

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY

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# 100 Years of Pragmatism

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**William James's**  
Revolutionary Philosophy

Edited by John J. Stuhr

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1. James's *Pragmatism* and  
American Culture, 1907–2007

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William James usually tended more toward self-deprecation than self-aggrandizement. In a letter to his brother Henry dated May 4, 1907, however, William characterized his new book *Pragmatism* with uncharacteristic enthusiasm. It was “an unconventional utterance,” William conceded, but after the passage of a mere ten years, he wrote, it might be considered “epoch-making.” Even more boldly, he predicted “the definitive triumph” of the “general way of thinking” laid out in the book, and he characterized the overall cultural change as “something quite like the protestant reformation” (*LWJ*, III, 337–40). What did he mean? How does his prophecy look a century after the publication of *Pragmatism*? Did the twentieth century witness the change he anticipated?

A decade ago, scholars were attempting to make sense of the unquestionable presence of pragmatism in American intellectual life at the close of the twentieth century. In my own contribution to this conversation, I asked readers to consider which aspects of contemporary pragmatism preserved the central ideas of James and his colleague John Dewey, which aspects constituted new departures, and what difference the controversies made in our understanding of twentieth-century American intellectual history.<sup>1</sup> The essay attracted some attention, particularly from those whom I characterized as having left behind James's and Dewey's crucial commitments to experience and democratic culture.<sup>2</sup> The essay was also criticized from a different angle, by the philosopher Elizabeth Minnich, for having paid insufficient attention to the importance of social action.<sup>3</sup> Since the article stressed my conviction that the truth-testing envisioned by James and Dewey requires democratic forms of cultural experimentation, at first I considered Minnich's criticism surprising, but I do see her point. Inasmuch as I focused on the controversies over how we should understand James's and Dewey's ideas and those of their successors in the multifaceted and diverse traditions of

pragmatism, I did pay less attention to social practices than I did to the ideas themselves. In part in response to that observation and in part in response to the division of labor for this volume envisioned by the editor, in this essay I concentrate less on how intellectual historians should interpret pragmatism old and new and more on the influence of James's (and, to a lesser extent, Dewey's) ideas on American history.<sup>4</sup> But my focus will remain on the consequences of pragmatism for American thought, because I share James's own conviction that thinking itself constitutes a kind of action and that ideas make a difference.

I will discuss a number of different domains, including politics, law, race and ethnicity, gender, business management, architecture and urban planning, medicine, law, education, and environmentalism, and two different eras, the early twentieth century and the turn of the twenty-first. My goal in this essay is to sketch—because in the space of an essay it is not possible to do more than that—some indications of the immediate impact of pragmatism in the first half of the last century and some signs of its longer-term legacies as manifested in various contemporary practices.

Two further introductory notes: First, James's *Pragmatism* marked the blossoming of ideas germinating for thirty years, ideas first advanced in his 1878 essay "Remarks on Spencer's Definition of Mind as Correspondence." There James observed that thinking begins with "mental interests," emotional or practical reasons that propel individuals to act and thereby "help to *make* the truth which they declare." Already advancing a crucial argument that he believed would distinguish his pragmatism from wishful thinking, an argument his critics then and ever since have persistently misunderstood, James insisted in the essay, in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, that "the only objective criterion of reality is coerciveness, in the long run, over thought" (*EP*, 21).<sup>5</sup> In a later essay of 1885, "The Function of Cognition," which James described to C. A. Strong in 1907 as the "fons et origo of all my pragmatism,"<sup>6</sup> an essay he later reprinted as chapter 1 of *The Meaning of Truth*, James contended that theoretical speculation is idle unless it can be tested in the world beyond the mind. "These *termini*, these sensible things," he wrote in an article from an 1885 issue of *Mind* titled "The Function of Cognition," "are the only realities we ever directly know," so disagreements about ideas should be settled according to their "practical issue" (*MT*, 31). James continued refining the lectures eventually published as *Pragmatism* in presentations given before various audiences in places from Berkeley to Rome, and in his Harvard courses, during the years 1898–1907. Because the argument of *Pragmatism* itself is best understood as the product of a very lengthy process that began several decades before the book appeared, it is no surprise that some signs of the ideas' impact predate publication of the book.

Second, when James invoked the Protestant Reformation in his letter to his brother Henry, he had in mind a particular kind of cultural transformation. In *Pragmatism* he characterized the Reformation as a shift in the "centre of gravity" and "an alteration in 'the seat of authority'" away from "the upper ether" to the "facts themselves." Just as Protestantism had seemed "to papal minds" nothing more than "a mere mess of anarchy and confusion," so would his pragmatism

strike "ultrarationalist minds in philosophy" as "so much sheer trash." But "to minds more scientific and individualistic in their tone yet not irreligious either," James sought to show the value of shifting attention from abstract principles to "the really vital question for us all," namely, "What is life eventually to make of itself?" As the first Protestants splintered into rival sects, some early challengers to orthodoxy worried that individual congregations, or even individual believers, might take it upon themselves to answer such questions on their own, interpreting scripture according to their own lights and deciding for themselves how to live their lives. Such anxieties prompted some Protestants to circumscribe the boundaries of legitimate experimentation, whereas others ventured so far beyond those limits that they eventually constituted communities of their own and governed themselves independent of any other authority. It was that spirit of ceaseless experimentation, not the quest to replace one orthodoxy with another, that prompted James to compare his pragmatism to the Protestant Reformation (*P*, 62). For that reason the myriad claimants to the pragmatist mantle throughout the last century have been acting very much in the spirit of James's own understanding of what pragmatism means, and my own sketches of forms of pragmatist experimentation are intended to suggest some of its many dimensions rather than to define or delimit it. Nor will I discuss here pragmatism in literature or the arts, even though many of the most important writers and artists of the last century have expressed their debts to pragmatism. That is a story for another time.

Evidence indicating the influence of pragmatism on American politics in the early decades of the twentieth century is complex but unmistakable.<sup>7</sup> In the presidential election of 1912, both the platforms of the Progressive Party of Theodore Roosevelt and the Democratic Party of Woodrow Wilson reflected the impact of James's ideas. James and Roosevelt had a history. They became acquainted during TR's sophomore year at Harvard in 1877–78, when he studied comparative anatomy and physiology of vertebrates with James as part of his plan for a career in science. During that year, when his father's death plunged TR into a depression that he worked through with outbursts of various kinds, he engaged in spirited exchanges with James of the sort for which he later became famous. TR's pugnacity initially amused James, but when it matured into bellicose imperialism he denounced his former student.

James's anti-imperialism deserves our attention now, at a time when our nation is wrestling with the agonizing consequences of another war justified in terms reminiscent of those used a century ago. In a letter to the *Boston Evening Transcript* on March 1, 1899, James condemned his nation for suppressing indigenous forces in the Philippines at the end of the Spanish-American War. "We are now openly engaged in crushing out the sacred thing in this great human world—the attempt of a people long enslaved to attain to the possession of itself, to organize its laws and government, to be free to follow its internal destinies according to its own ideals." James concluded with a stinging attack on everyone involved: "Could there be a more damning indictment of that whole bloated idol termed 'modern civilization' than this amounts to? Civilization is, then, the big, hollow, resounding, corrupting, sophisticating, confusing torrent of mere brutal

momentum and irrationality that brings forth fruits like this." After TR delivered a defense of American policy a month later in his speech "The Strenuous Life," James wrote a reply in the *Boston Evening Transcript* on April 15, 1899, that can be read as an early draft of *Pragmatism*. American imperialism, he wrote, was born of an abstract doctrine of national strength conceived without ever taking into account the people of the Philippines themselves "face to face as a concrete reality." It illustrated just the sort of thinking James decried in *Pragmatism*. "Of all the naked abstractions that were ever applied to human affairs, the outpourings of Governor Roosevelt's soul in this speech would seem the very nakedest." TR, James wrote, seemed frozen in "early adolescence"—the state in which James had first encountered him. He "gushes over war as the ideal condition of human society, for the manly strenuousness which it involves, and treats peace as a condition of blubberlike and swollen ignobility." Why? TR never felt the need to explain: "Not a word of the cause,—one foe is as good as another, for aught he tells us; not a word of the conditions of success." James's fury seethed through his concluding words. "To enslave a weak but heroic people, or to brazen out a blunder, is a good enough cause, it appears, for Colonel Roosevelt. To us Massachusetts anti-imperialists, who have fought in better causes, it is not quite good enough."<sup>8</sup> Having delivered a speech in 1897 at the dedication of the monument to Robert Gould Shaw and the Massachusetts 54th, the regiment of African American soldiers that included among its officers James's younger brother Wilky, the regiment that was sacrificed in the bloody and futile battle of Fort Wagner, James was sickened by TR's glorification of war for no purpose other than the "hollow abstractions" of national greatness. The nation needed no such pointless displays; it needed instead the "civic courage" of those who could put the common good above their own self-interest, the sensibility that fueled progressivism at its best.<sup>9</sup>

By 1912, however, through James's student Herbert Croly, whose book *The Promise of American Life* shaped TR's Bull Moose campaign, and through Wilson's adviser Louis Brandeis, a legal pragmatist known as "the people's lawyer," James's social and political sensibility was helping to set the tone of domestic political debates during the crucial years before America's entry into World War I. From its origins in "the Wisconsin idea" of consumer protection, economic regulation, and a graduated income tax, the progressive reform movement that transformed public life at the local, the state, and eventually the national level represented a deliberate departure from the dogmatic claims of laissez-faire and Marxist-inspired ideologies and a conscious commitment to incremental reform and democratically guided experimentation in public policy. When Croly joined the economist Walter Weyl and another of James's students, Walter Lippmann, in 1914 as founding editors of *The New Republic*, they made no secret of their commitment to pragmatism, a commitment that Croly himself made even more explicit in *Progressive Democracy* (1914). They urged discarding inherited formulas and testing proposals in practice, thereby transmitting to a wider public the radical ideas advanced by the precocious Lippmann in the most Jamesian of his books, *A Preface to Politics* (1913) and *Drift and Mastery* (1914).

