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Pragmatism's Advantage

Abstract

In this paper, the author argues that within the current philosophical debate, pragmatism has a distinct advantage over its rivals—on the one hand, Anglo-American analytic philosophy and, on the other hand, continental philosophy. By refusing to succumb to 'naturalizing' tendencies, pragmatism is able to overcome scientific tendencies in contemporary analytic philosophy. At the same time, by emphasizing the 'natural', pragmatism provides a helpful correction to metaphysical tendencies in continental philosophy.

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Pragmatism's revival, even its persistence, continues to baffle explanation, as in a way its history always has. It was deemed exhausted by the end of the 40s and 50s of the last century; was unexpectedly revived in the 70s, though its principal champions, Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam, prominent members of the American philosophical community, faded rather quickly by the end of the century. And yet, now, at the beginning of the new century, its prospects seem startlingly improved, as if something of special promise had been discovered or rediscovered apart from the energies of its classic figures and its 'second-wave' enthusiasts (that is, its accidental vivifiers).

It was, of course, originally a parochial success, though it did gain adherents abroad; and it began to attract a wider Eurocentric interest in its short second life, despite a distinctly poor showing at home. We may even speculate about a third career. For pragmatism has begun, possibly for the first time in its history, to be seriously treated as a distinct alternative to – possibly more than an alternative, perhaps a connective tissue spanning the great divide between – analytic and continental philosophy. At any rate, it now counts as a distinctly strong constellation of doctrines and strategies potentially capable of contesting the hegemonies of the day—within both the English-language analytic movement of the last half of the twentieth century and the trailing forces of the Cartesian, Kantian, Husserlian, and Heideggerean movements of late continental Europe. It would not be unreasonable to say that pragmatism's promise at the present time is a function of the fatigue of its principal competitors and of the economy and fluency with which it can coopt the principal strengths that remain attractive among the many movements of Eurocentric philosophy, without betraying its own conviction.

Rightly perceived, pragmatism's best feature lies with its post-Kantian ancestry coupled with its opposition to the extreme forms of analytic scientism with which it has shared a gathering sense of conceptual rigor. It forms, for that reason, a natural bridge between analytic and continental philosophy, for rigor is not inherently scientific. In my opinion, none of the three movements mentioned

(hardly unified within themselves) is separately likely to overtake its own limitations or incorporate the best work of the others in a compelling way. Still, within its own conceptual space, pragmatism favors a constructive realism drawn in as spare a way as possible from post-Kantian resources, freed from every form of cognitive, rational, and practical privilege, opposed to imagined necessities *de re* and *de cogitatione*, committed to the continuities of animal nature and human culture, confined to the existential and historical contingencies of the human condition, and open in principle to plural, partial, perspectival, provisional, even non-converging ways of understanding what may be judged valid in any and every sort of factual and normative regard. There may well be a touch of reportorial distortion in going beyond these clichés; but, risking that, it would not be unreasonable to say that pragmatists believe that the analysts are likely to favor scientism and the continentals, to exceed the bounds of naturalism, and that both tendencies are more extreme or extravagant than their policies require. In this fairly direct sense, pragmatism's strength lies in the possibility of a rapprochement by way of the 'corrections' mentioned. It could never have claimed such an advantage earlier, had not the main efforts of analytic and continental philosophy perseverated too long in their obviously vulnerable commitments. Pragmatism has persevered as well, of course, but it seems poised now for a larger venture.

At the beginning of the new century, Eurocentric philosophy (both analytic and continental) maintains its technical competence in every sector of inquiry in which it invests its energies—but it is plainly played out by now. It is philosophically becalmed, no doubt afloat, but bound for no particular port of importance beyond what its best progenitors had originally identified. Very nearly all of these large programs are known to be seriously defective, though their inertia remains impressive. Contemporary Cartesians, for instance, continue more or less to ignore the import of Descartes's original *aporia* within their most up-to-date efforts: frankly, I count nearly the whole of late analytic philosophy among its self-appointed victims—for instance, W. V. Quine and Donald Davidson and the familiar representatives of recent analytic scientism, Daniel Dennett and Paul Churchland.¹

Kant and the post-Kantians posit a more than merely human cognizing competence, examining which they and their advocates discover (to no one's surprise) transcendental powers that they cannot confirm within the limits of actual human reflection: Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel afford more than enough evidence (regarding reason in practical affairs) to show that the dream of such a mythical resource has easily survived two hundred years of disbelief.² Habermas, for instance, unlike Apel, has never been able to decide whether 'reason'

1. For a detailed account of the fortunes of pragmatism and American analytic philosophy, see my *Reinventing Pragmatism: American Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); and *The Unraveling of Scientism: American Philosophy at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

2. For a discussion of Apel's and Habermas's treatment of Peirce's pragmatism, see my 'The Vicissitudes of Transcendental Realism,' in Mitchell Abouafia, Myra Bookman, and Catherine Kemp (eds.), *Habermas and Pragmatism* (London: Routledge, 2002).

is a determinate natural faculty or a transcendental faculty; whereas the better claim denies that it is a determinate faculty of any kind: its mention (that is, the point of mentioning reason) merely collects a would-be formal feature of what we call thinking viewed as the muster of argumentative rules beyond (but including) deduction, regardless of whether it addresses theoretical or practical questions. Habermas has always been uneasy about admitting any allegiance to the *a priori* powers of Reason; but, increasingly, in more recent years, he shows an uncertainty as well about the possibility of securing the reliable universality he needs, by admitting the vagaries of natural reason. He is caught, therefore, in a dilemma of his own devising; for the prospects of an objective universality, whether in practical or theoretical matters, whether normative or factual, cannot be freed from consensual contingencies. Habermas's problem is precisely the same problem that confronted John Rawls, when Rawls found himself obliged to rechristen his own theory of justice as a form of liberal ideology. Pragmatism in the American vein gladly eschews any and every strict or assured form of necessity, which the 'Kantian pragmatisms' of Apel, Habermas, and Rawls cannot afford to be deprived of.

Hegel, incomparably the best of the post-Kantians, who sought to bring Kant's abstract cognizing subject back to the unavoidable contingencies of the quotidian world, could not quite keep his own effective Subject from swelling beyond any merely mortal *ich*—in a way that threatened to encompass the whole of humanity, the whole of history, *Geist*, Reason, even (through a sort of Spinozistic exuberance) the Trinity, within the compass of his singular Subject. The telltale clue that challenges the entire Hegelian tradition rests with the assured sense of a kind of conscious subjective continuity of thought and experience that no merely human agent could possibly confirm: that is precisely what figures like Nietzsche and Michel Foucault effectively exposed, and figures like Marx and Jean-Paul Sartre manfully tried to render in naturalistic terms. At his best, Hegel introduces a mythic or heuristic subject to facilitate his deliberate constructions, but two hundred years have failed to yield much in the way of leaner assumptions. Indeed, Hegel may not have been well served by his own progeny. For, a great many admiring commentators find it unlikely that Hegel did not subscribe to a collective subject – *Geist* – somehow more real than any human subject (though the *Phenomenology*, the linch-pin of Hegel's extraordinary effort, as well as other texts, gives us more than ample reason to view *Geist* as a convenient nominalization for managing predicative complexities abstracted and idealized from the thought and life of aggregates of humans who share a common history).³ If Hegel held the opposite view (which I find impossible to believe), then so much the worse for him.

Very early on, the young Karl Marx precociously isolated the nerve of Hegel's excesses in an introductory essay for a proposed critique of Hegel's *Philosophy*

3. For a sense of the opposite tendency, see Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), which is itself a summary of Taylor's *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

of *Right* (never completed), which, in the Feuerbachian spirit in which it begins, tellingly affirms: ‘man is not an abstract being, squatting outside the world. Man is *the human world*, the state, society,’ which, read in Ludwig Feuerbach’s way, succinctly signified (however inexplicitly) the simple fact that Hegel had somehow reversed the denotative and predicative foci of the analysis of the human.⁴

Of course Marx was at least partly – certainly not entirely – right, though the mature Marx was open to a similar charge. The best that can be said for the post-Kantian Idealists is that they collected, pell-mell, every intuition about the human world, but had no analytic patience for isolating what exactly was the human condition itself as distinct from the whole of societal life or nature. Two hundred years later, within the boundaries of English-language analysis, we have hardly put our minds to the matter with more conviction or success; we have all but lost any reliable sense of the cultural and historical questions the Idealists pondered so flamboyantly. In any event, Marx’s phrase confirms (however unintentionally) that Hegel opposed Cartesianism in all its forms (including the Kantian version) and grasped the sense in which there cannot be a disjunction between the human subject and its world—including its evolving history.⁵ (Marx was not quite clear about the extent to which he himself was a Hegelian in his best work.)

