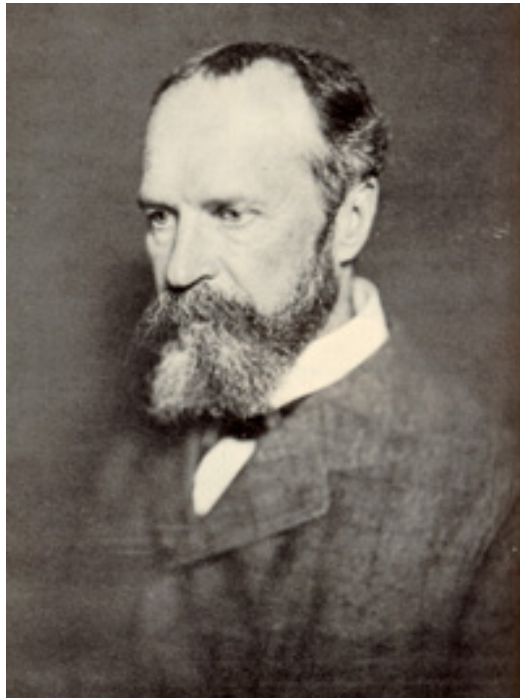


# American Philosophical and Intellectual Thought

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William James (1842-1910): the Founding Father of American Pragmatism

## **Recent Publications:**

*Instructors Resource Guide to The American Pageant (13/e)*  
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## **A Bit O' Irish:**

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# American Philosophical and Intellectual Thought: A Survey and History

## 1. The Colonial Period (1620 - 1776):

"A continuing challenge to the American intellectual scene has been provided by the successive waves of immigration, and the resulting infusions of divergent ideas. No sooner did one wave begin to be assimilated than a new force appeared. Thus America constantly added the experience and thought of older traditions to its shore; yet at the same time these traditions were themselves profoundly altered by the new habitat." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 17)

European settlements in America: the Puritans of Plymouth, the Anglicans of Jamestown and Charleston, the Dutch of NY, the Quakers and Germans of Pennsylvania, the French of New Orleans, and the Scotch-Irish of the advancing frontier communities.

### A. The Puritans (1620 - 1700):

The Puritans wished to purge the Church of England of its "Popish practices", dissatisfied with the reforms of the Anglican Church, they left to form a New Zion. "The Puritans were thoroughly British in culture and conventions; they differed from their contemporaries primarily in the degree of their religious dissent." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 18) Principle beliefs were Calvinistic, although they did not claim to be literal disciples of John Calvin. These beliefs were:

1. Absolute sovereignty of God and utter dependence of man on God.
2. God is all powerful & arbitrary whose ways are inscrutable to man.
3. Adam's descendants inherited the curse of "original sin" and were irresistible given over to evil.
4. First covenant with Adam (which man was to receive immortal life), second covenant through Jesus (which man can receive salvation).
5. Salvation is not earned through good works or moral excellence.
6. God's will has been predetermined (i.e., foreordained) and the elect (i.e., a Society of Saints) are totally dependent upon God's grace.
7. Man must offer God faith and obedience.

For the Puritans, life was a moral process originating in sin, dedicated to faith, and culminating in the hope that salvation might be achieved. Moral virtues were emphasized: discipline, devotion, honesty, moderation, temperance, frugality, industry, and simplicity. The philosophical predestination did not lead to passive inaction because, "the dynamic activism of the American Puritan might better be explained, not by his religion or his philosophy, . . . but by the new geographical and economic necessities; here was a frontier to claim, a wilderness to conquer, a future to forge." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 19)

New England Puritanism was intolerant of dissent and heresy - in particular was the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which was organized along theocratic lines. The covenant with God was more of a corporate arrangement between the whole community and God rather than a private affair. Initially there was no idea of "separation of church and state", but as new sects began arriving and as the covenant became more secularized, freer communities began to be formed. Toleration seemed to be the only way to deal with the growing number of different denominations popping up in the new America.

### B. Colonial Materialism and Immaterialism (1700 - 1776):

For the most part, practical pursuits and religious interests dominated seventeenth-century America and little time was devoted to theoretical philosophy - it was not till the eighteenth-century that intellectual philosophic and scientific interests were more directly nourished.

**Primary Figures:** Jonathan Edwards (1703 - 1758), Samuel Johnson (1696 - 1772), Cadwallader Colden (1688 - 1776), and Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790).

Edwards represents the most thoroughgoing use of philosophical idealism in an attempt to provide a rational philosophical vindication of the Calvinistic system against its critics. Johnson used philosophical immaterialism to combat materialism - however, neither Edwards nor Johnson could stem the tide of the new forces, especially the development of modern science and modern philosophy, which was emerging in Europe.

Edwards most important philosophical work was, *Freedom of the Will* (1754), in which he puts forth a defense of Calvinistic determinism against the arguments for free will. Every event has a cause, but divine omnipotence, foreknowledge, and efficacious grace (all of which are Calvinistic doctrines) are consistent with moral freedom and moral responsibility. Freedom, according to Edwards, is having the power, opportunity, or advantage, to do as one pleases to do - without considering how one's pleasure comes to be as it is. Even though one's pleasure (sometimes called - will) is the product of causal principles. Edwards attempts to resolve the alleged paradox by careful linguistic definitions of key terms.

In *The Nature of True Virtue* (written in 1755, published in 1765), Edwards argued that man is naturally incapable of true virtue, being sinful and corrupt. Yet there is the grace of God that has elected some for salvation, and one sign of this is the individual's religious affection and sense of beauty.

In *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), Edwards maintains that belief in God has its source in the religious affections, love and joy, and that these are transmitted from supernatural source and are not to be comprehended by the natural senses (e.g., Deism - which Edwards considered to be the greatest abomination to Christianity). And in his, *Notes on Natural Science*, Edwards provides a metaphysical defense of philosophical idealism, holding that mind and spirit are fundamental to the universe.

Johnson preferred the quiet conservatism of the Church of England to the evangelical enthusiasm then sweeping through the Puritan churches of New England. Johnson was a follower of the ideas of George Berkeley, who was a critic of the materialism of Newton and Locke, which he thought would lead to skepticism, freethinking, and atheism. *Spiritual, not material substances, were real, the human mind receiving what the Divine Mind impressed upon it.* However, the immaterialism of Berkeley and Johnson had little effect on late eighteenth-century American thought, possibly because of its Anglican association, though their ideas would reemerge in nineteenth-century America through transcendentalism and idealism.

