
Reading the five volumes of Early Defenders of Pragmatism in succession gives one a good sense of how pragmatism took shape in its beginning years; a period in which pragmatism appears to be heavily dominated by James and Schiller. Each of the five volumes includes a facsimile republication of an early book on pragmatism, together with the discussion it then generated, and a new introduction designed to put the book and its discussion in historical perspective. The volumes were edited by John Shook, who also wrote the introductions to volumes one and three. This set of five is part of an ambitious program by Thoemmes Press to republish a large number of hard to find books in American philosophy that have since long been out of print. A companion set, entitled Early Critics of Pragmatism, which is also edited by John Shook, is scheduled to appear this fall.

The first of the five volumes contains H. Heath Bawden’s The Principles of Pragmatism: A Philosophical Interpretation of Experience, which appeared in 1910. In addition to this, the volume contains six contemporary reviews and an introduction by John Shook. Bawden (1871–1950) was a student of Mead and Dewey at the University of Chicago. After his graduation, he taught at Vassar College and later at the University of Cincinnati. Bawden was dismissed from the latter in 1908, two years before The Principles of Pragmatism appeared. His dismissal revolved largely around his separation from his first wife and his views on the social institution of the family. The story recalls Charles Peirce’s dismissal from Johns Hopkins. Like Peirce, Bawden, too, would never hold an academic position again, and, like Peirce, Bawden moved to the countryside while continuing to publish on pragmatism. In contrast to Peirce, however, who tried to live a gentry lifestyle at his Arisbe estate, the more idealistic Bawden joined an experimental farming community in California.

Bawden’s Principles of Pragmatism is one of the first systematic and relatively comprehensive expositions of pragmatism. There are chapters on experience, consciousness, thinking, truth, reality, the mind-matter problem, and on the tension between evolutionism and the Absolute. Of particular interest is Bawden’s conception of consciousness. Using his extensive training as a physiologist, Bawden rejected the notion that consciousness is confined within the brain. For Bawden, consciousness is related to the entire organism, which, in turn, is “merely a center of interchange,” not a self-contained unit. As Bawden put it: “Consciousness is no more related to the central nervous system than electrical phenomena are confined to the commutators by which the current is deflected” (p. 92). Of the reviews of Principles of Pragmatism included in the volume, that of Horace Kallen (see also volume four), is especially interesting because of
how he pitted the Cambridge pragmatists (Kallen studied with James, Royce, and Santayana) against the Chicago functionalists.

The second volume of *Early Defenders of Pragmatism* contains John Elof Boodin’s *Truth and Reality: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge*, of 1911. To this are added eight reviews, some of which are responses to earlier papers of Boodin that later found their way into *Truth and Reality*. The volume comes with an excellent introduction by Randall Auxier who makes a strong case that Boodin was a thinker in his own right that has not received the attention he deserves. In his introduction, Auxier writes of Boodin’s philosophy, that it “effects a synthesis of pragmatism, realism, idealism, humanism (of a stripe), and theistic religious naturalism and is best described as a process metaphysics … and presented as a personalistic alternative to Bergson” (p. vii). Calling Boodin a *defender* of pragmatism is thus not quite appropriate. Boodin rather *used* pragmatism as an alternative to what he calls the dogmatic method of the old idealism and materialism, to develop what he called “pragmatic realism.” Pragmatism, for Boodin, meant approaching metaphysics with the scientific spirit, and this he seeks to establish in *Truth and Reality*.

Volume three of *Early Defenders of Pragmatism* centers around a concise, 77-page introduction into pragmatism by David L. Murray (1888–1962). The book, entitled simply *Pragmatism*, originally appeared in England in 1912. Murray was a devotee of Ferdinand Schiller, and the book shows he was intimately familiar with both Schiller’s humanism and his interpretation of James: Three general currents in nineteenth-century thought guided Murray in his discussion of pragmatism: Darwinism, with its action-related conception of intelligence; the reformation of logic, which opened the possibility of alternative logical systems; and new developments in psychology, especially as promulgated by James in his *Principles of Psychology*. Murray can certainly be characterized a defender of pragmatism, and even a militant one. Murray criticized non-pragmatist (or intellectualist) philosophers for distancing themselves too far from real life. It is the mission of pragmatism, Murray added, “to bring Philosophy in relation with real Life and Action” (p. 70).

In his interesting introduction to this third volume, Shook distinguishes two main branches within the pragmatist family: the Peirce-Dewey branch, and the James-Schiller branch. Murray clearly belongs to the latter. Peirce and Dewey are mentioned only in passing, and what Murray says about them shows that he knows little to nothing about them. In fact, a central chapter in the book, “The Dilemmas of Dogmatism,” would have gained much from reading Peirce’s “Fixation of Belief.” Although Murray would probably dismiss Peirce as too much of an intellectualist philosopher, taking into account Peirce’s early paper would nonetheless have posed a serious challenge to Murray’s “proof of pragmatism” and the accompanying relativistic interpretation he gives of the doctrine.

