pragmatism is equivalent to enlarging or exploring a canon of philosophers. The diversity of canons supplies ammunition for those scholars censorious of old-fashioned modes of understanding, and of the penchant of humanists to make up syllabi of required readings. This censure receives confirmation if we look more closely at the curious facts apparent in "inventing" even competing canons. When Peirce wrote up the essays that would define his pragmatism in the 1860s and 1870s, he spent much time disapproving of René Descartes and Bishop George Berkeley; he looked to the medieval scholastic Duns

Scotus for legitimate insights into the theory of knowledge. Only a little later, James negatively referenced Hegel and the succeeding absolute idealists (of whom his coworker Royce was one); James dedicated *Pragmatism* to the sensationalist empiricist John Stuart Mill, and called his position a new name for old ways of thinking. As Dewey made his path in collegiate philosophy, he first adhered to the liberal Calvinist theology of New England, and next to Hegel. In constructing their differing canons of pragmatism, the scholars from various disciplines have set to the side the intellectual progenitors that Peirce, James, and Dewey (and others) thought were theirs. The tradition that the three (and others) are thought to have started has little to do with the odd assortment of past thinkers who actually stimulated the production of the ideas of the men who are canonized.

This same phenomenon is found in the philosophical circles that have furthered whatever canonization Brandom can hope to obtain. A scholar like Cheryl Misak, for example, might be content to add Brandom to her registry of Chauncey Wright, Peirce, Lewis, and Quine. But to move Brandom up into this particular hall of fame, or any other such hall, we would need to discount those grandees whom Brandom names as his predecessors—Kant, Wittgenstein, and Sellars.

Scholars have ratified some thinkers, and put them in some rational order. But this order has little overlap with the texts that the thinkers themselves perceived as basic. And we additionally encounter conflicting lists of texts on pragmatism that are commended.

When these complaints are aired about how canons can multiply and about how the canonized are weirdly dug up from their original location, much is taken. But much abides. We can hardly get around Peirce, James, and Dewey, ubiquitous in surveys of pragmatism. Two commitments of the many people claimed for the pragmatist trademark are also pervasive. Sensationalist empiricism troubled these people, and they gravitated to what I can only describe as an "enriched" experience that differs from that of philosophers like Hume, Mill, and Bertrand Russell. Moreover, the purveyors of enriched experience found it when they brooded about practices, the conduct that allows human beings to negotiate their world. Public practices, and experience that is not simply to be described as "sense data," are brought into the light over and over again from Peirce to Brandom.

Does my tricky survey, then, only legitimate the mention of some elementary pragmatism as a cliché in the introductory course on the US since the Civil War?

That is part of my conclusion. For the other part, I find disquieting the mélange of attitudes evident when we contrast what unlike disciplines say about pragmatism. We need more interdisciplinary consultation, more colloquy across professional boundaries, and more respect for the apprenticeships of scholars in disciplines other than our own. The collapse of the projects of the

American historians of ideas of the 1970s and 1980s pushed out the serious study of pragmatism from intellectual history and left it to the philosophers. The philosophers own it by default. That is why a 150-year roll call of pragmatists has been formed and their works studied as if they had been generated today. The philosophers need to accept yesterdays. Nonphilosophers, however, cannot ignore the cerebral convolutions that are the hallmark of philosophy—and of pragmatism. The victories of social and cultural historians account for some of the problems in the study of pragmatism. Faculty in departments of history and American studies have not reduced ideas to something else. Nonetheless, the lure of social history and of the autopsy of culture have made it too comfortable for the people in these departments to tell us what sustains a philosophical treatise but not the concepts in it.