As Lippmann explained to his English friend Graham Wallas, whose Fabian

socialism appealed to him as much because of its eclecticism as its radicalism, his aim in *A Preface to Politics* was to demonstrate the fruitfulness for politics of James's idea of uncertainty. Paraphrasing James, Lippmann contended that the "great difficulty in all complicated thinking" is "to understand that the concept is a rough instrument" that we use when we lack "adequate perception." "James always felt," Lippmann continued in his letter to Wallas, that "the epistemological problem, especially," has "tremendous consequences" for political practice. As Lippmann put it in *A Preface to Politics*, we can no longer "expect to meet our problems with a few inherited ideas" and "uncriticized assumptions." Instead "our primary care must be to keep the habits of mind flexible and adapted to the movement of real life," precisely the argument at the center of *Pragmatism*.<sup>10</sup>

*Drift and Mastery* was Lippmann's plea for using the capacities of government to investigate and solve problems rather than shackling it according to the dictates of left- or right-wing ideologies. Scientific research could generate reliable information, and educated public servants attuned to Jamesian ideas might apply that knowledge to experiments designed to ameliorate the unprecedented problems facing a culture undergoing urbanization and industrialization. "Rightly understood science is the culture under which people can live forward in the midst of complexity, and treat life not as something given but as something to be shaped." Although Lippmann later came to doubt the capacity of the people to think either pragmatically or even responsibly, in his youth he had greater confidence in democracy because he equated it with science: "There is nothing accidental then in the fact that democracy in politics is the twin-brother of scientific thinking. They had to come together. As absolutism falls, science arises. It is self-government. For when the impulse which overthrows kings and priests and unquestioned creeds becomes self-conscious we call it science." Lippmann did not promise easy answers. To the contrary, he urged pragmatic experimentation. "The only rule to follow," he wrote, "is that of James: 'Use concepts when they help, and drop them when they hinder understanding.'" In other words, "Mastery in our world cannot mean any single, neat, and absolute line of procedure."<sup>11</sup>

Croly and Lippmann preferred Roosevelt to Wilson in 1912. They judged Wilson a less attractive candidate because they worried that his apparent commitment to small government might rule out some of the experiments Roosevelt seemed eager to try. For that reason their shift to Wilson after his election surprised many of those who knew them or read them. But consistent with their pragmatism, the editors of *The New Republic* turned enthusiastic when Wilson proved much more willing to explore unconventional pathways than they had anticipated. In fact, Wilson's domestic policies during his first term in office came closer to the programs of the Progressive Party platform than to the Jeffersonian shibboleths of many of the Democrats he courted to win his party's nomination. As president of Princeton Wilson had attacked numerous old-boy traditions, ranging from the shape of the curriculum to the centrality of Presbyterianism and the social clout of the undergraduate eating clubs. He appointed the first Jew and the first Catholic to the Princeton faculty. He described his approach as academic reformer in a single word: "expediency."<sup>12</sup> As governor of New Jersey he

had instituted a direct primary to challenge the power of political machines, and he had created a public utilities commission to identify and protect the public interest. Given that background, Wilson's commitment as president to the quintessential progressive reforms, a graduated income tax and independent regulatory agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission, should not have come as a surprise. Wilson's record of innovation first brought him to prominence in the academy and in state politics, and that willingness to experiment likewise manifested itself in his domestic agenda as president.

Wilson's debts to James are only now coming to light. From Wilson's days as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins, when he read and responded enthusiastically to the radical social democratic writings of the economist Richard T. Ely, through his own writings about American government and his terms as president of Princeton and as governor of New Jersey, Wilson showed a growing interest in experimentation masked by his respect for thinkers such as Walter Bagehot and Edmund Burke. Most commentators have missed the precise contours of Wilson's admiration for such thinkers, whose interest in moderate reform has been eclipsed by their opposition to revolution. Just as his teacher Ely defended himself from accusations of socialism in Wisconsin during the 1890s by differentiating his interest in progressive reforms from the revolutionary slogans and strategies of American Marxists, so Wilson could simultaneously value Burke's interest in organic change and nevertheless advocate significant transformations in American democratic government. Wilson's familiarity with James's ideas has escaped the attention of historians more interested in dissecting Wilson's political maneuverings than in understanding the ideas that shaped his sensibility.

Wilson cited James's "will to believe" in his own public addresses. His correspondence with his fiancée Ellen Axson, who became not only his wife but the center of his emotional life until her tragic death in 1914, reveals their intimate acquaintance with James's crucial essays "What Makes a Life Significant?" and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," essays that exerted a lasting influence on both of them. If Wilson's own ethics owed a debt to Ellen, as his biographers have noted, both of them clearly owed a debt to James, whose emphasis on the importance of yoking strenuous effort to ethical ideals—and whose acute awareness of the tragic incompatibility of competing moral principles—manifested themselves in Wilson's campaigns for political and economic reform. Wilson started out as a champion of *laissez faire*, and when circumstances required it (as in Democratic Party primary campaigns) he could still sing hymns to competition. But from the time he entered Johns Hopkins until his death, Wilson showed increasing appreciation of the distance his nation had traveled from its agrarian origins and of the consequences of that journey for social and economic policy. Democracy in an urban industrial age, Wilson came to realize, required active intervention by government both through taxation and through regulation. His operating principles as governor and president were those he had followed at Princeton, weighing what was desirable—in this case intervention in the economy to bring about greater equality—against what was possible politically. In politics and economics he became increasingly impatient with inherited formulas and increasingly com-

mitted to the pragmatist principle of experimentation. The same qualities that attracted James's personal friend Louis Brandeis to Wilson, his rigorous mind, his uneasiness with the shibboleths of backward-looking agrarians within the Democratic Party, and his passion for exposing the excessive power of big business, ultimately won him the support of other self-proclaimed Jamesians such as Croly and Lippmann and America's most prominent pragmatist philosopher (after James's death in 1910), John Dewey.<sup>13</sup>

Wilson's commitment to such an experimental politics, fully consistent with the arguments that progressives such as Brandeis, Croly, and Lippmann derived from James and Dewey, is seldom acknowledged today primarily because the popular image of Wilson has been so powerfully shaped by his disastrous failures in foreign policy. First in his ham-handed dealings with Mexico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and the Russian Revolution, then in his final tragedy after he returned from Versailles, Wilson failed to follow or secure the principles of democracy for which he claimed the United States was going to war in 1917. The reasons for his dramatic change from flexible experimentation at home to unyielding dogmatism concerning the rest of the world remain a puzzle. They involve political, psychological, and (late in his life) even physiological factors too intricate to discuss here. But the doctrinaire, unsuccessful, and unwell Wilson of the post-stroke period should not cause us to lose sight of the pragmatist Wilson who inspired Brandeis, Croly, Lippmann, and Dewey during the first six years of his presidency. Reading history backward makes it easy to miss the dimensions of Wilson's presidency that the pragmatists among his contemporaries recognized and admired. From the perspective of 1917, however, it was much less clear than it became later that Wilson's plans for "peace without victory" and a world "safe for democracy," plans fully consistent with the ideas of other American pragmatist progressives such as those clustered around the then-progressive *New Republic*, would vanish in the smoke of resurgent nationalism in Europe and the fog of isolationism at home. Randolph Bourne's now-celebrated critique of Dewey, who endorsed Wilson's rationale for entering World War I because of the effects Dewey thought likely to result from American participation, looks persuasive to us now for the same reasons it persuaded Dewey after Wilson's plans had failed.<sup>14</sup>

But that outcome was hardly inevitable. Consider a modest counterfactual hypothesis. Had Wilson remained a pragmatist before leaving for France, he might have worked to bring along his Republican critics as shrewdly as Franklin Roosevelt was later to do before and during World War II. Had Wilson remained a pragmatist in Paris and when he returned to negotiate with the Senate in Washington, he might have persuaded both his European allies that "peace without victory" was a better strategy for them in the long term and his critics at home that joining the League of Nations would contribute to America's national security. Had Wilson shown the same commitment to pragmatism in foreign policy after 1918 that he had shown in domestic politics (although not in his dealings with Latin America) up to that point, and had a vigorous League of Nations succeeded in preventing the tragic spiral that brought Hitler to power, Wilson's legacy would look very different indeed.<sup>15</sup>

Self-proclaimed pragmatists could reach opposite conclusions concerning the meaning of pragmatism for politics, as the Bourne-Dewey debate illustrates. So does the difference between the positions on the war taken by two other influential and equally self-conscious pragmatists, James's and Dewey's close friend Jane Addams and James's student W. E. B. Du Bois. Addams earned considerable notoriety (and, eventually, a Nobel Peace Prize) for opposing American participation in WWI and advocating international cooperation afterward, whereas Du Bois judged the war as Dewey did and argued, moreover, that honorable military service in the war might enable African Americans to escape the opprobrium of racism.<sup>16</sup> Although of course no single individuals can be considered emblematic of social movements as multifaceted as those advocating equal rights for women and blacks, the pragmatists Addams and Du Bois played central roles in those movements.

Addams frequently invoked the importance of pragmatism for her life and work. She emphasized the role Dewey played in shaping the programs and sensibilities of Hull House, the first and most influential of the many settlement houses that emerged during the progressive reform era. Such settlements served a variety of purposes. Not only did they offer alternative social services to those provided by Democratic Party machines and access to education, health care, and recreation for recent immigrants to American cities, they also offered employment and career paths to many members of the first generation of college-educated American women.

The lines of influence between pragmatism and the founder of Hull House ran in both directions. Visits to Hull House helped Dewey decide he should accept a professorship at the University of Chicago, frequent lectures there helped him hone his ideas about schools and social psychology, and he often cited the educational programs of Hull House as models of pragmatist education. From 1897 until he left for New York in 1904, Dewey served on the board of trustees of Hull House, and Addams cited both his ideas and his personal influence in many of her speeches and writings.<sup>17</sup>

Addams's relation to James was marked by a similar reciprocity of influence, although it began somewhat later and focused primarily on questions of war and peace. In response to the U.S. suppression of the indigenous efforts at self-government in the Philippines at the end of the Spanish-American War, James and Addams both developed arguments concerning the injustice of imperialism and the need to redirect bellicose human impulses toward less destructive ends. In *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Addams explained her hope that the interaction of different immigrant communities in American cities would breed a cosmopolitan sensibility that might make outbreaks of war less likely. In Chicago in 1898 and in Boston in 1904, Addams and James appeared on the same platform to advance that argument, and both of them understood that they shared a common conception of the reasons for opposing war. In her introduction to *Newer Ideals of Peace*, a book that James greeted with admiration, she contrasted the reasons for her aversion to war with what she called "the older, dovelike ideal." She championed peace for explicitly pragmatist reasons: she believed "the newer, more ag-

gressive ideals of peace" would be embraced not because of a basic commitment to the principles of pacifism but because of the positive results of developing what she called "a moral substitute for war." Although James provided a more dramatic formulation of their common argument in the lecture he published as "The Moral Equivalent of War," they articulated versions of the same pragmatist position: given the increasingly devastating destructiveness of warfare and the apparently ineradicable human inclination toward conflict, twentieth-century Americans must find an alternative outlet.<sup>18</sup>

W. E. B. Du Bois played a role in the twentieth-century struggle for black equality no less central than that of Addams in the settlement house movement, and he too explicitly credited James with shaping his sensibility. While a student at Harvard, Du Bois later wrote, he was "a devoted follower of James at the time he was developing his pragmatic philosophy," and he credited James with converting him from "the sterilities of scholastic philosophy to realist pragmatism." Du Bois decided to devote his own talents to the social sciences and to journalism, becoming the first African American to earn a Ph.D. at Harvard, the only African American among the founders of the NAACP, and the first editor of that organization's journal, *The Crisis*. Whereas many members of his generation derived from Darwin's followers the lesson that whites and blacks were categorically different, Du Bois took a different path. He reasoned, drawing on James and his other teachers, including the Harvard historian Albert Bushnell Hart and the German historical economists with whom Du Bois studied in Berlin, that all cultural forms and judgments—including race consciousness—emerge from historical processes. For that reason all cultural norms should be subjected to critical scrutiny, as James urged in *Pragmatism*, without preconceived or inherited notions about the nature, let alone the superiority, of any one nation, creed, or race.<sup>19</sup> Although Du Bois, like Addams, drew on multiple sources, and although the experiences that radicalized him after WWI carried him away from pragmatism and toward Marxism, there is clear and convincing evidence that his influential early writings and political engagement reflected the ideas he learned from James.

