

P O L I G R A F I

MEDITERRANEAN
LECTURES
IN
PHILOSOPHY

EDUARDO MENDIETA

THREE PRAGMATIST LECTURES

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INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities Koper, University of Primorska, decided to invite prof. Eduardo Mendieta to deliver a set of lectures on pragmatism and contemporary philosophy as the first speaker within the *Mediterranean lectures in philosophy* series. As a philosopher, Eduardo Mendieta covers a wide range of subjects, the understanding of which is vital for our age. As a pragmatist, he uses intercultural methods in his analyses. He is an author of many books analyzing issues of contemporary phenomena of philosophy of globalization or global philosophy, Eduardo Mendieta is no doubt one of the most important contemporary thinkers dealing with Latin American philosophy in particular and radical social philosophy in general. If there is a topical issue for practical philosophy today, then it exists within the mosaic of his invaluable works.

Journal *Poligrafi* already dedicated its 2006 international issue to Latin American philosophy and the problematic of neoliberal globalization. In his paper »Transmodernity and Interculturality,«¹ Enrique Dussel argued for an intercultural dialogue as a dialogue between different intellectuals of the 'border' (i.e. the peripheral world) as well as between their cultures and that of globalizing Modernity: »Any pretense of universality must be deconstructed from the optical multi-focality of each culture.«² This critical – or *transversal* – intercultural dialogue is precisely what is needed in our age and we are convinced it should replace the sterile theoretical horizon of Modern philosophy. If there is a Post-modernity, then it must resonate with this voice.

But what is the role of the Mediterranean in this process? According to Derrida, we can change headings (*changer de cap*) – i.e. the course and movement of European thought as a thought of Modernity. As an Algerian-born philosopher in his work *The Other Heading*, Derrida was

¹ Enrique Dussel, »Transmodernity and Interculturality,« *Poligrafi* 11, 41/42 (2006), 5–40.

² *Ibid.*, 33.

arguing for this specific turn within philosophy through the metaphor and a word-play on »*le cap*«: »How can a 'European cultural identity' respond, and in a responsible way – responsible for itself, for the other, and before the other – to the double question of *le capital*, of capital and of *la capitale*, of the capital?«³ As for the question what constitutes a special relation between intercultural philosophy and the Mediterranean, it is of no insignificance that in its beginnings the intercultural or comparative philosophy was largely characterized and dominated by the orientalist West-East paradigm (Europe and Asia). It was only in the mid- 20th century, more precisely with the nascent of African and Latin American philosophies in 1950s and 60s, and later with the application of a new intercultural hermeneutics (R.A. Mall) that, in a Derridean manner of »changing the heading«, the intercultural/comparative philosophical thought became reoriented towards the vertical North-South axis.

The 'Mediterranean' both geographically and historically refers to its central positionality: as the name itself already suggests, the Mediterranean was historically perceived as a '*medius-terrae*', a region of sea and small islands surrounded by continental land, thus perceived as a 'centre of the known world,' where trade and culture flourished. But today its central positionality – still more importantly – suggests a possible hidden center of aforementioned re-orientating events; Mediterranean as a place of a new socio-ethical paradigm in the age of globalization. From this perspective the European Mediterranean could have its counterpart in the Caribbean: as Euro-mediterranean is positioned in between Europe and Africa, so is the Caribbean-mediterranean a link between the two Americas. Both mediterraneans are centrally-positioned not solely in geographical terms; they are also wedged between conceptually and foremost materially different Worlds. Thus, the term 'Mediterranean' can help conceptualize a region where different Worlds criss-cross each other and where different forms of exchange between them take place. According to E. Dussel we can even think of an Asiatic-Afro-Mediterranean world (the 'Mediterranean' here is also inclusive of Latin America

³ Derrida, J., *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 16.

through its colonial relation to the European 'modernity', particularly that of Spain), which since Hegel has never been recognized as a center of world history, and which in the 20th century has been revived only through a new implementation of local ethnographic and philosophical-intercultural studies.

Moreover, according to French specialist in Southeast Asian history, Denys Lombard, there is 'the other Mediterranean' – i.e. the South China Sea as a similar 'contact zone' of civilizations as the Mediterranean. The 'two seas' are also connected through world commerce – with the Indian Ocean functioning as a connection between the cultural & commercial networks of the Mediterranean and the South China Sea (through the rich trade, i.e. maritime spice trade and silkroad).

In our present-day global situation, issues of human poverty and global inequality as experienced in the extreme throughout many parts of the South in Africa, Asia and Latin America are probably among the most urgent socio-ethical questions to be addressed and resolved by future philosophy. Following the era of world-wide European colonial expansion and thinking after the postcolonial criticisms of the socio- as well as politico-ethical consequences of this expansion, the 'Mediterranean' as a *center* of practically and pragmatically oriented paradigm in philosophy will thus emerge as a space for intercultural dialogue between the peripheral worlds of the global South on the one side and the dominant European/North American economic 'global' culture with its ancient Greek/Mediterranean roots on the other side. This encounter will urge Western philosophy to rethink critically its role in history, as well as the role it will assume in the future, as as to contribute to a 'just justice' (L. Gordon) of a new global economical, political and cultural order.

The choice of prof. Mendieta for being the first lecturer in *Mediterranean lectures in philosophy*, held at our faculty, is thus only a natural one: as a representative of Latin American philosophy and a director of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center at Stony Brook, with his roots in Colombia, he, according to our belief, personifies the role which the 'Mediterranean' regions ought to have in the global worlds. Still more: by holding his lectures at our Faculty, prof. Mendieta connects not only one specific mediterranean but bridges mediterraneans

in the plural, what is perhaps the best token of Dussel's idea of *trans-
versality* (i.e. 'the movement from periphery to the periphery'⁴) of in-
tercultural dialogue.

Lenart Škof & Tomaž Grušovnik

⁴ Enrique Dussel, »Transmodernity and Interculturality,« *Poligrafi* 11, 41/42 (2006), 39 (n. 56).

MEDITERRANEAN
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THE HEGELIAN AFTERMATH AND THE RISE OF PRAGMATISM

Lecture I

Introduction

Every philosophy cannot but be singularly specific, even as it strives to give expression to the eternal in the most particular. Hegel's famous expression that philosophy is its time comprehended in thought, means at the very least that philosophy is thoroughly historical. The historical, however, assumes very specific material dimensions. It is written in a language, a language that is always a natural, that is to say, historical language. Philosophy is also historical in that it seeks to give expression to forces that are global, national, intellectual, and sometimes, merely internal to the development of thought itself. We may thus say that there are at the very least four types of factors that can be said to explain the rise of particular philosophical moments or currents.