Colden carried on an extensive correspondence with Johnson on the topic of idealism versus materialism. Colden was not a pure materialist - he did seem to advocate a kind of dualistic theory, which allows for the existence of *intelligent being*. "Like body, intelligent being is active and known by its effects, but it differs from material being in its essential nature." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 102) Colden was sympathetic to Deism: God as First Cause gave direction to the action of matter, but did not intervene in its operations.

In *First Principles of Morality* (1746), Colden presents a materialistic hedonism: the body is a machine and pleasure is the end cause of the virtues. Throughout Colden's works one finds a modern mind, critical of "mere authority," directing the individual to think for himself, unencumbered by prejudice and received tradition, and basing its inquiries on the methods of science. Although conservative in his political beliefs and opposed the American Revolution, he was devoted to reason and sympathetic to the Enlightenment.

Franklin applied Newton's physical principles and illustrated Newtonian natural philosophy and the possibility of a completely mechanical explanation of the universe. Franklin also owed his philosophical reputation to the fact that he was broadly educated and interested in many fields of human endeavor - he displayed wisdom for life, both intellectual and practical. In his, *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion* (1730), Franklin espouses his deistic rationalistic philosophy of religion. Franklin's philosophy can be summarized as follows:

1. Secularized typical Puritan virtues in ethics, thrift, temperance, punctuality, and industry.
2. Virtue and Reason are combined as revealing the true source of happiness.
3. Staunch defender of republicanism and revolution.

Franklin was a highly civilized man - fair-minded, humane, charitable, and a source of worldly wisdom - qualities which were unique in early America.

## 2. The Revolutionary Period (1776 - 1800):

"With the outbreak of the War for Independence in 1776, interest in the ideals of the Age of Reason became pre-eminent. The Enlightenment had a correlative impact in America. Many of the colonists were inspired by the English Deists such as Blount, Clarke, Bolingbroke, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Wollaston, and by French writers such as Condillac, Diderot, Condorcet, Holbach, Volney, La Mettrie, and Voltaire. However, it was the empiricism and liberalism of the British philosopher John Locke that had the most important and direct influence on American thought - though once again his major impact was practical." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 20)

The Age of Reason in America assumed three forms:

1. it contributed to the development of materialism and deism in metaphysics and religion
2. it helped to emphasize the values of a secular and naturalistic morality
3. it made meaningful the ideals of republicanism and revolution

**Primary Figures:** Benjamin Rush (1745 - 1813), Thomas Paine (1737 - 1809), Ethan Allen (1737 - 1789), Elihu Palmer (1764 - 1806), and Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826).

**Materialism:** The Newtonian materialism of the colonial period came to full maturity in the latter part of the eighteenth-century. The materialists had strong interests in science and they attempted to extend what they considered to be the legitimate aims of science to other areas of the cosmos, including man. Thus, they consistently attempted to apply physical and mechanistic explanations to mind and morality.

**Deism:** Deism as a religious philosophy was widely espoused by many of the advanced leaders of the new republic, such as Jefferson and Washington. The deists affirmed the supremacy of reason, and denied the claims of revelation, prophecies, and miracles - defending the principles of religious freedom, toleration, and the separation of church and state.

1. all events in nature were determined by natural causes
2. God, as first cause, designed the natural order
3. nature and man, were products of the goodness of God
4. mankind is basically good, Calvinism is fundamentally flawed (with its beliefs in original sin and human depravity)
5. man as a rational creature, is capable of achieving the good life on earth
6. morality was humanistic, happiness and pleasure, not faith and humility, were the standards of choice
7. science, reason, and education are the instruments of human progress
8. Lockean empiricism - all knowledge is based on sense experience
9. man is a product of conditioning forces of his environment - therefore, improved social environment means improved human behavior

*Republicanism and Revolution*: The ideas which inspired the Revolution had their origins in the writings of Locke and Montesquieu, but their experimental application in a new context was a significant innovation. The American thinkers maintained that justice is related to the doctrine of *natural rights* and not to the divine right of kings, hereditary rights, or the conserving of established institutions. Governments are artificial contracts made by men, to be overthrown and changed by men if they do not fulfill their original purposes or if they violate inalienable human rights.

This does not mean that there was unanimity among the colonists. And indeed, after the Revolutionary cause was gained, there was need to reason out and build a new system of government. *The Federalist Papers* (1787 - 88) were written by Alexander Hamilton (1757 - 1804) the conservative, James Madison (1751 - 1836) the liberal, and John Jay (1745 - 1829) in order to explain and justify the Federal Constitution. Some American thinkers, such as Jefferson, considered agrarian society as the ideal, but others, such as Hamilton, favored a commercial or industrial society. The problem of how to safeguard human liberties against the encroachments of a tyrannical government was dealt with by the development of a system of checks and balances among the three branches of government.

### 3. The Counter-Revolution in America (1800 - 1850):

"No sooner had America reached its apogee in brilliance than a conservative reaction set in - political, religious, moral, and philosophic. The liberal stream of the Enlightenment was overwhelmed by a conservative undercurrent, which now rose to the surface." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 22)

#### A. Southern Racial Aristocracy (1800 - 1860):

An immediate reaction against the Declaration of Independence was stimulated by a fear of "the mob" inspired to some extent by the Jacobin excesses of the French Revolution. The south was unable to reconcile itself to Jeffersonian democracy. Is the principle *all men are created equal* defensible, or does it rest on untenable metaphysical grounds? There rose a group of men, dedicated to defending the status quo of the Southern way of life - which included the institution of slavery and the economic interests that it supported. Attacked were the notions of liberty, equality, natural rights, democracy, and strong federal government. John C. Calhoun (1782 - 1850) was the most serious southern philosophical writer of this period, denied that there were natural rights prior to society - such rights were metaphysical abstractions - and he attempted to defend a hierarchical and organic conception of society. Order and security, rather than scientific reason or democratic reform, were to be valued and preserved.

#### B. Academic Philosophy - Scottish Realism (1800 - 1850):

A similar conservatism was evident in religion in the early nineteenth-century. The radical deistic spirit of the Age of Reason was lost in the general subservience of science to religion. The earlier confidence in the powers of human intelligence was replaced by a failure of courage and a sense of human dependence. Remarkable during this period were the numerous scholarly attempts to rationalize received traditions and values.

Colleges played a big role in promoting these ideas - the purpose of many colleges was to provide moral discipline and an ordered conception of the universe. The college thus had the conservative function of preserving a cultural tradition and, in effect, of justifying the status quo.