James's pragmatism was equally decisive in the emergence of a multi-stranded discourse about racial and ethnic identity and cultural pluralism that has persisted into the present. From his 1890 *Principles of Psychology* through his Hibbert Lectures at Oxford in 1908, later published as *A Pluralistic Universe*, James insisted that experience is inescapably relational and value-laden. Although those ideas did not come into focus in *Pragmatism*, and James even contended that his philosophy of radical empiricism was distinct from his pragmatism, his phenomenological conception of immediate experience underlay everything he wrote. It figured especially prominently in the writings of his students who addressed issues of color and culture, notably Robert Park, Alain Locke, and Horace Kallen, whose writings helped set the terms of debate on these issues throughout the interwar period. James claimed that selves are constituted, within particular cultural matrices marked by particular constellations of values, through interactions with other similarly constituted individuals. In essays such as "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings" and "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," James traced

the significance of those insights for America's diverse and democratic culture. Robert Park, after working as a muckraking journalist in Chicago and joining with Dewey on the short-lived progressive periodical *Thought News*, enrolled at Harvard in 1898 to study with James. In class one day Park heard James read a draft of "On a Certain Blindness," which made such a powerful impression that Park quoted it repeatedly in his own writing and teaching and recommended, "in preference to anything else that James or anyone else has written," that it be required reading "for sociologists and for teachers." Park later wrote that "On a Certain Blindness" was "the most radical statement of the difficulty and necessity" of overcoming the inability to see the significance of others' lives. Achieving mutual "recognition," Park wrote, is a prerequisite to "communication in a society composed of individuals as egocentric as most of us naturally are."<sup>20</sup>

After Park completed his studies in Germany, he returned to serve as James's assistant for a year before spending ten years working at the institution that Park considered a radical pragmatist educational experiment, Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute. Park then joined the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, where he worked to collect and disseminate data concerning American cities that he believed prerequisite to social policies conceived pragmatically and democratically. Among the many students he and the other Chicago sociologists trained were notable African Americans such as Charles C. Johnson, who completed most of the work that went into *The Negro in Chicago* before moving to New York, where he became the editor of the magazine *Opportunity* and one of the most influential figures in the Harlem Renaissance. In his teaching Park had emphasized the unique role of the arts, particularly novels, in awakening the sympathetic identification with others that James had identified in "On a Certain Blindness." In an obituary he wrote when Park died in 1944, Johnson recalled Park's insistence that his students understand—and work to overcome—"that blindness to the meaning of other people's lives to which James referred." Johnson carried that confidence concerning the democratic reformist potential of aesthetic experience with him to *Opportunity* and sustained it as president of Fisk University. Johnson later wrote approvingly that Dewey, to whose work Park had first introduced him, "redefines faith in terms of attitudes, as 'tendency toward action.'" Paraphrasing James's argument in *Pragmatism*, Johnson proclaimed that "adherence to any body of doctrines and dogmas, based upon a specific authority, as adherence to any set of beliefs, signifies distrust in the power of experience to provide in its own on-going movement, the needed principles of belief and action." The pragmatists, in Johnson's words, urged instead "a new faith in experience itself as the sole ultimate authority," a commitment to flexibility that had already proven problematical in debates concerning the relation between white and African American culture.<sup>21</sup>

The pragmatists' perspectives on experience and the power of art—not only to help awaken sympathy but to fuel democratic social change and erode racial and ethnic enmity—also surfaced in the work of other writers directly influenced by James. Horace Kallen, a rabbi's son who served as James's teaching assistant at Harvard two years after Park departed, became well acquainted with one of the

students in James's class, Alain Locke, an African American who insisted to the skeptical Kallen that their racial difference should make no difference. Two years later Kallen and Locke, on fellowships at Oxford, forged a friendship from their shared animosity toward the white American Southerners who refused to include their fellow Rhodes scholar, Locke, in their Thanksgiving celebration. Kallen and Locke were together in Oxford when James delivered the Hibbert Lectures there; his own pluralism clearly shaped their ideas. Consider a metaphor James employed in an essay published in a 1904 issue of *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* under the title "A World of Pure Experience" (*ERE*, 21–44) in which he termed his position "a mosaic philosophy." He then noted that whereas in "actual mosaics the pieces are held together by their bedding," in his "radical empiricism there is no bedding; it is as if the pieces clung together by their edges, the transitions experienced between them forming their cement." So, thinking in terms of the distinct groups comprising American culture, one could reason (as Kallen and Locke, if in somewhat different ways, both did) that the edges, the transitions, and the clinging together do the work. Yet James conceded that the metaphor is misleading, "for in actual experience the more substantive and the more transitive parts run into each other continuously, there is in general no separateness needing to be overcome." In the hybridities of ethnic and racial interaction, James's students could infer, lies the possibility for "Experience itself," as James put it, "to grow by its edges." Just as "one moment proliferates into the next," so "Life is in the transitions as much as in the terms of connection; often, indeed, it seems to be there more emphatically." Whereas most early twentieth-century American writers upheld a more or less static and vaguely Anglo-Protestant norm as the standard according to which all immigrant groups should be judged and toward which all Americans should aspire (the "melting pot" model), Kallen, Locke, and Du Bois all followed their mentor James in challenging that image. They urged Americans to view identity as more fluid and the United States as the product of a distinctive—and incessant—juxtaposition, jostling, and mixture of diverse races, religions, ethnicities, and nationalities.<sup>22</sup>

The term "cultural pluralism" itself entered American discourse through the efforts of Kallen, who was born in Germany and raised in an orthodox Jewish household, and whose consciousness of his own ethnic and religious identity is usually identified as the source of his insights. But from Kallen's perspective his ideas originated in the "commingling" of the ideas of two of his Harvard mentors: on the one hand, the Anglophile literary critic Barrett Wendell, who alerted the assimilated and non-practicing Kallen to the richness of his Jewish cultural tradition; and on the other, the hero of Kallen's first book, *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life* (1914). Kallen adopted James's philosophical ideas of consciousness, experience, toleration, pluralism, and experimentation, from which he forged the theory of cultural pluralism with which he became identified. Rather than insisting that one's identity is always fixed by one's grandparents, to use a formulation often associated with Kallen, or offering his now equally familiar image of American society as a symphony in which various ethnic groups represent different groups of instruments, Kallen at first sought

merely to emphasize the distinctive cultural resources available to individuals from different backgrounds as they shape their own lives and help shape the culture in which they live. Far from essentializing ethnicity, in other words, Kallen viewed it pragmatically, as his later critiques of Zionism made clear. Although he endorsed the idea of a Jewish homeland, Kallen bristled when he saw Zionism applied as a litmus test (or wielded as a club) by those with less flexible or pragmatic conceptions of the idea. Locke, although he remained “a reluctant race man,” gradually grew to share Kallen’s appreciation of the particularities of individual racial and ethnic traditions. Indeed, whereas Kallen’s model remained Eurocentric, Locke joined with other contributors to the landmark volume he edited, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (1925), to celebrate the distinctive contributions of African Americans to the culture of the United States. Although sharp disagreements concerning the singularity of the black experience and the relative insularity of African American culture marked the debates among both blacks and whites during the 1920s (as of course they have ever since), the contributions of Du Bois, Johnson, and Locke—all fueled by pragmatism—inaugurated the twentieth-century African American challenge to previous assumptions concerning the inferiority of African American culture. Together with arguments from anthropology advanced by Dewey’s Columbia colleague and ally Franz Boas and their students Ruth Benedict and Randolph Bourne, these writers used James’s ideas of experience and pluralism to unsettle prevailing assumptions about race and ethnicity.

Since the 1960s Bourne has often been cited for his critique of the “war intellectuals” Dewey and Lippmann, who supported Wilson’s policies in World War I, but he was equally well known during his brief life for his contributions to other debates concerning American culture. In his brilliant essay “Trans-national America” (1916), Bourne cited Kallen’s work and presented himself as an ally in the struggle against forced assimilation of immigrants into a preexisting American mold. But the thrust of his essay differed from the cultural pluralism Kallen advocated. Bourne contrasted the cosmopolitan sensibility available to individuals who shrugged off a single ethnic or cultural background to the provincialism of those locked in a single enclave or simple way of thinking—those whose identity was fixed by their grandparents or who played but a single instrument in the American symphony. Two decades of sharp ideological debates over multiculturalism have made the cultural pluralist Kallen and the cosmopolitan Bourne seem quite distinct to us. In the context of early twentieth-century American culture, however, their shared respect for cultural diversity and for the plasticity of identity and culture—as well as their shared debts to pragmatism—made their similarities appear far more significant than their differences. Although other routes besides the one that Kallen and Bourne followed led to an appreciation of cultural difference, it is undeniable that they—like Park and Johnson, Du Bois and Locke—chose to emphasize the debts they owed to James’s pragmatism.<sup>23</sup>

During the 1920s James’s version of pragmatism, like many other aspects of prewar culture, faded from the spotlight. Lippmann began his steady march away from James toward Aquinas, and Du Bois from James toward Marx. Dewey

emerged as the most prominent pragmatist philosopher and the most steadfast champion of democracy. Yet pragmatism remained an important influence in politics and loomed even larger in law during the interwar period. The next Democratic Party nominee to be elected president after Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, learned from Wilson’s successes and from his failures. FDR shared Wilson’s preference for piecemeal experimentation over rigid doctrine; the eclecticism of the New Deal has earned FDR both admiration and ridicule as a “pragmatist” from many writers who would not know William from Jesse James or John from Thomas Dewey. But the evidence is now clear that from his election in 1932 until his death in 1945, FDR developed a firm commitment to plans and programs that emerged from the work of professional social scientists in his administration whose familiarity with and allegiance to pragmatist philosophy is not in doubt. Dewey in particular was widely admired by some influential members of FDR’s inner circle and by less prominent members of New Deal agencies, particularly those on the National Resources Planning Board. Dewey’s arguments for experimenting with radical democratic decision making filtered into some of the programs that took shape and many of the more ambitious plans that Congress refused to adopt during the 1930s and 1940s. The failure of FDR’s 1944 plan for a Second Bill of Rights, which would have committed the United States to policies of full employment, public housing, national health care, and other aspects of what has come to be known as “the welfare state,” is clear. The reasons for its failure are complex. There is little agreement concerning what such programs would have accomplished, or why they were not adopted in the United States, especially since the G.I. Bill did institute precisely such programs for returning veterans, and most European nations moved rapidly after WWII to secure just such guarantees for all citizens. As political scientists, legal scholars, and historians now scrutinize FDR’s proposals for the postwar period with greater care, it has become clear that some of his closest advisers were led to their distinctive approach to these thorny issues because of the influence of James’s, and especially Dewey’s, pragmatism.<sup>24</sup>

Some of the most prominent champions of the New Deal came from the legal community, where legal realism became particularly influential during the 1930s. Usually associated with the jurisprudence of Roscoe Pound, Learned Hand, and Felix Frankfurter, legal realism descended directly from the writings of James’s friends Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. and Louis Brandeis, the latter of whom Wilson nominated for the US Supreme Court in 1916 in a very controversial appointment. Legal pragmatists denied that the law conforms to reason, to morality, or to any unchanging principles. They insisted that it must change with changing conditions and changing expectations. In other words, law should be a flexible tool adapted to addressing new challenges, an experimental form of problem solving fully consistent with James’s recommendations in *Pragmatism*. Brandeis and his protégé Frankfurter were the most visible proponents of a pragmatist jurisprudence on the Supreme Court, but different versions of legal pragmatism had been worked out long before, first by the cynical anti-democrat Holmes, then by the unwavering democrat Brandeis, and afterward by other less widely known judges and legal scholars.<sup>25</sup>



The philosophical dimensions of the legal realist critique were most fully elaborated in the interwar writings of law professors at Yale and Columbia. Scholars such as Karl Llewellyn, Jerome Frank, Thurman Arnold, William O. Douglas, Felix Cohen, Adolf Berle, Robert Lee Hale, Walter Hamilton, and James Landis challenged the legal formalism still being taught in many law schools and still being practiced on the bench. These legal pragmatists directed their fire particularly against the sacred status of property and contract, which they insisted were contingent on public policy rather than protected by the Constitution against any legislative challenges. Some legal realists remained in law schools. Others ended up in New Deal agencies, where they translated their ideas into practice. Still others, most notably Douglas, continued the assault on fixed legal ideas by working as judges to extend legal pragmatism from administrative law and economic regulation to the domains of conservation, civil liberties, and civil rights.<sup>26</sup>