Edmund Husserl, we realize, stubbornly maintained the self-deception of the Transcendental Ego in a palpably impossible form: where, that is, he explicitly disjoins phenomenology from natural reason and experience (from which it was somehow to be functionally separated in order to ensure an otherwise inexplicable competence free of any natural encumbrance). Here is what Husserl says – it needs no explication – when he introduces, in *Ideas*, the essential project of the phenomenological *epoché*:

We put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being: this entire natural world therefore which is continually “there for us,” “present to our hand,” and will ever remain there, is a “fact-world” of which we continue to be conscious, even though it pleases us to put it in brackets. . . Thus all sciences which relate to this natural world, though they stand never so firm to me, though they fill me with wondering admiration, though I am far from any thought of objecting to them in the least degree, I disconnect them all, I make absolutely no use of their standards, I do not appropriate a single one of the propositions that enter into their systems, even though their evidential value is perfect. I take none of them, no one

4. Karl Marx, ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*,’ in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, trans. and ed. T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 43. For a further unsympathetic, almost wooden analysis of Marx’s account of human nature, see Jon Elster, *Making Sense of Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Chs. 2, 6. Elster goes too far in his efforts to ensure that Marx will not be seen to be committed to a collective subject. He fails to come to terms with the important complication that Marx’s, as well as Hegel’s, thought requires the admission of collective predicates that can be attributed to individual human subjects—as with language and culture and class interests, for instance.

5. For a well-known version of a standard misunderstanding, see Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960).

*of them serves me for a foundation—so long, that is, as it is understood, in the way these sciences themselves understand it, as a truth concerning the realities of this world. I may accept it only after I have placed it in the bracket.*⁶

But, of course, Husserl nowhere demonstrates that ‘bracketing... any judgment that concerns spatio-temporal existence’ frees any of our predicative distinctions from being indissolubly influenced by the ‘natural standpoint.’ Husserl’s argument may expose the naiveté of Descartes’s version of the *cogito*; but, surely, his own replacement is at least as arbitrary and naive.

Furthermore, just this unaccountable privilege may be judged, fairly enough, to have been the partial inspiration for Martin Heidegger’s abandonment of Husserl’s *epoché* in favor (as it turned out) of an even deeper and more privileged penetration of the would-be self-disclosive power (*aletheia*) lying in wait at the very source of the mystery of Being—which (to be sure) no merely human *Da-sein* could possibly affect or control or fathom.⁷ The result has been an unmatched privilege in matters of philosophical and political prophecy: whatever had been assigned to transcendental sources earlier – beyond the merely human, as among the most ardent Idealists – now needed only to be assigned to the mystery of Being itself, that is, *Sein*, incomprehensibly close, yet utterly inaccessible, to *Da-sein*’s initiatives.⁸ But, proceeding thus, Heidegger betrays, in much the same way the transcendentalists do, the privileged certainty thereby gained, without the scruple of confining speculation within the play of the ‘natural world.’ Heidegger freed himself from the disadvantageous transparency of actually positing a transcendental structure.

I put the point tendentiously, to mark my reading of Husserl and Heidegger. But it matches in a perfectly fair-minded sense the ambiguous (if not equivocal) claims of the actual texts of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger. Yet I venture to say that Hegel abandons strict necessity and any commitment to the existence of a collective *Geist*; whereas Husserl seems wedded to a transcendently pure *epoché* and the ultimate disjunction (at the level of ‘science’) between natural and phenomenological reason, and Heidegger (after the *Kehre*) seems stubbornly committed to the revelatory powers of *Sein*.

One may easily imagine trying to free Kant from his transcendental Idealism (whether it would succeed or not); but it is not possible (in a similar way) to imagine Husserl ‘freed’ from pure phenomenology, though Merleau-Ponty makes a splendid effort to do so. Heidegger frees himself, of course, by a deeper form of gnomic wisdom, but the result is hardly legible on any known reading. Kant may be

6. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1931), §32. See, also, Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), Fifth Meditation.

7. For an account of Heidegger’s excesses regarding truth and knowledge, see my ‘Heidegger on Truth and Being,’ forthcoming in *Continental Philosophy Review*.

8. See, for instance, Martin Heidegger, ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,’ trans. Thomas Sheehan, *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

weaned from transcendentalism, because his arguments claim to discern no more than familiar necessities explained by reference to extraordinary circumstances; whereas Husserl introduces a novel methodology that must be mastered if we are to discern its characteristic necessities at all, and Heidegger simply announces what the mystery of Being reveals.⁹ Yet (I concede) there is room for invention here, so far as Husserl is concerned; the promising invention made possible by Heidegger's *Being and Time* is simply rejected after the *Kehre*.¹⁰

No one would believe that we would be willing to bear so much conceptual baggage without complaint, were it not for the easy conviction that its argument was true; or, trust the good cheer with which analytic philosophy continues to ply a calling that belongs somewhere, in time, between the mid-seventeenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.¹¹ I should say at once that I am not prepared to allow the pragmatists to go scot free. They are obviously slack in their own reading of naturalism: they have hardly distinguished their own account from that of the 'naturalizing' extremes championed for instance by Quine and Davidson¹² and they have never returned (*pace* G. H. Mead) to pursue in any significant depth the analysis of what a person is, or indeed what social history is. These themes belong to their post-Kantian origins, but they need to be rescued from analytic and continental excesses *and* pragmatist inertia.

Still, pragmatism's best intuitions have been applied to eliminating the extravagances of its Kantian sources (by Charles Peirce) and its Hegelian sources (by John Dewey) in such a way as to lead us back to the ordinary aptitudes of *human beings* (ourselves) viewed within a generously Darwinized ecology, without transcendental or revelatory or privileged presumptions of any kind. Frankly, Dewey, despite his technical limitations (in logic and the methodology of science) did manage to penetrate the corrective themes in a commanding way— in *Experience and Nature*.¹³ No other American philosopher, as far as I know, has succeeded as well, though his detailed treatment needs a stronger hand.

Broadly speaking, the pragmatists are not usually wrong in their principal views, though I admit that Dewey is often banal. Peirce simply veers off more and more insistently from what he originally took to be pragmatism's theme. William James actually supplies a necessary ingredient in the pragmatist arsenal (the theory of truth); but he does so so lamely, so utterly without skill and for such a crazy reason, that he accomplishes little more than the betrayal of his own minor standing – that is, in his compulsion to reconcile the 'truths' of religion and the truths of science – which of course put the movement's reputation at considerable risk.¹⁴ Peirce was infuriated with James's 'misreading' – piracy was

9. I explore the question of the 'later' Heidegger in 'Martin Heidegger: A Pragmatist by Any Means,' forthcoming (publication details not yet available).

10. See, for instance, Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

11. I defend the charge in some detail, in *The Unraveling of Scientism*.

12. See my *Reinventing Pragmatism*, Prologue.

13. See John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Dover, 1958).

14. See William James, *The Will to Believe* (New York: Longmans Green, 1907); also,

what he saw – but he condemned James (indirectly) for the wrong reasons, for he himself became more of a German Idealist (of a homegrown American sort) than a pragmatist in the terms *we* now acknowledge—frankly, in terms of a pragmatism more Dewey's than Peirce's.

Peirce simply lost interest in the narrow primacy of the 'here and now' with which he began.¹⁵ Even so, he never returned to the transcendentalist's excesses: he betters Kant by collecting Kant's kind of certitudes as no more than pragmatic conjectures or projections of rational Hope. Though why such articles of faith continued to be needed remains inadequately explained. The fact is, they are inseparably linked with Peirce's version of fallibilism and the 'long run,' that is, with Peirce's account of truth, which goes utterly contrary to James's remarkably canny intuition *and* the best-known strains of Peirce's earliest papers. The account goes far towards explaining the stalemate between Peirce and James.

The mature Dewey makes almost no mistakes of this sort, but no one can be genuinely satisfied with Dewey's resolutions: adopting them strikes the mind as platitudinous, hardly worth the candle. Still, when you keep in mind the outrageous alternatives promoted by the grand thinkers I've trotted out, you realize how much better Dewey is than he sounds. In the same sense, the analytic philosophers are generally not merely wrong but wrongheaded in the very thrust of their essential program, that is, wrong in their various scientisms. I am convinced that they could never confirm the validity of their best-known, most unyielding forms of reductionism; but I remain willing to concede that their mistake is rather a noble and ambitious one, not lightly set aside. Quine, for instance, believes that haecceity can be replaced by quiddity; David Armstrong believes that real possibility can be explained in terms of actuality if modeled on the *Tractatus*; Nelson Goodman believes that predicative similarity can be explained in nominalist terms. These are appalling mistakes that accumulate with alarming ease.¹⁶ But they are advanced in the service of a contest favoring a thoroughgoing extensionalism whose latest inning we must stay to witness.

The principal strands of continental thought – those linked to Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger – are concoctions pure and simple, concoctions of great skill, I willingly acknowledge, by which opposed philosophies of high presumption are defeated rather handily or shown to lead to conclusions we would never willingly support. They are, in turn, themselves impossible to defend: each toys with holding fast to the life and capacity of ordinary human beings. But each 'relents,' so to say, in order to save the genuine grandeur of its own impossible

Bertrand Russell, 'The Definition of "Truth",' *My Philosophical Development* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959).

15. For a sense of Peirce's early views along pragmatist lines, see 'The Fixation of Belief,' *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

16. See W. V. Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), §§37–38; D. M. Armstrong, 'The Nature of Possibility,' *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, XVI (1986); and Nelson Goodman, 'Seven Strictures on Similarity,' *Experience & Theory*, eds. Lawrence Foster and J. W. Swanson (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1970).

invention. There is nothing in the viable philosophies of our day to compare with the marvelous extravagances of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, unless it is the way in which our own lesser figures catch fire from the fire that belongs to these.