Two dominant philosophical influences in this period:

1. Scottish Realism
2. Philosophical Idealism - popular during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The Scottish philosophers, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, Adam Ferguson, and others, seemed to many in America to offer a powerful answer to Hume's skepticism. Scottish realism was first introduced at Princeton before 1800 by John Witherspoon and Samuel Stanhope Smith. It was popularized by James McCosh (1811 - 1894), a late arrival to the American shores.

Realism was based on the doctrine that "real objects" existed independently of man and were perceivable as such. *Real objects were neither unknowable nor reducible to phenomena or ideas*. All of this seemed self-evident and give to inductive intuition. The realists believed that such intuition might establish moral, political and religious truths - indeed, all fundamental truths could be known in the same way. There were self-evident certitudes of right and wrong, standards of justice and injustice, truth of God's existence and of immortality of the soul, mathematical objects, and basic scientific universals. This method could be extended indefinitely and was conveniently used to instate a whole set of orthodox ideas and values, giving them sanction of philosophical necessity. Realism became a means of rationalizing the unquestioning acceptance of traditional values which appealed to "common sense."

### 4. Transcendentalism (1820 - 1860):

"The movement was rather conservative in its metaphysics and epistemology, but it was decidedly liberal in its morals and politics. It was fairly inchoate movement - literary, religious, political, and philosophical - distinguishable more perhaps by what it opposed than by what it supported." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 26)

**Primary Figures:** William Ellery Channing (1780 - 1842), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882), Theodore Parker (1810 - 1860), Henry David Thoreau (1817 - 1862), Amos Bronson Alcott (1799 - 1888), James Freeman Clarke (1810 - 1888), James Marsh (1794 - 1842), Frederick Henry Hedge (1805 - 1890), Margret Fuller (1810 - 1850), Orestes A. Brownson (1803 - 1876), and many others.

Initially the transcendentalists were Unitarians, who liberal in sentiment, transformed Calvinistic pessimism to optimism; God was loving and just, not arbitrary or vindictive; man was not necessarily sinful but capable of moral virtue and goodness. The Unitarians also reacted against the mechanistic universe and rational religion of the deists. Nature manifested divine purpose, and man might know and appreciate its full beauty. But man must transcend ordinary understanding or experience, and his soul must have direct contact with divinity; this might be done largely without benefit of clergy. The Unitarians, like the Deists, wished to use reason to interpret the Bible but, unlike the Deists, many accepted revelation.

1. reacting against the limitations of Lockean conception of experience
2. there is a transcendental realm over and beyond the phenomenal appearances, and ultimate reality which only reason and intuition could penetrate
3. criticized the dependence of knowledge based on empirical and scientific facts - such evidence was only probable, and ended in skepticism
4. poets and seers who proclaimed truth as they saw it and were not interested in rational proofs
5. there are two worlds - (a.) the unreal world of sensations, which are the objects of physical science, and (b.) the unseen world, a religious, moral, and aesthetic universe, which only poetry and philosophy could discover
6. movement stimulated by moral idealism
7. goal is to liberate the individual and to free him from the blind hold of custom and convention

The transcendentalists were humanitarians deeply concerned with moral progress, with political and social justice and equality. Each individual possessed an implicit dignity, which was also a claim to equality, for each person had both the ability and the right to consult his private intuition. They fought against acquiescence to injustice and defended liberalism in social action.

#### 5. Speculative and Absolute Idealism (1860 - 1900):

"Transcendentalism was sympathetic to philosophical idealism, but it seemed primarily to offer a literary and romantic rather than a technical approach to philosophy. European philosophical idealism had taken root in American thought, and it reappeared after the Civil War as the dominant academic tradition. . . . A group known as the St. Louis Hegelians was especially influential in the development of this kind of speculative idealism."

**Primary Figures:** William T. Harris (1835 - 1919), Laurens Perseus Hickok (1798 - 1888), Henry C. Brokmeyer, Thomas Davidson, George H. Howison, Denton J. Snider, J.E. Woerner, Joseph Pulitzer, Carl Schurz, and Josiah Royce (1855 - 1916).

St. Louis Hegelians published two major journals:

1. *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, first of its kind in America
2. *The Western*, a review of education, science, literature, and art

The movement was initiated (about 1858) by the "Kant Club" through the serious study of German absolute idealism: Hegel, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. The transcendentalists had received their idealism from secondary sources; the speculative idealists went to primary sources, translating and studying directly the works of absolute idealists, especially Hegel's *Logic*.

The speculative idealists argued single-mindedly for the speculative method: they attacked the positivism, empiricism, and agnosticism of Comte, Mill and Spencer, and defended "abstract philosophy." Through reason, they (i.e., Mill and crew) believed, one could achieve knowledge of "ultimate reality."

In a symposium in 1895, George H. Howison summed up the dominant temper of American academic idealism when he said: "We are all agreed in one great tenet, which is the entire foundation of philosophy itself: that explanation of the world which maintains that the only thing absolutely real is mind; that all material and all temporal existences take their being from consciousness that thinks and experiences; that out of consciousness they all issue, to consciousness they are presented, and that presence to consciousness constitutes their entire reality." (Adams, *Contemporary American Philosophy - Personal Statements*, Volume II, pp. 85)

The kind of idealism that generally prevailed, however, was neo-Hegelian absolute or objective idealism. This kind of idealism, unlike mentalistic or subjective idealism (e.g., Berkeley and Johnson), did not simply reduce reality to ideas. Mind was held to be central to the universe; but the universe was thought to be a systematic or organic whole, encompassing the experience of individual men, social mind, and culminating in an objective intelligible order. The order of the universe was not only a logical or causal order, but value and purpose were also said to have an ontological basis in reality.

Josiah Royce is usually considered to be the greatest defender of Absolute Idealism in America. In *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885), his first book in philosophy, he asked the following question - Is there any real thing in the universe of infinite worth? An individual's life, his ends and purposes, are purely partial and fragmentary, unless they are related to an inclusive and higher purpose. This Absolute Purpose is a standard of value, in terms of which all our partial moral ideals, indeed the problem of evil, find ultimate resolution. Royce was a pragmatist and voluntarist in the sense that truth was related to human needs and purposes. But he was an absolutist in the sense that needs were universal and that there was a timeless or eternal basis to truth.

#### 6. Evolution and Darwinism (1859 - 1900):

"The impact of the scientific revolution on the modern world took on significant proportions with the introduction of Darwin's theory of evolution. This theory stimulated new and bold philosophical discussion, and led to deep conflict, in both Europe and the United States, between science and traditional religion, metaphysics, and ethics." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 30)

**Primary Figures:** John Fiske (1842 - 1901), Francis Ellingwood Abbot (1836 - 1903), and Chauncey Wright (1830 - 1875).

