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support and confidence that someday  
for this last accomplishment, finishing  
thanks to Mary Breiter, my wife, and to our  
friendship, support, and love made all of this

INTRODUCTION

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Pragmatism is America's most distinctive philosophy. In the received history, it has been understood as a development of European thought in response to the "American wilderness." A closer examination, however, reveals that the roots and central commitments of pragmatism are grounded not just in European intellectual traditions, but also in ways of thinking indigenous to North America. In this book I will present a different history of pragmatism that traces its origins along the border between Native and European America in a context significantly conditioned by Native American thought.

It is common for critics of American thought and culture to argue that American history is fundamentally a story of conquest, dispossession, slavery, and destruction. American philosophy and history, from this perspective, is finally the philosophy and history of Europeans in America made distinct by their particular form of capitalism and imperialism. While one can view American thought as a kind of intellectual (or perhaps anti-intellectual) monolith, a broader reading of the past argues against a single "American way" and in favor of a complex story of interaction among Europeans, Native peoples, and other peoples and cultures as they came together in the Western hemisphere. Although it is rarely clear from the published histories, the immigrant Europeans were never alone in America and were never free of the diverse influences of those they encountered, enslaved, and dispossessed. While some held fast to particular ways of thinking that justified and rewarded the processes of colonization, others came to learn new ideas. Those who did the latter sought to structure American communities in ways compatible with the richness they found. When this complex history is recognized, the American intellectual tradition can be seen to have at least two lines of development, one largely dominated by a philosophical perspective exported to the Americas from Europe, and another informed by an indigenous philosophical perspective. That pragmatism is, in important ways, a product of European philosophy is already well-recognized. My purpose will be to examine the ways in which it is also a product of an indigenous philosophy.

Evidence for the claim that an indigenous philosophical perspective served as a crucial source of American pragmatism involves three general points. First, the central commitments of the later classical pragmatism of Charles S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey are apparent much earlier in Native American thought, particularly within North-eastern Native traditions. These commitments, I will argue, are pre-figured in indigenous thought at a time when European thought in America was marked by a set of contrary commitments. Second, there are at least some clear cases in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries where one can reasonably trace the influence of these Native commitments on European American thinkers. I will argue that these figures, who are also important in the development of the recognized American philosophical tradition, were in a position to learn from the Native perspective and integrate aspects of indigenous philosophy into their own philosophical perspectives. Third, a genealogy can be given connecting these early European American thinkers to the philosophical context out of which classical pragmatism emerged. This genealogy is crucial because it helps to affirm that pragmatism is not simply a further development of modern European thought faced with the conditions of a "wilderness." Rather, it develops as a philosophy of resistance, to challenge the European perspective. The genealogy also suggests that pragmatism is not only a critical perspective but one that tries to respond to the problems faced by those who find themselves in a place where radically different peoples meet and seek to coexist.

The reconstructed history brings two significant results. First, by locating the origins of American pragmatism in Native thought and tracing its development as a resistance movement, it converts the limited canon of well-known academic philosophers into a broad philosophical tradition. This expanded tradition requires a place for the philosophical voices of Native people, women, and others within American philosophy and provides a means to frame their points of agreement and divergence in an ongoing dialogue with both the classical pragmatist and European philosophical traditions. Second, the reconstruction of the history of American philosophy can ground a new interpretation of the ideas of pragmatism both as a philosophy of resistance but also as a viable framework for reconstructing American society in a new pluralist era. By re-considering the history of American philosophy in this way, new interpretations of American thought take shape and have the potential to provide a philosophical perspective for life in a pluralistic world.

This strategy of reexamining the American past as a resource for sustaining a pluralistic community and the importance of Native American traditions in this effort have been suggested before. In 1952, Felix S.

Cohen published an essay entitled "Americanizing the White Man." Cohen, then a professor of philosophy at the City University of New York, described a meeting in which the commissioner-elect of the Bureau of Indian Affairs asked a group of Native people how the bureau could best "Americanize the Indian." A Native American man in the audience arose and replied this way:

You will forgive me if I tell you that my people were Americans thousands of years before your people were. The question is not how you can Americanize us but how we can Americanize you. We have been working at that for a long time. Sometimes we are discouraged at the results. But we will keep trying. And the first thing we want to teach you is that, in the American way of life, each man has respect for his brother's vision. Because each of us respected his brother's dream, we enjoyed freedom here in America while your people were busy killing and enslaving each other across the water. The relatives you left behind are still trying to kill each other and enslave each other because they have not learned that freedom is built on my respect for my brother's vision and his respect for mine. We have a hard trail ahead of us in trying to Americanize you and your white brothers. But we are not afraid of hard trails. (Cohen 1952, 177-178)

For Cohen, the American tradition is ultimately grounded in the ideas, practices, and material culture of Native American peoples. Equally significant, however, is Cohen's commitment to the idea that the future of North America depends not on the reduction of difference to a common culture, but on the presence of diverse cultures in a process of respectful interaction. The possibility of this diversity depends upon the ability of the dominant culture to reengage the American intellectual traditions grounded in Native thought. These traditions, he thinks, can provide the resources for a flourishing American community.