But of course pragmatism in politics and law did not go unchallenged. To the contrary. Particularly with the rise of communism and fascism, critics of pragmatism charged that the flexibility pragmatists prized opened the door to a pernicious relativism that made impossible the principled resistance to evil. James's death in 1910 removed his voice from these debates, but many critics on the right and the left charged his allies and heirs—especially Dewey, the most visible and prolific pragmatist—with having sapped the vital strength of American democratic culture. Whereas pragmatists questioned dogmatism and urged experimentation, the struggles against fascism and communism persuaded many Americans that a dangerous world requires vigilant fidelity to fixed truths. Although through the 1950s many prominent intellectuals, from Reinhold Niebuhr and David Riesman to C. Wright Mills and Richard Hofstadter, continued to invoke James's ideas in relation to everything from religious faith to anti-intellectualism, pragmatism became increasingly suspect as the demand for certainty became increasingly urgent.<sup>27</sup>

In the four decades since the late 1960s, when so many aspects of American culture came under attack, the yearning for certitude and the accompanying temptations of self-righteousness have been particularly strong in U.S. politics. The early student radicalism that emerged with the manifesto known as the Port Huron Statement showed signs of a significant debt to pragmatism. The faculty members and graduate students at the University of Michigan who most directly influenced Tom Hayden and his fellow founders of Students for a Democratic Society were steeped in the democratic radicalism of John Dewey; the aversion to dogma and the commitment to experimentation manifested in the Port Huron Statement extended the central arguments of the early twentieth-century pragmatists into the post-WWII world.<sup>28</sup>

But that radical political sensibility from the outset stood in tension with a different set of impulses, a defiant repudiation of authority and an enthusiastic embrace of authenticity understood as the satisfaction of individual desires. The counterculture thus contained the potential for renewing the crusades of progressive pragmatists focused on the ideal of egalitarian social justice, on the one hand, and the strikingly different emphasis of the catch phrase “if it feels good,

do it,” on the other. That latter formula not only parodied the strenuous ethics of James and Dewey but substituted the escape from discipline for the longer-term project of validating hypotheses against the resistant stuff of the world, the bar against which James insisted from the beginning to the end of his writings that all truth claims must be tested.<sup>29</sup> Neither the Freudian left drawn to Herbert Marcuse or Norman O. Brown nor the varieties of the Civil Rights movement drawn to Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X, thinkers who had little in common with each other, showed any evidence of having been shaped by James's or Dewey's pragmatism. Even so, the backlash against a now legendary, larger-than-life army of cultural revolutionaries has set the terms of recent American public debate. In the stylized framework of the post-1960s culture wars, the early pragmatists have been recast as cultural relativists who undermined the core values of American life. Whereas James and Dewey saw themselves as contributing to the fulfillment of the American democratic project as they understood it, their critiques of dogma and their embrace of experimentation rendered pragmatism subversive in the eyes of those who prized fixed standards and stable authority.

On the right, the reassertion of unchanging truths in the realms of politics and culture meant an emphatic rejection of pragmatism. The unprecedentedly doctrinaire form of recent American conservatism that emerged with Barry Goldwater's 1964 candidacy for president, picked up momentum with Ronald Reagan's election as governor of California, and first crested with Reagan's election to the presidency in 1980, has been surging forward ever since. In the two terms of the presidency of George W. Bush, particularly since the bombing of the World Trade Center in 2001, we have witnessed the almost complete repudiation of evidence-based reasoning and the scientific model of trial and error, perhaps because such trials can indeed provide evidence of errors, which only the weak admit. In place of experimentation stands an increasingly brittle reliance on dogmas such as cutting taxes at home and slogans such as “staying the course” in the “war against terror” abroad—regardless of the consequences of turning a police action against renegade Islamists into a replay of the Cold War—doctrines that cannot be challenged without eliciting charges of allegedly un-American class warfare, cowardice, or treason.

In short, during the past three decades there have been few echoes of James's *Pragmatism* in the increasingly polarized world of American public life. Efforts to criticize the status quo on pragmatist grounds tend to be met with shrill responses from the extreme right and sometimes from the extreme left, neither of which shows much interest in the strategies recommended by pragmatists: the frank admission of uncertainty and the testing of hypotheses by trial and error. Modesty, tentativeness, and acknowledgment of the provisionality of all social policies have become endangered species in American politics. Those few politicians who have invoked the pragmatists explicitly, such as former New Jersey senator Bill Bradley, and those reformers and writers who have stressed the need to revitalize civil society have been maligned as temporizers by critics on both ends of the political spectrum. The doctrinaire right is locked into rigid commitments to the rewards of a so-called free market and a tightly regulated cul-

ture—except where economic activity is concerned. One part of the left, almost equally doctrinaire, seems locked almost as tightly into defending problematic social programs such as public assistance and public schools, and committed to rights-based, liberationist mantras at a time when increasingly large numbers of people lack the moral principles necessary to deal responsibly with others and the basic skills necessary to cope with the bewildering world they confront. Echoes of James's advice about cultivating respect for those with whom one disagrees, or trying to understand how one's opponents see the world, grow ever fainter in the escalating shrillness of political debate.<sup>30</sup>

For all those reasons, as well as for all the reasons having to do with the transformation of academic disciplines from philosophy to cultural studies, which I have discussed elsewhere and which are discussed in other essays in this volume, the resurgence of pragmatism in the late twentieth century came as a surprise. Early in that resurgence, I and others hoped that the return of a pragmatist sensibility in the academic community might signal a new progressive movement. Such hope has become much harder to sustain. Perhaps just as significant as the return of pragmatism in academic disciplines such as philosophy, however, has been the proliferation of pragmatisms in different domains of American life. In the remainder of this essay I will briefly survey six areas in which forms of pragmatism have shown signs of life in recent years. Some of the people involved explicitly invoke James, others Dewey, and others contemporary pragmatists such as Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, Hilary Putnam, or Cornel West. But all of them nevertheless claim the mantle, and show clear signs of the continuing influence, of the founders of the tradition; a brief glance at them should suggest how vibrant varieties of American pragmatism remain outside the realm of philosophy a century after the publication of *Pragmatism*.

I embark on this survey of current uses of pragmatism with misgivings. In another letter William wrote to his brother Henry, this one on September 8, 1907, he complained about some of the early responses to *Pragmatism*. Many readers seemed to assume that the book was “got up for the use of engineers, electricians and doctors, whereas it really grew up from a more subtle and delicate theoretic analysis of the function of knowing, than previous philosophers had been willing to make” (*CW*), III, 343–44).<sup>31</sup> It is a cliché that Americans are a “pragmatic people,” and I do not want to be understood as claiming that James's direct influence has ever been decisive in any of these areas. But neither should it be assumed that outside the small community of academic philosophers all references to James are uninformed or meaningless. Having myself written elsewhere about the philosophical issues involved in the resurgence of pragmatism, and confident that those issues will receive appropriate attention elsewhere in this volume, I will proceed to assess some of the other uses to which pragmatism has been put.

It might seem self-evident that in fields such as business, architecture, medicine, law, education, and environmentalism, a pragmatist sensibility understood as the testing of results in practice would be commonplace; the principles of James's pragmatism should be everywhere. According to prominent practitioners in each of those professions, however, the opposite is true. There are two reasons:

First, for reasons that will become apparent, there are serious questions involved in deciding what it means for ideas to “work” in each of these domains. Second, pragmatism has always appealed above all to mavericks, to those like James and Dewey who stood outside the mainstream and raised critical questions about standard practices. Were pragmatism ever to become orthodoxy, it might cease to serve the purpose its founders had in mind, its potential as a lever for unsettling conventional wisdom.<sup>32</sup>

Invocations of pragmatism in the realm of corporate management are nothing new. Ever since, to use the image of labor historian David Montgomery, a manager first tried to insert his own brain under the workman's cap, consultants have been aiming to improve the efficiency of corporations. Historians have disagreed about whether Frederick Winslow Taylor's time-management studies were intended to streamline production and save needless effort or merely to control those at the bottom of the pecking order. But there is little doubt that Brandeis advocated “scientific management” because he thought everyone involved would benefit from the careful application of pragmatist methods to the organization of labor. Although some thought behaviorist psychology marked the flowering of James's insights into the link between physical and emotional responses, the cynical application of such insights only to manipulate workers more effectively betrayed James's underlying purpose. So varied were the uses to which techniques of business management were put that generalizing is impossible. Suffice to say that by the time Peter Drucker wrote *The Practice of Management* in 1954, many critics viewed strategies of “democratic leadership” and “participative management” that can be traced to Deweyan social democratic impulses as oxymoronic within the framework of corporate culture.<sup>33</sup>

More recently, Nitin Nohria of the Harvard Business School has contrasted the recommendations James offered in *Pragmatism* to the standard—and distinctly non-pragmatic—practices of most U.S. corporations. From Nohria's perspective, the recent lagging performance of the American economy, the widely acknowledged “competitive decline” of American firms, stems from “the failure of U.S. management to address its most serious problem: a lack of pragmatic judgment.” Nohria skewers managers' tendency to rely uncritically on “ready-made answers instead of searching for creative solutions”; he offers James's pragmatism as the antidote to this serious condition. Managers of American companies, according to Nohria, frequently fall for three faulty strategies. First, they tinker with familiar “off-the-shelf” approaches that have already proven to be failures. Second, managers adopt the latest fad, the “flavor of the month” that promises immediate results although it has never been tested. Finally, other companies decide to try all available options at once, an eclectic approach almost guaranteed to end in chaos rather than coherent management. Nohria recommends instead “a return to pragmatism as espoused by the nineteenth-century American pragmatists: to judge any idea by its practical consequences, by seeing what it allows you to do, rather than by chasing after an elusive notion of truth.” He quotes James's observation that “[t]heories are instruments, not answers to enigmas in which we can rest,” and he urges managers to adopt that “pragmatic attitude” toward the

problems they confront. Nohria points out that James considered all problem-solving strategies context-specific rather than universal in their applicability, and he recommends that managers must be alert to “both the macro and micro—from the cultural milieu of a host country, for example, to the personalities of employees on a management team.” Pragmatist managers “have a keen sense of the company’s history, including the successes and failures of past management programs,” knowledge that enables them to avoid the three sorts of failure noted above. They know well the entire range of a company’s resources, from “physical assets to human capital, which gives them the ability to judge what is possible in addition to what they might consider desirable in the abstract.” Moreover, strategies adopted according to these pragmatist principles must constantly be reevaluated to measure their continuing adequacy as circumstances change. Nohria cites the success some firms have experienced with “town-meeting-like settings” that “fostered a sense of community while ensuring the visibility of individual contributions.” Such public settings not only generated new ideas that could be discussed and evaluated, they also “forced reticent managers to face up to pressures for change,” thereby nudging those reluctant to adopt pragmatist strategies to see their value rather than dismissing them out of hand as challenges to their own authority.

