

# Pragmatism and the Prospect of Rapprochement Within Eurocentric Philosophy

## *Pragmatismo e a Perspectiva de Reaproximação no Contexto da Filosofia Eurocêntrica*

**Joseph Margolis**

Temple University - USA  
josephmargolis455@hotmail.com

**Abstract:** The main currents of Eurocentric philosophy, broadly conceived: pragmatism, analytic philosophy, and continental philosophy, though each of these “movements” ranges over extremely diverse undertakings, now appear to be converging on the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of some form of naturalism. Analytic philosophy has tended to favor reductive forms of naturalism (“naturalizing,” in Quine’s and Davidson’s sense); continental philosophy tends to favor, in what I call extranaturalism, the inadequacy of any usual form of naturalism (notably, along the lines explored by Husserl and Heidegger); and pragmatism tends to favor moderate but generous forms of naturalism that admit the uniqueness of the human person. The question that concerns me here is the prospect of a rapprochement among these currents, which I take to depend on a reconsideration of the paired innovations of Kant and Hegel. In these terms, pragmatism appears to have a distinct advantage, though its own fortunes depend on its ability to coopt the distinctive work of the continentals and replacing the extreme reductive options favored by the analysts.

**Key-words:** Pragmatism. Contemporary philosophy. Eurocentrism. Naturalism.

**Resumo:** *As principais correntes da filosofia eurocêntrica, amplamente concebida: pragmatismo, filosofia analítica e filosofia continental, embora cada um destes “movimentos” se estenda sobre realizações extremamente diversas, agora parecem estar convergindo sobre a questão da adequação ou não a alguma forma de naturalismo. A filosofia analítica tem tendido a favorecer formas redutivas de naturalismo (“naturalizantes,” no sentido de Quine e Davidson); a filosofia continental tende a favorecer, no que denomino extranaturalismo, a inadequação de qualquer forma comum de naturalismo (notavelmente, nas linhas exploradas por Husserl e Heidegger); e o pragmatismo tende a favorecer formas moderadas, mas generosas de naturalismo que admitem a singularidade da pessoa humana. A questão que me concerne aqui é a perspectiva de uma reaproximação entre estas correntes, que eu acho que dependem da reconsideração das inovações paralelas de Kant e Hegel. Nestes termos, o pragmatismo parece ter uma vantagem distinta, embora sua sorte dependa de sua habilidade em cooptar a obra distinta dos continentais e de substituir as opções extremamente redutoras favorecidas pelos analistas.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Pragmatismo. Filosofia contemporânea. Eurocentrismo. Naturalismo.*

It has taken nearly the full span of the Western philosophical tradition to challenge effectively its most ancient assumptions: viz., that what is real is, or includes, the changeless and that what is real in the changing world depends, unconditionally, on what is changeless in the real. These are hardly completely defeated doctrines even now, but their authority has been profoundly shaken. They fit, almost without exception, the more than two thousand years that link Parmenides and Kant. After Kant, with the rapid rise to prominence of the concept of historicity and its remarkable penetration of all the seeming invariances of the accepted canon, what may fairly be termed the doctrine of the flux has gained a measure of parity so compelling that the ancient canon has had to look to its own defenses in an entirely new way. Philosophy has been bifurcated ever since in a way that was never possible before. Furthermore, if we divide the post-Kantian tradition along “pragmatist,” “analytic,” and “continental” lines – perhaps oversimplistically, though not for that reason inaccurately – then pragmatism, nearly alone among the principal movements of our time, has embraced the flux four square, without clinging to subversive loyalties of any kind harking back to would-be older invariances.