Evolutionary ideas featured prominently in philosophy: Hegelianism took historical development seriously; and Auguste Comte's positivism predicated three stages of social evolution. But it was with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) that evolution, for the first time, seemed to be taken out of the range of speculation and to be given fairly definite factual confirmation.

Behind much of the determined opposition to Darwin lay the strong religious, metaphysical and moral antipathies his theory provoked. The basic problem was whether and to what extent divine design could be reconciled with evolution. Critics of traditional theology held that natural selection undermined purpose, that chance replaced fixed laws, and that scientific law did not imply design. Darwinism challenged many traditional concepts: the notion of a teleological universe, of fixed species, and of man as separate from nature and the product of a special act of divine creation. All of this led to drastic attempts to adjust philosophy to scientific discovery by the construction of new metaphysical and moral theories.

Fiske propounded, in his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* (1874), a cosmic theism, and attempted to explain through evolution the origin of all human capacities, including moral sympathy and intellectual ability. "Fiske related the development of moral sympathy to the prolonged period of human infancy and dependency. His theory was able, he thought, to reconcile both utilitarianism and Kantianism in ethics." (Kurtz, *American Thought Before 1900*, pp. 379) Wright accepted Darwin's explanations within biology and used them to account for self-consciousness and the growth of language, but he resisted the attempt to extend the evolutionary process into a cosmic metaphysic. The major effect of Darwin on metaphysics in America, however, was that nature was now seen as a state of dynamic flux or change, not fixed system of eternal reality. The classical category of substance or essence thus was transformed into the category of process or event.

## 7. The Golden-Age of American Thought (1880 - 1940):

"An American philosophical renaissance occurred at the end of the nineteenth-century, and it continues in full force down to the present." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 17)

Several reasons for this growth in American philosophical thought:

1. sharp rise in the publication of new philosophical journals and books, *The International Journal of Ethics* (1890), *The Philosophical Review* (1892), and *The Journal of Philosophy* (1904)
2. during this century numerous philosophical society have been established: especially, the American Philosophical Association (1901)
3. serious introduction of philosophy as a subject into liberal arts colleges and graduate schools and the steady expansion of higher education
4. growth in interest in philosophy coincided with the emergence of a remarkable number of original thinkers and fresh movements

Most of these thinkers were rebelling from the idealism that had dominated American thought during the second half of the nineteenth-century and was still very influential during the opening years of the twentieth-century. Although it is unquestionably true that idealists have generally been on the defensive since the beginning of the century and that their numbers have been constantly diminishing, it must also be pointed out that philosophers of considerable standing have continued until the present day to advocate one or another of the basic theories associated with idealism.

These basic principles of idealism are: (a.) mind is in some sense the fundamental reality - everything that exists can on analysis be seen to be mental or, if not itself mental, at any rate dependent on mind; (b.) reality is an organic whole in which everything is logically or internally connected with everything else; and (c.) value and purpose are not merely features of the human scene, but are of cosmic significance. Most, though not all, idealists were defenders of some form of traditional religion, and even those who were not nevertheless had obvious affinities with the outlook of rationalistic theology.

### A. Pragmatism:

"The ideas subsequently associated with the school of pragmatism were first discussed by the members of the *Metaphysical Society* in Cambridge in the 1870's. . . . pragmatism was primarily a method of clarifying ideas and concepts by clearing away metaphysical and other confusions." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 18 - 19)

**Primary Figures:** Charles Peirce (1839 - 1914), William James (1842 - 1910), John Dewey (1859 - 1952), and George Herbert Mead (1863 - 1931).

In *The Fixation of Belief* (1877), Peirce argued that beliefs guide actions, and they arise in response to dissatisfaction and doubt from which we struggle to free ourselves by means of inquiry. But how are we to fix our beliefs? Not by tenacity or authority, nor by *a priori* methods (a la Descartes), but by the method of science. Science is the most effective way of resolving doubt, largely because it is the method most in accord with "real objects." Peirce's most famous article, *How to Make Our Ideas Clear* (1878), he suggests pragmatism as a principle or method of clarification: the meaning of an idea is to be discovered by reference to its conceivable practical bearings.

Peirce's published ideas lay virtually dormant until James popularized them in a lecture entitled "Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results," which he delivered in 1898 at the University of California. When James spoke of pragmatism, he meant both the pragmatic method as advocated by Peirce and a new theory about the nature of truth that he thought to be implicit in the pragmatic method. James modified Peirce's rigorous definition of "pragmatism" by extending it to a theory of truth, which allowed

for particular individual and subjective consequences as the test of an idea, thus making room for religious and moral ideas. For James, "truth" (or sometimes what was called "useful") could also apply to what was emotionally satisfying. "On pragmatic principles, we cannot reject any hypothesis if concepts useful to life flow from it. . . . If the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 20) None of the other leaders of American pragmatism could bring themselves to accept this theory of truth.

Peirce was naturally hostile to the subjectivity of this theory, which he maintained was not implied by the pragmatic method. This does not mean that Peirce was not interested in a theory of truth - he defended the "method of science" as the most effective way of resolving doubt and fixing belief. But he insisted there were limitations to the use of the pragmatic criterion. Dewey wished to extend the pragmatic criterion to the broader aspects of life. For Dewey, the term "pragmatic" meant only "the rule of referring all thinking, all reflective consideration, to consequences for final meaning and test."

Pragmatism tended to contribute to the destruction of traditional conceptions of metaphysics and to the reconstruction of philosophy. Peirce, James, and Dewey were not hostile to metaphysics, but they thought that, like the sciences, any defensible metaphysics would have to be empirical and tentative in character. Accordingly, all notions of Absolute Being or ultimate certainty such as the idealists espoused were rejected. "Peirce was ingenious in his formulation of metaphysical ideas - phenomenological, realistic, and evolutionary - though at times these seem hardly to conform with the pragmatic criterion. James outlined several novel ideas, such as a metaphysics of pure experience, and radical empiricism, and Dewey advanced a naturalistic metaphysics allegedly descriptive of the generic traits of nature and based upon human experience." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 22)

## B. Realism:

"Although the realists differed on many matters of importance, they agreed on certain basic epistemological issues. They all denied the idealistic premise that physical objects are reducible to 'ideas' and denied equally that the objects of experience exist when we experience them. The fact that we know something makes no difference to the object known. In more technical language: the relation between knowing and the object known is an 'external' and not an 'internal' relation." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 22 - 23)

**Major Movements:** "New Realism" and "Critical Realism"

**Primary Figures:** New Realists - Ralph B. Perry (1876 - 1957), William P. Montague (1873 - 1953), Edwin B. Holt (1875 - 1946), Edward G. Spaulding (1873 - 1939), Walter T. Marvin (1872 - 1944), and Walter B. Pitkin (1878 - 1953). Critical Realists - George Santayana (1863 - 1952), James B. Pratt (1875 - 1944), Durant Drake (1878 - 1933), Charles A. Strong (1862 - 1940), and Arthur K. Rogers (1868 - 1936).