1. There are factors internal to philosophy, that is to say, that there is an internal logic to philosophical argumentation that may lead to the emergence of certain lines of thinking and to the collapse or rejection of certain other lines of argumentation. There is a way in which we can tell the history of philosophy in a totally self-referential way, as if philosophy was outside history and all that matters is the coherence and logical necessity of certain positions. Such a way of thinking about philosophy is exemplified by what has been called by Richard Rorty doxographic and rational reconstruction historiographies of philosophy¹. If the former assumes that there is a set of problems that all philosophers have been trying to answer, the later approach argues that the story of philosophy

¹ See Richard Rorty, »The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres« in Richard Rorty, *Truth and Progress. Philosophical Papers, Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 247–273.

is the story of the slow but progressive building of an edifice, in which every new argument is an argument that builds on prior arguments. Every philosopher, and every philosophical tradition is contributing to the building of a major edifice, whose foundations are secure by the rational coherence of each successive brick. The doxographic approach does not necessarily assume such a rational coherence. Rather, it takes it for granted that if we study a group of thinkers, it is because individually and collectively they are all contributing to answering the perennial questions of humanity: »What is being?« »What is knowledge?« »What is true?« and so on.

2. There are factors that are entirely external to philosophy and that one may call world–historical. These are the factors that in fact any given philosophy may be trying to comprehend in thought. These are the factors that give philosophy matter for thought. They are what philosophy is trying to make sense of, and in fact, philosophy then obtains its uniqueness from the way it formulates specific answers to such world–historical events.

3. There are factors that are external to philosophy but that are not necessarily experienced as world historical, at least at first. These factors have to do with what we could refer to as »paradigm shifts« in the conceptual, scientific, and metaphoric way we conceive the world. Examples of such »paradigm shifts« are Galileo, Kepler, and Newton’s development of a mathematical picture of the cosmos, ones that required that we rethink God. After the so-called scientific revolution, God could no longer be thought as in terms of the old clock winder, or the old material sustainer of the world. Similarly, Darwin offered a radically new way to understand the emergence of different life forms that made it extremely difficult to hold on to our long held views about life, species, the alleged timelessness of nature, and logically, God, as creator. Einstein’s theory of relativity and Max Planck’s quantum mechanisms have also spawned a paradigm shift that we are still in the mist of making sense of sense.

4. Finally, there is what I would like to call in short hand »national« factors. By national here I mean the combination of religious, literary, linguistic traditions that shape a national physiognomy or national character that suffuses every cultural product that emerges from that nation. Among the »national« I also include national mythologies that

condition the ways in which something like a »national« identity may be fashioned. Such myths may be simply that, i.e. fictions invented to make sense of a history, but they remain determining for the development of a national character. There is no philosophy that is not always a national philosophy, a philosophy that in one way or another was caught in the grip of local dynamics. I want to underscore that the entwinement of philosophy with the national and the local has become the more dominant at least since the collapse of Christendom and its fragmentation into different national traditions, with their respective languages and even religious traditions. There never has been philosophy as such. All philosophy has always been a national philosophy, or the philosophy of a particular cultural crystallization, with its historical language, literary traditions and myths of identity.

In the following, thus, I will be approaching an analysis of the emergence of pragmatism in the United States, during the second half of the 19th century, in terms of these four set of factors. In terms of the factors internal to philosophy, I will discuss what has been called the Hegelian Aftermath. A central claim of these lectures is that we cannot make sense of pragmatism if we do not relate it to how it is an attempt to make sense of the collapse of the Hegelian synthesis among ontology, epistemology, ethics and history. Next, and instead of trying to give an account of what I called the world–historical factors, which I will deal with in my second and third lectures, I will turn to a discussion of Darwin’s *The Origin of the Species*, and its inauguration of a new scientific paradigm that brought about the challenge of the dominant forms of understanding at the end of the 19th century of the US. Darwin’s paradigm shift not only entailed the secularization of our picture of nature; it also demanded a new appreciation for the power of scientific, rational, deductive thinking. Beyond and above any simplistic form of empiricism, Darwinism commanded us to see past appearance, and the evidence of things seen, to the logic of form, of phylogenetic unities, and the force of chance in bringing about change. Finally, we will turn to a discussion of the civil war, as the »national« factor that most directly shaped the national character and temperament. It is against the gruesome and massive scale of the violence that the civil war unleashed over the lands of the Union that provoked so intensely most of the founding fathers of pragmatism.

In my second lecture, I will return to the problem of war, because it is through the pragmatist's responses to not just the civil war, but also subsequent wars, that have defined the specific character of pragmatist thinking. In my third and final lecture, I turn to questions of citizenship, racial inequity, and the formation of the kind of bonds that secure national reconciliation and unity in a time of extreme challenges, and how pragmatism can be said to have contributed to such a project, the project of achieving a decent country.

Hegel (1770–1831)

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel towers 19th and 20th century philosophy like Plato towers over most of the Western philosophy. His thinking is either the explicit target of attack, or the point of departure for most original thinking after him. Yet, like most major philosophical figures, there is always a debate about which version or stage of the Hegel's thinking is the most mature, the most symptomatic, the most eloquent expression of what are taken to be his main contributions. It could be said that there are at least four different Hegels. There is what we can call the pre-phenomenological Hegel, when he was under the powerful influence of both Kant and Fichte. To this period belong a series of important works on Christianity, Judaism and the philosophy of religion as well as moral philosophy. There is then the phenomenological Hegel, whose *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807 is the most mature and original expression. Then there is the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right*, of 1820, with what some take to be his mature thinking on the philosophy of thinking and reason. And, finally, the argument can be made that there is a fourth Hegel, the Hegel of the system of philosophical sciences, or the science of logic, in which we find Hegel's mature and fully developed science of the unfolding of reason. This is the Hegel of the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* of 1827 and 1830. After Hegel's death, his chair in philosophy at Berlin's university was filled by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, who was called to the position allegedly to cure German philosophy of Hegel's virus. But already during Hegel's time, there was a debate as to who was the true Hegel, whether the Hegel of the *Phenomenology* or the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right* and

the *Science of Logic*. Since his death in 1831, there developed two schools of thought around how this question was answered: The Young, or Left Hegelians, took sides with the Hegel of the 1820's *Phenomenology*, while the Right or Conservative Hegelians stuck particularly with the Hegel of the *Philosophy of Right*. It can be said with the hindsight of more than 150 years of debate around this division that the Young or Left Hegelian have won, for the majority, if not all of the most interesting work in the last century and half that has had anything to say about Hegel's work has been produced by a ceaseless return to that seminal text: *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This, indeed, is one of the most important and generative text in Western and Central European philosophy. It is also a highly complex work, and one that as many philosophers have argued remained incomplete, or rather, was meant as a promissory note. The *Phenomenology* carried the subtitled *Introduction to the Science of the Experience of Consciousness*, which as it was going to print Hegel also called the »First Part« of the »System of Science.«² The *Phenomenology* was meant as an introduction to the science that studies the unfolding of consciousness, but already then in 1807 Hegel had the intuition or insight that it was not just an introduction but the very first part of the system of science of logic, by which he meant something like the first part of what later he would call the encyclopedia of philosophical sciences. This intuition is extremely important, and it has remained the core-stone of post-Hegelian philosophy, and that is that there is no point of entry into the very structure of thought, of what Hegel calls *Geist*, other than through the study of the very experience of consciousness. Put simply, there is no way to get outside consciousness to look at how that consciousness can understand its own coming to be, its own unfolding and process of recognizing itself. There is no jumping over the shadow of consciousness. Thus, for Hegel, the portal to the edifice of logic and the system of science *tout court*, is the phenomenology of spirit, that is to say, the study of what is first and most evident to the self-conscious being: the very experience of consciousness. Phenomenology is *prima philosophia*, that is

