important than that of others" (75). However, this objection misses that the whole point of intrinsic value is that it is its own justification. More to the point, this objection seems premature barring a metaphysical analysis of the status of value. Moreover, if Lekan is truly to follow Dewey in rejecting invidious dualisms which seek to artificially separate humans from nature and instead see ourselves as continuous with nature, then his axiology must take seriously the value of non-human beings.

Acutely aware of the difficulty of defending a pragmatist moral theory, Lekan notes that those who would defend the ethical theories under reconstruction will suspect a "skeptical assault" and skeptics will suspect a "failure of intellectual nerve" (9). Yet, Making Morality offers such a lucid and thorough defense of the importance and richness of a pragmatist reconstructive moral theory that both of these camps will be unable simply to ignore its value. With Lekan, then, I am confident that a pragmatic reconstruction "remains the best hope for setting the house of moral philosophy in order" (9).

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Stephen John Mack’s The Pragmatic Whitman focuses largely on the changes in Walt Whitman’s vision of American democracy, as presented in both his poetry and prose. Mack divides Whitman’s development into three phases of progressive maturation. The first is best exemplified by Leaves of Grass (1855 and 1856). Here, according to Mack, Whitman offers a “metaphysics of democracy” in which sensory experience and the pluralistic equality of the experiencers take center stage. Whitman is working toward a naturalistic and dynamic cosmology akin to what would later be called “radical empiricism.” This cosmology includes a pragmatic verification of language, an exploration of the relationship between the “I” and the “me,” a questioning of hierarchies, and notions of temporal change and the ongoing development of mind. This chapter of Whitman’s thought culminates in what Mack calls the “problem of agency” - crises in Whiman’s life and in the
life of the United States that highlight problems in Whitman’s early vision.

This second phase in Whitman’s career is marked by problems that lead to a re-envisioning of Whitman’s early thought. These critical moments, according to Mack, are best seen in “Sea-Drift,” “Calamus,” Drum-Taps, and Sequel to Drum-Taps (1859-1867) in which we can see a new tack in Whitman’s writing. For example, in “Sea-Drift,” Whitman’s metaphor of the sea develops from “benign, laissez-faire nature,” as it is presented in earlier works, into a place of danger that requires skill and work to navigate. This emphasis on activity is the result of problems confronted by Whitman and the United States. These crises are personal and sexual for Whitman, and political and martial, for America. Whitman’s struggle with his homosexuality (or possibly only a single relationship) and the United States’ Civil War coincide to inspire Whitman to offer a new version of personal agency and tragic mourning that might bond personal and social ties in a comprehensive democratic vision.

The third progression in Whitman’s work is represented by Democratic Vistas (1871). Here, the mature Whitman struggles to present a secular, religious version of democracy that ties together his broad-reaching early vision of democratic possibilities and his more narrow focus on agency and tragedy. Individual agency is free and vital only in the context of an active and participatory democratic, social life. Mack focuses on Whitman’s “triadic model” of the “ideal democratic self” in which physical, mental, and religious growth are all essential for the continued, well-functioning movement of a democratic way of life. Finally, in his conclusion, Mack very briefly lists ten elements of “organic democracy.”

Throughout The Pragmatic Whitman, Mack continuously interweaves his readings of Whitman’s works with descriptions of relevant work done by classical American pragmatists – especially James, Dewey, and Mead. For example, Mack discusses James on truth in Pragmatism, Dewey on psychology in Human Nature and Conduct, and Mead on the self in “Mind, Self, and Society.” These moments of comparison, as well as many others, bring Whitman into an ongoing conversation among pragmatists about the nature of personal identity, democracy, the relationship between
history and nature, linguistic meaning, and the metaphysics of experience.

Mack’s work should be of interest to scholars of American pragmatism and literature, and could be used fruitfully in graduate seminars and reading groups on such topics. I would hesitate, however, to recommend its use in undergraduate courses unless it was supplemented by work done by the philosophers discussed and a broad survey of much of Whitman’s own work. The treatments of some of the elements of pragmatic thought are presented rather briefly, although not at all superficially, and so would require additional readings. The Pragmatic Whitman, I believe, is an important work – it opens up a key figure in the history of American literature to new interpretations and brings the pragmatic tradition a powerful voice of democratic and philosophic thought.

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Vincent Colapietro is the Holden Caulfield of the American intellectual rye field. He captures the philosophical ideas of seemingly remote individuals before their thoughts plunge over the mainstream edge and into oblivion. As he has done with Vincent G. Potter, so he now does with John William Miller. This nation is rich with small colleges and major universities, each impacting societal values in inimitable ways. Many of those small colleges have very capable, erudite minds, sometimes with more sophistication, coherence, comprehension, and systematic views than some university want-to-bes. The very fabric of our democracy finds sustenance from these small college minds with cosmic views. In fact the democracy (and academe) requires and even demands the fecund contributions that these faculty provide for the multitudes of sub luminaries they produce.

So, with the opening words of the synergistic relation between the individual and the history of a time, intellectuals, like John William Miller define the context