Pragmatist managers are resourceful improvisers, whom Nohria characterizes by invoking Claude Lévi-Strauss’s concept of the *bricoleur*, who reasons inductively from day-to-day experience and experiments creatively rather than attempting to apply abstract principles to concrete problems. For such pragmatist bricoleurs, “solutions are never fixed or final.” Nohria offers several examples of such managerial approaches, including Shikhar Ghosh, a partner at the Boston Consulting Group who is a “self-avowed pragmatist” and sees the principal difficulty of using management theory as the inability of most managers to act flexibly and adapt to changing conditions instead of getting stuck in comfortable but unsuccessful patterns. In Ghosh’s words, “Managing is a matter of constantly looking at the way you do things and adjusting the process to reflect your goals and resources. That’s pragmatism. You use the resources you have to get where you need to go.” Although it would be a wild exaggeration to contend that James’s pragmatism is pervasive in American business, because in many corporate cultures the bottom lines of profit and shareholder value are the only measures that matter, the awareness of at least some prominent practitioners of its persistent value as a critical tool seems clear enough.<sup>34</sup>

The notoriety of pragmatism at the turn of the twenty-first century also led to its discussion among architects and urban planners. But for reasons difficult to discern, it seems to me less clear that any of them has shown a sophisticated understanding of what the application of pragmatism to such domains might entail. Of course architects throughout the twentieth century experimented with styles that diverged from the standard repertoire descending from the classical, gothic, renaissance, and baroque vocabularies. Whether such innovative architects as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright actually drew valuable ideas from James and Dewey is less clear than that they tried to break the molds they were

given. Mid-century architects such as Bruce Goff and Herbert Greene did invoke James explicitly as a source of ideas in their critiques of the formulaic, unimaginative buildings springing up around America after WWII. One could argue that Greene in particular, by taking into account not only the site, materials, and functions of a building but also the character and aspirations of those who would occupy it, and by trying consciously to construct environments that make possible both expected and unexpected experiences of space, tried deliberately to design buildings that embodied James’s ideas of truth testing. But of course people and their needs and desires change constantly, in rhythms that even the most dynamic buildings cannot match; efforts to find architectural versions of the dynamism of music or of life necessarily encounter obstacles.

Buildings, like cities, emerge from the interactions between architects, engineers, funding sources, and those who will inhabit them. Inasmuch as architects seek to inform themselves about and incorporate the myriad and changing lives and values of all those who will experience what they create rather than designing according to a priori ideas or predetermined patterns, they can be seen, and have seen themselves, as operating in a Jamesian spirit.<sup>35</sup> But the method of truth testing that James addressed in *Pragmatism* cannot very easily be translated into the more or less fixed forms that buildings and cities assume. Of course architecture and urban planning more nearly embody pragmatist principles when conceived as a dynamic, integrative, and participatory process, as the influential developer James Rouse tried to do. But whether, to what extent, and for what reasons the products of that process themselves ought to be called “pragmatist” is another question.<sup>36</sup>

Pragmatism shows more promise as a method of critical analysis when wielded by physicians. Although James himself was trained at the Harvard Medical School, he never practiced medicine, in part because he found the primitive diagnostic techniques and even more primitive remedies available to physicians in the late nineteenth century so distant from the methods of science. According to psychiatrists such as David Brendel, the medical profession today still needs an injection of James’s pragmatism. Doctors tend to rely on “outmoded” ideas of evidence that draw a rigid distinction between human subjectivity and the natural world, an inclination that results in the formulaic application of prescribed cures, most often chemical, without paying sufficient attention to the phenomenology of health. Instead, Brendel argues in *Healing Psychiatry: Bridging the Science/Humanism Divide*, the medical profession needs to embrace what he calls “clinical pragmatism,” an approach resting on four pillars—practical, pluralistic, provisional, and participatory—all of which descend directly from the insights of the founders of pragmatism. First, rather than bull-headedly prescribing standard treatments in all cases, psychiatrists should concentrate on practical results for individual patients and acknowledge that the same approach does not work in all cases. Second, they should remain alert to the wide variety of options available rather than depending too heavily on common medications. Third, evidence from even the most rigorous double-blind tests should be seen as provisional rather than fixed, both because the tests are usually devised for certain purposes, with

certain outcomes in mind, and because further testing or experimentation with alternatives might always yield different results. Finally, patients should be invited to become active participants in devising their own treatments rather than subjected to the wisdom of omniscient clinicians. Medical science, according to Brendel, has tended to adopt “the mythology that we can observe the world independently of our own values,” and as a result there has been too much reliance on the supposedly objective facts of biochemistry and insufficient attention paid to the particular experience of each individual. Although Brendel cautions that “we need to be able to apply the science, of course,” he believes that renewed attention to James’s concept of pragmatic tests of truth can improve clinical training and practice.<sup>37</sup>

Arthur Kleinman, another psychiatrist involved with training physicians at the Harvard Medical School, likewise invokes James’s *Pragmatism* in his diagnosis of what ails medicine. In his eloquent study *What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger*, Kleinman recounts the stories of individuals whose life experiences illustrate the ways in which wrenching choices shape sensibilities that cannot simply be “cured” by psychiatry but are instead constituted by the pain occasioned by tragic outcomes. Like Brendel, Kleinman cautions his fellow physicians against assuming that the standard repertoire of medical responses can be more effective in dealing with such individuals than resources drawn from the traditions of religion and moral philosophy. In the chapter of *Pragmatism* in which James addressed religious faith—and of course in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*—he argued that scientists should pay less attention to interrogating evidence concerning the existence of the supernatural and more attention to evidence of the consequences of faith for believers. As Kleinman puts it, “The passion-laden, practical self is caught up in what I have called our local moral worlds, what William James called genuine reality. The reflective self is caught up in ethical deliberation and aspiration.” Bridging that gap, which Kleinman sees as the pragmatist strategy for coping with an intransigent and often tragic reality, requires understanding how selves negotiate the differences between the realm of abstraction and the “practical tasks of living.” For Kleinman, accomplishing this task no more involves the warm bath of wishful thinking than it did for James; instead it requires the hard work of acknowledging that “suffering, well-being, and the ethical practices that respond to human problems are constantly changing as local worlds change and as do we, the people in them, become something new and different.” Kleinman concludes, as Brendel does, that “simplistic distinctions between the objective and the subjective, the absolute and the relative, the right and the wrong, are no help and may even get us into deeper trouble.” Yet neither “is it at all sufficient to take up a position in which complexity, uncertainty, and undecidability negate the vexing questions themselves, covering over our own weaknesses and self-serving willingness to comply as long as we are comfortable and protected.” That Nietzschean path leads only to “cynicism and nihilism, and ultimately disables us and denies us the capability to change ourselves and our world.” Kleinman sees, as James did, that the search for answers involves the activity of living and choosing rather than merely the activity

of contemplation or theorizing. It is in the realm of individuals’ lived experience, with awareness of the range of meanings that they impute to their lives and to the cultures they inhabit rather than merely a sophisticated understanding of pharmaceuticals, that medicine in a pragmatist spirit is to be practiced.<sup>38</sup>

The fields in which pragmatism has had, and continues to have, the deepest impact are law and education, yet those are also among the fields in which the meaning of pragmatism has been most fiercely contested. Pragmatism been such an important factor in so many of the landmark judicial decisions of the twentieth century, including *West Coast Hotel v. Parrish* (1937) and *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and it plays such an important part in legal education at leading law schools today, that it is difficult to decide how to focus a brief discussion of its contemporary significance. Perhaps it is sufficient to note that across the spectrum of opinion within the law, from figures such as Duncan Kennedy in critical legal studies and Margaret Jane Radin in feminist jurisprudence on the left to Cass Sunstein and Akhil Amar in the center and Richard Posner on the right, many of the most prominent and influential participants in legal discourse emphasize the shaping role of pragmatism in American law throughout the twentieth century. The question in the law is not whether pragmatism matters, the question is what it means. For Sunstein, for example, pragmatism authorizes Deweyan deliberative democracy. That means in practice that judges should often exercise restraint. They should allow legislatures to experiment with diverse solutions whenever social disagreements are deep and unresolved and clear guidance from the Constitution is unavailable—as it so often is concerning issues that did not arise in eighteenth-century America. For Posner, by contrast, the pragmatic test of truth boils down to economic efficiency as determined in the unfettered marketplace through bargains struck by self-interested individuals.<sup>39</sup>

Instead of surveying rival forms of legal pragmatism, I want to focus on the practical consequences of dual commitments to pragmatism and feminism in the work of Joan Williams, a legal scholar who has become the most visible figure in the WorkLifeLaw (WLL) movement. This organization, born at American University in Washington, D.C., and now located at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, has developed from the growing awareness of an increasing number of scholars, lawyers, and ordinary working Americans that the workplace has become incompatible with the requirements of family life. Whereas the demands placed on exemplary employees, whose existences are thought to revolve around their jobs, have long been considerable, the intensification of those demands in recent decades has sparked a response. In her book *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What To Do about It*, Williams dissected “the ideal worker model” and demonstrated the ways in which it systematically disadvantages those workers—usually but not always women in their childbearing years—with family responsibilities that conflict with devotion to the demands of high-pressure jobs. The Center for WorkLifeLaw is a clearinghouse and a resource for those interested in filing lawsuits in those cases in which unavoidable conflicts between work and family responsibilities cause workers to be penalized or fired. Such cases, reflecting “family responsibilities discrimination,”

have increased nearly 400 percent in the last decade. The WLL report "Litigating the Maternal Wall: U.S. Lawsuits Charging Discrimination against Workers with Family Responsibilities," documents more than six hundred cases over three decades. Although many of the workers involved are mothers, other suits have been filed by males responsible for the care of children, parents, or spouses.<sup>40</sup>

This approach to sex discrimination, explicitly inspired by James's *Pragmatism*, is something new. In the 1960s many women lawyers adopted the stance of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Despite having finished at the top of her class at Harvard and Columbia Law Schools, Ginsburg was denied a clerkship and was unable to find a job. Nevertheless, speaking for a generation of women, Ginsburg declared in her confirmation hearings for the U.S. Supreme Court that a person's sex is rarely relevant to job performance. Thus, Ginsburg argued, treating women as equal to men would solve the problem of discrimination. The WLL position is less committed to the abstract ideal of equality and more pragmatist. Finding that fealty to the principle of anti-discrimination failed to address the problems women continue to face in the work place, and finding that not all men and not even all women—not even all working women—share the conviction that the differences between men and women are insignificant or irrelevant, Williams and the other legal activists at WLL have discovered that focusing on the consequences for men as well as women of the "ideal worker model" more effectively enables them to address the challenges of balancing work and family duties. The new policies concerning family leave now being instituted in many workplaces, ranging from elite law firms to discount stores, not only reflect changes in federal legislation. They also reflect the success of WLL in litigating cases of family responsibilities discrimination. In a self-conscious turn toward James's conception of truth in *Pragmatism*, Williams declares that "feminism does not represent a commitment to 'discover' eternal truths whose blinding light will persuade everyone." Instead, as James argued in his analysis of religion, wherever the evidence does not yield a definitive answer, we should be content to remain open to new evidence. In such domains, different people's experiences yield different truths. From a pragmatist perspective, it makes better sense to acknowledge that a plurality of truths (concerning the existence of God, for James, or concerning the essential quality or sameness of men and women, for Williams and WLL) exist than to declare categorically that the experiences of some people are simply false. To the extent that WLL succeeds over time in breaking down the "maternal wall" that keeps employers from extending to women the opportunities and the rewards available to "ideal workers" who happen to be men, particularly men who happen to be unburdened by family duties, the consequences of that change will provide particularly powerful evidence of the role pragmatism continues to play in twenty-first-century American life.<sup>41</sup>