² R. B. Pippin, »You Can't Get There From Here: transition problems in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*,« in F. Baiser, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52–53.

to say, it is philosophy at its most essential and elemental. Indeed, this is how we should read paragraphs 26 and 27 of the *Phenomenology*, which read: »*Pure self-recognition is absolute otherness, this Aether as such, is the ground and soil of Science or knowledge in general.* The beginning of philosophy presupposes or requires that consciousness should dwell in this *element.*« And »The standpoint of consciousness which knows objects in their antithesis is to itself, and itself in antithesis of them, is for Science the antithesis of its own standpoint,«³ which gives way to this explicit formulation of the relationship between phenomenology and the science of knowledge, or what is the same, the science of the experience of self-consciousness: »It is this coming-to-be of *Science as such or knowledge*, that is described in this *Phenomenology* of Spirit. Knowledge in its first phase, or *immediate Spirit*, is the non-spiritual, i.e., *sense-consciousness*. In order to become genuine knowledge, to beget the element of Science which is the pure Notion of Science itself, it must travel a long way and work its passage. This process of coming-to-be (considering the content and patterns it will display therein) will not be what is commonly understood by an initiation of the unscientific consciousness into Science; it will also be quite different from the 'foundation' of Science; least of all will it be like the rapturous enthusiasm which, *like a shot from a pistol*, begins straight away with absolute knowledge, and makes short work of other standpoints by declaring that it takes no notice of them.«⁴ Again, a system of thought cannot be formulated, articulated, or spit forth as if a shot of thought had been fired, precisely because science replicates the very coming-to-be conscious of self-consciousness. The *Phenomenology*, in short, proclaims that we cannot but begin with what is before ourselves, and as the entire book proceeds to demonstrate, what we have is social being. Consciousness for Hegel is through and through social. Social consciousness, or rather social self-consciousness, is always social being. But this social self-conscious being, is thus always thoroughly and absolutely meditated. In every aspect of social existence, we can discern the marks of every other aspect of social existence. If all

³ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 14.

⁴ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 15-16, bold added for emphasis.

social being is absolutely mediated, then it is also the case that it is never entirely complete and finished. Self-consciousness always trails behind its self-recognition. Our self-consciousness can only become self-conscious of itself when it recognizes itself as otherness in its objectification, in its externalizations as either crystallizations of social being, or a concepts of itself. Self-knowledge is always changing because we are always recognizing ourselves as others in those very images of ourselves that we produce. Self-consciousness is always unhappy, and always too late. All knowledge, thus, is also radically incomplete. There is an extremely important passage in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* that we must quote to get a better sense of what this may mean:

We see that consciousness now has two objects: one is the first *in-itself*, the second is the *being-for-consciousness of this in-itself*. The latter appears at first sight to be merely the reflection of consciousness into itself, i.e. what consciousness has in mind is not an object, but only its knowledge of that first object. But, as was shown previously, the first object, in being known, is altered by consciousness, it ceases to be the in-itself, and become something that is the *in-itself* only *for consciousness*. And this then is the True: the being-for-consciousness of this in-itself. Or, in other words, this is the *essence*, or the *object* of consciousness. This new object contains the nothingness of the first, it is what experience has made of it.⁵

Knowledge is a ceaseless activity precisely because both the object and subject of knowledge are caught in this dance of co-determination. But, by the same token, truth, or the truth of knowledge is not found, but rather made. And with this, I think we have arrived at some of the central ideas that have guided the prodigious appropriations of Hegel's thinking. At the core of the *Phenomenology*, and I have tried to approximate this core by way of a few exegetical remarks, we find the following philosophemes: first, the dynamic and open character of the science of consciousness; second, the productive or practical character of knowledge, truth, and self-consciousness; third, the centering of phenomenology as a first and foremost philosophical method; fourth, the centrality of the individual consciousness in the very process of the coming to consciousness of the social consciousness. Every moment of self-con-

⁵ G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 55.

sciousness is irreducible and indispensable. There is no absolute or general self-consciousness without individual and singular self-consciousness. Hegel's system, as it is articulated in the *Phenomenology*, offers us a social ontology that deciphers social being as a historical becoming, in such away that epistemology and ethics are subordinated, or rather, made co-determining with a historical social being that apprehends itself in its own historical activity. How these themes and philosophemes stand in relations of priority or dependency is what has been debated since Hegel's death. And it in these specific answers that we are able to discern the emergence of existentialism, Marxism, phenomenology and, of course, pragmatism. Every one of these philosophical movement is explicitly and avowedly a response to the demise of the Hegelian system, a system that as soon as it was articulated collapsed under the weight of its own systemacity and internal struggle to subordinate social being to the system of the logical sciences.

Presently we cannot go into the details of how each one of these movement is post-Hegelian while remaining deeply ensconced in the Hegelian *Weltanschauung*. For the moment, however, let us put it this way: Existentialism, as the philosophy that argues that 'existence precedes essence,' extends Hegel's argument into a deeper phenomenology of factual, that is to say, given and arbitrary individual existence that must face its absolute freedom without Gods or Metaphysical banisters. Phenomenology, which achieves its 20th century apogee in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, can be said to complete Hegel's promise of phenomenology as the first part of the science of logic, when Heidegger wrote that »Ontology is possible only as phenomenology« and that »*Phenomenological truth (disclosedness of being) is veritas transcendentalis.*«⁶ Marxism, like Pragmatism, on the other hand, takes up Hegel's social ontology and combine it with its productivistic or materialist epistemology, which claims that knowledge and truth are produced through social activity. In fact, Karl Marx's theses on Feuerbach could easily stand as summaries for what makes both Marxism and Pragmatism forms of Hegelianism. In particular if we look at theses 2 and 8, we can see the

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 34.

common genealogy of Marxism and Pragmatism. The theses say respectively: »The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth; i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking, in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.« And »All social life is essentially *practical*. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.«⁷

Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

After Hegel no other figure has exerted more influence on pragmatism than Darwin has. George Herbert Mead's pragmatist social psychology was avowedly a product of an attempt to develop a functionalist psychology that made use of Darwin's methods and focus on the living and embodied biological being.⁸ Darwin was the Luther of the American philosophical tradition. He set the standard, the method, and the goal. As Richard Rorty was to argue in an essay from the early 1990's, we ought to understand not just John Dewey's work, but also most of pragmatism, as an attempt to marry »Hegel and Darwin.«⁹ Towards the end of this lecture, I will return to Rorty's provocative expression and discuss what philosophical cash value it may hold in store. A judicious way to approach the role of Darwin in American thought would be to approach the question through one of Dewey's most pointed, and insightful appreciations of Darwin. The lecture that Dewey delivered at Columbia University, in New York, in 1909, almost a century ago, was entitled »The Influence of Darwinism on Philosophy.« In this lecture Dewey lays out clearly why Darwin was such a lightning rod for American, in particular, and Western thought, in general. Dewey claims that

⁷ Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 422-423.

⁸ Hans Joas, *G. H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of his Thought*, trans. Raymond Meyer (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985), 34-35.

⁹ The essay is entitled »Dewey between Hegel and Darwin« and it is now in Rorty, *Truth and Progress*, 290-306.

