activities). (Cf., p. 186) The pragmatic function of even the loftiest speculations is a more refined orientation of human agents to the world in which they are destined to satisfy their needs and pursue their purposes. Dewey once suggested: "Nothing could be more helpful to present philosophy than a 'Back to Plato' movement; but it would have to be back to the dramatic, restless, co-operatively inquiring Plato of the Dialogues . . . ." Dewey saw this Plato as a philosopher "whose highest flight of metaphysics always terminated with a social and practical turn." Such a turn is a present, although muted, theme in Speculative Pragmatism. (E.g., pp. 172-73) But, the "elusive common spirit" of classical American pragmatism requires making this theme ever more persuasively articulate and urgently felt. To this extent, this spirit has proven to be more elusive than perhaps even Professor Rosenthal imagines. (Cf., pp. 5, 197)

Such criticism is itself, I hope, in the deepest spirit of speculative pragmatism (the key dimensions of such pragmatism being "temporality, creativity, novelty, fallibilism, pluralism, perspectivalism, and openness" [p. 195]). Beyond this, such criticism is rooted in the deepest respect for Professor Rosenthal's ambitious project. Speculative Pragmatism is a book which takes the classical American pragmatists in a genuinely pragmatic temper. For it not only puts the collective corpus of the classical pragmatists to work, but it does so in a speculatively bold and truly creative manner. Accordingly, it is highly deserving of careful study and serious discussion.

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This book is, in the author's own words, "embarrassingly ambitious." (p. vi) It attempts to sketch nothing less than the post-medieval history of a highly contestable idea—"science." It focuses upon the institutions, practices, and discourses (principally texts) which have most crucially contributed to establishing what we today take to be the "social sciences." Although the stability of these sciences is now being challenged (this book being itself a part of that challenge), the relative stability of the social sciences as cultural practices is an historic fact—indeed, an historic achievement. The story of this achievement is a long and complex one in which numerous strands are interwoven. Professor Manicas is interested in telling part of this story in order to illuminate the way in which the established social sciences and the established social order mutually support one another.

A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences is divided into three unequal parts. Part I, entitled "The Critical Ideas" and covering Chapters 1-9 (pp. 3-190, almost two-thirds of the entire book), is a "selective history of ideas." (p. 4) It chronicles, among other events (including those noted in the previous paragraph), the shot-gun divorce between "science" and "philosophy." Part II ("The Modern Social Sciences") tries to show that "the by now familiar practices and disciplinary divisions in the human sciences were constituted [principally in the U.S.] in the 20 or 30 years which span the turn of the nineteenth century." (p. 5) The goal of Part III ("Realist Philosophy of Social Science") is, first and foremost, that of the central chapter in this part (Chapter 13, "A Realist Social Science"), namely, "to sketch a realist conception of social science as an alternative to the mainstream view." (p. 267) While Part I is highly informative, the reader is likely to be overwhelmed by the details and complexity of the history Professor Manicas is narrating. Precisely because Parts II and III are narrower in scope, the author appears to be in far greater control of the material: the main points are given the prominence they deserve. In general, Professor Manicas is a better philosopher than storyteller (he is better at discerning the meaning of a text or evaluating the force of an argument than narrating a sequence of events); even so, the story he tells is crucial to narrate and his telling of it is always informative, even if it is sometimes too compressed or cluttered.
In addition to telling a story, Professor Manicas presents an argument for a form of realism. Indeed, the immanent goal of this entire study—as history and as philosophy—is the defense of a realist philosophy of scientific inquiry in general and of the social sciences in particular. The author notes, “it is only very recent developments which have made a fully coherent 'realist' alternative plausible.” (PP. 5-6) As both a historian and philosopher of the social sciences, Professor Manicas is trying to render this alternative even more plausible. Even so, the “main idea is plausible enough. Indeed, were it not for particular turns in the history of the Western scientific and philosophic tradition ... the main idea would hardly need arguing.” (p. 262) However, precisely because of these turns, it demands a defense. This defense cannot be abstract and ahistoric; the very form of realism being defended here requires that its defense include a concrete grasp of the historical practices. Nonetheless, this form of realism is simply the view that “humans and human cultures relate symmetrically to a natural world, which they shape and which shapes them. Being capable of making apt responses to the causal inputs from this world, humans learn, and collectively they develop social patterns which, in turn, become causal factors in their reproduction.” (p. 262)

A deep moral vision informs this study. A (if not the) principal moral of Professor Manicas’s historical sketch is that “the modern social sciences have been, unwittingly or not, defenders of the status quo.” (p. 276) In particular, the eventual outcome of the Americanization of the social sciences turned out to be that, without "any remorse or conceptual embarrassment," the so-called human sciences became united "in seeing themselves as jointly concerned with 'behavior' and with individuals who could be both mindless and asocial, the 'happy robots' of 'The Great American Celebration.'" (p. 237) Despite this history, "social science is potentially liberating." (p. 276) But, the human sciences can become liberating disciplines, humanizing practices, only if they empower people to see that, "while social reality is real enough, it is not like unchanging nature, but is just that which is sustained by human activities, activities regarding which humans have the only say." (Ibid.) This means, in effect, empowering human beings to see themselves as "causal agents," and as such, being "capable of re-fashioning society in the direction of greater humanity, freedom, and justice." (p. 277)

Yet, there is nothing naive in Professor Manicas’s call for the humanization of the "human" sciences. Indeed, he is quick to point out: "For change to come about, practices must be altered, which means that most of those engaged in reproducing the practices must together alter their activity .... not the least of these is our structured incapacity, promoted by technocratic social science, to constitute any sort of adequate social mechanism for unconstrained social inquiry." (p. 277) There are even moments in which he appears to be edging towards despair—e.g., "the social conditions for scientific knowledge have never been fully realized, and it may well be the case that the ideal of scientific practice sketched above is now beyond recovery." (p. 265) Yet, at no point does Professor Manicas succumb to the cultural pessimism so ironically comforting to post-modern intellectuals. (Such pessimism is personally comforting because it is politically liberating—i.e., it liberates intellectuals from politics, from the sense of any responsibility to engage in the reconstruction of their institutions.) Time and again in the later chapters of this book one hears a voice calling for the patient yet courageous reconstruction of our dominant practices, discourses, and institutions, a voice all the more courageous because it cannot in good faith fall back upon the historical optimism of the previous century. It is as important for us today to hear such a voice as it is to listen to the story it narrates.

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Those who wish to contribute book reviews or to recommend books for review, should contact the Book Review Editor: Professor Vincent Colapietro, Department of Philosophy, Saint Mary's College, P. O. Box 1508, Winona, MN 55987. Also, authors of new or forthcoming books should request their publishers to send review copies to Professor Colapietro.