The field of education has been no less contentious than the law and no less clearly shaped by pragmatism. James as well as Dewey wrote influential guides to education; both lectured extensively to teachers about translating their philosophical ideas into a new form of teaching. Dewey's tireless efforts, first at the University of Chicago, then at Columbia University, spawned generations of

teachers and administrators committed to varieties of "progressive education" as they understood it. Many studies have shown what went wrong. Dewey's own emphasis on rigor and his insistence on balancing the transmission of information—or "content"—with the training of skills was lost when his ideas about teaching, ideas that he shared with James, escaped from the classrooms of exceptional, and exceptionally well-trained, teachers into the classrooms of the often unimaginative and ill-prepared cadres who fanned out into America's schools. Debates about the adequacy of pragmatist education resemble debates about the adequacy of Christian ethics: neither has been tried outside a few select and usually short-lived experiments. We know that virtuoso teachers, such as those with whom Dewey worked at the laboratory school in Chicago, can bring to equally exceptional students the demanding, energizing, and all-absorbing experience that Dewey believed every school should provide. But just as Dewey believed that democracy could stave off the pressures that Max Weber identified—bureaucratization, rationalization, and disenchantment—so he believed that small-scale, well-funded, locally controlled schools could engage parents as well as students in shared educational endeavors that would give teachers the chance as well as the incentive to bring pragmatism into the classroom. When instead school systems consolidated, when some children were channeled into more "academic" and others into "vocational" tracks, when professionalizing educators increasingly monopolized decisions about methods and curricula and spawned a distinct class of administrators, and especially when taxpayers decided they would prefer to buy bigger cars and houses for themselves instead of paying for smaller classes and better-compensated teachers for their children, almost all the characteristics necessary for pragmatist education vanished. Yet the ideal of the student as an energetic, teacher-directed problem solver, like the ideal of the child-centered school as a place of teacher-led critical inquiry, survives; in the best public and private schools, it is even practiced.<sup>42</sup>

I can testify that pragmatism is as vibrant a presence in debates about higher education as it is in the fields of early-childhood, elementary, and secondary education. In the mid-1990s I took part in a lively conference at Rollins College that spawned a valuable book, *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*.<sup>43</sup> Since then I have participated in conversations sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Historical Association, Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Brandeis University, Wellesley College, and Harvard University devoted to the question of how American colleges can meet their goals of producing well-educated citizens. Those involved in those conversations have not taken for granted that we know the meaning of "well-educated" or that there is any obvious way to go about accomplishing that goal. Instead the means and the end are subjected to critical scrutiny and careful consideration of the evidence concerning what students do and do not learn in colleges today. In one of the most widely read books of recent years on this subject, *Our Underachieving Colleges*, former and current Harvard president Derek Bok makes available to his readers the evidence about what appears to work best: small, discussion-oriented classes that engage students with

demanding materials and require them both to master bodies of knowledge and to make independent, critical judgments about how to use it to solve problems on their own.<sup>44</sup>

In the last three years of deliberations at Harvard concerning reforms of undergraduate education, Bok's ideas and those of many others received the careful consideration of the faculty-student committees investigating different dimensions of the student experience. Nothing in Bok's book, and little in the reforms still being debated by the Harvard faculty, would have surprised William James. The principal changes are likely to include emphasis on the following: (1) balancing exposure to a wide range of disciplines with deeper learning in a particular field, the size and shape of that more focused study to be determined by faculty within departments rather than according to a single model; (2) education that occurs outside as well as inside the classroom, from off-campus service experiences and/or from intensive foreign study; (3) the active engagement of each student in shaping a program suited to his or her own goals; (4) bringing students and senior faculty together in small-group courses, beginning with freshman seminars and culminating in capstone courses of various kinds; and (5) the need to review all of these programs within five years both to reconsider our goals and to assess how our programs are working. All five of these desiderata embody the principles of pragmatism.<sup>45</sup>

James criticized much that was happening to American colleges during his own lifetime. He was particularly upset by professionalization and the obsession with what he termed "the Ph.D. octopus." Many features of contemporary higher education, including the hyper-specialization as well as the focus on research and graduate training of many members of the professoriate, would upset him, but James would surely recognize and applaud the conversion of many of his successors to "the general way of thinking" he announced in *Pragmatism*.<sup>46</sup>

Because the preservation of the natural world was a topic almost as close to James's heart as was education, it is fitting to conclude this essay with a brief discussion of pragmatism in the discourse of early twenty-first-century environmentalism. Some of James's most eloquent writing was inspired by the time he spent "tramping," as he liked to call his hikes around Keene Valley in the Adirondacks and in the Lake Chocorua region of the White Mountains where he and his family built a summer home. Despite his own rhapsodies about the wilderness, which he shared with many Progressive-era conservationists, James was acutely aware, as some of his nature-loving contemporaries were not, of the tension between his own preservationist impulses and the desire of other Americans to develop natural resources—or simply clear a few acres of forest land for farming. That tension, between the desire to exclude humans from wilderness areas and the desire to regulate land use for the public good according to principles of scientific management, persisted among environmentalists throughout the twentieth century. Environmental debates have tended to oscillate between biocentrism, or deep ecology, in which nature is considered inviolable and humans are judged intruders, and technocentrism, in which concerns with preserving scarce or endangered resources such as air, water, or non-human life forms have led scientists to work

through government regulation or judicial decisions to protect the environment without much concern for public participation.

In recent decades, both wings of environmentalism have been under attack from several directions, not only the laissez-faire wing of the Republican Party. Critics opposed to some biocentrists' disregarding of what they consider the legitimate interests of humans in making use of nature have been joined by radicals opposed to some technocentrists' disregarding of democratic engagement in environmental policy. In response to these critiques, some environmental scientists have called for a new sensibility, which they term environmental pragmatism. One of these environmental pragmatists, Kelly Parker, observes that "experience" is "the most basic term in pragmatism" and that the environment is, "in the most basic sense," where "experience occurs, where my life and the lives of others arise and take place." Parker rejects as incoherent the notion that nature has "intrinsic value" that must be respected "*independent of any consciousness that might value it.*" Nature matters to humans not for its own sake, as the more extreme biocentrists contend, but because it provides "the ultimate source of our growth"; hence any heedless annihilation of nature annihilates the "places where experiences unfold." Some constructivists, who have pointed out that an environmentalist sensibility has emerged historically rather than enjoying the privileged position of transcendent truth, have challenged the claims of biocentrism without then providing a rationale for environmental protection. Environmental pragmatists argue instead that just as the field of experience for individuals is enriched by the presence of other individuals with whom they interact, so, in Parker's words, the "environment is as much a part of each of us as we are parts of the environment, and moreover, each of us is a part of the environment—a part of experience—with which other beings have to contend." Environmental destruction is to be resisted because it impoverishes the range of experiences available to all of us.<sup>47</sup>

Environmental pragmatists in the tradition of Deweyan democracy emphasize that such resistance should involve the participation of as many individuals as possible. Rather than relying on the technical expertise of scientists or the authority of courts simply to declare what policies should be adopted, Paul Thompson has argued that participatory democracy provides the standard by which environmental activism should be judged. Restating an argument that has echoed from James and Dewey through the progressives until today, community, in Thompson's words, "is the method of science, and the basis of a pragmatic theory of truth." Engaging as many people as possible in the process of inquiry not only provides a means for individuals to become educated about environmental issues, it generates the "common visions of life and purpose" that are the life blood of democratic culture. The warrant for pragmatism, environmental pragmatists conclude, remains what it has always been: "Communities that involve practitioners—bridge builders, farmers, policy-makers—have a reliable mechanism of self-criticism: the ideas must work."<sup>48</sup>

But what, it is necessary to ask, should count as "working" in a pragmatist sense? In business, should the standard be profitability or shareholder value, or are other criteria such as worker involvement, compensation, and satisfaction more

important? In medicine it might seem obvious that the appropriate standard is health, but in some areas, especially in the realm of psychiatry, is the appropriate standard a drug-induced tranquility or a deeper—albeit more elusive, and sometimes even painful—degree of self-understanding? In law, is the standard of what works to be arrived at through forceful and precedent-setting judicial decision making or rather through merely structuring the terms of a conflict that must be worked out through the chaotic process of democratic wrangling? In education, is the standard higher student test scores, or is it instead inculcating in students a willingness to wrestle with ideas and an understanding of how to think critically about a whole range of problems that are not amenable to easy answers? In environmentalism, is the standard protecting the environment for its own sake, or making environmental policy through expert decisions made by scientists, or is it instead whatever decision results from the sustained and unpredictable outcomes achieved by the sustained engagement of the people?

If the answer in each case lies in the latter of these alternatives, then how is it possible to stipulate—or even imagine—a pragmatic test that adequately measures results? Some of those who invoke pragmatism in twenty-first-century America seem to think there is a “bottom line” that is easy to identify and that provides clear guidelines. Those with a more sophisticated understanding of what James meant in *Pragmatism* know that both for individuals and for the culture as a whole, the process of pragmatic inquiry is unending as a matter of principle. Finding the proper standard of measurement is an endless process for individuals, and it is even harder for different individuals to reach consensus on what those measuring sticks should be. The challenge involved in assessing the meaning and significance of pragmatism for American culture, from the time of the original pragmatists until the present, has revolved around deciding what judgments are properly to be made by individuals, independent of the judgment of others, such as questions of religious experience were for James; what questions are to be decided by highly trained experts comprising communities of inquiry, such as questions of economic and environmental regulation were for many progressives and New Dealers; and what issues are best decided by the messy, contentious, and imperfect democratic process. Clear answers to those questions remain as elusive now as they were a century ago.

One of the correspondents with whom James most often shared his thoughts on the glories of experience in the wilderness was his younger friend Pauline Goldmark, a Bryn Mawr-educated progressive activist whom he got to know, along with her sister Josephine Goldmark, on one of his many trips to the Adirondacks.<sup>49</sup> In a letter James wrote to her on February 4, 1904, while riding the train from Syracuse to Boston after a winter storm, he began by painting a vivid image of the landscape: “The snow is over, but the horizons disappear in the blackish grey of a frozen atmospheric jelly.” After reflecting on the severe beauty of “our wild cold and snow,” he expressed his happiness that he was returning to the work that would culminate in the publication of *Pragmatism*. “I am ashamed to say,” he confessed, “how much interested I have become in my own system of philosophy (!) since Dewey, Schiller, a Frenchman named Bergson, and some lesser

lights, have, all independently of me and of one another, struck into a similar line of ideas.” James really was somewhat taken aback that not only were American, English, French (and, he might have noted, German and Italian) thinkers all developing versions of what they thought of—to his surprise—as “his” philosophy, the philosophy that would come to be known as pragmatism, but he himself was beginning to think it might amount to something over the long term. “I am persuaded that a great new philosophic movement is in the air,” he wrote, anticipating three years before he finished his book the high hopes he expressed to his brother Henry when *Pragmatism* appeared. But William James already saw, as we should see when we try to assess the impact of his ideas, that tracing the influence of pragmatism is a tricky business. Although philosophical movements such as pragmatism, James continued in his letter to Pauline Goldmark, “seem ridiculously abstract in their original form,” they nevertheless do “filter down into practical life through the remotest channels” (*LWJ*, X, 382–84). No one familiar with these ideas would claim the “definitive triumph” of pragmatism today, when the brittle dogma of U.S. righteousness dominates public debate and threatens to silence dissenting voices who challenge whether increasing inequality at home and increasing arrogance in the world constitute “working” by any standard consistent with our nation’s democratic principles and aspirations. Yet James’s ideas have indeed filtered down into many corners of practical life in America, where they continue to provide leverage for some critics as dissatisfied with reflexive celebrations of that “bitch-goddess success” as was James himself.

## NOTES

1. James T. Kloppenberg, “Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?” *Journal of American History* 83 (June 1996): 100–138. Versions of this essay were reprinted in *The Revival of Pragmatism: New Essays on Social Thought, Law, and Culture*, ed. Morris Dickstein (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 83–127; in *A Pragmatist’s Progress: Richard Rorty and American Intellectual History*, ed. John Pettegrew (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), pp. 19–60; and, in a revised form refocused on issues in higher education, under the title “Cosmopolitan Pragmatism: Deliberative Democracy and Higher Education,” in *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America*, ed. Robert Orrill (New York: College Board, 1997), pp. 69–110.