Western thought, at least since Aristotle, has been guided by the central idea of a ruling *idos*, which the Scholastics translated from the Greek into Latin as *species*. Every living being and manifestations in creation, through every one of its stages of maturation, development, decay, and eventual demise, was held together in its change and permutations by a governing principle. The drama of life, changing, mutating, shedding forms, nonetheless seemed also to hold all to a regularity, a cyclicity of life. Life in its plural manifestations and forms, remained unified in its ceaseless activity. As Dewey wrote beautifully: »This formal activity which operates throughout a series of changes and hold them to a single course; which subordinates their aimless flux to its own perfect manifestation; which, leaping the boundaries of space and time, keeps individuals distant in space and remote in time to a uniform type of structure and function: this principle seems to give insight into the very nature of reality itself.«¹⁰ This principle is what Aristotle, and the Greeks in general, called *idos*, and we called »species.« For Dewey the idea of species, however, had three components, which had two specific consequences. The idea of species entailed that *first*, nature does nothing in vain and everything has a reason, *second*, within everything that is biological, natural, living, there is a quasi-spiritual, intellectual principle, which is not evident to the eye, but is evidently operating invisibly in the very structure of that living entity, and *third*, that the »manifestation« of this principle subordinates both what is material and sensible to the telos of the realization of this principle. These three entailments of the notion of species could operate in »two directions,«¹¹ and I quote: »Purposefulness accounted for the intelligibility of nature and the possibility of science, while the absolute or cosmic character of this purposefulness gave sanction and worth to the moral and religious endeavors of man. Science was underpinned and morality authorized by one and same principle, and their mutual agreement was eternally guaranteed.«¹² In other words,

¹⁰ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (New York: P. Smith, 1951 [1910]), 5.

¹¹ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, 10.

¹² John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, 10.

the intelligibility of creation both underwrites science and the moral and religious pursuits of humans. In this way, the idea of *species* could be ground for both an ethics of science and an intelligible, and justifiable, religious passion, in such a way that science could be a form of religious piety, and conversely being religiously pious is a rational response. Here, we can see how Dewey has perspicaciously diagnosed the irritating and haunting centrality of Darwin in American culture, for curiously Darwin both underwrites the representation of the Christian God as a designer, and the notion that ethics is grounded in the very rationality of creation, while at the same time challenging both the intelligibility of nature and the rationality of ethics. For Darwin, as Dewey makes clear, challenges the three central tenets of the idea of species. The principle of natural selection challenges to their core the idea that there is nothing in nature without a purpose, or that that purpose is the telos of natural forms; it also challenges the notion that these natural forms are necessarily an expression of a rational and formal principles that is the matrix of intelligibility of nature, and finally that ethics can be read of or justified from this intelligibly. As Dewey put it, »if all organic adaptations are due simply to constant variation and the elimination of those variations which are harmful in the struggle for existence that is brought about by excessive reproduction, there is no call for a prior intelligent causal force to plan and preordain them.«¹³ Nature is the realm of blind necessity and there is a lot in it that is both futile, unintelligible, and cannot be a comforting ground for any ethics, except perhaps that of the biggest and meanest predator. One of the most evident consequences of this momentous change in the way we approach creation is that this puts philosophy under a ban, namely that philosophy must »forswear inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities.« Philosophy has to become humble and must begin with the singular, the given, the specific. After Darwin, philosophy must »shift from an intelligence that shaped things once and for all to the particular intelligence which things are even now shaping; shift from an ultimate goal of good to the direct increments of justice and happiness that intelligent administration of existent condi-

¹³ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, 11–12.

tions may beget and that present carelessness or stupidity will destroy or forego.«¹⁴ After Darwin, philosophy must become a philosophy of the fragile and singular entity, as it must also become a philosophy that acknowledges the fragility and contingency of our happiness and justice claims. Darwin has humbled philosophy, but this new humility offers philosophy a new life, a new future. Darwin forced modesty upon philosophy. In Dewey's view, this derogation is grounds for a new sense of philosophical responsibility.

Yet, Dewey is sanguine enough to recognize that old habits give way slowly. While Darwin has shaken the very foundation of science, ethics, and philosophy, he also opened up new opportunities, offered new possibilities for humans to relate differently to their own moral ideals and to the very contingency of their tools for making sense of the world. Tellingly, Dewey ends his overview and analysis of the influence of Darwin on philosophy in general and pragmatism in particular not by fulminating against the obsolescence and anachronism of anti-Darwinian ideas, nor by suggesting that Darwinism would eventually impose itself due to its »more radical« and rational aspect. Instead, Dewey ends with a humble note:

Old ideas give way slowly; for they are more than abstract logical forms and categories. They are habits, predispositions, deeply ingrained attitudes of aversion and preference. Moreover, the conviction persists – though history shows it to be a hallucination – that all the questions that can be answered in terms of the alternatives that the questions themselves present. But in fact intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume – an abandonment that results from decreasing vitality and a change of urgent interest. We do not solve them: we get over them¹⁵.

This passage, in fact, summarizes succinctly what can be said to some of the central themes of pragmatism: ideas are habits, or a *habitués*. They are a form of comportment towards the world, and they are changed not so much by proving them wrong, but by our undertaking

¹⁴ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, 15.

¹⁵ John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, 19.

different habituses, comportments, and predispositions. We do not solve them rationally. We simply stop asking questions of the world in those ways. We simply stop asking those particular questions and begin to ask new questions. These new questions, in turn, presuppose new habits. New habits, evidently, are also new forms of sociality. The humbling of philosophy, and its new gained responsibility, are linked to the project of new forms of social being. This new form of social being, however, has no other guarantee than our commitment to it in terms of how far it takes us away from the mistakes of our antecessors. In this way, thus, Dewey married Hegel and Darwin, as Rorty put it. Rorty, in other words, saw Dewey as unifying two forms of thinking that gave us new narratives, new questions, while reasserting our historical responsibility without metaphysical alibis. As Rorty put it: »... the Hegel-Darwin synthesis Dewey proposes must de-ontologize this claim [that the real is the rational] and make it simply a regulative, heuristic principle. Narratives of historical progress are legitimized not by the philosopher's explanation that the slaughter-bench of history is where the Incarnated Logos is redemptively tortured, but because we want historians to be able to discern what Hegel called »the rose in the cross of the present.« A historian should be able to tell her community how it is now in a position to be, intellectually and morally, better than predecessor communities thanks to its knowledge of the struggles of those predecessors. As the saying goes, we know more than our ancestors because they are what we know; what we most want to know about them is how to avoid their mistakes.«¹⁶ In other words, our community is not fated by history, reason, God, or nature to fulfill any given specific end. We face our freedom in our cosmic loneliness, accompanied only by our co-citizens and members of the communities through which we come to be whom we become. Rorty, echoing Dewey, concludes his essay on Dewey's marriage of Hegel and Darwin, thusly: the developments of the last century »have made it steadily easier for us to substitute Deweyan questions like »which communities' purposes shall I share?« and »What sort of per-

¹⁶ Richard Rorty, *Truth and Progress*, 305.

son should I try to become?« for the Kantian questions »What should I do?« »What may I Hope?« and »What is man?«¹⁷

What Pragmatism is and is not

With that as a background, I like to offer a quick overview of what Pragmatism is and is not by listing what it rejects and what it affirms.¹⁸

Pragmatism rejects:

Platonism: and thus the essence/appearance dichotomy

Aristotelianism: and thus the convention/nature distinction

Thomism: and thus the natural law/human law division

Cartesianism: and thus the *res extensa/res cogitans* dualism

Kantianism: and thus the noumena/phenomena dyad

Hegelianism: and thus the notion that history has a logos and that it is the becoming self-conscious of the idea

Marxism: and thus the notion that all history is the history of class struggle

For this reason, Pragmatism is anti-essentialist, anti-realist, anti-mentalistic, anti-subjectivist, and anti-cognitivist. In short, pragmatism is thoroughly anti-metaphysicalist and anti-foundationalist.