The American tradition, from this perspective, offers a kind of meta-level viewpoint or, better, a methodological framework that can support a diversity of particular viewpoints. The process of learning this perspective is a process of adopting a philosophical attitude, well established in Native traditions, that will sustain diversity and growth. The result of the process of reengaging the American tradition will be a transformation of those who are part of the dominant culture. For those who take up the process from the dominant culture, Cohen concludes that "we" ought to stop trying to make "them" more like "us": "we might do better to concentrate on the real job of the New World, the job of Americanizing the white man" (Cohen 1952, 191). This does not mean overthrowing one's own heritage, however, but rather the adoption of a philosophi-

cal perspective that recognizes the value of difference and the goal of respectful coexistence in a diverse and growing community.

I argue that American pragmatism begins along the border between Native and European America as an attitude of resistance against the dominant attitudes of European colonialism. The first chapter sets the stage for a new history of American pragmatism by considering the problems of accounting for its origins. In order to clarify what constitutes pragmatism in this discussion, the second chapter presents four commitments or interests that can serve as a starting point. These commitments, what I call the principles of interaction, pluralism, community, and growth, mark lines of thought that ultimately connect Native American philosophy with the emergence of classical pragmatism.

Chapters 3 and 4 develop the character of the attitude of colonialism as it emerged along the border, framing both the dominant European American conceptions of America and establishing practices of exclusion and dispossession in the name of progress. As examples of the colonial attitude, I examine the influential work of the Puritan historian and philosopher Cotton Mather, the work of Thomas Jefferson, and the work of the Jacksonian historian and philosopher George Bancroft. Despite the radical differences between their views and in how historians of philosophy have viewed their work, the three nevertheless share a philosophical perspective grounded in the dispositions of the colonial attitude. The attitude, reminiscent of what Dewey called the "quest for certainty," amounts to a particular way of understanding the world which seeks to reduce meaning to a single set of truths and a single hierarchy of value. Although each version of the attitude is grounded in a different philosophical language, each is led in practice to exclusion, intolerance, and attempts to eliminate difference. Against this logic of domination an indigenous attitude characterized by commitments to interaction, pluralism, community, and growth emerged in Native responses to the growing European society in America. This attitude came to be adopted by some non-Native people who also rejected the colonial attitude and became part of a long intellectual tradition that includes classical pragmatism, anti-racism, and feminism.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, I show that the commitments of pragmatism were already well-established aspects of Northeastern Native culture and were expressed as the practices of *wunnégin*, welcome or hospitality, a way of understanding and acting consistent with the co-existence of cultural differences. I illustrate the priority of Native ideas in the new European American philosophical perspective through the work of the Puritan minister and philosopher Roger Williams. I show

that Williams developed a distinctive version of the indigenous attitude through his friendship with the Narragansett leader, Miantonomi, and other Native Americans along the northeast American coast in the mid-seventeenth century. Through a close analysis of the Narragansett response to outsiders developed in a range of *Mohowauigsuck* (cannibal) stories and Williams's own discussions of Native thought, I argue that his conception of a pluralist community and the philosophical attitude that supports it is grounded in Native thought. Williams's work provides a crucial instance of how Native American thought could be transmitted to European Americans and come to influence their views. It also helps to lay the groundwork for the adoption of the indigenous attitude as a mode of resistance to colonial ways of thinking in later generations of American thinkers.

The seventh chapter traces the development of the broadening influence of the indigenous attitude through the "Native Prophetic movement" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This movement of Native American orators and political and military leaders focused on establishing Native land rights and cultural autonomy. While interactions between Native and European peoples in America continued in places to be framed by the practices of *wunnégin*, changing circumstances led to the expression of another version of the indigenous attitude as a standpoint of resistance to the colonial attitude—what I will call the logic of place. I look in particular at the speeches of Teedyuscung and Neolin of the Delaware people, Tenskwatawa of the Shawnee, and Sagoyewatha of the Seneca. These speakers at once demonstrate a commitment to the four principles that are central to pragmatism and make explicit the ways that these commitments lead to an alternative way to organize and value things and events. The result is a logic of place that locates meaning in situations that are framed by culture and environment. This attitude, from the perspective of many European Americans, provided both a means of resistance and a model for an alternative way to understand and act in the world.