What is most interesting about the pragmatists is this: first, they begin, as Husserl and Heidegger do, with the problems posed by Kant and Hegel (which neither pragmatism nor phenomenology ever abandons); and, second, they are never tempted by the self-deceptions of analytic scientism or the analysts' refusal to admit the sense in which they (the analysts) have never rightly overcome the pre-Kantian or Kant's pre-Kantian paradoxes. Pragmatism is one of a very small number of Western philosophical movements – certainly it is the only sustained American movement – that, within the terms just mentioned, never exceed the natural competence and limitations of mere human being. That at least is my brief. The necessary arguments are close at hand.

Against the analysts, the pragmatists' motto might be: 'natural but not naturalizable'—meaning, by that, to favor the reasoned rejection of every form of scientific reductionism spawned in the spirit of Quine's 'Epistemology Naturalized' or Davidson's 'A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge.'¹⁷ Against the continentals, it might be: 'realism on no more than human terms' – meaning, by that, the unavoidability of a constructivism or constructive realism, as a result of conceding the generic argument that Kant and Hegel invent and share, trimmed down from the nonnatural or supernatural or transcendental or Idealist extravagances of Kant's and the post-Kantian world – always, of course, with an eye to (their) identifying the single would-be constant Subject of every form of knowledge, understanding, and agency.

Pragmatism is poised, therefore, between the extremes of analytic and continental philosophy of the sorts now mentioned. It isolates as a distinct question the question of the right analysis of the human being as such, in the very context in which we arrive at a realist picture of the world ample enough for all intelligent life. Analytic scientism precludes constructivism: hence, precludes the Kantian and post-Kantian resolution of the Cartesian paradox. But, as I say, Kant's own and the usual post-Kantian efforts to capture the 'subjective' condition on which a constructive realism is said to depend tends to go extravagantly haywire, to exceed anything that might be said to be at all 'natural' or familiar to our ordinary sense of ourselves. That is what is meant by 'Idealism' (whether German or British), which exceeds the sense of my two mottoes and secures thereby some questionable kind of necessity—telic, historical, rational, or totalized. Pragmatism is committed to bringing the account of the human down to scale, without yielding to any premature form of 'naturalizing' or to any form of privilege or ontic necessity or unexaminable faculty or, worse, the revelations of Being itself, which are

17. The theme is developed in my *Reinventing Pragmatism*, Prologue, and supported in full detail in *The Unraveling of Scientism*. See, also, W. V. Quine, 'Epistemology Naturalized,' *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969); and Donald Davidson, 'The Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge,' (with 'Afterthoughts'), *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001).

(as Heidegger candidly admits) utterly alien and unbidden! Put metonymically: pragmatism's form of naturalism precludes any indefeasible necessities affecting knowledge or reality. That is the basis of its opposition to the extreme proposals of analytic scientism and Husserlian and post-Husserlian phenomenology: the one, in the direction of naturalizing; the other, in the direction of anti-naturalism. But, once you grant the pragmatist postulate, you will find it impossible to hold the line against constructivism, historicism, relativism, incommensurabilism, and similar proposals (to whatever extent they prove coherent).

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Now, it cannot be denied that, within the continental fold, there *are* comparable efforts to save the themes (or something like the themes) I've flagged as defining (in the Kantian and post-Kantian idiom) the constructionist cast of any realism likely to be deemed at all viable. I insist only that the epistemic competence those efforts display must themselves be construed in constructive terms. For, if *they* were cognitively privileged in a facultative way, we would have exceeded once again the reasonable limits of 'naturalistic' tolerance and nullified the advantages of a constructive realism. Pragmatism *is* of course just such a naturalism or realism; it is already, therefore, a cousin to any corresponding movement from the continental side that recoils from vestigial privileges in the 'corrective' work of figures like Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger: for example, in Kant's speaking of the determinative role of noumena that we cannot know, or of the 'deduction' (from the contingent data of sensory perception) regarding the necessary or constitutive conditions of the realist standing of such perception, or of the assured characterization of the representational nature of perception itself, or of the supposed *a priori* arguments confirming the conceptual indefeasibility of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics; or of Husserl's claiming that the phenomenological *epoché* can be effected within the confines of natural reflection, or that noematic invariances can be reliably freed from the contingent constraints of language, perception or any other form of naturalistic experience.¹⁸

Once the temptations of new forms of privilege are set aside, we begin to glimpse the prospect of an abundance of continental theories that may claim a history pertinently similar to pragmatism's history and something of a cognate idiom. There's the clue to pragmatism's current 'advantage.' I find that prospect more than prefigured in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and, say, the Frankfurt Critical program, both of which have been judged hospitable to themes very close to those favored by pragmatism.¹⁹ But the evidence (often tantalizing and incon-

18. See Eugen Fink, 'Husserl's Philosophy and Contemporary Criticism,' in R. O. Elverton (ed.), *The Phenomenology of Husserl* (Chicago: Quadrangle Press, 1970).

19. In fact, American pragmatists have already noticed pertinent congruities. See, for instance, the following texts for some representative specimens that themselves lack a common outlook: Mark Okrent, *Heidegger's Pragmatism: Understanding, Being, and the Critique of Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Mitchell Aboulafia, *The Mediating Self: Mead, Sartre, and Self-Determination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) and *The Cosmopolitan Self: George Herbert Mead and Continental Philosophy* (Urbana: University of Illinois

clusive) may be drawn as well from figures like Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, and others loosely collected as post-structuralists. And, of course, once we go this far, I would welcome the inclusion of that isolated figure – the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*²⁰ – who bridges in an incompletely developed way (through *Sprachspiel* and *Lebensform*) a sort of proto-pragmatism and a Kantian-like inspiration.

I would now add as well the names of some considerably less well-known figures, who write in the spirit of the so-called ‘American continental movement,’ such as Frederick Olafson and Joseph Rouse.²¹ Both feature a Heideggerean reading of what it is for a human being ‘to *have* a world’ or to investigate physical nature scientifically within the terms of a human world. ‘Having a world,’ Olafson maintains, cannot be captured by, or reduced to, the conceptual idiom usually thought adequate, in Anglo-American analytic philosophy, for the descriptive and explanatory work of the natural sciences.²² Here, I would say, we find ourselves in the neighborhood of a fresh beginning bridging the shared strengths of pragmatism and continental philosophy and directed (at least in part) against the egregious scientisms of analytic philosophy. ‘Having a world,’ I would say, is, at least initially, common ground between Husserl, Heidegger, and Dewey—and, for that matter, Hegel.

Merleau-Ponty, I remind you, characterizes science as ‘second-order,’ meaning by that (it seems) to privilege whatever may be phenomenologically recovered from *le corps vécu*, where the latter is then said to harbor ‘primordial,’ ‘pre-philosophical’ (or pre-thetic) elements as opposed to what is usually thought to be contingently empirical in the role of the natural sciences.²³ But it may be – Merleau-Ponty may have meant, particularly toward the end of his career – that science is second-order in the ineluctable sense that, however confined or revisable our ‘primordial’ resources may be, science cannot escape its dependence on the recovered, conjectured, forever incompletely retrieved (or interpreted), already enlanguaged data (the ‘given’) tethered to the sensibilities of the human condition itself, from which our cognitive disciplines somehow competently arise. It is there, of course, that pragmatists and phenomenologists diverge. The crucial

Press, 2001); Sandra B. Rosenthal, *Time, Continuity, and Indeterminacy: A Pragmatist Interpretation of Contemporary Perspectives* (Buffalo: SUNY Press, 2000); and, with Patrick L. Bourgeois, *Mead and Merleau-Ponty: Toward a Common Vision* (Buffalo: SUNY Press, 1991); and Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays 1972–1980)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

20. See, for a sense of the supporting argument, Newton Garver, *This Complicated Form of Life: Essays on Wittgenstein* (Chicago: Open Court, 1994), Chs. 15–16.

21. See Frederick A. Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition: Against Scientism* (London: Routledge, 2001); see, also, Joseph Rouse, *Knowledge and Power: Toward a Political History of Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); and *Engaging Science: How to Understand Its Practices Philosophically* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

22. For an extreme specimen, see Henry Plotkin, *Evolution in Mind: An Introduction to Evolutionary Psychology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

23. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), Preface and Introduction.

question is this: how can it be shown that what is extracted from the 'given' (read without privilege, say in the spirit of Hegel's *Erscheinungen*) could possibly yield a principled disjunction between the naturalistic and the transcendental?