But Pragmatism is not just a critical philosophy, it also tries to affirm some basic ideas and principles and traditions. Pragmatism is:

Humean, that is, it affirms the primacy of the role of imagination in guiding our moral behavior. Derridian, that is, it endorses deconstruction as a form of redescription that leads us to new concepts.

Davidsonian, that is, that we are always already embedded in webs of linguistic pan-relationalism

Wittgenstenian, that is, it departs from the recognition that language games are forms of life, and meaning is anchored in practices.

¹⁷ Richard Rorty, *Truth and Progress*, 306.

¹⁸ I am here drawing on my own work, see my introduction to Richard Rorty, *Take Care of Freedom and Truth Will Take Care of Itself: Interviews with Richard Rorty*, edited and introduced by Eduardo Mendieta (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), xi–xxx.

Heideggerian, but only to the extent that for Heidegger language was the horizon of novelty, of disclosure. All creativity is always linguistic creativity.

And finally, it is Habermasian in that it affirms that all subjectivity is first and foremost intersubjectivity and that rationality is always communicative action, that is, action with other in some sort of public space. Reason is always the giving and taking of reasons within a space of reasons.

BETWEEN WARS: THE ECLIPSE OF PRAGMATISM

Lecture 2

The Civil War and Ideas Worth Dying For¹

In his Pulitzer winning book *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America*,² intellectual historian Louis Menand frames the emergence and eventual eclipse of pragmatism between two wars: the Civil War and World War II. The Civil War was an existential shock to many of the classic pragmatists. William James' brothers fought in it, and one of them died directly because of wounds suffered in the War. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., whom Menand restores to the classical pantheon of the founders of pragmatism, was wounded twice in the war. The destruction, both personal and national, that the Civil War brought about, made a profound impact on the founding generations of pragmatisms. Menand goes further. He argues that it was precisely against the passions of certitude and the certitude of passions that resulted in the upheavals of the Civil War for which pragmatism was developed as an antidote. If violence resulted from a blind allegiance to beliefs, pragmatism sought to make it harder for people to »be driven to violence by their beliefs,«³ by making our allegiance to our beliefs conditional on the efficacy of those beliefs. A belief was worth our loyalty so long as it contributed to the defusing of the violence of abstractions. As a philosophical re-

¹ I am drawing here from a book chapter that is forthcoming in a book I co-edited: Chad Kautzer and Eduardo Mendieta, eds., *Pragmatism, Nation, and Race: Community in the Age of Empire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009), the chapter is entitled »Transcending the 'Gory Cradle of Humanity': War, Loyalty and Civic Action in Royce and James.«

² Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Idea in America* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001), see in particular the epilogue, where Menand make explicit this framing. In a public, albeit unpublished, lecture entitled »War and Pragmatism« (2001, manuscript), Menand expanded on this framing of his history of pragmatism, linking it to the then recent events of 9-II.

³ Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, 440.

sponse to the Civil War, pragmatism, in Menand's view, became »a style of thought that elevated compromise over confrontation.«⁴ It was this very attitude that spelled its eclipse after World War II, and the onset of the Cold War. For these two wars were fought over principles, principles that are mutually exclusionary and that prevent any compromise and negotiation. While pragmatism may have been a style of thought that served the healing nation, by articulating a tolerant and ecumenical way of looking at disagreement and dissent, it became obsolete and even an obstacle when questions of principle came to the foreground. Curiously, Menand notes that the major social and political transformations in the US polity, namely the Civil Rights movement, did not stem at all from pragmatism, but from the religious communities, in particular the Black southern Baptists. Menand notes: »Martin Luther King, Jr. was not a pragmatist, a relativist, or a pluralist, and it is a question whether the movement he led could have accomplished what it did if its inspirations had come from Dewey and Holmes rather than Reinhold Niebuhr and Mahatma Gandhi. Americans did not reject the values of tolerance and liberty during the Cold War – on the contrary – but they replanted those values in distinctly non-pragmatic soil.«⁵

Menand's analysis of the impact of the Civil War on the founding generation of pragmatists is surely right. Yet, to bracket pragmatism between the Civil War and the Cold War is doubtlessly contestable. James and Royce, as well as Dewey, were deeply disturbed and critical of the US intervention in Cuba and the Philippines. Menand neglects the role of the Spanish-American war and what many, including James considered to be a form of imperialism. World War I had a profound impact on the development of Dewey's political philosophy, as we will see. Most importantly, however, the development of pragmatism did not halt with the Cold War, even if one can partly assent with Menand that pragmatism suffered an eclipse by the professionalization of philosophy. Menand neglects the role of Vietnam and the Sixties in the education of the neo-pragmatists. It can be argued that the work of neopragmatists like Richard Rorty, Richard Bernstein, and Cornel West were unmis-

⁴ Ibid., 441.,

⁵ Ibid., 441.

takably marked not just by the Cold War, but also by the reactions to it that culminated in the Vietnam debacle. At the very least, one has to challenge Menand's rather jejune view that US history, in general, and US intellectual history in particular, can be neatly sandwiched between these two major war: between the war that forged a nation, and the war that forged the empire of the good. US history, sadly, has been marked indelibly by many wars, most of them which cannot be easily assimilated into the kind of Whiggish and sanitized history that Menand presupposes when he unfolds a narrative that goes from national trauma to global ascendancy over the forces of intolerance, authoritarianism and dictatorship.

Additionally, while Menand's book has done a great service to the history of pragmatism and the history of ideas in the US, especially as it has forcefully and eloquently argued for the role of Darwin and the philosophy of law (via Holmes) in both histories, Menand's conclusions seem not to have adsorbed a central lesson of all the founding pragmatism, namely that selves are neither Cartesian homunculi nor Kantian disembodied moral subjects. In chastising pragmatists for offering a type of thinking that »explains everything about ideas except why a person would be willing to die for one.«⁶ Menand takes us behind pragmatism's development of what has been called the dialogic or mediated self.⁷ Ideas, as Menand right notes, are just tools, which may indeed lead us to want to die for them, or to kill for them. But all pragmatists, from Peirce through West, more important than ideas are the types of selves that we think we should be. Menand, in order words, manages to re-epistemologize and re-mystify the social self into an epistemic machine, which gives and accepts reasons, while submitting them to a pre-existing set of adjudicating norms. For pragmatists the issue is not what kind of ideas social agents can entertain, but rather how are social agents socialized in such away that they are vulnerable or resistant to the dogmatism of certain ideas. Pragmatism is a philosophy of social agents, not of ideas that exist in some metaphysical realm. Thus, Menand's formu-

⁶ Ibid., 375.