The old longings continue to plague us, however – even to instruct us in a useful way. You find them in Peirce, in Horkheimer, in Habermas, in Cassirer, in Merleau-Ponty, in Gadamer, in Kuhn, in Popper, in Reichenbach, in Putnam, in McDowell, every bit as much as in Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger. Occasionally, they cross the divide too late in philosophy’s career and too zealously to gain back the innocent standing of the pre-Kantian world that beckons Kant, for instance in figures like Husserl and Apel and, more quarrelsomely, in the others just mentioned. The most forthright recent reckoning of the general issue appears in a late comment by Thomas Kuhn, who became reconciled, at the end of his own career, to the troublingly discontinuous contingencies that define the grand success of his *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* – which he himself found difficult to accept. Regarding what he now calls the “standard locution developed within the tradition” of the philosophy of science – namely, that “successive scientific law and theories grow closer and closer to the truth” – about which Kuhn unhesitatingly concedes that “at present it’s not even clear what is being claimed” – he now “reasserts” the following “tripartite conviction,” which brings him into accord with what had originally worried him in his early work:

First, [he says] the Archimedean platform outside of history, outside of time and space, is gone beyond recall. Second, in its absence, comparative evaluation is all there is. Scientific development is like Darwinian evolution, a process driven from behind rather than pulled toward some fixed goal to which it grows ever closer. And third, if the notion of truth has a role to play in scientific development, which I shall elsewhere argue that it does, then truth cannot be anything quite like correspondence to reality. I am not suggesting, let me emphasize, that there is a reality which science fails to get at. My point is rather that no sense can be made of the notion of reality as it has ordinarily functioned in philosophy of science.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> KUHN, T. S. (2000, p. 115).

I doubt we can do better than this. Kuhn is summarizing a fundamental conceptual change in philosophy's orientation, a version of the largest, most important directive of the last two hundred and fifty years. His remarks capture in the leanest possible way the essential critique Hegel levels against Kant, without any of the baggage of Hegel's own fandango. Kuhn's charge *is* Hegelian all right, and, also pragmatist – *and* it is more than either, since it spells out in the idiom of our own day the implicit nerve of a potential rapprochement capable of collecting all the principal movements of our age congenially. But it yields up without a murmur any and every version of the idea that the intelligibility of the world implicates harboring some stratum of real invariance. Kuhn's straightforward pronouncement signifies that we have, finally, been able to conceive, without recoil, the negation of the principal would-be Parmenidean and Eleatic "conceptual truths" that remain in play:<sup>2</sup> that is, we can actually now formulate, without palpable absurdity or meaninglessness, a picture of the real world that no longer requires admitting any indissolubly necessary linkage between the changing and the changeless! Our conceptual possibilities have evolved. That fact alone is infinitely more important than any continuing dispute as to whether the posit of an invariant order is more fruitful than its denial in this context of debate or that. *Dispute* already concedes the point, since it's already on *this* side of the new divide; Kuhn is speaking out of his new conviction, out of *his* sense of eclipsing and fulfilling the pragmatist half-measures of Carnap and Popper and even Quine. Our age has enlarged our options in an extraordinary way and, in doing that, has propelled philosophy to a new level of invention the Eurocentric tradition has somehow failed to recognize for what it is. We've actually changed the relative weightings among the seemingly best and most salient "conceptual truths" that confront us collectively in our evolving experience: we have the evidence of the historicized transformation of our thinking!

That, I daresay, is the principal source of pragmatism's otherwise puzzling importance – a certain discipline and promise – through its classic phase and its unforeseen revival through its second life: it has indeed found rigor and resource enough in the changing regularities of a changing world for all its conceptual needs.

Nothing that was ever feared regarding the ineluctable consequences of abandoning the supposed invariant structures of the real world has come to pass. Pragmatism's unmarked adherence to the flux confirms in a natural, remarkably modest way the sheer viability of conceptual economies larger than its own, prepared to dismantle what had always been thought to belong to "perennial" philosophy: that is, the necessarily changeless nature of what is most fundamentally real and the assuredly foundational standing of the facultative competence by which we discern the fact. That *is* the conceptual confidence that has dominated Western philosophy for nearly the whole of its history; viewed thus, pragmatism remains the single most convincing experiment and demonstration that no part of the Eleatic Truth was ever truly indefeasible. Its immutable assurances were never more than the false buttresses of philosophical dogma. Our conceptual stones have remained in place for as long as they have, but none has remained