Here, perhaps most notably in his Course Notes on Husserl's 'The Origin of Geometry,' Merleau-Ponty sketches the sense in which he finds his own conception of phenomenology amply anticipated in Husserl's first and last work and in what he finds to be the final convergence between Husserl and Heidegger. He may have been too sanguine about the privileged resources Husserl and Heidegger reserve for themselves (in their very different ways). But he points the way to what, from a pragmatist perspective, might reasonably be viewed as a naturalistic turn within phenomenology itself. Let me risk citing, entirely out of context, some lines from Merleau-Ponty's Course Notes, which give a clear sense of his own struggle with what he regards as a false disjunction between phenomenological objectivism and phenomenological subjectivism – both presumed to be apodictic – in favor of an infinitely explored chiasm, the interweaving or entanglement of language and lived experience ('idea' and 'flesh': *Verflechtung* is Husserl's term, which Merleau-Ponty coopts as *entrelacement*), a 'third' way of phenomenology:

a thought is not *some ideas*. It is the *circumscription of an unthought*. . . Cf. the lived or perceived universe: not only made out of things but also out of reflections, shadows, levels, horizons, which are not nothing, which are *between* the things and delimit their variations in one sole world. . . The method that we are extolling is already one of Husserl's final thoughts. Circle: we presuppose his final thoughts and they presuppose this method. . . Exactly this leads description to the place where consciousness is *apperceived* as connected to body-world-truth-language-history, man. Can one *constitute* that, envelop it, in the system of apperception? How can one found on acts that which is '*vor aller Theorie*,' the 'pretheoretical,' the *Vorgegeben*? Does reflection rediscover the source from which it descends? Being eidetical, isn't reflection always different from production. . . How would it unveil the *Ursprung* of passivity?²⁴

These remarks may be read as similar in spirit to – while clearly very different from – the sense of what is given (*Erscheinungen*) in Hegel's *Phenomenology* and (too baldly put) in Dewey's notion of 'an indeterminate [or problematic] situation.' I would say all three offer 'naturalistic' interpretations of the 'given,' that is, constructive strategies that yield an endless effort at a satisfactory realism that abandons every form of privilege. What Merleau-Ponty claims is that Husserl had already arrived at such an economy. The point at which divergence occurs is plain enough: '*vor aller Theorie*' signifies *either* what is 'given' (without theoretical

24. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Course Notes: Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology' – that is, Merleau-Ponty's Course Notes on Husserl's 'The Origin of Geometry'—trans. Leonard Lawlor, in *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology: Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, ed. Leonard Lawlor with Bettina Bergo (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002), pp. 14–15. (Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between underlined words and italicized words.) See, also, Leonard Lawlor, 'Foreword: *Verflechtung*: The Triple Significance of Merleau-Ponty's Course Notes on Husserl's "The Origin of Geometry".'

bias, even where it is theory-laden, or what is prior or primordial, completely shorn of theory; the first accords with Dewey's intuition; the second, with Husserl's; the first is naturalistic, the second is anti-naturalistic. But the first is 'given' in the sense of being presuppositionless, hence not privileged in any way; whereas the second is posited as theory-free, by way of a problematic theory.

As I view the matter (and, I venture to say, on any pragmatist account that finds my line of reasoning congenial), there is nothing wrong with the second conjecture, unless it is to ignore the fact that it is a conjecture and not the assured recovery of some forgotten cognitive resource or reliable disclosure. (Merleau-Ponty may himself insinuate something of the stronger sort from time to time, though he means it more in the way of what is presumably invariant than in the sense of the *a priori*. It may be treated as a diminished vestige of Husserl's original facultative claim. But it is also on the edge of being reclaimed naturalistically, if only naturalism would oppose scientism, and if only a complete 'recovery' were an infinitely postponed objective.)

But if the objection holds, then to speak of science as 'second-order' is either a distortion of the human limitations that we know—the faintest possible 'recovery' of something close to Husserl's literal disjunction between the natural and whatever is phenomenologically 'pure' or else a hint of the thoroughly constructivist nature of human knowledge and understanding. I think we must allow both notions to have their inning. All I insist on (on pragmatist grounds) is that invariances cast in naturalistic terms can never be ensured in any modal sense: so that phenomenology is itself, finally, no more than a search for certain large (constructed) conceptual constancies that appear to organize our experienced world *and are tested as such within that same world*. Read that way, phenomenology *cannot* be deemed a separate science with its own method and characteristically strong form of epistemic rigor: it must be an abstraction from the naturalistic sciences or from their informal sources.

To take a moment more: Olafson is completely straightforward when, following Husserl (but not Husserl's argument) and following Heidegger (whom he finds more congenial), he attempts to recover what Husserl calls 'the natural attitude,' the competitive strength of which he then proceeds to test. Let me cite Olafson's clear-sighted proposal, therefore, which may help us gain an important conceptual economy:

I propose to reverse the traditional procedure [Olafson says] and to accept the claim of the natural attitude unless and until it can be shown to be false by proofs that are more persuasive than those that have been offered so far. This means that the natural attitude will not serve simply as a datum for the kind of philosophical interpretation that is quite free to replace it with theses of its own devising. Instead, it will represent in some sense the primordial achievement implicit in having a world at all—an achievement that all philosophical and scientific accounts of our nature as perceiving and thinking beings have somehow to acknowledge and find a place for in the theories they construct.²⁵

25. Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition*, pp. 18–19.

With one essential caution, I agree entirely with the point of Olafson's implied challenge: what he says suggests a way of recovering the nerve of the continental tradition while avoiding the excesses of the Kantian/post-Kantian period *and* the excesses of his own champions, figures like Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty (read 'canonically'). What Olafson offers plainly converges with the main thrust of the pragmatists' own way of resisting scientism, reductionism, dualism, transcendentalism, and other conceptual megalomaniacs of the Kantian/post-Kantian world. Olafson manages to isolate the essential pivot of the entire future prospect of Western philosophy that I have been sketching more circumspectly: locally, what amounts to pragmatism's potential third life; Eurocentrically, the rapprochement bruited between pragmatism and continental philosophy by figures like Olafson himself; doctrinally, the explication of the full play of what I am calling constructivism or constructive realism. Seen thus, the best of the 'continental' themes drawn from phenomenology (generously construed) insists on the 'primordial' or, better, empirically infeasible standing of whatever is the uniquely, the irreducibly human—in opposition to analytic scientism's presumption that the human can in principle be captured in terms of whatever adequately characterizes the nature of inanimate physical 'things' or the animate world below the level of the fully human.

The contrast between analytic scientism and what is convergent between pragmatism and phenomenology (as characterized above) may be put this way. For one thing, scientism treats the world as independently *determinate* and knowable as such; whereas pragmatism and continental philosophy view the determinateness of the world as a construction (of potentially many different sorts) within the terms of its *determinability*: its being 'given,' its being discernible by human beings whose powers of cognition and understanding arise (quite naturally) within that same world. For a second, analytic scientism supposes that the foundational determinacy of the entire world can be adequately expressed in terms confined to the description and explanation of inanimate physical things, so that the fully human world can be described, bottom-up, *from* that same foundation; whereas pragmatism and continental philosophy are not persuaded that the mental, behavioral, cultural, linguistic, and historical aspects of the human world can be convincingly *reduced* in the terms favored by the first. They insist instead on a fundamental asymmetry between top-down, part-whole, functional and sub-functional, relational accounts and bottom-up accounts that are thoroughly atomic, compositional, adequately rendered in extensionalist terms.²⁶ Thirdly, as a consequence of the two sorts of opposition just mentioned, scientism sees no reason, *in principle*, to think of human beings as radically different in conceptual respects from inanimate things, even with regard to consciousness, intentionality, reflexive thought, language, freedom, care and responsibility; whereas the pragmatists and continental theorists, believing otherwise, construe whatever is judged to be a part of reality or true about the world, or valuable in any sense

26. Symptomatically, Daniel Dennett, one of the more zealous of the scientific clan at the present time, insists that bottom-up and top-down analyses are perfectly symmetrical—which favors, of course, bottom-up analyses. See D. C. Dennett, *Content and Consciousness* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).

whatsoever, as practically and/or epistemically dependent (though not, for that reason alone, ontologically dependent) on the initiatives of human inquirers.

The difference between the pragmatists and the continentals – if there is any difference finally – seems to be confined to formulating the difference between persons and ‘things’ and what, in this regard, we should understand by the adequacy or inadequacy of naturalism itself. For the moment, convergence provides the most interesting lesson.

To grasp the full *agon*, we must be clear about Olafson’s intent in speaking of ‘the primordial achievement implicit in *having* a world.’ This is, of course, a theme central but obscurely linked to the ‘ontological’ in Heidegger’s account in *Being and Time*, problematic but equally central in Husserl’s reckoning of a shared ‘world,’ and certainly needing to be carefully explicated in Merleau-Ponty’s treatment of science as ‘second-order.’ Olafson is well worth pondering here. Commenting on what I have just cited from his account, he goes on to say:

This may seem an excessively weighty entitlement to confer on what some would doubtless regard as just another theory—a little cruder, perhaps, than its more up-to-date rivals but with no more initial plausibility than they can claim. My reply to this objection is that such a categorization of the natural attitude as a primitive theory has little to recommend it. Theories, after all, have to be tested by their application to a field that they do not simply control so that it can only confirm the theses that they propose. . . A world, self, and others—these are “facts” that the natural attitude presupposes and that every human being must somehow be familiar with because they are implicit in every form of inquiry and in every human practice. No theory could be confirmed unless the field of inquiry were already ordered by the distinctions they imply. My thesis is, accordingly, that unless a theory reconstructs human being in such a way that this kind of familiarity finds a place within it, it hardly deserves to be treated as even minimally adequate to the ostensible purpose.²⁷

This is certainly a challenge to the extremes of analytic philosophy. Olafson has in mind the linked doctrines of dualism and reductionism, which pragmatism would of course join in opposing.

But just how telling is the actual thesis? Well, Olafson favors both sides of the dispute: on the one hand, he says he is prepared to accept the possibility that the ‘natural attitude’ is false, though he knows of no compelling argument to that effect; on the other hand, he insists that *his* own ‘facts’ (he calls them ‘phenomenological facts’²⁸) are ‘implicit in every form of inquiry and in every human practice.’ If the first option held, then naturalism would be perfectly compatible with the ‘bare’ phenomenological facts adduced in the second; but if the second option held (as Olafson reads it), then naturalism (that is, scientism and reductionism, *not* the pragmatists’ version) would be necessarily incompatible with those same ‘phenomenological’ facts; or, the phenomenological facts would be indistinguishable from ‘naturalistic’ facts of a non-scientistic sort.

27. Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition*, p. 19.

28. Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition*, p. 106.

Another way of putting the same point – which I find helpful – would simply remind us that whatever we take to be an adequate picture of the real world must answer to whatever is humanly ‘given’ in that minimal, unprivileged, unendingly reinterpreted sense that marks the existential nature of human cognition and practical life reasonably assigned (on the reading I’ve been suggesting) to Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, Dewey’s *Logic*, and Merleau-Ponty’s Course Notes on Husserl’s ‘The Origin of Geometry.’ If that reading were sustained, we would already have achieved the rapprochement we want.

I would say – I think pragmatism would prefer to say – that scientism and reductionism fail entirely *on their own terms*, without our needing at all to broach Olafson’s deeper confrontation. On the first option, Olafson would count as a naturalist of a sort not very different from the pragmatists—in spite of the way he enters the debate; on the second option, he might never be a naturalist of any stripe. Husserl’s strongest doctrine opposes every naturalism, no matter how moderate, because his own doctrine harbors an exclusionary claim about transcendental privilege. The distinguished phenomenologist J. N. Mohanty concedes that there is a continuity, within human capacities, between empirical or ‘natural’ cognitive powers and phenomenological inquiry said to yield its own *sui generis* form of certainty.²⁹ Nevertheless, phenomenology draws its conceptual data (for its own work) *from* one or another contingent *Lebenswelt*. Yet if that is so (and it must be so), phenomenology could never vindicate a form of certainty firmer than that

29. See J. N. Mohanty, *Explorations in Philosophy: Western Philosophy*, ed. Bina Gupta (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), Part I. Mohanty has published, more recently, a suggestive paper on the inadequacy of ‘reducing’ the naturalistic account of consciousness to the transcendental and reducing the transcendental to the naturalistic. See J. N. Mohanty, ‘Consciousness: Mundane and Transcendental,’ in *Philosophy and Science: An Exploratory Approach to Consciousness* (Kolkata [Calcutta]: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2003): the papers were presented at a seminar held at the Mission Institute in February 2002. (Unfortunately, Mohanty’s paper has a number of typographical errors.) Mohanty begins with the seeming paradox: ‘Consciousness is part of the world, but it is also our only access to the world (including itself)’ (p. 41)—a view that is remarkably close to Dewey’s. (I see no paradox.) He invokes the *epoché* (which, as I’ve suggested, itself instantiates the supposed paradox). But, from my own vantage, his most important concession runs as follows: ‘By “transcendental” . . . is meant not what transcends, or is beyond the world, i.e., Nature, but rather what grounds the possibility of the latter, but for which there would be no objectivity, and [no] object of natural science and therefore no natural science at all’ (p. 42). Mohanty explicates ‘grounds’ in terms of the following: (1) that ‘consciousness alone is self-manifesting [self-conscious]’; (2) that ‘there [can] be [no] consciousness without there being an object of which it is conscious [the *noesis/noema* relationship]’; and, hence, (3) that ‘one may . . . “bracket” all our beliefs in the world, not make use of them (without having to deny them)—and yet have the essence of consciousness unaffected [*epochè*]’ (pp. 42–43). I take Mohanty to be one of the most skillful and best-informed phenomenologists of our time and am heartened, therefore, by what seems to be the inescapable naturalism of his own account, that is, a form of naturalism that is opposed to the ‘naturalizing’ reductionism or eliminativism of analytic scientism—whether, say, in Quine’s sense or in Churchland’s (the latter’s account of which he specifically shows to be paradoxical). I would add that Mohanty’s ‘phenomenological’ distinctions are pretty well confined to the human paradigm and (probably) cannot be extended reliably to the animal world (because of the absence of language); but if language is essential, then I would also say that there cannot be any principled disjunction between the naturalistic and the transcendental *within the natural world*. In short, the phenomenological itself must be thoroughly naturalistic!

of 'natural' conviction, unless it also claimed (however doubtfully) a cognizing power beyond the 'psychologistic' data on which its favorite faculty is practiced. On the concession Mohanty tenders (which he claims to find in Husserl), we cannot possibly identify a confirmed source of phenomenological certainty that we cannot find in 'natural' reason.

In favoring the first option, the 'facts' Olafson adduces cannot be 'primordial' in any sense that is demonstrably beyond the competent inquiries of any nonreductive science; or 'transcendent' in the sense Heidegger intends in his own analysis of *Dasein*, namely, what is essentially invariant (but not changeless!) in the nature of a human being, contrasted with ordinary contingent 'things'—although, of course, Heidegger eschews the Kantian 'transcendental' wherever the Kantian distinction is read as *a priori* rather than as experientially invariant.

I would argue that the human person or self (as distinct from any mere member of *Homo sapiens*) is a hybrid artifact, an indissolubly emergent, individuated entity possessing 'second-natured' powers (speech, reflection, agency, freedom and responsibility) incarnate in its biological gifts, brought into effective existence by the enculturation of the gifted infants of the human species.³⁰ But if that is so, then – in the relevant phenomenological sense – 'world, self, and others' *are also artifacts* of our having internalized language and culture in the first place; and then, the very distinction of the human *may* indeed, in principle, *be* explained in causal terms, well within the competence of some nonreductive science, without precluding in any way the coherent, principled threat of reductionism (however remote that possibility may be). Rightly understood, to admit the second-natured nature of human persons entails the causal efficacy of human agency, the denial of the 'causal closure of the physical world,' the intransitivity of causality – the reverse of what reductionism requires – at the level of emergent culture.³¹ These are doctrines incompatible with any form of analytic scientism.³²

Olafson is too hasty here. Heidegger is not hasty in the least, though he is certainly arbitrary in dismissing the bare possibility of a naturalistic explanation of the unique capacities of human being. I see no reason why there cannot be a responsible science that respects Olafson's 'phenomenological' distinctions, *if* they hold in naturalistic terms. After all, science is itself a uniquely human undertaking.³³ All that I find required, which the continentals often miss, is a distinction between two kinds of naturalism—itsself required to mark the essential difference between pragmatism and analytic scientism. I see absolutely no reason

30. A fuller account is given in Joseph Margolis, *Historied Thought, Constructed World: A Conceptual Primer for the End of the Millennium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

31. Here, it may be helpful to take note of the various ways in which the thesis being advanced would not be allowed in any of the following well-known forms of scientism: Noam Chomsky, *New Horizons in the Study of Language and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); John R. Searle, 'Reductionism and the Irreducibility of Consciousness,' *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), Ch. 5; Jaegwon Kim, *Supervenience and Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

32. See, further, Margolis, *The Unraveling of Scientism*.

33. See Martin Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture,' *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

to think that the naturalism appropriate to pragmatism would be inappropriate to the distinctive work of the continentals, *if* they intended to be bound by naturalism as well. Again, this is what I mean by pragmatism's advantage.³⁴

Olafson's so-called phenomenological regularities confirm the following: (i) that we cannot regard 'world, self, and others' merely as small-scale empirical theories that can be evidentially disconfirmed—notoriously, the gist of Paul Churchland's doctrine;³⁵ (ii) that they are, nevertheless, notably stubborn 'facts' tethered to our contingent but remarkably regular formation as selves—which seem to be shared by pragmatism and what, in the most generous terms, we may call phenomenology; (iii) that they yield no privileged competence of any detailed or determinate sort (as of perception or thought)—an argument directed, somewhat confrontationally, against the extreme views attributed to Husserl and Heidegger, with or without Olafson's acquiescence; (iv) that the details of phenomenological reflection *are*, indeed, theory-laden in their own way—hence, contrary to Husserl's disclaimer, perhaps contrary to Olafson's cautions as well; (v) that, as we presently understand matters, the human being *is* unique in its encultured competence, which Olafson, following Heidegger, calls 'presence' and 'transcendence';³⁶ (vi) that the 'phenomenological facts' adduced make it impossible, at the present time, to justify disjoining first-person and third-person discourse and discrimination (as, say, against the well-known thesis advanced by Daniel Dennett)³⁷ or to justify disjoining, within naturalism's terms, the factual and the normative; and (vii) that whatever may be regarded as 'factual,' whether phenomenological or not, is 'constructive' in the naturalistic sense. Joseph Rouse, for instance, who begins his studies of the natural sciences under a considerable debt to Heidegger's 'existential' phenomenology, construes Heidegger himself as an effective critic of Husserl's 'antinaturalist conception of necessity' (in effect, Husserl's 'phe-

34. As in the motto, 'natural but not naturalizable,' that is, the theme of my *Reinventing Pragmatism*.

35. See, Paul M. Churchland, *A Neurocomputational Perspective: The Nature of Mind and the Structure of Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), Ch. 1.

36. Olafson introduces the terms (Heidegger's terms) 'presence' and 'transcendence' in a careful way: 'presence,' he says, is to be used 'for expressing the status of those entities that are present to someone' (that is, human subjects); and 'transcendence' applies 'to the entities – human beings – to which other entities are present.' See Olafson, *Naturalism and the Human Condition*, p. 86. Heidegger would count these distinctions as *existentia*, a term that conveys a meaning rather close to that of the Kantian transcendentals and the strongest possible disjunction between *Dasein* and 'mere things.'