⁷ See Mitchell Aboulafia, *The Mediating Self: Mead, Sartre, and Self-Determination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), and *The Cosmopolitan Self: George Herbert Mead and Continental Philosophy* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001)

lation about pragmatism not explaining why a person should die for a certain idea manages to reverse pragmatism's fundamental insight about the relationship between ideas and person. The issue is not what kind of ideas we should die for, but what kind of person is that which would die for an ideal or idea. When we reframe the issue in that way, we immediately recognize that all pragmatists, perhaps with the exception of Peirce, sought to answer the question: what kind of social agents have certain social arrangements produced that would be willing to die for specific ideas, and can we develop new social formations that would give birth to persons who would replace dying and killing for certain ideas, with other social values and forms of social interaction. It is this latter question that particularly preoccupied Royce, James and Mead.

From the Philosophy of War to the Philosophy of Loyalty

Josiah Royce »confesses« quite early in his book *The Philosophy of Loyalty*⁸ that he had entitled his lectures »philosophy of loyalty« because of a book he had read early the last summer (1907). The book was Rudolf Steinmetz's *Die Philosophie des Krieges* (The Philosophy of War). Royce notes that »war and loyalty have been, in the past, two very closely associated ideas. It will be part of the task of these lectures to break up, so far as I can, in your minds, that ancient and *disastrous* association, and to show how much the true conception of loyalty has been obscured by viewing the warrior as the most typical representative of rational loyalty.«⁹ Immediately, Royce is taking distance from Steinmetz, even as he confesses that it was Steinmetz who not only suggested the title for his own book, but also the very theme of loyalty. According to Steinmetz, Royce proceeds »war gives an opportunity for loyal devotion so notable and important that, if war were altogether abolished, one of the greatest goods of civilization would thereby be hopelessly lost.« And then adds emphatically: »I am keenly conscious of the sharp contrast

⁸ Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915 [1908])

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12–13. Emphasis added.

between Steinmetz's theory of loyalty and my own.«¹⁰ What was Steinmetz's view?

Steinmetz was an important ethnologist, even a pioneer of sociology. His *Philosophy of War* was the summation of years of research and also a kind of manifesto. The work is a methodical analysis of the role of war in history, which relies on a substantive knowledge of world history. Steinmetz explores »war as a cultural instinctual power [*Triebkraft*],« the disadvantages and advantages of war, the »essential and still valid function of war,« the replacement of war through international agreements, the process of collective selection through war, the resistance to that selection, the ineluctable law of the increase in military budgets, future war, the curtailment of the martial spirit, peace congresses and their ineffectiveness, and a final exploration of the enemy. Steinmetz approached is unmistakably marked by a form of social Darwinism, for which war is a selection mechanism that eliminates races and nations unworthy of living and exalts those who have survived the fire and iron of the canons of war. Steinmetz's work is in fact very similar to that of Friedrich Ratzel, the father of modern German geopolitics. And perhaps not coincidentally, Steinmetz's book is published in a series where Ratzel's works, as well as those of other racialists were published (Hans Driesch and Rudolf Eisler). Steinmetz spouses the view that we should view the state as a vital organism, one that both expresses and preserves the vital force, that is the instinctual powers, of a race. The vitality of a state is the vitality of a race or people. War is an indispensable means for the preservation of that vitality and for the »Kollektivauslese« that eliminates those that are a pathology and preserves those who augur the health of the fatherland and stage. It is the glory of the state and the fatherland that compels individuals to rise above their egoism and the fear of their lonely deaths. Without those ideals, individuals would not be compelled to rise above their individual preservation. Indeed, argues Steinmetz, whoever contemplates the highest achievement of human life as an ideal, must be willing to accept the love of the fatherland, and naturally also its presupposition, namely the sacrifice and compassion that is commanded by its sacrifices. As he puts it bluntly: »The state needs,

¹⁰ Ibid., 13.

as does the individual, for its full existence: danger, need, and struggle. Whoever loves humanity should not want to spare it these, I think, and that is simply general, and has simply become trivial wisdom. The same applies to the state.¹¹ Or as he puts it later on: »Peoples like individuals need distress (*Not*), suffering and danger for their development, as well as for their life.«¹² To want to die for the glory of one's nation and for the strength of its state, is to want to die for posterity. In dying for the state and the fatherland, we live forever in the memory of the victorious people. As Steinmetz writes »The state, fatherland and war are simply irreplaceable, and that is why they demand their sacrifice.«¹³ It is for this reason that Steinmetz reformulated Hegel's famous statement about history into »war is world judgment« and »war is both a judge and reformer at the same time.«¹⁴ War, in short, is indispensable for the spiritual development of an entire people. War is the source of the moral and physical health of the people.¹⁵ Or, as he puts it in a provocative formulation: »if there were no war, we would have to invent it.«¹⁶

Royce's »sharp contrast« with Steinmetz could not be starker. Steinmetz subordinates any kind of moral values or social virtues to the vitalistically construed people, race, nation, and state. It is the glory of these that exacts from us loyalty. Here loyalty is at the service of a warrior people and state. For Royce, on the contrary, loyalty is the very foundation of morality; it is the expression of the moral commandment itself. When properly defined, for Royce, »loyalty is the fulfillment of the moral law.«¹⁷ For loyalty is the deliberate, conscious, and practical »devotion« of a person to a cause. Loyalty is the self-subjection and self-giving of a person to a cause, a cause that is also the cause of another. It is very evident in Royce's language that he is explicitly appropriating and translating Kant's moral philosophy, but in terms of Peirce's semiotics, as we will see later. For loyalty is a self-relation mediated by a

¹¹ Steinmetz, *Philosophie des Krieges*, 199.

¹² *Ibid.*, 221.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 190.

¹⁷ Royce, *Philosophy of Loyalty*, 15.

community of interpretation. We don't adopt a cause, any cause, without a context. We submit in devotion to those causes that are shared by others, and with whom we have entered in a process of interpretation. Communities of loyalty are communities of interpretation. To be loyal is per definition neither a solipsistic nor an egotistical act. Loyalty is a form of witnessing: of oneself as a principled individual before others, a community of moral accountability. We submit before and for others, self-consciously. We affirm our autonomy by willingly subjecting ourselves to a cause. This autonomy is just another expression of our rational self-consciousness. Thus, for Royce, loyalty is the summation of both self-legislation and rational self-consciousness. I am the author of my own subjection, but only insofar as it is rationally evident to myself. For Royce, as for Socrates, Augustine, and Kant, »moral authority for each of us is determined by our own rational will.«¹⁸