2. See for example Richard Rorty, “Dewey between Hegel and Darwin,” in Rorty, *Truth and Progress, Philosophical Papers*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 290–306, an essay marked by Rorty’s characteristic civility and generosity; and cf. Stanley Fish, “Truth and Toilets: Pragmatism and the Practices of Life,” in *The Revival of Pragmatism*, pp. 418–434; and Fish, “Truth but No Consequences: Why Philosophy Doesn’t Matter,” *Critical Inquiry* 29 (2003): 389–417.

3. Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich, “The American Tradition of Aspirational Democracy,” in *Education and Democracy*, especially pp. 194–99.

4. On the impact of pragmatism on the writing of American history, see James T. Kloppenberg, “Objectivity and Historicism: A Century of American Historical Writ-

ing," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 1011–30; and Kloppenberg, "Pragmatism and the Practice of History: From Turner and Du Bois to Today," in *The Range of Pragmatism and the Limits of Philosophy*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 197–220.

5. See the discussion of this essay in H. S. Thayer's introduction, *P*, xii.

6. See *ibid.*, xv.

7. On the relation between pragmatism and progressivism, see James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Eldon Eisenach, *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); and Axel Schäfer, *American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875–1920: Social Ethics, Moral Control, and the Regulatory State in a Transatlantic Context* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000). As those books make clear, neither pragmatism nor progressivism was strictly an American phenomenon. Philosophers and reformers on both sides of the Atlantic participated in a transnational process of intellectual and political change, with lines of influence running both east and west, as James himself well understood.

8. See Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, vol. 2, *Philosophy and Psychology* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935), pp. 310–17.

9. See "Robert Gould Shaw: Oration," in *ERM*, 64–74. This brilliant address, which deserves to be better known, makes clear why it is a mistake to argue that James's pragmatism provides no grounds for making sacrifices or gives no criteria for making political decisions.

10. Walter Lippmann to Graham Wallas, July 31 and October 30, 1912, Walter Lippmann Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University; Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* (1913; rpt. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 29.

11. Walter Lippmann, *Drift and Mastery* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1914), pp. 206–208, 274–75, 295, 329.

12. See the discussion of Wilson's term as president of Princeton in John Milton Cooper Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 89–107, a chapter appropriately titled "Academic Reformer."

13. This unconventional reading of Wilson as pragmatist progressive with social democratic sympathies in the domestic sphere rests on splendid research presented in the unpublished Harvard Ph.D. dissertation of Trygve Throntveit, "Related States: Progressivism, Imperialism, and Internationalism in American Thought, 1880–1920." Historians have long doubted the existence of a unified, cohesive progressive movement, preferring instead to see progressivism as an era or, better yet, as a coalition of shifting groups with diverse and sometimes incompatible interests. Such a framework makes it possible to understand why and how some progressives were able to emphasize eugenics, immigration restriction, prohibition, and racial segregation as solutions to the problem of "corruption" as they saw it, whereas others focused on socioeconomic reforms and still others emphasized changing the mechanisms of governance. For detailed analysis of these issues, see James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). More recent studies include Eldon Eisenach, *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy during the Progressive Era* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Axel Schäfer, *American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875–1920* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000); and Michael Willrich, "The Case for Courts: Law and Political Development in the Progressive Era," in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in*

*American Political History*, ed. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and Julian Zelizer (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 198–221.

14. Four different accounts of the complex Dewey-Bourne dispute are Casey Nelson Blake, *Beloved Community: The Cultural Criticism of Randolph Bourne, Van Wyck Brooks, Waldo Frank, and the Young Intellectuals* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991); Alan Ryan, *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1995); and Jonathan M. Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity, 1890–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

15. From the voluminous literature on the tragic failures and rarely acknowledged potential of Wilson's foreign policy, see especially Throntveit, "Related States: Progressivism, Imperialism, and Internationalism in American Thought, 1880–1920"; and Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

16. On the positions taken by Jane Addams and W. E. B. Du Bois before, during, and after World War I, see especially Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism*.

17. On the Addams-Dewey relationship, see Allen Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*; and Louise W. Knight, *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

18. See William James to Jane Addams, February 12, 1907, cited in Davis, *American Heroine*, p. 140. Davis points out that James began developing these ideas in his philosophy courses as early as 1888. On pp. 135–56, Davis discusses the similarities between Addams's views on war and those James began to develop in 1890s and brought to fruition in "Moral Equivalent of War," which she called the "moral substitute for war." Christopher Lasch persuasively characterizes Addams's perspective on war as pragmatist in his introductory comments to "Newer Ideals of Peace" in his collection of her writings, *The Social Thought of Jane Addams*, ed. Christopher Lasch (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 218–19; for the essay itself, see pp. 219–31. See also the incisive analysis in Hansen, *The Lost Promise of Patriotism*, pp. 128–30, 137–90, which details the ideas and interactions of James, Dewey, Addams, Du Bois, and Eugene Debs.

19. See David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993); Axel Schäfer, "W. E. B. Du Bois, German Social Thought, and the Racial Divide in American Progressivism, 1892–1909," *Journal of American History* 88 (2001): 925–49; and Richard Cullen Rath, "Echo and Narcissus: The Afrocentric Pragmatism of W. E. B. Du Bois," *Journal of American History* 84 (1997): 461–95.

20. Robert Park, "Methods of Teaching: Impressions and a Verdict," in Stanford M. Lyman, *Militarism, Imperialism, and Racial Accommodation: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Early Writings of Robert E. Park* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1992), p. 311.

21. Charles Johnson, "Dr. Robert E. Park: 1864–1944," *Psychiatry* 7 (1944): 107, quoted in the outstanding study by George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 52–61.

22. The aptness of this image for the concept of cultural pluralism first came to my attention through the splendid work by Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 189–90.

23. On Kallen's and Bourne's ideas and their influence in American debates concerning racial and ethnic identity, the place to begin is David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1995]), a book that brings into the present the pragmatist understanding of experience and



identity as fluid and subject to change and choice. Hollinger's pragmatist argument is as unpalatable to many rigid multiculturalists today as were the arguments of early twentieth-century pragmatists such as Du Bois, Locke, Kallen, and Bourne to many of their contemporaries. Others offering variations on these themes in contemporary discourse include Werner Sollors and Anthony Appiah, two commentators born outside the United States who see the possibilities of the cosmopolitan ideal as clearly as does Hollinger. For another statement of this position, which shows Dewey's independent statement of a position similar to that taken by his student Bourne in "Trans-national America," see Dewey, "Nationalizing Education," *Journal of Education* 84 (1916): 425–28, in Dewey, *Middle Works, 1899–1924*, vol. 10 (Carbondale: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1980), pp. 202–10; and cf. the fine discussion of this essay, along with the writings of Kallen, Locke, James, and Boas, in Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White*, pp. 86–93.

24. See Sidney Milkis, *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System since the New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); James T. Kloppenberg, *The Virtues of Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 100–123; Cass Sunstein, *The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More Than Ever* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); and Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: American Vision of Human Rights* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

25. See Robert W. Gordon, ed., *The Legacy of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992); G. Edward White, *Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: Law and the Inner Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Thomas C. Grey, "Holmes and Legal Pragmatism," *Stanford Law Review* 41 (1989): 787–870; Philippa Strum, *Louis D. Brandeis: Justice for the People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Philippa Strum, *Brandeis: Beyond Progressivism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993); Barbara Fried, *The Progressive Assault on Laissez Faire: Robert Hale and the First Law and Economics Movement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Morton Horowitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1870–1960: The Crisis of Legal Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and David M. Rabban, *Free Speech in Its Forgotten Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

26. John Henry Schlegel, "American Legal Realism and Empirical Social Science: From the Yale Experience," *Buffalo Law Review* 28 (1988): 459–586; Laura Kalman, *Legal Realism at Yale, 1927–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

27. The best study of this dynamic remains Edward Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism and the Problem of Value* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973).

28. On student radicalism and its animating ideas, see James Miller, *Democracy Is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

29. Some critics have argued that James's pragmatism, by making the satisfaction of the individual the ultimate test of truth, contributed to the rise of the therapeutic sensibility that has manifested itself in countless self-help programs designed to substitute high self-esteem for what James, like his contemporary Theodore Roosevelt, termed the "strenuous life." That interpretation of James could not survive the careful reading of his essays on ethics, including "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life," "What Makes a Life Significant?" and "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings."

30. The relation between the increasing polarization of party politics and the decline in voting has been noticed for several decades, as has the gap separating the positions of the most strident activists of both parties from the much more moderate positions taken by most Americans. On these issues, see E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why American Hate Politics* (New York: Touchstone, 1991); Theda Skocpol, *Missing in the Middle: Working Families and the Future of American Social Policy* (New York: Norton, 2000);

Alan Wolfe, *One Nation, after All: What Americans Really Think about God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, The Right, The Left, and Each Other* (New York: Penguin, 1999); Alan Wolfe, *Moral Freedom: The Search for Virtue in a World of Choice* (New York: Norton, 2001); and Morris Fiorina, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (London: Longman, 2005).

31. But William remained hopeful: immediately after the passage quoted in the text, he added, "I know that it will end by winning its way & triumphing!"

32. Some critics of the idea of a pragmatist resurgence have observed that pragmatism has appealed primarily to those on the left. See for example Alan Wolfe, "The Missing Pragmatic Revival in American Social Science," in *The Resurgence of Pragmatism*, pp. 199–206. Wolfe contrasts the interest of most social scientists with "reality" to the pragmatists' alleged utopianism, a contrast that echoes the long-standing tension in social science between ostensibly value-free and self-consciously value-laden inquiries. The incoherence of the idea of value freedom, which has been insisted upon by pragmatists from the beginning, has been the subject of many studies, of which I will cite only Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), discussed in some detail in note 36 below. Although there are notable exceptions, Wolfe is correct about the clustering of those interested in pragmatism on the left of the political spectrum. It does not follow from that observation, however, that pragmatists are unconcerned with reality.

33. Compare the critical analyses of David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, The State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and David F. Noble, *America by Design: Science, Technology, and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), with two accounts that focus on the reasons behind the rise, and the wide varieties, of managerial capitalism: Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Management Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977); and Olivier Zunz, *Making America Corporate, 1870–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). On more recent management gurus such as Peter Drucker, see Stephen P. Waring, *Taylorism Transformed: Scientific Management Theory since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

34. See Nitin Nohria and James D. Berkley, "Whatever Happened to the Take-Charge Manager?" *Harvard Business Review* (January–February 1994): 128–37; and the proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Harvard Business School that brought together more than two dozen prominent academics, management consultants, and practitioners, *Breaking the Code of Change*, ed. Michael Beer and Nitin Nohria (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000). One of the central issues discussed in this volume, an approach to corporate management that focuses on the fair treatment of employees, worker participation, and the flexible, experimental pragmatist strategies discussed in the text, descends directly from the writings of James and Dewey. On those ideas see especially the articles by Beer and Nohria, Peter M. Senge, Larry Hirschorn, Karl E. Weick, Robert H. Schaffer, and Terry Neill and Craig Mindrum. In their epilog, Beer and Nohria note the inclination of all conference participants to envision themselves engaged in a process of scientific inquiry and, as scientists, to aspire to value-free neutrality. But, they conclude, "this value-free ideal is something we will have to reject, because it simply prevents us from having the discussion we really need to have. We must accept that part of what guides our views on organizational change is our values" (p. 475). That insight too echoes much of what James and Dewey wrote about the relation between assessments of "what works" and the underlying values that inevitably inform the answer to that question. On this pivotal issue, which I have discussed in *Uncertain Victory* and in "Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking?" see Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays*. In his preface, Putnam states bluntly the argument of the book: "developing a less scientific account of rationality, a account that enables us to see how reasoning, far from being

impossible in normative areas, is in fact indispensable to them, and conversely, understanding how normative judgments are presupposed in all reasoning, is important not only in economics [much of the book concerns a defense of the work of Amartya Sen], but—as Aristotle saw—in all of life” (viii). Here are just two passages in which Putnam states his position—which seems to me convincing both as a restatement of the work of the early pragmatists and as the way in which we should be thinking about pragmatism today—with particular pungency: “The classical pragmatists, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, all held that value and normativity permeate *all* of experience. In the philosophy of science, what this point of view implied is that normative judgments are essential to the practice of science itself” (30); and “pragmatists in particular have always emphasized that experience *isn't* ‘neutral,’ that it comes to us screaming with values” (103). For similar insights from the discipline of economics, see Julie A. Nelson, “Confronting the Science/Value Split: Notes on Feminist Economics, Institutionalism, Pragmatism and Process Thought,” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 27 (2003): 49–64; and Julie A. Nelson, *Economics for Humans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

35. See, on Bruce Goff and Herbert Greene in particular and on prominent twentieth-century architects more generally, Paul Heyer, *Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America* (New York: Walker, 1966); Peter Blake, *The Master Builders* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961); and Ben Allen Park, “The Architecture of Bruce Goff,” *Architectural Digest*, May 1957.