37. These distinctions are quite enough to defeat such theories, for instance, those advanced by Paul Churchland and Daniel Dennett, without drawing dubious consequences from the distinctly abstract 'phenomenological facts' Olafson advances. The argument applies for instance to Churchland's notorious claim that the 'folk-theoretical' approach to mental and personal traits is so hopelessly mistaken (as an empirical 'theory') that it should be utterly rejected as beyond repair; it applies as well to Dennett's notorious claim that Science requires that we abandon all reliance on first-person reports and avowals regarding mental states. See Churchland, *A Neurocomputational Perspective*; also, Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991) and 'Quining Qualia,' in *Consciousness in Contemporary Science*, ed. A. Marcel and B. Bisiach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). (Olafson clearly has Churchland's doctrine in mind.)

nomenological reduction’); he finds a parallel between Heidegger’s argument and Otto Neurath’s critique of Carnap’s conception of necessity.

By this and other means that suggest (to Rouse) how figures as diverse as Quine, Sellars, Heidegger, Neurath, and Wittgenstein all contribute to the dismantling of a pervasive antinaturalism focused on a problem Rouse calls ‘the problem of manifest necessity,’ we glimpse some ingenious possibilities of fashioning an anti-scientific naturalism that might even begin to reconcile elements of analytic philosophy and phenomenology.

There may be some disputable themes in Rouse’s argument: the parallel between Heidegger and Neurath, for instance, indifference to Carnap’s later pragmatist tendencies, indifference to Heidegger’s own anti-naturalistic bias (especially after the *Kehre*), indifference to arguments like Merleau-Ponty’s that find a convergence between Husserl and Heidegger inclining in a naturalistic direction. But I mention Rouse himself primarily as an attractive recent investigator (drawn, like Olafson, to continental themes) of fresh possibilities in the service of a strengthened naturalism.

Rouse construes the problem of ‘manifest necessity’ as ontological rather than epistemological, which is interesting:

The problem is this [he says]: any attempt to ground normativity in necessity must be able to show how the alleged necessities are both authoritative and binding upon materially and historically situated agents. The issue is not epistemological. The worry is not that we might fail to know what is or is not necessary, but that its supposed necessity would make no effective contact with the normativity it was to explicate. Appeals to necessity would thereby account for normative authority at the expense of normative force [that is, of relevance to actual practices].

Very neat and very useful, apart from agreeing or disagreeing with the textual story. But the obvious resolution stares you in the face. If realism takes a constructivist turn, then all the normative features of the sciences (truth and validity, say) must be constructivist as well—as, conformably, our moral and political norms will be. But that *is* the pragmatist conception, of course. Hence, at one stroke, norms prove to be easily accommodated in naturalistic terms and can be freed from alleged strong forms of necessity (the kind of necessity claimed for the ‘laws of thought,’ the ‘laws of the laws of nature’) that would make such a resolution impossible.³⁸

38. Joseph Rouse, *How Scientific Practices Matter: Reclaiming Philosophical Naturalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 13–14. Rouse brings his argument to bear against the views of figures like ‘Frege, Husserl, early Wittgenstein, Carnap, and Cassirer (among many others)’ (p. 30). For a sense of Dewey’s most general account, see John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (in *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol II. no. 4), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939). It is useful to consider in this connection Wittgenstein’s examination of the *continuity* of our questioning notions of ‘clarity’ and ‘necessity’ (and therefore of the norms for applying each) in empirical, philosophical, and mathematical contexts. The pursuit of these issues provides the most plausible grounds that I know of for reading the later Wittgenstein as a more or less congenial figure viewed from the pragmatist perspective. It would be too much

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There are undoubtedly many ways of characterizing the whole of Eurocentric philosophy. From my vantage, the principal quarrels of the twentieth century have taken the form of a three-sided contest increasingly centered on the nature and adequacy of a realism that is: (a) constructive or constructivist; (b) naturalistic; (c) nonreductive and nondualistic; (d) hospitable to the unique abilities of the human being; (e) persuaded that there are no privileged or transcendental or apodictic faculties and no unconditional necessities or invariances *de re* or *de cogitatione*; (f) opposed to any hierarchical or disjunctive order of cognizing powers at the level of reflexively acknowledged human abilities—as between practical and theorizing powers or between perceptual and conceptual powers; (g) Darwinian, in the sense that linguistic and other cultural competences presuppose and are emergent and incarnate in the biology of the species; (h) prepared to concede that the human person or self is best construed as a ‘second-natured’ hybrid artifact indissolubly and emergently embodied in the members of *Homo sapiens*, through having internalized the contingent language and culture of one or another historical society; (i) historicized, in the sense that our conceptual resources are historically formed, enlarged, reduced, altered, transformed as a result of historical changes in the ongoing formative, communicative, and sustaining processes of cultural life itself; (j) not, therefore, opposed in principle to admitting objective judgments of a relativistic or incommensurabilist sort, should they prove to be (as I believe they are) self-consistent and coherent; and (k) prepared to account for the normative features of meaning, logic, validity, justifiability in theoretical and practical matters, knowledge, legitimation, factuality, rationality and the like in thoroughly naturalistic terms.

I would, in fact, now define pragmatism in terms of just these eleven commitments. They fit the classic pragmatists surprisingly well, though we are more than half a century beyond their best reception. They also spell out the leanest form of realism that the great philosophical tradition spanning Descartes and Kant and Hegel, the post-Kantians, the analysts, the continentals, the pragmatists, down to the beginning of the twenty-first century, could possibly support. More than that, of the three movements sketched, pragmatism is the only one that is more or less unconditionally committed (often inadequately, I admit) to the entire tally.

to say that Wittgenstein was a pragmatist or a ‘neo-pragmatist.’ But he makes a very strong case for disallowing the appeal to mathematical reasoning as separable from, *and* yet normative for, empirical and philosophical reasoning — which goes very much against Frege’s conviction (and the conviction of Fregeans like Michael Dummett). Consider, for instance, §46, Pt. III (read in the context of the run of remarks at §§43–48), in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, ed. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964). To me, this seems to strengthen the prospects of a ‘naturalism’ akin to the pragmatist and continental intuitions I’ve been pitting against the ‘naturalizing’ preferences of analytic scientism. See, further, the very helpful discussions offered in Juliet Floyd, ‘Wittgenstein, Mathematics and Philosophy’ and Hilary Putnam, ‘Rethinking Mathematical Necessity,’ in *The New Wittgenstein*, ed. Alice Crary and Rupert Read (London: Routledge, 2000). I gladly accept all seven adjustments (mentioned above), which, I imagine, everyone hospitable to the pragmatist orientation will also find congenial.

That is indeed a distinct advantage in an age largely becalmed by philosophical nostalgia. The fact is, no familiar philosophy to this day – at least none that I am aware of – has yet successfully reconciled with its own assumptions all the themes I've just mentioned.³⁹

Analytic philosophy favors an entirely different version of naturalism from that of the tally just collected—one that exceeds its bounds and is incompatible with it. I concede that Kant's transcendentalism may be replaced by a carefully confined naturalism, but it would have to yield up all of Kant's supposed modal necessities. I also concede that, for all its extravagance, Hegel's conception of mind or *Geist* is already naturalistic, even respectful of the small powers of individual human agents, though it would be hard to fashion an explicit account of no more than 'merely' human competence confined in precisely the way Hegel intends. There's the pivot of the entire contemporary *agon*.

Beyond all that, I've added (to the tally rendered) a number of provocative doctrines that were never featured by the original pragmatists, though they were aired to some extent during pragmatism's second phase. My thought is simply that the additional items listed can no longer be avoided – historicity and relativism in particular – once constructivism is separated from all transcendental and like-minded presumptions. That is to say, my tally is, in this respect, more a proposal regarding pragmatism's future prospects than a simple record of its past achievements. I freely acknowledge my own preferences of course. But the tally begins to show why Eurocentric philosophy is likely to bring its strongest views into line with these inevitable lessons. That is, of course, what I mean by pragmatism's advantage.

Pragmatism, I remind you, has only recently come of age. Its best promise is a direct function of the exposed vulnerabilities of analytic and continental philosophy. That cannot be said, in the same sense, of either of the other two 'movements' vis-à-vis pragmatism. Pragmatism's great strength lies with its having been eclipsed for nearly thirty years! Whereas the strongest figures in both analytic and continental philosophy have either straddled both halves of the twentieth century (most notably, Heidegger and Wittgenstein) or have extended into the second half of the century the main lines of thinking of the first half (Quine and Davidson, among the analysts; the lesser phenomenologists and Heideggereans, among the continentals; even the Carnapians and Sellarsians, among the lesser positivists and unity of science theorists). In an odd but plausible sense, pragmatism exhausted its original program and turned quite naturally to respond to the seeming strength of the analysts and continentals.

The short life of pragmatism's second wave (viewed through the work of Richard Rorty chiefly) actually bequeathed pragmatism a role defined, quite unpredictably, by the perceived inadequacies of its natural rivals—in a way only nominally linked to the original themes of the classic pragmatists themselves. Its own weakness, therefore, has proved to be the source of its greatest promise,

39. I believe I have demonstrated the coherence and merit of a theory in accord with just such a tally, in *Historied Thought, Constructed World*.

given the important additional fact that, very nearly alone among the English-language programs, pragmatism never completely abandoned its post-Kantian, even Hegelian, commitment.

