such spaces in the profession). Not doing so, of course, risks further detaching American philosophers from the issues confronting a rapidly changing global society. Despite the flimsy basis for solidarity that Gracia provides the Hispanic/Latino community, his work does an excellent job preparing American philosophers for a new kind of philosophy and a new kind of America.

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Bruce Wilshire is an American philosopher who is not missing out on his philosophical inheritance. Primal Roots represent Wilshire’s continuing endeavor to reclaim a past to which the existence of anything that might be distinctively called “American philosophy” is owed. Such a task is, to be sure, monumental, to say nothing of the impossibility of achieving it in any single work. Thus all critical response to Wilshire’s provoking insights should turn on the role and meaning of “roots” in the title. Highlighting kinships and affinities between various elemental insights of different thinkers, and even traditions is one thing; claiming that they are connected by a continuous, shared core of meaning is quite another. Understanding which of these two best describes Wilshire’s relating the “ecstatic” existence of the Ogallala Lakota, Black Elk with Emerson’s thought, as well as his drawing parallels between James’s pure experience and shamanic practices, especially crucial toward grasping his meaning.

Wilshire insists that “roots” should be interpreted as precisely what the mythic symbol of the “World-Tree” suggests: “the vital integration of all things.” The integration Wilshire suggests, centers on the “primal”, and is that which connects central aspects of the thinking of (at least) Thoreau, Emerson, James, Dewey, Black Elk, Henry Bugbee, W. W. Hocking and C. S. Peirce. Wilshire’s motivation for identifying the primal in these thinkers is to tap into a healing source for the alienation, addiction, and general spiritual malaise he recognizes as characteristic of so much of modern life.

What Wilshire calls the “primal”, is variously referred to throughout the book as “indigenous”, “prescientific or commonsensical” (98), and is defined as: “what we typically take
completely for granted, what we feel we can ignore" (138). It is in this sense of primal that, according to Wilshire, integrates James’s pure experience with the open-ended practices of shamanic healing; reveals the similarity of Emerson’s horizon with Black Elk’s hoop of the world’ provides access to the heart of phenomenology, reflected in the work of Hocking who briefly studied with Husserl; and even aligns contemporary field theory in physics with experiences normally thought to be hallucinatory or fantastical. Wilshire’s openness to experience that most would call mystical or even apparitional comes to a sobering head in the closing chapter, which includes a moving account of the recent death of his daughter. The experience, and its aftermath, are revealed as having provided further startling challenges to Wilshire’s own brave attempt to integrate into his life a lasting means to meet the demands of what he identifies to be the primal level of experience.

While Wilshire’s claims will assuredly produce a yawn amongst hardened technical philosophers, they should stimulate discussion not only in American philosophical circles, but in Continental as well. In particular, the chapter on Hocking should give pause to any avowed scholar of German philosophy who holds a dismal view of its connection with American thought. The reflections on James are spectacular, demonstrating a deep kinship and understanding of some of the most complex features of his thought while at the same time donating one of the most spirited and convincing defences of his notorious account to truth.

His treatment of Dewey should, by contrast raise eyebrows. Wilshire makes much of Dewey’s personal crisis in 1916, when he sought out psycho-bio-therapist F. M. Alexander, who Wilshire describes as having “discovered means for altering minding by altering bodily movements and postures” (111). Observing Dewey’s manner of talking, the movement of his head and neck, Alexander concluded that he was “drugged with thought” and proceeded to “manipulate Dewey’s body into unaccustomed positions and postures.” This experience, its residual effect on Dewey, together with a presentation on two of Dewey’s “fugitive and discarded poems,” move Wilshire to conclude that Dewey’s published (public) philosophy is not “behaviorally compelling” in that lack a “language of archaic myth and ritual: “here Dewey the great philosopher does not give us the consistent support that we need” (109).
Connecting thinkers in the classical American grain with other traditions, whether with phenomenology, existentialism, Native American thinking, feminism or even postmodernism, is crucial toward not only demonstrating the rich, multi-faceted appeal of American philosophy, but also understanding its deep heritage. Sadly, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, American University philosophers/scholars predominately ignored this, their own philosophical heritage, with the result that many interpreters still buy into the vicious myth that American philosophy is fundamentally derivative of Europe and England. While The Primal Roots of American Philosophy will not by itself, correct this myth, it can and should motivate discussion toward that end.

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 Holmes' 1897 essay, *The Path of the Law*, is widely considered one of the great early expressions of philosophical pragmatism in American legal scholarship. As such, it has served as an inspiration for succeeding generations of legal scholars, not just for those who consider themselves pragmatists, but also for legal positivists, legal realists, law-and-economics scholars, and others. Yet, despite its tremendous influence, Holmes' essay has shown itself remarkably resistant to ready understanding. It seems to proceed upon contradictions: At one point, Holmes wonders aloud "whether it would not be a gain if every word of moral significance could be banished from the law altogether" (339). The law, he claims, is simply the prediction of what courts will do in fact. Morality has nothing to do with it. "If you want to know the law and nothing else," he goes on in a famous passage,

you must look at it as a bad man, who cares only for the material consequences which such knowledge enables him to predict, not as a good one, who finds his reasons for conduct . . . in the vaguer sanctions of inner conscience (335).

Having staked out this, what seems to be, radical positivist position, however, he turns to profess his deep respect for the law "as the witness and external deposit of our moral life"