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<sup>2</sup> For the sense of "conceptual truth" invoked here, see PUTNAM, H. (2004, p. 60-65).

forever – none has remained unchanged within the drift of human understanding. The ideal of the modally changeless is utterly beyond the pale of passing evidence: a piece of superstition as far as anyone can now tell. No one has ever shown that to admit no more than the stabilities of actual change is nonsense or self-contradiction. But it's taken more than two thousand years to make the required leap. The result is that much of the history of philosophy is now debris – not to be merely discarded in Rorty's postmodernist sense, but genuinely and painstakingly superseded nonetheless.

My own conviction is that the lesson was already embedded in the radical possibilities of Hegel's critique of Kant,<sup>3</sup> regardless of what, disputatiously, we now care to make of Hegel's famously opaque doctrines. In any case, the pragmatists have drawn the radical lesson from Hegel, and Kuhn has focused its power in a particularly memorable and daring way by uniting a version of the continuum of inquiry that joins Kant and Hegel and Peirce and Carnap and Popper and himself and Feyerabend with an acknowledgment of the historical appearance of discontinuous "paradigm shifts" and their concession of intelligible incommensurabilities. You cannot fail to see in this a budding energy of an entirely new philosophical age that probably cannot be strengthened if it cannot engage all the stalemated movements of the present Eurocentric world.

Analytic and continental philosophies, which draw their continuing strength from the same post-Kantian and post-Hegelian sources, have always divided their energies unequally between invariance and flux. Analytic philosophy oscillates between pragmatist impulses and the extremes of scientism (as among Russell, Carnap, Wittgenstein, Quine, and Sellars);<sup>4</sup> and continental philosophy (if you include the Fregeans, the Marburg Kantians, the Husserlian phenomenologists, the Heideggereans, the Frankfurt-Critical School)<sup>5</sup> has always been similarly divided, reluctant to abandon the saving stabilities of presumed invariance.

Apart from having evolved from these same (proximate) sources, all the principal movements of Western philosophy have, as it happens, been uniformly damaged by the immense traumas of World War II, the Cold War, and an unending series of barbarous wars down to the second Iraqi war. I think *that* actually accounts in good measure for the distinct isolationism and fatigue of the whole of Eurocentric philosophy and its penchant for endlessly recycling, largely without convictions of conceptual adequacy, the once distinctly compelling visions of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pragmatism was itself palpably exhausted by the 40s and 50s, had all but expired as the result of its growing lack of comprehension of the original lesson of the great transformation effected in the interval spanning the work of Kant and Hegel – which is to say, the lesson of its own beginnings. It lost the edge of its upstart purpose, which, it must understand, it still can, and must, recover.

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<sup>3</sup> See HEGEL, G. W. F. (1977); and HEGEL, G. W. F. (1995) Section on Kant in the context of Section Three.

<sup>4</sup> See MARGOLIS, J. (2003).

<sup>5</sup> See FRIEDMAN, J. (2000).

Put in the simplest way, the lesson comes to this: Kant successfully demonstrated that the problematic nature of knowledge invites and requires a transcendental discipline, an *a priori* construction of its posited sources of assurance; Hegel demonstrated, in turn, that the Kantian presumption that the transcendental itself required privileged sources was patently arbitrary, inaccessible, unconvincing, ultimately self-deluding and that, accordingly, Kant's invention of his *a priori* method was never more than an *a posteriori* posit – though not for that reason unsuited or inadequate for the questions of a suitably diminished task. Pragmatism, then, is that strand of the Hegelian critique that remains transparently committed to a thoroughly naturalistic reading of the *a posteriori* standing of a derivative of Kant's original apriorist strategy, which now adheres to the doctrine of the flux.