In the eighth and ninth chapters I consider the impact of the Prophetic movement, in particular on the seminal work of Benjamin Franklin. In crucial ways, Franklin represents the central intellectual tradition that led to Peirce's and James's initial formulations of pragmatism. His work in Pennsylvania brought him in close contact with the Delaware leader Teedyuscung and others. At the same time, in his work as a scientist and writer, he brought the practice of science and the interests of community together through an attitude and logic remarkably similar to that of the Native Prophetic movement. In chapter eight, I examine Teedyuscung's version of the logic of place as it emerged in peace con-

ferences between his people and the Pennsylvania government. In chapter nine, I consider the development of Franklin's own philosophical perspective, both in his experimental science and in his writings on Native Americans. Taken together, these perspectives, grounded in his interactions with Native thought, helped to frame both a distinctive approach to American science and a distinctive conception of a pluralist democratic society.

In the tenth and eleventh chapters I examine the influence of a new generation of Native thinkers on the development of the women's movement of the first half of the nineteenth century. By the 1820s, the logic of place that emerged from the Native Prophetic movement was enhanced with new attention to the problems of differences within communities as well as between them. The result was a new version of the logic of place—what I call the logic of home—that was developed both in Native narratives and in Native activism. Native author Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, in particular, helped to develop this logic in her stories, first published in 1826. At the same time, the logic of home was also developed by Native leaders such as John Ross as a means to understand and resist the policy of Indian removal formalized by Congress and President Andrew Jackson in 1830. While the logic of place provided a way to understand interactions between peoples, the logic of home provided a way to see the effects of differences within a place. In response to the triple crises of Indian removal, slavery, and the demand for women's suffrage, some European American women followed the lead of Native people and adopted both the indigenous attitude and its logic of home as a way of carrying out their own challenge to the dominant colonial attitude. At the center of this development in European American thinking is the work of Lydia Maria Child. For Child and others, the logic of home served not only as a means of attacking laws that permitted slavery and denied women rights, it also became a framework for a new form of feminism and a new approach to social inquiry.

In the final chapter, I outline the ways in which the lines of pragmatic development in the work of Franklin and Child reunite in the philosophical work of the classical pragmatists. From Franklin and his successors the pragmatists learned one version of the indigenous attitude, framed by a conception of experimental science grounded in community and a community grounded in the practices of freedom and democracy. The classical pragmatists, and Dewey in particular, learned from Child and her successors to apply the abstract conceptions of science and democracy to the lived experience of a pluralistic society in which a diversity of groups, interests, and ideas could coexist. In the end, classical prag-

matism and its four commitments emerge from a complex environment characterized by both the colonial and indigenous attitudes. What is generally recognized as distinctively American philosophy arises from the influences of both European and Native thought on key figures and movements throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. In the end, the genealogy of pragmatism becomes more than the development of a particular philosophy. It becomes a genealogy of a rich American philosophical tradition—diverse in its thinkers, plural in its traditions, and potentially valuable in its implications for life in a multicultural world.

North America in the twenty-first century will be an increasingly diverse place. Long-established principles of equality and national unity will be disrupted by the demands of difference. Any adequate response to this pluralist environment will require changes in established ways of thinking. It will call up, in fact, a philosophical crisis, whether or not it is so named, in which options will be narrow. People can ignore difference, suppress it with escalating violence, or they can search for other principles, alternative ways of understanding and acting in the world, that will promote coexistence. This work is a response to the crisis in favor of coexistence. I argue that a philosophical perspective already exists within the American tradition that offers an alternative to a violent response to cultural pluralism. This perspective provides a logic that helps to defuse conflict while fostering both differences and connections. Such an attitude has long been part of American thought, but it has been hidden or misunderstood for much of its career by a dominant attitude more interested in promoting unity and the progress of civilization than in diversity and the growth of communities. The value of reconstructing the history of American pragmatism is in its contribution to the recovery of this alternative attitude.

When W. E. B. Du Bois sought a way to promote the coexistence of different races early in the twentieth century, he proposed to begin by presenting a "plain unvarnished tale," a study that could find in lived human experience models that would serve as a vision and critical standard for life beyond the colorline (Du Bois 1989, 115). Unlike the "plain unvarnished truth" often sought to settle hard questions, Du Bois aimed for a reconstructive examination of historical traditions and present circumstances, with the goal of undermining the colorline and building a diverse community. It is a "tale" because it is to be responsive and transformative, not final. It is "plain" and "unvarnished" like "truth" because it is not fiction but a retelling grounded in a recognizably common history and experience. The problems of the twenty-first century call for a

similar strategy, a plain unvarnished tale that can provide the resources for the coexistence of a diversity of groups, interests, and ideas. Following Du Bois, my reconstruction of the history of pragmatism is a plain unvarnished tale that reconstructs the American philosophical past in order to support an American community that supports, and perhaps even cherishes, differences as a basis for growth.