Royce explicitly addressed the obvious question as to what happens when two different loyalties confront each other. In fact, it is in addressing this question that Royce comes to one of the strongest thesis of these lectures, namely that all »commonplace virtues« are but expression of »loyalty to loyalty.«¹⁹ Loyalty to loyalty in fact becomes a moral compass for Royce that directs us to respect the loyalty to loyalty of other persons. Royce writes, »a cause is good, not only for me, but for mankind, in so far as it is essentially a *loyalty to loyalty*, that is, is an aid and a furtherance of loyalty in my fellows. It is an evil cause in so far as, despite the loyalty that it arouses in me, it is destructive of loyalty in the world of my fellows ... in so far as my cause is a predatory cause, which lives by overthrowing the loyalties of others, it is an evil cause, because it involves disloyalty to the very cause of loyalty itself.«²⁰ Inasmuch as loyalty to loyalty is a form of self-subjection, or as Royce calls it »to have a cause« by which one lives, it is a form of self-reflexivity that exhibits both consciousness and will. Our loyalty to loyalty however is betrayed, become an evil, if that same ability to be loyal to loyalty is denied in others. Perhaps not unlike Kant's categorical imperative with its four dif-

¹⁸ Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 118–9, italics in original.

ferent formulations, the imperative to be loyal to loyalty entails also the reverence and respect of the same ability in every other human being. For Royce, like Kant, the supreme expression of our humanity lies in our living in accordance with a moral law that is to be respect in every human being. There is a simultaneous universalizing and constraining, or self-curtailed, of this supreme moral duty: loyalty to loyalty demands that I constrain my loyalty to those loyalties that do not curtail or destroy another fellow's own loyalty to loyalty. Loyalty can't be blind, boundless, and unreasoning. On the contrary, argues Royce, it is only insofar as they are expressions of my rational will that loyalty is loyalty to loyalty, i.e. to that ability to submit ourselves to causes and ideals that would, or could, command the same loyalty from other human beings. In the end, Royce thesis is strong and unequivocal: »... *all those duties which we have learned to recognize as the fundamental duties of the civilized man, the duties that every man owes to every man, are to be rightly interpreted as special instance of loyalty to loyalty.* In other words, all the recognized virtues can be defined in terms of our concept of loyalty.«²¹

Royce returned to the questions of loyalty and war in a series of lectures he delivered on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Philosophical Union of the University of California. Soon after Royce had delivered the lectures in the summer, World War I began.²² The manuscript of the lectures underwent revisions in light of the war, but it was published in 1914 under the title of *War and Insurance: An Address*.²³ In fact, Royce sought to make the final manuscript a manifesto against the war. What is also important about this book is that Royce once again makes explicit reference to Steinmetz, which demands quotation:

Sebald Rudolf Steinmetz is professor of Ethnology at the University of Amsterdam. His »Philosophie des Krieges« was published in 1907 and has much influenced the train of thought which was first set forth in the present writer's »Philosophy of Loyalty (New York, 1908),« and which has gradually led, through a series of intermediate books, to the present Address. That this influence has partly been due to my own opposition to certain of the theses of

²¹ Ibid., 139–40, italics in original.

²² See John Clendenning, *The Life and Thought of Josiah Royce* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 376–390

²³ Josiah Royce, *War and Insurance: An Address* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914).

Steinmetz is obvious. But I hope that section II of this Address clearly shows that in certain respects I stand greatly indebted to Steinmetz for some of his views regarding the war-like aspects of human essence.²⁴

Part II of Royce Address is entitled »The Neighbor: Love and Hate.« In this section Royce addresses how the martial spirit mobilizes both hate of the enemy and love of one's compatriots. At the heart of Royce preoccupation in this chapter, as well as throughout the whole book, is to understand how it is that war, or the war-like spirit, draws on the spiritual side of the human being. As he puts it, it is in war's appeal to the spiritual in the human being that »lies its appeal to what is best in man.«²⁵ We cannot properly address the endurance and perpetuation of war if we simply dismiss the war-like spirit as an atavistic and regressive left over from earlier stages of social evolution. Nor can we deal properly with war in terms of love and hate relations. Love of one's neighbor and hate of one's adversary are expressions of a more fundamental form of love, loyalty. Thus, Royce is appealing to his earlier work on loyalty. The issue is how to transform the love and hate that martial spirit exploits and mobilizes into a different form of love, or rather loyalty? For Royce, the issue is to re-direct these forms of affect and emotional attachment to other forms of social cooperation and cohesion. With Steinmetz, then, Royce agrees that challenges, need, and danger raise human to higher levels of moral and spiritual achievement; but against Steinmetz, Royce think that it is not the state, the nation, or war that should be the object of our faith, devotion and loyalty. Instead, and here Royce stays with Kant, the solution to war is the development of a higher form of loyalty, or loyalty to a more encompassing social whole, humanity as a community of interpretation. This is where Royce's »insurance« in the title of his book comes in, as well as Peirce's semiotics.

Basing himself on Peirce's semiotics Royce developed the notion of a »community of interpretation« that involves at the very least three elements: An intepreter, and interpretant, and a interpretee, which correspond to Peirce's symbol, sign, and icon. Royce also puts it this way: a community of interpretation consists »in what is usually called a *prin-*

²⁴ Ibid., 83.

²⁵ Ibid., 19.

cial, of an *agent*, and of a *client*, or other such man, *to whom the agent represents the principal.*»²⁶ Royce identifies three special forms of communities of interpretation: the judicial community, the banker's community, and the community of insurance. Nonetheless, what is of utmost importance for Royce is the specific quality all of communities of interpretation, and that is that since they abolish all dyadic relations they dilute, decrease, and even abolish all possible conflict. Since all relations are now triadic, differences have to be mediated, negotiated, interpreted, and resolved in terms of some sort of consensus or persuasion. A pair, alone, is a dangerous relation. A triad augurs peace, or at least »negotiation.« Not unexpectedly Royce develops his critique of dyad's with reference to Kant's notion of the«unsocial sociability» of the human being.²⁷ Royce is quite blunt: »*dyadic, the dual, the bilateral relations of man and man, of each man to his neighbor, are relations fraught with social danger. A pair of men is what I may call an essentially dangerous relation.*«²⁸ Once we enter into relations with others, others that are more than a pair, that is, we have entered relations that command our loyalty. Triadic relations are correlated with loyalty and peacefulness, whereas dyadic relations entail hostility and conflict. Thus, Royce concludes, war persists because nations continue to relate to each other on the basis of dyadic relations. »War is simply one case whereby to illustrate how dangerous the dyadic relations are in the social world; and how dangerous a community is one which has the form of a pair either of individual men or individual nations.«²⁹ And this is where the community of insurance enters into Royce overall argument and proposal. The solution to the endurance and perpetuation of war is to develop an international system of insurance that would begin with the establishment of an international bank to aid its participants in the eventuality of national crises due natural catastrophes. A community of insurance would develop as a community of interpretation that would command the loyalty of its members. And in this way, war would be from the outset outlawed and eventually made obsolete. The aim of this community of insurance

²⁶ Ibid., 45.

²⁷ See section III of *War and Insurance* for Royce's discussion and use of Kant.

²⁸ Royce, *War and Insurance*, 30.