36. The question of a pragmatist aesthetics, on which Richard Shusterman has done fine work and which is related more directly to works of visual art, literature, and the performing arts, seems to me separate from the more problematic question of how pragmatism relates to the realm of architecture. See Shusterman, *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992). For examples of the ways in which practitioners and scholars have tried to address the relation between pragmatism and architecture, with less than striking success, see William G. Ramroth Jr., *Pragmatism and Modern Architecture*, a breezy history of modern architecture in which pragmatism generally figures not at all, only to become, in the epilog, the method of all architects, the night in which all cows are black. See also *The Pragmatist Imagination: Thinking about “Things in the Making,”* ed. Joan Ockman (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000). This fascinating volume of conference proceedings concludes with a skeptical afterword, “What’s Pragmatism Got To Do with It?” This essay, written by the scholar who has done more than any other to analyze the problematic relation between pragmatist ideas, democratic participation, and public art, Casey Nelson Blake, raises the questions I discuss in the text. On James Rouse, see Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Merchant of Illusion: James Rouse, America’s Salesman of the Businessman’s Utopia* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004); and, more broadly, on the experimental communities of Columbia, Maryland, Reston, Virginia, and Irvine, California, and how they developed over time, Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Suburban Alchemy: 1960s New Towns and the Transformation of the American Dream* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001). Bloom’s work shows clearly the tensions bedeviling developers with democratic convictions and pragmatist methods operating within the unyielding constraints of the real estate marketplace.

37. David H. Brendel, *Healing Psychiatry: Bridging the Science/Humanism Divide* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006). Brendel is quoted in “Psychiatry by Prescription,” in *Harvard Magazine* (July–August 2006): 42.

38. Arthur Kleinman, *What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially pp. 219–33.

39. I have addressed these issues in several articles, including “Pragmatism: An Old Idea for Some New Ways of Thinking?,” “Deliberative Democracy and Judicial Supremacy,” *Law and History Review* 13 (Fall 1995): 393–411; and “The Theory and Practice of Legal History,” *Harvard Law Review* 106 (April 1993): 1332–51.

40. Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What*

*To Do about It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mary C. Still, “Litigating the Maternal Wall: U.S. Lawsuits Charging Discrimination against Workers with Family Responsibilities,” a WLL report available from the Center for WorkLifeLaw, UC Hastings College of the Law, 200 McAlister Street, San Francisco, CA 94102. Assessing James’s direct influence on feminism is difficult. Some feminists, such as Williams, Margaret Radin, and Nancy Fraser, invoke pragmatism as an important source of feminist ideas. Others downplay James’s significance. Charlene Seigfried, one of the most visible feminist pragmatists, credits James with acknowledging the importance of dimensions of experience, such as emotion, care, and trust, now claimed by many feminists as characteristically female, and she acknowledges that he was unusually receptive to the idea of women’s education (after early misgivings about it), but she nevertheless faults James for his uncritical acceptance of paternalism, of separate spheres for men and women, and his “pervasive sexism.” See Charlene Haddock Seigfried, *Pragmatism and Feminism: Reweaving the Social Fabric* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), especially chapter 6, “The Feminine-Mystical Threat to Masculine-Scientific Order.” See also the essays collected in the special issue of *Hypatia* 8 (Spring 1993) titled “Feminism and Pragmatism.”

41. Williams, *Unbending Gender*, pp. 260–63. As if to confirm or illustrate the salience of these issues, during the time I was working on this article word arrived of the new family-leave policy instituted recently by Harvard University. Although perhaps as much a consequence of recent federal legislation as of the controversies at Harvard brought on by the ill-considered remarks of Lawrence Summers, former president of the university, concerning women’s aptitude for science, the change in Harvard’s policy—whatever the reasons for it—is fully consistent with WLL initiatives. It seems likely to make as significant a difference in the lives of many male as well as female “ideal workers” at Harvard, in the dining halls as well as the laboratories and classrooms, as any other developments in contemporary American culture.

42. By far the most widely read study of these phenomena is Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). To her credit, Ravitch is careful to distinguish Dewey’s ideas, and his Chicago lab school, from the sins of shoddy instruction and content-free skills building committed in his name. But she conflates under the rubric “progressive education” Dewey’s own commitment to well-funded schools offering rigorous instruction to all American children with the disastrous “reforms” of vocational education and life-adjustment, both of which displaced not only the rote learning that Dewey sought to replace but also the strenuous engagement with traditional subject matter that he stressed. The anti-intellectualism Ravitch properly scorns should not be confused with pragmatism. An exceptionally shrewd and informative essay on these issues is the review of *Left Back* by Alan Ryan in *New York Review of Books*, February 22, 2001, pp. 18–21. For James’s ideas about how pragmatism might be translated into education, see his *Talks to Teachers on Psychology; and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals* (1899; rpt. New York: Norton, 1958); and Dewey, *The Child and the Curriculum and The School and Society* (1900, 1902; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); and the book that Dewey considered the best summary of his ideas, *Democracy and Education* (1916; rpt. New York: Free Press, 1944).

43. Robert Orrill, ed., *Education and Democracy: Re-imagining Liberal Learning in America* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1997). Because singling out any of the seventeen essays in this collection might be taken as a sign of less respect for the others, I want merely to recommend the entire collection, with contributions from college presidents, scientists, social scientists, humanists, and scholars of education, as an illustration of how widespread interest remains in the resources pragmatism can offer those thinking critically about the reform of American higher education.

44. Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

45. Because the Harvard curricular review will continue into the coming year, I cannot predict the particular shape the programs will take. I have not addressed the issues that remain most contentious, which concern the general education program to be prescribed for all students. But the characteristics of the reforms that I have identified in the text either have already been adopted or are almost certain to be adopted.

46. In this note I will cite articles in publications concerning the curricular review written by various faculty members, including in particular the essays written by Louis Menand, and the essays by Katherine De Salvo, Thomas Wolf, Emily Riehl, and John Haddock, all of whom invoke James's writings in their analyses of what needs to be done, in *Student Essays on the Purpose and Structure of a Harvard Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard College, 2005).

47. For a clear overview of these issues, see Andrew Light and Eric Katz, "Introduction: Environmental Pragmatism and Environmental Ethics as Contested Terrain," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, ed. Andrew Light and Eric Katz (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1–18; and cf. Kelly Parker, "Pragmatism and Environmental Thought," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 352–76; Kelly Parker, "The Values of a Habitat: *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990): 353–68; Anthony Weston, "Beyond Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 7 (1985): 321–39; Eric Katz, "Searching for Intrinsic Value: Pragmatism and Despair in Environmental Ethics," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 307–18; and the exchange between Weston and Katz, and the commentary by Andrew Light, in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 319–38. See also Sandra B. Rosenthal and Rogene A. Buchholz, "How Pragmatism Is an Environmental Ethic," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 38–49; James Proctor, "A Social Construction of Nature: Relativist Accusations, Pragmatist and Critical Realist Responses," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (1998): 352–76; Bob Pepperman Taylor, "John Dewey and Environmental Thought," *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990); Bob Pepperman Taylor, *Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992); and the critique of Taylor in Larry A. Hickman, "John Dewey's Pragmatic Naturalism," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 50–72, especially p. 70n25. For help in clarifying these issues I am indebted to Zachary Liscow, "Environmentalism versus Democracy: The Threats of Biocentrism and Technocentrism and the Promise of Environmental Pragmatism," unpublished paper, May 2005.

48. Paul Thompson, "Pragmatism and Policy: The Case of Water," in *Environmental Pragmatism*, pp. 187–208. For an ambitious analysis of the implications of pragmatism for environmental law and policy, see Daniel Farber, *Eco-Pragmatism: Making Sensible Environmental Decisions in an Uncertain World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and for a history of the intersection between pragmatism and environmentalism, see Ben A. Minteer, *The Landscape of Reform: Civic Pragmatism and Environmental Thought in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

49. Consider two examples of letters James wrote to Pauline Goldmark during the last year of his life, as the heart problems brought on by his hiking worsened. On June 22, 1909, he urged her to "lose no chance during all these young years to live with nature—it is the eternal normal animal thing in us, overlaid by other more important human destinies, no doubt, but holding the fort in the middle of the security of all the rest." On September 5 of that year he wrote that her letter from the West "gladdened my heart by awakening lively images of the bath in Nature's beauties and wonders which you were about to have. I hope you have *drunk deep*, for that goes to a certain spot in us that nothing else can reach, more 'serious' and 'valuable' though other things profess (and seem) to be." For a rich selection of the letters James wrote to her sister Pauline, see Josephine Goldmark, "An Adirondack Friendship," in *William James Remembered*, ed. Linda Simon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 174–98. It was through another Goldmark sister, Alice, who married Louis Brandeis, that James and Brandeis first became acquainted.

## 2. The Enemies of Pragmatism

MARK BAUERLEIN

For those students exposed to pragmatism in the customary way, in survey courses in modern philosophy or American intellectual history, it is easy to overlook one of the functional and diverting aspects of its early development. Apart from Charles Sanders Peirce's programmatic essays from the 1870s, the most common assigned texts date from the first decade of the twentieth century—William James's *Pragmatism* (1907) and *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), essays by John Dewey on knowledge and psychology, Peirce's "What Pragmatism Is" (1905), and, perhaps, a piece by F. C. S. Schiller on "humanism." In these works we find the central themes of meaning, method, reality, and truth expounded at length in various ways and styles, for instance, Peirce's eccentric mix of semiotics and epistemological realism and Schiller's confrontational insistence on the human element in the most reflective inquiries. Philosophy teachers can mine these materials for provocative ideas and formulations, treating James's description of the true as "whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief" (*P*, 42) as an acute expression of modern thought or as a violation of logical distinctions. Intellectual historians might link Dewey's cognitive psychology to the spread of evolutionary thinking, or James's "cash-value" approach to ideas to Gilded Age mores. Literary theorists can cite Peirce on interpretation as an anticipation of post-structuralist theory.

These are important connections rightly included in the study of pragmatism in its formative phase. But in many prominent statements of the time, especially during the prolific years 1904–1908, the pragmatists addressed more immediate influences, arguments, and adversaries. The texts they responded to included those originating not only many years earlier (*The Origin of Species* was already a half-century old), but just a few months or weeks before. The antagonists included not only famed figures of ancient and modern philosophy, but contemporary pro-