Primary principles (i.e., those in agreement) of the New Realists:

1. Maintained the independence of things known.
2. Maintained epistemological monism - particulars and universals that are real are apprehended directly rather than indirectly through copies or mental images.
3. Attacked speculative system building and mystical philosophy.
4. Advocated the use of logic and the method of analysis as the model for doing philosophy.

Critical Realism, as opposed to the New Realism, drew a distinction between the datum (i.e., the mental interpretation) and the object - therefore they advocated a kind of epistemological dualism. "The critical realists, in brief, maintained that the world contained at least two sets of entities: (a.) material things and (b.) mental states, ideas or essences, and that it is only the latter which are given or presented directly to consciousness. The given is not the same as the existent object. Moreover, our sense qualities exist at a time later than that of the events in the object that cause them. This theory, it was thought, had the advantage of enabling us to explain error by attributing it to the psychological state of the knower." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 24)

## C. Naturalism:

"In a broad sense of the term 'naturalism,' any philosophy may be regarded as naturalistic if it maintains that all phenomena can in principle be explained in terms of natural causes or principles. In this sense, a number of philosophies of past centuries are also 'naturalistic.' This is undoubtedly true of most materialistic systems." (Kurtz, *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 26)

## 8. Modern America (1940 - present):

Other movements in the history of American Philosophy:

- a. **Idealism** (Brand Blanshard, James E. Creighton, William E. Hocking, and Wilbur Urban)
- b. **Rationalism** (Morris R. Cohen and Alfred North Whitehead) - belief that reason is the key to understanding nature.
- c. **Marxism** (Sidney Hook and Erich Fromm) - many intellectuals were attracted to Marxism during the depression of the 1930's.
- d. **Neo-Thomism** (Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson) - not many philosophers outside the Catholic universities have found anything in neo-Thomism that is new or inspiring.
- e. **Logical Positivism** (C. I. Lewis and C. L. Stevenson)

- f. **Existentialism** (Paul Tillich, John Wilde, William Barrett, George Schrader, James Edie, Maurice Natanson, and Robert G. Olson) - has appealed to individuals who believed that philosophy should concern itself with basic human problems and who accuse positivists and linguistic analysts (and rightly so - IMHO) of reducing philosophy to trivial games of words. Favorite topics of Existentialists are the alienation of humanity and their anxieties and the "inauthentic" mode of life.
- g. **Phenomenology** - deals abstractly and intuitively with the experiences in which certain kinds of objects are set before us - it seeks to analyze that experience and discover their relationships to their objects and other experiences.
- h. **East-West** (W. T. Stace, F. S. C. Northrop, J. B. Pratt, A. E. Burtt, Charles A. Moore, and Van Meter Ames)

## Major Philosophers: American History

### Early American Philosophers:

Jonathan Edwards  
 Samuel Johnson  
 Cadwallader Colden  
 Ethan Allen  
 Elihu Palmer  
 Thomas Paine  
 Philip Freneau  
 Benjamin Franklin  
 Thomas Jefferson  
 James Madison  
 Alexander Hamilton  
 William Hamilton  
 John Adams  
 Samuel Adams  
 Nathaniel Emmons  
 Samuel Hopkins  
 Benjamin Rush

### Modern American Philosophers:

James McCosh  
 Daniel Webster  
 Robert Y. Hayne  
 John C. Calhoun  
 Abraham Lincoln  
 William Ellery Channing  
 Henry David Thoreau  
 Ralph Waldo Emerson  
 Edward Bellamy  
 John Dewey  
 Laurens Perseus Hickok  
 John Fiske  
 Chauncey Wright  
 Thomas Kuhn  
 Paul Grice  
 William T. Harris  
 Carl Hempel  
 Ernest Nagel  
 Charles Hodge  
 Edwin Holt  
 William James  
 George Herbert Mead  
 Sidney Hook  
 Charles Peirce  
 Ralph Perry  
 Josiah Royce  
 C. I. Lewis  
 William Graham Sumner  
 Orestes A. Brownson  
 Henry George  
 George Fitzhugh  
 Henry Adams

## Teaching Strategies for use in the Pre-AP and AP Social Studies Classroom

1. **Traditional Lecture:** In this traditional teaching strategy the primary goal is presenting the students with lots of information in a relatively easy format. The downside to this is that it does not actively engage the students, students passively sit at their desk as the teacher does most of the talking during the class time.
2. **Interactive Lecture:** In this alternative to the traditional lecture format, active participation is used and students are engaged during most of the class. It takes all the elements of the traditional lecture and adds with it active learning activities. Chunks of information are presented to the students in a traditional lecture format (5 to 7 minutes) with critical thinking discussion questions posed to students - in which students are encouraged to present their own opinions (engaging both the teacher and the other students).
3. **Socratic Discussion:** In this teaching strategy students are engaged by the teacher (as well as other students) with critical thinking discussion questions. In this format, students do most of the talking during class. The teacher has 6 to 9 critical thinking questions in which they ask of the students, posing other questions as new information gets introduced by students. This is the way that I cover information in the textbook. I let the students teach me the chapter, instead of the other way around. This does require pre-reading on the part of our students, but this is expected of our students in the Pre-AP and AP classes.
4. **Small Group Seminar:** This is a highly structured formal class discussion. Normally this strategy is used for covering primary sources - students are asked to read a text (or even better, two text with contrasting viewpoints). During class, students are put into small discussion groups (normally groups consist of no more than 10 members). Students are given 4 to 5 critical thinking discussion questions (not ahead of time) - the first and last question all students must give their opinion of the question (and in a predetermined order). The middle two are up in the air, students may give their opinion or ask clarifying questions as they want to. A leader of the group makes sure that all rules of the seminar are being followed. The teacher walks around the class observing the behavior of students, making sure they stay on task.
5. **Class Debate:** In this teaching strategy students participate in a formal class debate. There are numerous ways of organizing this instructional strategy. I have students divide up sides, I present them with a topic for debate (e.g., Do the Ten Commandments, as posted in the Alabama Court House, constitute a violation of the "Separation of Church and State"). Each side is given an equal amount of time to present their argument, with equal rebuttal time given to each side.
6. **SOAPS Reports - document analysis:** S = subject, O = occasion, A = audience, P = purpose, and S = source. In class activity for analyzing primary source documents (e.g., speeches, letters, political works, etc.).
7. **3 Level Questioning - document analysis:** Level 1: can be answered explicitly by facts contained in the text or by information accessible in other resources. Level 2: are textually implicit, requiring analysis and interpretation of specific parts of the text. Level 3: are much more open-ended and go beyond the text. They are intended to provoke a discussion of an abstract idea or issue.
8. **OPTICS Evaluations - visual analysis:** O = overview, P = parts, T = title, I = interrelations, C = conclusion, and S = source. In class activity for analyzing visual source documents (e.g., political cartoons, works of art, photographs, etc.).
9. **Mock Trials and Other Role Playing:** Students act out history in these highly effective teaching strategies. These can vary from topic to topic and class to class; ranging from mock trials, speeches, town hall meetings, etc.