I take this to be the single most important lesson of the entire interval of modern “modern philosophy,” which spans the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the present time and finds its most immediate objective in the rapprochement of Eurocentric philosophy, that is, the reconciliation of pragmatist, analytic, and continental currents: *aufgehoben*, let us say, in Hegel's manner. Both analytic and continental philosophy are obviously tempted by one or another form of Eleatic invariance: the analytic, by the excessive economies of scientism and reductionism; the continental, by the extravagances of extranaturalism. Pragmatism's advantage lies with its advocacy of a moderate naturalism in tandem with its commitment to the flux and its own reading of the Hegelian critique. I see no prospect of a more compendious or promising summary of the last two hundred and fifty years of modern philosophy.

All of this is barely more than obliquely discerned. Kant rejects the cognitive privilege of the rationalist tradition he himself transforms along transcendental lines. But he somehow persuades himself that the would-be universality and certitude of transcendental reflection need not be refused so long as it is not directly applied in validating cognitive claims about the real world. To the modern mind, such presumptions would have to be won afresh if they were ever to be taken as decisive, once we admitted the arbitrariness of construing reason as a cognitive faculty of any kind that might bear in a substantive way on deciding the validity of the truth-claims of one or another science or cognate inquiry. Once we agree that there is no assured prior “science of science,” Kant's actual system (the system of the first *Critique*) fails utterly, without yet discounting Kant's brilliant intuition that we cannot legitimate science's labor except by constructing what, given what we suppose our sciences accomplish, amounts to a reasoned guess at the *a priori* conditions for such an *a posteriori* success: effectively, human knowledge. So the exercise is insuperably contingent, even though it seeks to approximate to a would-be “conceptual truth” about what is reliable in the sciences and cognate forms of understanding.

Hegel saw this at once, in the analysis of historicity: that is, in the analysis of the idea that thinking is itself historied, the idea that reason changes over time in its determinable *a priori* intuitions about how, effectively, to extend its continuing grasp of the full truth about the world – beyond any provisionally closed body of science. Perhaps it must proceed discontinuously (as Kuhn believes and as Peirce never quite refutes), but in accord (always) with its own evolving lights – with the dawning sense that the *a posteriori* forms of the *a priori* will never (and never did) capture Kantian necessities or

universalities.<sup>6</sup> In this precise sense, we begin to grasp – without ever needing to subscribe to Hegel’s extravagances regarding the objectification, or the necessities, or the would-be *telos* of *Geist* itself (though each of these ideas remains perfectly capable of being interpreted in the same carefully circumscribed way Hegel applies to Kant)<sup>7</sup> – the sense in which all the currents of modern Western philosophy are the beneficiaries of Hegel’s radicalized continuation of the Kantian revolution. It’s in this spirit that I claim that pragmatism is, still incipiently, the leanest variant of Hegelian philosophy formed within the bounds of the Eurocentric tradition of the last two centuries.

I do indeed believe this cartoon summary of the present state of philosophy is more or less correct. Pragmatism *is* the leanest form of naturalism committed (often too vaguely) to the post-Hegelian analysis of historicity and encultured life. Yet it never pursued these themes forcefully or adequately enough during or even since its classic days. Were we to search Peirce and Dewey thoroughly, and even if we added James and Mead and Schiller and Lewis to our sources, we would still find that pragmatism’s classic phase hardly touched the fresh possibilities focused by Kuhn’s late daring, and certainly never equaled the robust inquiries of its own most congenial near-contemporaries, that is, Marx and Nietzsche, fired by the same Hegelian impetus that best defines its own inspiration. Pragmatism *has* indeed been given a second life through the well-known minor scuffle between Rorty and Putnam,<sup>8</sup> but it has still to justify that gift.