Pragmatism began as a distinctly minor and parochial movement, in spite of its being well informed about the principal post-Kantian currents in Germany and Britain, as those were perceived not very long after their first appearance and reception. Peirce was almost completely unknown though remarkably well-informed, and, of course, he was both original and unusually daring; James was more of a pop figure than a leading thinker though, reread in the context of the more systematic efforts of Peirce and Dewey, he is often remarkably suggestive; and Dewey, pragmatism's *sine qua non*, came to his mature reckoning only a short time before the movement began to wane and lose its influence—through, say, the later Depression years, the approaching War years, and their aftermath.

What the pragmatists accomplished (Dewey in particular) could hardly have been grasped until the fatigued philosophies of post-War Europe and the altered fortunes of analytic philosophy – which were refocused at mid-century largely by Quine (in the United States, more than in Britain) – revealed in the plainest way their own limitations and pragmatism's serendipitous advantage. All of this crested shortly before pragmatism's 'second wave,' which, unintentionally, obliged all those interested in its better prospects (Rorty and Putnam, for instance) to test their mettle against the visions of the analysts and continentals.

The result has been a much amplified and altered pragmatism still attracted to the themes of the primacy of the practical, the here and now, the contingent regularities of a fluxive world, the defeat of Cartesianism, the lessons of the Kantian and post-Kantian figures shorn of Idealist extravagance, the rejection of extra-natural or doubtfully natural conceptual resources, the perceived needs and interests of the human creature that we take ourselves to be, a Darwinian disposition, meaning and truth construed in an openly anthropomorphized way, an anthropocentric realism that acknowledges the inseparability of fact and value, the barest beginnings of historicist tendencies, and a tolerance for the improvisational and interpretive variety of instrumentally useful conceptions of 'self, world, and others' in addressing the contingencies of practical life. (Here, I deliberately invoke Olafson's least 'facts.')

Beyond all this, pragmatism needs to collect all the puzzles local to the systematic programs of the analysts and the continentals that bear on the three-sided *agon* I sketched a bit ago *and* to fashion new answers and assessments by which to test its viability in these changed times—its capacity (frankly) to confront the scientisms of the one and the extra-natural extravagances of the other. My sense is that if it can do that, if pragmatism can indeed show the way to a Eurocentric rapprochement regarding continental themes and analytic rigor (which is not to deny continental rigor—Husserl's, for instance, but only to insist on abandoning analytic scientism and holding to whatever rigor remains), we shall find ourselves ready for conceptual inventions that have probably been delayed for at least fifty years by the perseveration of late twentieth-century philosophy.

Closer to home, there remains an unbearable dearth of analysis in Anglo-

American philosophy regarding the very nature of the human being, its historicized and culturally formed condition, the problematic relationship between biology and culture, and the bearing of these considerations on standard philosophical problems (reality, knowledge, norms, mutual understanding). It is an extraordinary fact that there is almost no interest (in English-language philosophy) in the ontological and epistemological complexities of history conceived in Hegelian and post-Hegelian terms (in Marx, in Nietzsche, in Dilthey, in Sartre and Foucault, for example). Its absence in analytic philosophy is, of course, very nearly required. Its absence (or, better, its tepid presence) in classic pragmatism is simply a mystery—worse, a scandal.

At the present time, philosophers still presume to fashion their accounts of what a human being is, without ever addressing the matter of the historicity or ‘second nature’ of the human condition itself. Though it is widely denied or ignored, it seems impossible to formulate a convincing account of science that never addresses the question of the formation and objective standing of the conceptual resources of human scientists themselves.⁴⁰ Admit the gap, and you begin to see the strong convergence, across discontinuous philosophical practices, of the work of figures like Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend and those, drawn from the continental side, like Nietzsche and Foucault.⁴¹

The continental tradition has, I admit, never abandoned the analysis of the human being and never neglected to test the validity of the best work of the period spanning Kant and Hegel. It has its structuralists, of course, retrograde figures like Louis Althusser, who seems to have completely ignored (or who simply never knew) Marx’s early critique of Hegel.⁴² But the major contributors to continental philosophy have also largely failed to identify what, in a narrow sense, bears on the functional competence of individual persons within the space of their ethos and collective history—or, simply within the boundaries of the ‘natural world.’

Here, surely, is the best possible site for an essential confrontation between pragmatism and continental philosophy that has only barely begun to be tested. The irony is that analytic philosophy’s hegemony within the Anglo-American world has largely deflected English-language philosophy from pursuing any such recuperative inquiry. To be perfectly candid, I cannot imagine how, from the pragmatist vantage, there could be any single more productive undertaking than to test how far a naturalistic reformulation of continental analyses of the human world might succeed and with what consequences; or how, from the continental side,

40. This was of course the nerve of Thomas Kuhn’s pioneer inquiry. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. enlarged (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). But Kuhn was unable to strengthen his analysis effectively and, gradually, turned against the most arresting innovations of his own work. More revealing still, the *problems* – never mind Kuhn’s fledgling efforts at analysis (or Paul Feyerabend’s ‘anarchistic’ treatment of the same issues) – have now been effectively eliminated from mainstream analytic philosophies of science.

41. See, for instance, Paul Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: NLB, 1978), Part I, especially §7. See, also, John Preston, *Feyerabend: Philosophy, Science and Society* (London: Polity Press, 1997), Ch. 6; and Margolis, *The Unraveling of Scientism*, Ch. 2.

42. See, for instance, Louis Althusser, ‘Marxism and Humanism,’ *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: NLB, 1977).

to test the presumed inadequacy of naturalistic conceptions of the principal distinctions regarding 'self, world, and others' that the strongest European accounts have rendered.

The ultimate question, of course, remains: how best to understand the differences and similarities between being human and being a mere 'thing' (or, more probingly, between animate creatures and human persons); or, between human individuals and their societies and the artifactual, cultural world they produce. But if even this much were attempted, we would be well on our way to fashioning a very different picture of philosophy's questions, a vision that would begin with our present impasse and return us, after two hundred years (perhaps better: after nearly four hundred years), to the intuitions that count as the truly modern beginnings of Eurocentric philosophy.

4

The continentals fear – they have reason to fear – that English-language naturalism has no deep interest *in the human*, if it cannot be captured by the idiom deemed adequate for describing and explaining inanimate nature and the Darwinian world 'below' the level of encultured life. But they confuse too easily the neglect of the human and the advocacy of the natural. The analysts *are* committed to the natural, of course, but they deny that they neglect the human. What *they* mean, speaking as partisans of one or another form of scientism, is that, in whatever sense the human *is* natural, it must eventually yield to a perfectly extensionalist analysis cast in materialist terms.⁴³ (I remind you again that analytic rigor need not be scientistic.) For their part, the continentals fail to reckon with the pragmatists, who mean to match *their* every scruple, except that *they* (the pragmatists) refuse to exceed the outer limits of nature itself. In this way, the analysis of the 'natural' now defines the *agon* of our age.

All three movements may therefore claim to be realist in various local senses, taken singly or pairwise. The continentals and the pragmatists, for instance, tend to be constructivists and anti-reductivists; the analysts tend to be neither. The pragmatists and analysts are assuredly naturalists, but the continentals are very often not. The analysts and continentals tend to be irreconcilably opposed, whereas the pragmatists steer a middle course between scientism and extra-natural powers or modes of being.

From the analysts' point of view, both the continentals and the pragmatists may actually be 'idealists,' since they tend to be constructivists and, favoring the empirical, appear to favor dualism inconsistently. From the vantage of the continentals, the analytic forms of scientism are demonstrably incoherent, since they wrongly conflate the human world and the world of 'things.' From the pragmatists' point of view, the analysts fail to demonstrate that scientism is actually valid, apart from its being coherent; and, for their part, the continentals fail to demonstrate that (as they very often believe) *to* admit the unique mode of human being *must* exceed the boundaries of the natural world itself. The analysts tend

43. See, for instance, Kim, *Supervenience and Mind*.

to see a natural world yielding to inquiries cast in terms confined to what is common to the inanimate and sub-human world. The pragmatists admit a Darwinian continuum, but find no difficulty in acknowledging the uniquely human sphere of freedom and reflexive understanding. And the continentals reject the analysts' scientism outright and have the gravest doubts about the pragmatist alternative. Quite an extraordinary three-sided contest!

I have shown that the continental worry (which, following Heidegger, Olafson isolates as 'presence' and 'transcendence') is simply *not* unconditionally opposed in any familiar respect to pragmatism's own concerns. Frankly, I have already (previously) tried to recover an analogous space of debate between the analysts and the pragmatists, one that centers on the question of the coherence and viability of scientism itself. Let me remind you of the point of the second question by citing some remarks of Quine's.