# American Pragmatism: Primary Sources

## Definitions of Rationalism and Empiricism:

**Rationalism:** Reliance on reason (Lat. ratio) as the only reliable source of human knowledge. In the most general application, rationalism offers a naturalistic alternative to appeals to religious accounts of human nature and conduct. More specifically, rationalism is the epistemological theory that significant knowledge of the world can best be achieved by *a priori* (i.e., prior to experience, therefore, not a result from) means; it therefore stands in contrast to empiricism. Prominent rationalists of the modern period include Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz.

**Empiricism:** Reliance on experience as the source of ideas and knowledge. More specifically, empiricism is the epistemological theory that genuine information about the world must be acquired by *a posteriori* (i.e., after experience, therefore, a result from) means, so that nothing can be thought without first being sensed. Prominent modern empiricists include Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Mill. In the twentieth century, empiricism principles were extended and applied by the pragmatists and the logical positivists.

## William James: *Pragmatism* (Lecture II - What pragmatism means?), 1904

SOME YEARS AGO, being with a camping party in the mountains, I returned from a solitary ramble to find every one engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The corpus of the dispute was a squirrel - a live squirrel supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree-trunk; while over against the tree's opposite side a human being was imagined to stand. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem now is this: *Does the man go round the squirrel or not?* He goes round the tree, sure enough, and the squirrel is on the tree; but does he go round the squirrel? In the unlimited leisure of the wilderness, discussion had been worn threadbare. Every one had taken sides, and was obstinate; and the numbers on both sides were even. Each side, when I appeared therefore appealed to me to make it a majority. Mindful of the scholastic adage that whenever you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, I immediately sought and found one, as follows: "Which party is right," I said, "depends on what you practically mean by 'going round' the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if on the contrary you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for any farther dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other."

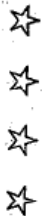
William James

1842-1910

Born in New York City, William James was one of the first products of the scientific education that was emerging in America after the Civil War. Trained at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School, he received an M.D. from Harvard in 1869 and was associated with that institution for most of his life, first as an instructor in physiology and later as a professor of philosophy. A passionate believer in free will, he opposed all deterministic philosophical systems that did not admit the factor of chance. He also dealt on many occasions with the competing claims of science and religion, attempting to erect a mode of thought that left room for both. James was a bitter foe of Spencer, largely because he was seeking an experimental approach (as Spencer was not) that emphasized active human effort operating in an unfinished world.

Not only was James an outstanding philosopher, but he also laid the foundation for the emergence of psychology as an independent discipline in America and established one of the first psychological laboratories in this country. His psychological system was based upon the active role of the self, and he was critical of those individuals who looked upon the mind as a quiet cognitive organ. Thus, the direction of James's psychological and philosophical inquiries led him to pragmatism as the basis of his scientific and philosophic systems. His emphasis on pragmatism, it must be pointed out, was not in any way related to a consideration merely of worldly success, for his use of the term "practical" did not exclude any human motive, whether aesthetic, moral, or intellectual.

The following selection is from a famous series of public lectures delivered in 1906 at the Lowell Institute in Boston and in 1907 at Columbia University, reprinted under the title *Pragmatism* (New York, 1907).



The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many?—fated or free?—material or spiritual?—here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean prac-

tically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right.

A glance at the history of the idea will show you still better what pragmatism means. The term is derived from the same Greek word *πράγμα*, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878. In an article entitled "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for January of that year Mr. Peirce, after pointing out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all. . . .

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means. Shadworth Hodgson keeps insisting that realities are only what they are "known as." But these forerunners of pragmatism used it in fragments: they were prelude only. Not until in our time has it generalized itself, become conscious of a universal mission, pretended to a conquering destiny. I believe in that destiny, and I hope I may end by inspiring you with my belief.

Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power. That means the empiricist temper regnant and the rationalist temper sincerely given up. It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretence of finality in truth.

At the same time it does not stand for any special results. It is a method only. But the general triumph of that method would mean an enormous change in what I called in my last lecture the "temperament" of philosophy. Teachers of the ultra-rationalistic type would be frozen out, much as the courtier type is frozen out in republics, as the ultramontans type of priest is frozen out in protestant lands. Science and metaphysics would come much nearer together, would in fact work absolutely hand in hand.

Metaphysics has usually followed a very primitive kind of quest. You know how men have always hankered after unlawful magic, and you know what a great part in magic words have always played. If you have his name, or the formula of incantation that binds him, you can control the spirit, genie, arctie, or whatever the power may be. Solomon knew the names of all the spirits, and having their names, he held them subject to his will. So the universe has always appeared to the natural mind as a kind of enigma, of which the key must be sought in the shape of some illuminating or power-bringing word or name. That word names the universe's principle, and to possess it is after a fashion to possess the universe itself. "God," "Matter," "Reason," "the Absolute," "Energy," are so many solving names. You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your metaphysical quest. But if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be changed.

*Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest. We don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over again by their aid.* Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one at work. Being nothing essentially new, it harmonizes with many ancient philosophic tendencies. It agrees with nominalism for instance, in always appealing to particulars; with utilitarianism in emphasizing practical aspects; with positivism in its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions.

All these, you see, are *anti-intellectualist* tendencies. Against rationalism as a pretension and a method pragmatism is fully armed and militant. But, at the outset, at least, it stands for no particular results. It has no dogmas, and no doctrines save its method. As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, it lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next some one on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third a chemist investigating a body's properties. In a fourth a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated; in a fifth the impossibility of metaphysics is being shown. But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms. . . .