To be perfectly candid, pragmatism’s recent labors have favored a rather doubtful sort of nostalgia for certain dogmas that never actually congealed or were ever rightly “corrected” (during its classic phase) in the manner now so weakly approved. It has converted the rebel courage of its first champions into the formulaic fixities of Peirce’s “realism,” Dewey’s “anti-dualism,” James’s “existential pathos” – and remarkably little else. It has no cutting edge, no frontier undertaking, no challenge to lay before the profession at large. The standard themes are certainly “there,” of course, buried in plain view. But they block the continuation of pragmatism’s unfinished encounter with the rest of the Eurocentric tradition, which has (in its various careers) surely eclipsed pragmatism’s development after the 50s, a pragmatism that cannot (yet) be rightly said to have rekindled (or extended) its own energies. It is still comparatively inert, uncertain, unsure of its original mission, relatively arrested among the disconnected pieces of an unfocused and poorly remembered vision. It will surely dwindle once again – perhaps mortally – if it cannot demonstrate the recovery of its historical role in the first or second decade of the new century.

All of philosophy’s major movements are similarly at risk, however. Analytic philosophy has spent its best energies among reductionisms and extensionalisms that have proved entirely delusive (as in early Carnap, the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, Russell’s logicism, Quine’s behaviorism, Sellars’s eliminativism, Chomsky’s innatism): it’s

<sup>6</sup> I take this to be the right way to read Thomas Kuhn, Ernst Cassirer, and Charles Peirce. See CASSIRER, E. (1957, Pt. III; and Ch. 5, above).

<sup>7</sup> See HEGEL, G. W. F. (1991).

<sup>8</sup> See MARGOLIS, J. (2002).

now scrambling to recover its relevance by way of whatever it finds to be the saving themes of Kant, the post-Kantian Idealists, Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and the post-structuralists, whom it had earlier so unceremoniously dismissed. The recuperative impulse in American analytic philosophy (in Brandom, McDowell, Rorty, Putnam) is undoubtedly honest and well-intentioned; but it is also noticeably awkward, improbable, disoriented, not a little desperate.

In a somewhat parallel way, the continentals have been too often attracted to extreme (or bizarre) forms of the “extranatural” interpretation of the human (certainly, at the highest level of authority, in Husserl and Heidegger and, less commandingly though fashionably enough, in figures like Levinas, Apel, Lacan, the French feminists, the structuralists and post-structuralists). The continentals have overreached themselves and have had to retreat to more modest options – notably, by way of naturalistic revisions and compromises (for instance, in the later work of Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Gadamer, Derrida) and, among American continentals and their allies, Hubert Dreyfus, John Hoagland, Mark Okrent, Joseph Rouse, Frederick Olafson, William Blattner, David Woodruff Smith, Alva Noë, Dan Zahavi, Jean Petitot, and even Richard Rorty.<sup>9</sup>

None of the grand movements of the Eurocentric world is now in a position of notable strength: each has become inflexibly wedded to doctrines that were once justifiably admired but are now more or less vestigial, outmoded, inadequate, arbitrary, unfinished, repetitive, as among late Husserlians, for instance, gambling on the assumed apodicticity of transcendental phenomenology; or the Heideggerians, gambling on the inexplicit relationship between *Dasein* and natural persons or between the ontic and the ontological; or reductive materialists, risking all on the irrelevance of history and the denial of the different metaphysics of the cultural world; or the Kantians and post-Kantians, committed to the belief that universalism can always be empirically approximated by rational consensus; or the naturalists, relying on the assumption that normative distinctions can always be replaced, without loss or disadvantage, by causal distinctions. These are all dead issues: the graveyard of philosophy’s elephants.

We must turn back to Kant and Hegel to find the unfinished future, and we must overcome the inertia of World War II and its long aftermath to match the courage of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We are indeed committed to the evolving forms of *a priori* questioning but not to apriorisms that claim to deliver substantive necessity and apodicticity. We are led by the unforced convergence of the principal movements of Western philosophy that now feature the question of naturalism’s adequacy or inadequacy; as a result, we cannot fail to explore the possibility of a more focused rapprochement between pragmatism and analytic and continental philosophy. There are hardly any options there that are not dialectically obligatory. More than that, pragmatism is itself distinctly unfinished (in a way analytic and continental philosophy are not) – as a result of its own scattered history. Peirce, James, and Dewey had remarkably little in common: they largely avoided one another, apart from the need to resolve the scandal regarding the analysis of truth. Yet they come together now, quite easily, from their diverse