The next volume is devoted to Horace M. Kallen’s 1914 *William James and Henri Bergson: A Study in Contrasting Theories of Life*. The book, which is dedicated to “William James: My Master,” is most of all a defense of James’s pragmatism. The book
is accompanied with seven reviews, and comes with an excellent introduction by Richard Gale. In his introduction, Gale argues that Kallen's devoted defense of James has put James scholarship firmly on the wrong track. Kallen, Gale argues, went to great extent to minimize James's mystic side, portraying him almost exclusively as what Gale calls "a Promethean pragmatist." Kallen, Gale continues, was unable to accept that there was a deep divide in his master's thought and that he was in fact quite close to Bergson, even though this affinity did not square well with James's own pragmatism. Gale's introduction should not come as a surprise as his own book *The Divided Self of William James* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) aims to correct precisely this misreading of James that started with Kallen. Of all the reviewers only Lovejoy remarks on the lopsidedness of Kallen's interpretation of James.

Also devoted to a defense of James's pragmatism, the fifth and last volume contains a republication of *The Philosophy of William James* by the English philosopher Howard V. Knox (1868–1960). Knox's book appeared in the same year as Kallen's. The book is supplemented with two earlier papers by Knox, two reviews of the book, and a 1921 review by Knox of Henry James's *The Letters of William James*. The volume opens with an introduction by Ellen Kappy Suckiel.

In his discussion of James, Knox followed the same strategy as Murray by putting a strong emphasis on James's *Principles of Psychology*. Knox does so, as Suckiel correctly points out, to the extent of largely ignoring James's later writings on the subject. The central aim behind Knox's book is to show that James was one of the first to fully grasp the significance of Darwin's evolutionary biology. The Darwinian principle of progress by individual variation demanded, Knox explained, a reevaluation of the individual as something that is to be reckoned with, and a radical dismissal of a spectator theory of knowledge. It is this Darwinism too that in Knox's view inspired James's pragmatic theory of truth in which true beliefs are those that help the believer survive the "struggle for existence." According to Knox, the main purpose behind James's *Psychology* was to put the creative energy of the concrete individual back at the center. Knox considered this to be the vital principle that gave an organic unity to both James's psychology and his philosophy.

At the conclusion of this short review essay, a few comments on the set itself are in order. No clear account has been given on why these five books were chosen, or why books were chosen in the first place, as opposed to journal articles. A collection of journal articles outlining the early years of pragmatism may show a quite different picture than the one given by these five books. Of special note is further the absence of any mention of the Italian pragmatists, even though pragmatism in those days found a much stronger support in Italy than in England. One may think, for instance, of Giovanni Papini's *Sul pragmatismo* (1913).

The five-volume set is clearly intended for the library market. They are designed for heavy use and a long shelf life. The books that are included are reproduced photographically, whereas the reviews and responses are newly typeset. The choice of the texts on the spines is unfortunate. The spines give the name of the series and, in smaller
type, the abbreviated title of the book that is the pièce de resistance of that particular volume. Instead of abbreviated book titles, it would have been more appropriate to give the names of the early defenders themselves, as it is to them that the set is really devoted. The current practice leads, moreover, to some confusion. Not only does it portray "pragmatism" as an early defender of pragmatism, but, more importantly, the spine of volume four unambiguously points at William James and Henri Bergson as early defenders of pragmatism, which is not at all what is intended. The choice is likely to reduce its readership. Someone who is browsing the library stacks for John Elof Boodin’s Truth and Reality: An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge, is likely to pass on Early Defenders of Pragmatism: Truth and Reality. Using the library catalogue is likely to lead to similarly disappointing results. For example, neither the names of the early pragmatists, nor the titles of their books, abbreviated or not, are currently listed in the WorldCat entry for the set. Fortunately, this can be easily resolved.

It is, moreover, regrettable that no indexes are provided other than those that came with some of the original works (three of the five books come with their original indexes, but only Boodin’s book has a good one). To students and scholars interested in the development of early pragmatism, or in particular issues related to pragmatism, or in certain historical figures, such indexes would be of enormous help, especially since they would also cover the reviews and responses. From a scholarly standpoint, including such indexes would have made the volumes more valuable than the original works that are reprinted in them. By not including them, a great opportunity is missed. Of course, this omission can still be remedied by putting the indexes on line.

Despite these minor flaws, Shook’s Early Defenders of Pragmatism comes highly recommended. It brings together in a convenient way an important group of thinkers who helped to shape pragmatism and who form an essential backdrop for any study of the Big Five (Peirce, James, Schiller, Mead, Dewey) and their reception.

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