You see by this what I meant when I called pragmatism a mediator and reconciler and said, borrowing the word from Papini, that she "unstiffens" our theories. She has in fact no prejudices whatever, no obstructive dogmas, no rigid canons of what shall count as proof. She is completely genial. She will entertain any hypothesis, she will consider any evidence. It follows that in the religious field she is at a great advantage both over positivistic empiricism, with its anti-theological bias, and over religious rationalism, with its exclusive

interest in the remote, the noble, the simple, and the abstract in the way of conception.

In short, she widens the field of search for God. Rationalism sticks to logic and the empiricist sticks to the external senses. Pragmatism is willing to take anything, to follow either logic or the senses and to count the humblest and most personal experiences. She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. She will take a God who lives in the very dirt of private fact—if that should seem a likely place to find him.

Her only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us; what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted. If theological ideas should do this, if the notion of God, in particular, should prove to do it, how could pragmatism possibly deny God's existence? She could see no meaning in treating as 'not true' a notion that was pragmatically so successful. What other kind of truth could there be, for her, than all this agreement with concrete reality?

Selection from - pp. 65 - 68. Grob, Gerald N. and Beck, Robert N. (Editors) *American Ideas: Source Readings in the Intellectual History of the United States. Volume II: Dilemmas of Maturity (1865 - 1962)* New York: The Free Press, 1963.

## Consequences of the Pragmatic Method

Roscoe Pound: "Mechanical Jurisprudence" *Columbia Law Review* (December, 1908) - selections

What is scientific law? What constitutes science in the administration of justice? . . . [1] the demand for full justice, that is for solutions that go to the root of controversies; [2] the demand for equal justice, that is a like adjustment of like relations under like conditions; and [3] the demand for exact justice, that is for a justice whose operations, within reasonable limits, may be predicted in advance of action. In other words, the marks of a scientific law are, conformity to reason, uniformity, and certainty. . . . But this scientific character of law is a means, a means toward the end of law, which is the administration of justice. . . . Law is not scientific for the sake of science. Being scientific as a means toward an end, it must be judged by the results it achieves, not by the niceties of its internal structure; it must be valued by the extent to which it meets its end, not by the beauty of its logical processes or the strictness with which its rules proceed from the dogmas it takes for its foundation.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.: "The Path of the Law" *Harvard Law Review* (March, 1897) - selections

What constitutes the law? . . . The life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience. The felt necessities of the time, the prevalent moral and political theories, intuitions of public policy, avowed or unconscious, even the prejudices which judges share with their fellow-men, have had a good deal more to do than the syllogism in determining the rules by which men should be governed. The law embodies the story of a nation's development through many centuries, and it cannot be dealt with as if it contained only the axioms and corollaries of a book of mathematics.

## John Dewey: "My Pedagogic Creed" *The School Journal* (January, 1897) - selections

### ARTICLE I--What Education Is

In sum, I believe that the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass.

### ARTICLE II--What the School Is

I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends.

I believe that much of present education fails because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life. It conceives the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned, or where certain habits are to be formed. The value of these is conceived as lying largely in the remote future; the child must do these things for the sake of something else he is to do; they are mere preparation. As a result they do not become a part of the life experience of the child and so are not truly educative.

I believe that the moral education centers upon this conception of the school as a mode of social life, that the best and deepest moral training is precisely that which one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought.

I believe that the teacher's place and work in the school is to be interpreted from this same basis. The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences.

### ARTICLE III--The Subject-Matter of Education

I believe that the study of science is educational in so far as it brings out the materials and processes which make social life what it is. I believe that one of the greatest difficulties in the present teaching of science is that the material is presented in purely objective form, or is treated as a new peculiar kind of experience which the child can add to that which he has already had. In reality, science is of value because it gives the ability to interpret and control the experience already had. It should be introduced, not as so much new subject-matter, but as showing the factors already involved in previous experience and as furnishing tools by which that experience can be more easily and effectively regulated.

### ARTICLE IV--The Nature of Method

I believe that ideas (intellectual and rational processes) also result from action and devolve for the sake of the better control of action. What we term reason is primarily the law of orderly or effective action. To attempt to develop the reasoning powers, the powers of judgment, without reference to the selection and arrangement of means in action, is the fundamental fallacy in our present methods of dealing with this matter. As a result we present the child with arbitrary symbols. Symbols are a necessity in mental development, but they have their place as tools for economizing effort; presented by themselves they are a mass of meaningless and arbitrary ideas imposed from without.

### ARTICLE V--The School and Social Progress

I believe that it is the business of every one interested in education to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective interest of social progress and reform in order that society may be awakened to realize what the school stands for, and aroused to the necessity of endowing the educator with sufficient equipment properly to perform his task.

I believe, finally, that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life.

I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.

## Socratic Class Discussion Questions

- ❖ What is a paradigm shift? Do you think pragmatic thought and ideas represented a paradigm shift in American thinking - why or why not?
- ❖ What is the historical context of pragmatism (i.e., what is going on in American history at this time)?
- ❖ What is pragmatism, as defined by James, how would you define it?
- ❖ Is this a new philosophical method, according to James? What distinguishes it from the traditional philosophical schools of thought of empiricism and rationalism? Do you agree with this assessment?
- ❖ Do objective values have any place in the pragmatic philosophical world view? James envisioned pragmatism as being both a practical scientific method, and also a method of truth, do you agree?
- ❖ What is the point of the Papini example? Does this help illustrate James's point?
- ❖ What are the consequences of pragmatism (e.g., for legal and education thought)?
- ❖ What do you find most appealing about the ideas of pragmatism? What do you find the most disturbing about the ideas of pragmatism?

### In Practice - How It's Used in Class

**THE HOOK:** get students to talk in the beginning of class; studies have shown that students are more likely to speak if they have already talked (even if it is not about history).

When I use this strategy in class, I **ALWAYS** open the class by asking the students if there are any questions on the chapter. If there are, then I answer them immediately before we go on to our class discussion questions. I do this in case there are questions or concerns from the chapter, which might not get covered in the class discussion questions; I obviously want to make sure all of those get addressed before we move on.

