educational philosophy. Hickman’s interpretation of Dewey’s work as a philosophy of technology, I suggest, more than Dewey’s own writings, deserves the above criticism.

For others, what energizes the process of self-activity in Dewey’s philosophy is an anarchistic and aesthetical self-regulating force. Such energy seeks more than just the successful overcoming of problematic situations using all tools in its disposal. Such understanding of self-activity seeks consummation that is unavailable on the technological level. It must be sought, Dewey taught us, “below the human scale”, i.e., in its pre-epistemological stage. In short, Hickman’s “productive pragmatism” still ignores Jeffrey Reiman’s brilliant observation that for Dewey, science and technology were the means by which to secure value, but it was art, as the ultimate self-regulatory force that had “the task of letting nothing be a mere instrument.”

Finally, Hickman’s attempt to “put pragmatism to work” reveals the sad reality that it is difficult to “march” to Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy. Being a reformer of cultural conditions simply cannot be done through academic departments even if they include pragmatists. Pragmatists will become reformers when they engage the culture as union leaders, community representatives, inner city educators, etc., but not merely as academicians who write and speak with a pragmatic temperament of mind. Pragmatic wisdom, Emerson correctly observed, “is in the muscles”. It is the relationship between ideation and constructive force as habits and skills that bring about reform, or in the words of another great American philosopher, Woody Allen, “...physical force is always better with Nazis, uh...because it’s hard to satirize a guy with, uh, shiny boots on”.

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Because of its title, philosophers interested in American philosophy might be expected to flock to Louis Menand’s new work. What they will find there is not what they expected. It is not a work in philosophy; it is an intellectual history.

On the History. A history of what? A history is about how something came to be. It explains some outcome. What outcome is Menand explaining? It is the development of a culture, “a set of ideas, and a way of thinking that would help people cope with the conditions of modern life.” It is about how an earlier American culture was transformed into the present one. The transformation begins with the Civil War and the ideological struggle between various factions—the slave-owning South, the abolitionists, and the compromising unionists. Menand tells us: “Four people: Oliver Wendell Holmes, William James, Charles S. Peirce, and John Dewey, “together, “were more responsible than any other group for moving American thought into the modern world.”

They not only had an unparalleled influence on other writers and thinkers, they had an enormous influence on American life. . . . We
are still living, to a great extent, in a country these thinkers helped to make.

Within this claim for [their] importance there is a point about intellectual culture. . . very much a part of their legacy. [And the point is] There is a difference between an idea and an ideology. . . .

What this group had in common was . . . an idea about ideas. They all believed that ideas are not "out there" waiting to be discovered, but are tools . . . that people devise to cope with the world in which they find themselves. . . . Ideas should never become ideologies—either justifying the status quo, or dictating some transcendent imperative.

How things got this way is what Menand intends to explain. Whether Menand's history is correct requires careful thought. That is, are the factors and causes that he says brought about the transformation, in fact, correct and sufficiently adequate to effect the transformation? Furthermore, one might ask whether the outcome he is explaining did actually occur. Or was it a hoped for outcome that never quite got realized? This is not to be sceptical nor deny his correctness, but to indicate points of potential historical controversy.

Menand also ventures judgments about the decline and rise of the Pragmatists' reputations. And "the reputations of Holmes, James, and Dewey during the Cold War years were not just the reputations of thinkers whose style had come to seem antique. They were also the reputations of thinkers whose style had come to seem naive . . . [There was] a difference between the intellectual climate after the Civil War and the intellectual climate of the Cold War.

The Contents. His book covers not only the philosophers and the Metaphysical Club, but takes in ante-bellum politics, ideologies, the Civil War, what Holmes (thrice-wounded) discovered about ideology. The part on Dewey locates him, first at Burlington; then Baltimore and Johns Hopkins; Chicago, the Laboratory School, and the radicalizing Pullman strike; the influence of Jane Addams on his political philosophy; i.e. "An insistence on understanding antagonism as a temporary stage in the movement toward a common goal"; and finally New York, Columbia, and some of his most productive years.

One might ask whether there is any new information about the Metaphysical Club in Menand's book. Menand uses familiar sources; e.g., The Thought and Character of William James, and The Letters of William James, which have been used by other writers, but also has dug up sources not mentioned in other books. He brings out familiar facts more graphically. For example, he describes William James most succinctly:

He spent fifteen years trying to settle on an occupation, switching from science to painting to science to painting again, then to chemistry, anatomy, natural history, and finally medicine. Medicine was the only course of study he ever completed; he received an M. D. degree from Harvard in 1869 and never practiced or taught medicine for the rest of his life. He began teaching
physiology at Harvard in 1872, but switched fields, first to experimental psychology and then to philosophy . . .

**On the Philosophy.** Menand (a professor of English at CUNY)—even though he could not pronounce Peirce correctly in a radio interview—understands philosophy and discusses it intelligently. His interpretations are provocative. But there is not enough space to discuss them here. Although Dewey was not a member of the Metaphysical Club, Menand attributes to him considerable influence in transforming American thought and institutions. Menand also produces a harsh assessment of James' pragmatism; it "was not a philosophy for policy makers, muckrakers, and social scientists. It was a philosophy for misfits, mystics and geniuses—people who believed in mental telepathy, or immortality, or God. James was never able to believe unreservedly in any of those things himself; but to the end of his life, he tried."

"The value at the bottom of the thought of Holmes, James, Peirce, and Dewey is tolerance." "And once the cold war ended, the ideas of Holmes, James, Peirce, and Dewey reemerged as suddenly as they had been eclipsed." "Skepticism about the finality of any particular set of beliefs has begun to seem to some people and important value again."

Despite his admiration of the pragmatists, Menand thinks, "Turn-of-the-century pragmatism does have two large deficiencies as a school of thought. One is that it takes interests for granted; it doesn't provide for a way of judging whether they are worth pursuing apart from the consequences of acting on them. [I think he is wrong here.] want; but where do we get our wants? . . . The second deficiency is . . . [that] can lead people to act in ways that are distinctly unpragmatic. . . . History is lit by the deeds of men and women for whom ideas were things other than instruments of adjustment. Pragmatism explains everything about ideas except why a person would be willing to die for one."

What is most saddening is not anything Menand has explained but our seeming departure from those ideals that he saw achieved. Namely, that "ideas should never become ideologies—either justifying the status quo, or dictating some transcendent imperative." That notion currently seems to be under attack. Our intellectual culture seems to be crumbling.

**Readability.** Finally, the book is without doubt interesting and very readable. After all, it was not written by a philosopher.

Angelo Juffras