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

would be to help each other, but also to secure the mutual respect and loyalty that triadic relations presuppose according to Royce. Through the kind of mutual aid and accountability that developing a community of insurance would instigate in its participants, we would have an instance of Abraham Lincoln's famous triadic statement: »government of the people, by the people, and for the people.« As Royce summarizes and re-states in the language of an original draft of these lectures, »*whenever insurance of the nations, by the nations, and for the nations begins, it will thenceforth never vanish from the earth, but will begin to make visible to us the holy city of the community of all mankind.*«³⁰ This holy city would be the »great community« of humanity that would have abolished war and sublimated the spiritual side of war into an »enlarged loyalty« – to use Richard Rorty's language.³¹

From »war the gory cradle of humanity«
to the »blessing of civic genius«

It could be argued that William James' famous essay from 1910 »The Moral Equivalent of War« has unfortunately eclipsed an equally, if not more, powerful statement of James' views on war, namely his 1897 Oration on Robert Gould Shaw,³² which he delivered on the occasion of the dedication of the monument to Robert Gould Shaw and his regiment, designed by August Saint-Gaudens and Sanford White. Shaw had been the white Union colonel who had led the all-volunteer African American Massachusetts Fifty-four regiment. Shaw was killed in battle July 18th, 1963, as he was leading his regiment in a charge on the Confederate Battery Wagner. After the failed charge, and the death of nearly half of his regiment, he was stripped of his uniform and buried in a common grave with his black soldiers. The Confederate troops meant this to be an insult and desecration of an officer whom they must have taken to be a race traitor. Saint-Gaudens and White's monument portray Shaw

³⁰ Ibid., 80.

³¹ See Richard Rorty, »Justice as a larger loyalty« in *Philosophy as Cultural Politics. Philosophical Papers Volume 4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³² See William James, *Essays in Religion and Morality* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 64–74.

on horse, looking forward, austere, stoic, and resolute, sword in hand, as if ready to lead in a charge. He is flanked by his regiment of black Soldiers, whose faces are carefully cast, fully individualizing each soldier's face, in fine lines of pride, resoluteness, courage, and even joy. The monument is majestic in the way it brings holistic and unifying motion, but also careful individuation and personalizing. As pragmatist philosopher Harvey Cormier put it, Saint-Gaudens and White's monument succeeded »strikingly in representing for all the men of the Fifty-fourth not only a single, unified, purposeful motion but also their full human individuality.«³³ It is undoubtedly a powerful and moving monument, which is why it has been deemed one of the most important nineteenth-century sculptures of American art. William James' Oration is equally moving, ceremonial, and philosophically enlightening.

From the outset James makes it clear that this monument should not be understood to be celebrating military victory, or the martial virtues of those who died in the Civil War. The monument to Shaw and his soldiers is a very different type of monument than those that have long ago been, and will continue to be, erected to the »great generals« and the abstract soldiers. James spoke the following words: »Our nation had been founded in what we may call our American religion, baptized and reared in the faith that man requires no master to care of him, and that common people can work out their salvation well enough together if left free to try.«³⁴ And this is what Shaw and the Fifty-four both stood for and died for. This in fact was their genius, as James argues, to show that »Americans of all complexions and conditions can go forth like brothers, and meet death cheerfully if need be, in order that this religion of our native land shall not become a failure on earth.«³⁵ Yet, it is not the glory of dying that James underscores; nor does he offer a laudation to the »spiritual« side of war, as important as it may be. James is explicit and adamant about his distancing from any kind of militaristic celebration, even as he is dedicating a monument to soldiers who died in war.

³³ Harvey Cormier, *The truth is what works: William James, Pragmatism, and the Seed of Death* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 155. See Cormier's wonderful discussion of both the monument and James' analysis of it.

³⁴ James, *Essays in Religion and Morality*, 66.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

He writes »War has been much praised and celebrated among us of late as a school of manly virtue; but it is easy to exaggerate on this point. Ages ago, war was the gory cradle of mankind, the grim-featured nurse that alone could train our savage progenitors into some semblance of social virtue, teach them to be faithful one to another; and force them to sink their selfishness in wider tribal needs.«³⁶ Indeed, this is why war and war's heroes continue to be sung by the poets of nations. And for this reason there is no need to press the point on the military heroism of Shaw and his men, argues James. But there is something that is now far more important, and which is too easily forgotten. And, in James' view, a far more noble and difficult achievement, one that has not been 'bred' into the bone of human beings by the survival of the fittest, and that is the »lonely kind of courage (civic courage as we call it in peacetimes).«³⁷ It is to this lonely, civic, courage that the monuments of nations should be erected, of which the one to Shaw and the Fifty-four Regiment is an example. In juxtaposing military heroism and virtue, which has been bred into human by history, and civic courage, which is an acquired social virtue, James then proceeds to provide an encomium for what he calls civic genius:

The deadliest enemies of nations are not their foreign foes; they always dwell within their borders. And from these internal enemies civilization is always in need of being saved. The nation blest above all nations is she in whom the civic genius of the people does the saving day by day, by acts without external picturesqueness; by speaking, writing, voting reasonably; by smitting corruption swiftly; by good temper between parties; by the people knowing true men when they see them, and preferring them as leaders to rabid partisans or empty quacks. Such nations have no need of wars to save them.³⁸

What the Civil War has taught us is that social evils have to be checked in time, before they grow into bellicose causes. War leaves in its wake misery, increase powers of government, corruption, inflated budgets, and thus the seeds of future wars, »unless the civic virtues of the people save the State in time.«³⁹ War is neither the health of the

³⁶ Ibid., 72.

³⁷ Ibid., 72.

³⁸ Ibid., 72–3.

³⁹ Ibid., 73.

people, nor of the state. Rather, it is the active civic genius and courage of citizens that saves the people and the state from war.

James returned to the question of war towards the end of his life in a series of public interventions, one which carried the title of »The Psychology of the War Spirit,«⁴⁰ and which eventually became his famous »The Moral Equivalent of War« – rightly deemed one of the best American essays of the Century.⁴¹ This text revolves around the question of explaining the role of the martial spirit and its enduring relevance. James claims that pacifists have to directly address the psychological and moral relevance of the war spirit. Simply calling for the abolition will not do. The first three quarters of »The Moral Equivalent of War« is devoted to analyzing a variety of pro-war argument, or more precisely, philosophies that celebrate and foreground the importance of war in the education of humanity and the exaltation of nations. James is adamant, even as an avowed pacifist, he will not speak of the »bestial« side of war. Rather, he wants us to understand why war enthalls and inflames our imaginations with its pomp, romance, and heroes. As James overviews different arguments that capitalize on this aspects of war, he discusses Steinmetz's *Philosophie des Kriegeres*. James writes that Steinmetz's work is a good example of the kind of work that celebrates the moral and spiritual side of war, thus articulating a far more complex and sophisticated view. James offers a very good summary of Steinmetz's arguments:

War, according to this author [Steinmetz], is an order instituted by God, who weighs the nations in its balance. It is the essential form of the State, and the only function in which peoples can employ all their powers at once and convergently. No victory is possible save as the resultant of a totality of virtues, no defeat for which some vice or weakness is not responsible. Fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy, wealth, physical health and vigor – there isn't a moral or intellectual point of

⁴⁰ See the editorial note on »The Moral Equivalent of War« in James, *Essays in Religion and Morality*, 252–253. Note especially the transcription of what James is supposed to have said in a panel discussion held February 21, 1906.

⁴¹ See Joyce Carol Oates, editor, and Robert Atwan, co-editor, *The Best American Essays of the Century* (New York: Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000).