The questions that I use for our class discussion come from the *Guidebook: A Manual for Students to The American Pageant*. Here is a sample list of the questions from Chapter Seven:

- ❖ Why did the American colonies move from loyalty to protest to rebellion in the twelve years following the end of the French and Indian War?
- ❖ How and why did the Americans and the British differ in their views of taxation and of the relationship of colonies to the empire?
- ❖ What was the theory and practice of mercantilism? What were its actual effects on the colonies, and why did the colonists resent it so much?
- ❖ What methods did the colonists use in their struggle with British authorities, and how did the British try to counteract them?
- ❖ What advantages and disadvantages did the American rebels and the British each possess as the war began? What did each side do to mobilize its resources most effectively?
- ❖ Given the history of the colonies' founding and British "benign neglect" until the period just before the Revolution, was the American Revolution inevitable? Or could the thirteen colonies have remained peacefully attached to Britain for many years, as Canada did?

As students answer these I am constantly asking follow-up and clarifying questions to maintain the Socratic dialogue in class. I also encourage students to do the same. This usually results in a quality class period - not always, but most of the time students leave my class having participated in a meaningful and quality discussion.

We don't always get to all of the questions; at times, students will get bogged down with one question. Part of my job is to keep the discussion moving along in a timely manner. If we do not get to all of the questions (and this does not happen very often) - we do not come back to them, we simply move on to the new material. This is why it is so important to ask students if they have questions from the chapter, you don't want to not cover something in class that students don't understand. I always tell my classes, if you are not asking me questions, I assume you understand the material.

## Selected Bibliography - American Philosophy

### A. Histories of American Philosophical Thought:

1. Schneider, Herbert W. *A History of American Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1963. The textbook to consult on the topic of American philosophy - has become a classic and a standard reference.
2. Kuklick, Bruce. *A History of Philosophy in America: 1720 - 2000*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. A good history, from a very well known current philosopher.
3. Flower, Elizabeth and Murphey, Murray G. *A History of Philosophy in America*. (2 volumes) New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977.
4. Kurtz, Paul. "American Philosophy." *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (8 volumes), Volume 1. New York: Macmillan, 1967. Excellent source for studying the history of American philosophy - focuses only on thinkers that are traditional philosophers.

### B. Primary Source Anthologies:

1. Anderson, P. R. and Fisch, M. H. (Editors) *Philosophy in America From the Puritans to James*. New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1939. Excellent source for primary sources in the history of American philosophy. The selections are very well chosen.
2. Adams, George P. (Editor) *Contemporary American Philosophy - Personal Statements*. (2 volumes) New York: Russell & Russell, 1962. Decent volumes, however, the selections are only from contemporary philosophers.
3. Blau, Joseph. (Editor) *American Philosophical Addresses, 1700 - 1900*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946. Excellent source of complete philosophical addresses - dealing with philosophical issues, but this is good because it also contains addresses dealing with intellectual thought as well.
4. Fisch, M. H. (Editor) *Classic American Philosophers: Peirce, James, Royce, Santayana, Dewey, Whitehead*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1951. Great source for the biggies of American Philosophy. However, it is limited in its scope - only those mentioned are included in the volume.
5. Frankel, Charles. (Editor) *The Golden Age of American Philosophy*. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960. Great source of works from the "Golden Age" of American Philosophy - the Gilded Age to WWI.
6. Grob, Gerald N. and Beck, Robert N. (Editors) *American Ideas: Source Readings in the Intellectual History of the United States; Volume I - Foundations (1629 - 1865), Volume II - Dilemmas of Maturity (1865 - 1962)*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963. Excellent volumes, very good selections; however, it is out of print.
7. Harris, Leonard, et. al. (Editor) *American Philosophies: An Anthology*. Blackwell Publishing, 2001. A not-so-useful volume of primary sources - it is arranged topically (which I hate), the bad news is that this is one of the few that are still in print.
8. Hollinger, David A. and Capper, Charles (Editors) *The American Intellectual Tradition*. (2 volumes) New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Great selections, still in print, has a tendency to be to polemical (which I am not a fan of) - however, it is ridiculously expensive.
9. Irish, John P. (Editor) *American Philosophical and Intellectual Thought*. (2 volumes - in progress). Primary source documents in the history of American philosophical and intellectual thought - with critical thinking discussion questions.
10. Kurtz, Paul. (Editor) *The American Philosophers*. (2 volumes) New York: Macmillan, 1965. Volume 1: *American Thought Before 1900*. Volume 2: *American Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. Excellent source for primary sources in the history of American philosophy. **This handout drew heavily from the introduction to these volumes.** The best two volumes of American Philosophy that you can get - get these two if you are interested in this topic. The down side - they are out of print, but there are scores of them on the Internet through used bookstores. Try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) - I use this Internet search engine all the time for finding out of print and really old books.
11. MacKinnon, Barbara. (Editor) *American Philosophy - A Historical Anthology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.
12. Miller, Perry. (Editor) *American Thought: Civil War to WWI*. San Francisco: Rinehart Press, 1954. Good volume, which focuses on the "Golden Age" philosophers.
13. Muelder, W. G., Sears, Laurence, and Schlabach, A. V. (Editors) *The Development of American Philosophy*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1940. Excellent volume, another outstanding volume - worth getting, again, you will have to search the Internet for this title.
14. Myers, Gerald. (Editor) *The Spirit of American Philosophy*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1971. Not so useful volume, selections are ok, but arranged topically (you know how I feel about that).

15. Smith, James L. *Ideas That Shape a Nation*. Las Cruces, New Mexico: Suncrest Publications, 2000. Sort of useful and affordable volume, it does come with an instructors resource guide.
16. Stanlick, Nancy A. and Silver, Bruce S. (Editors) *Philosophy in America*. (2 volumes) Prentice Hall, 2004. Good selections, still in print, again - ridiculously expensive.
17. White, Morton. (Editor) *Documents in the History of American Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972. Decent, however it has too much European philosophy as background reading (not that that is a bad thing in itself, but I don't want all that in a sourcebook of American philosophy).

### C. American Pragmatism:

1. Haack, Susan. (Editor and Introduction) *Pragmatism - Old & New: Selected Writings*. New York: Prometheus Books, 2006.
2. Hickman, Larry A. and Alexander, Thomas M. (Editors) *The Essential Dewey: Volume One - Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
3. Hickman, Larry A. and Alexander, Thomas M. (Editors) *The Essential Dewey: Volume Two - Ethics, Logic, Psychology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.
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6. McDermott, John J. (Editor and Introduction) *The Philosophy of John Dewey: Two Volumes in One*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.
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12. Thayer, H. S. (Editor and Introduction) *Pragmatism: The Classic Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1982.

Interested persons are encouraged to consult the works of individual philosophers mentioned in the outline - or anthologies of particular movements.