Quine opens the title essay of his *John Dewey Lectures* (1968) with a rather nice touch: he says he attended Dewey's William James Lectures on art and experience at Harvard, in 1931, while himself a graduate student. Now, he adds, he finds himself giving the first John Dewey Lectures at Columbia! Very neat. He has, of course, a deeper purpose in saying what he says: he moves at once to confirm the sense in which his own view might be thought to be essentially in accord with Dewey's. 'Philosophically,' he says, 'I am bound to Dewey by the naturalism that dominated his last three decades':

When a naturalistic philosopher addresses himself to the philosophy of mind, [he explains,] he is apt to talk of language. Meanings are, first and foremost, meanings of language. Language is a social art which we all acquire on the evidence solely of other people's overt behavior under publicly recognizable circumstances. Meanings, therefore, those very models of mental entities, end up as grist for the behaviorist's mill. Dewey was explicit on the point: 'Meaning [he says] is not a psychic existence; it is primarily a property of behavior.'⁴⁴

You must appreciate the clever way in which Quine coopts Dewey: the two actually construe behaviorism in very different ways. Quine inclines toward B. F. Skinner's rejection of the mental altogether; Dewey is unwilling to separate the mental from the behavioral, but not for reductionistic reasons. They are both opposed to the Cartesian forms of private mental states. That is the conceptual lever that both joins and separates them; and yet, of course, their convergence also fuels the confused presumption that pragmatism and analytic philosophy are already irreconcilably opposed or already 'reconciled' in Quine's very smooth way.

This is not the right occasion for a close comparison between Dewey's and Quine's views. But it does afford an opportunity to complete the picture of the three-legged contest I have been sketching—now with an eye to its possible resolution as well as to the source of misunderstanding between pragmatism and analytic philosophy. Both Dewey and Quine agree with the line Quine cites from

44. Quine, 'Ontological Relativity,' *Ontological Relativity*, pp. 26–17. The citation from Dewey is from Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 179.

Dewey—*hence*, also, with Quine's inference 'that there cannot [as a result] be, in any useful sense, a private language.'⁴⁵ In fact, I would add that Dewey and Quine also agree: (1) that meanings are not entities of any sort; (2) that they cannot be first grasped in what are usually said to be private mental states; and (3) that there simply are no private mental states, that is, mental states disjoined from bodily states or behavioral events—or as an epiphenomenon publicly inaccessible in principle. That's the extent of their agreement *and* the sense in which Dewey would probably not oppose his being characterized as a behaviorist of sorts. *But they read the line Quine cites in very different ways.*

Dewey surely means that the mental *is* real, *is* genuinely 'personal' but *not* 'private' (in the epistemic sense in which we first grasp meanings). Though Quine is known for his well-placed ambiguities, he surely means, finally, to eliminate all reference to the mental wherever it does not yield to extensionalist analysis — even if, informally, he might never explicitly deny a run of mental states not yet analyzed in the scientific way. Put in the simplest terms: Quine has no use for the idea that human persons are 'second-natured,' transformed by the processes of enculturation. But then, there's no point to a philosophical rapprochement through strengthening naturalism's hand, if naturalism doesn't return us to the analysis of the puzzles of cultural life.

Here, I remind you of Merleau-Ponty's most pregnant comment on Husserl's 'The Origin of Geometry':

a thought is not *some ideas*. It is the *circumscription of an unthought* [*ungedachte, impensé*],

a phrasing apparently influenced by Heidegger, which (I would like to suggest) is in need of a naturalistic analysis. It is an important intuition of the inadequacy of empiricism applied to culturally informed processes, perceptual as well as reflective; of the inadequacy of construing thoughts as 'objects' of a kind that would yield to one or another form of scientism; of the pertinence of what is not expressly thought *in* one's thought but is somehow latent in it, determinably but not determinately, that is, interpretably as far as apt communicants are concerned. It makes reductionism impossible, but it also threatens to afford no articulated sense of how it may be 'recovered' in the context of actual social life. That is undoubtedly the key to the often perceived kinship between Merleau-Ponty and George Herbert Mead: for Mead begins to explore the possibility of explicating something akin to Merleau-Ponty's notion, in terms of *praxis*.⁴⁶

Quine could not have failed to see the decisive difference in his own and Dewey's views: Dewey's theme is given on the very same page from which Quine draws the 'behaviorist' line he favors; and, on the next page of Dewey's text, we read the telltale clarification: 'Primarily meaning is intent and intent is not personal

45. Quine, 'Ontological Relativity,' p. 27.

46. Sandra Rosenthal and Patrick Bourgeois make a very plausible case for considering the pragmatist reclamation of the phenomenological intuition. See their *Mead and Merleau-Ponty*, Chs. 1–2. See, also, Hans Joas, *G. H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought*, trans. Raymond Meyer (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

in a private and exclusive sense.’ This is meant to elucidate what is involved in the example Dewey provides, when, say, ‘A requests B to bring him something, to which A points [say, a flower].’ ‘The characteristic thing about B’s understanding of A’s movement and sounds [Dewey says] is that he responds to the thing [the flower] from the standpoint of A. He perceives the thing as it may function in A’s experience, instead of just ego-centrally.’⁴⁷ This is the nonreductive *and* non-scientistic sense in which Dewey would concede that *he* is a behaviorist. Notice, however, that perceiving a flower and grasping the meaning of what is said, or the meaning of a piece of behavior linked to speech, entails the mental, even if the mental is *not* extensionally reducible to behavior, or even if we make room (as by social convention) for the ‘ego-centric’ (which, of course, need not be private in any solipsistic way) and for the pertinently ‘implicated’ (that is, what is interpretable).

You may grasp the full import of this distinction – I’ll not pursue it further here – if you contrast the sense in which Dewey and Quine speak of ‘stimulus’ or ‘stimulation’ under perceptual and intentionally qualified behavioral conditions. Here is Dewey’s careful formulation:

neither the sounds uttered by A, his gesture of pointing, nor the sight of the thing pointed to, is the occasion and stimulus of B’s act; the stimulus is B’s anticipatory share in the consummation of a transaction in which both participate.⁴⁸

Dewey might almost be thought to be speaking here *after* Quine has spoken, in order to correct the drift of Quine’s scientism—in particular, to correct *the radical, extensionally reductive sense in which Quine treats perceptual occasions in terms of ‘ocular stimulation’ and intentional behavior in terms of ‘radical translation.’*⁴⁹ It is just *this* extreme reading of ‘behavior’ that Quine means to feature; it identifies Quine’s reading of the line I’ve already cited: viz. ‘Language is a social art which we all acquire on the evidence *solely* of other people’s *overt behavior* under *publicly* recognizable circumstances.’

The remark is meant to remind us of Quine’s extraordinary notion of radical translation and his elimination of intentional factors in understanding an alien people (and, by analogy, in understanding one another). *That* is precisely what Quine has in mind when he says, rather smoothly, in ‘Ontological Relativity’: ‘The semantic part of learning a word is more complex than the phonetic part, therefore, even in simple cases, we have to see what is stimulating the other speaker.’⁵⁰ The clause, ‘what is *stimulating* the other speaker,’ is, on Quine’s view but *not* on Dewey’s, reductive, extensional, atomic, completely free of intentional and intensional complications of just the sorts that arise in Dewey’s ‘behaviorist’ account of what is ‘stimulating’ A and B in the example given.

47. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, pp. 178, 180.

48. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 179.

49. I examine Quine’s usage in greater detail in *The Unraveling of Scientism*, Ch. 4. But, for a sense of Quine’s running account, see Quine, *Word and Object*, Parts I–II.

50. Quine, ‘Ontological Relativity,’ p. 28.

I've pressed the essential point in contrasting Quine and Dewey (keeping Merleau-Ponty and Mead in mind), in order to match the point of contrasting Olafson's views (as a continental thinker) with a pragmatist's naturalistic alternative. I hardly mean these comparisons to yield knockdown arguments as they stand. But they might help to make clear just how promising a prospect it is to work toward an understanding of what still separates the three movements I've tracked. Too many philosophers, believing them to be utterly irreconcilable, lack patience enough to formulate the essential questions for our time.

The fact is, the pragmatists were never entirely consistent in confining the sources of knowledge to whatever might reasonably be characterized as 'empirical' (say, as suited to the work of the empirical sciences). Morton White, for instance, argues very compellingly that Peirce, James, Dewey, C. I. Lewis, and Quine (whom White counts as a pragmatist) all concede 'dualisms' of empirical and non-empirical knowledge somewhere in their respective accounts.⁵¹ What is important about these concessions is, of course, that they betray inconsistencies within the naturalistic constraints of a thoroughgoing pragmatism (among the pragmatists themselves); *and*, more provocatively, that those inconsistencies effectively obscure the seemingly clear distinction between the naturalism of the pragmatists and the insistence on non-naturalistic sources of cognition that one finds in continental philosophy. I would add to White's account the evidence that, in developing his ramified version of fallibilism, Peirce clearly construes abduction in a way that appears, for all the world, to harbor *a priori* truths, which he officially eschews.

We cannot escape the irony that not only must we choose between the naturalistic and non-naturalistic alternatives of the pragmatists and the continentals, but we must correct the pragmatists with regard to their own essential doctrine. By and large, this can be done only, I argue, first, by adhering to something like Quine's rejection of a principled disjunction between the analytic and the synthetic (which the pragmatists may have weakly anticipated) and, second, by adhering to a thoroughgoing constructivism with respect to normative judgments (as of moral obligation) as well as to empirical and mathematical truths. But to acknowledge the point of such a labor is, effectively, to acknowledge, for our time, the full import of the central challenge of the three-legged contest I've been tracking.⁵²

51. See Morton White, *A Philosophy of Culture: The Scope of Holistic Pragmatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), Chs. 3-4. White summarizes his findings very neatly on p. 53.

52. Paper presented at a conference at Utrecht University, The Netherlands, June 26th, 2003.