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<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, PETITOT, J. et al. (Eds.) (1999).

beginnings, on the analysis of the flux, evolution, history, societal process, naturalism, and even a minimal form of fallibilism. The whole of Anglo-American philosophy, however, remains remarkably slack on the nature of history, intentionality, phenomenology, and enculturation.<sup>10</sup> These are, of course, absolutely central to the inquiries of continental philosophy. Furthermore, pragmatism and analytic and continental philosophy have favored very different views of the adequacy of naturalism. In this regard, the whole of Eurocentric philosophy has resources noticeably richer than those of any one of the principal movements within the tradition; its parts tend, therefore, to favor a certain natural division of labor, which might now contribute profitably to a genuine rapprochement.

When you see all of this, you see the plausibility of Hegel's dialectical reasoning: characteristically, the oppositions that arise in the historical process arise out of the material interests of the functioning moieties of some inclusive society; their "contradictions" are normally "sublated" by an evolving resolution within that evolving society, which, accordingly, will generate cognate oppositions of their own that must again be *aufgehoben*. If you see this entire process as a form of rational choice and freedom, then you understand at once why whatever solutions the encompassing society is prepared to adopt can hardly fail to be dialectically "necessary"; so that the *telos* of the process is itself trivially imminent (and "necessary"). In this entirely unproblematic sense (hospitable to plural, even competing commitments), whatever "is," "ought" ("dialectically") to be as it "is": which is to say, we view our choices in a normatively reasonable light. Where we still see an unacceptable limitation or defect, we admit a substantive tension that may yet have to be overcome.

So the "logic" of the rapprochement I've sketched is no more than one possible thread of philosophy's "progress." It cannot be entirely contrived: it evolves from the actual, effective engagements of the functioning cohorts of a committed society. The "logic" identifies no formal necessities therefore: the necessities are, rather, "material" or "concrete" commitments already embedded in the possibilities of future resolution dawningly perceived in the contradictions we actually encounter.

Here, I trace the deep informality of Hegel's conception of the logic of dialectical reasoning, in order to confirm that there is no secret *telos* or necessity in Hegel's own vision – no matter how literal-minded his arguments may seem at times.<sup>11</sup> The pragmatists are hardly bound to any formal strictures regarding their own "Hegelian" bent as a consequence of any closer reading of Hegel himself. I've fitted a loose version of the dialectic to the plausibility of the rapprochement I advocate – rather than pretend that we know how to proceed rigorously the other way around. The marvel is that the philosophical project suited to our time seems transparently obvious – in the sense of outflanking the conceptual doldrums of the age. If we adhered, rather, to Kant's transcendental original, our reasoning could never be dialectical in Hegel's sense – and would never need to be. It would also never suit the primacy of the historical flux. But

<sup>10</sup> For a promising counterexample, see ROSENTHAL, S. B.; BORGEOIS, P., (1992). See, also, JOAS, H. (1997).

<sup>11</sup> See BURGIDGE, J. W. (1981); and FORSTER, M. (1993).



if Hegel's critique of Kant is at all compelling (as I believe it is), then the *a priori* conditions of "possibility" (of knowledge) must themselves be *a posteriori* proposals in accord with "dialectical necessity" – and then the Kantian undertaking will be literally impossible. Hence, to admit historicity is to undermine the essential (the would-be) "conceptual truth" of the entire Kantian system: furthermore, if we admit that Kant correctly grasped the need for a transcendental turn in our second-order inquiries, then, on the argument before us, there can be no escape from the Hegelian dialectic or something very much like it. But to admit that much is also, effectively, to admit the necessity of the rapprochement I've been endorsing.

The argument, then, comes to this: (i) Western philosophy has been stalemated at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; (ii) nevertheless, the principal movements of the Eurocentric tradition have now converged on the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of a naturalistic account of the central problems of philosophy; (iii) modern "modern philosophy" is itself cast in terms of Kant's transformative analysis of the transcendental nature of the question of the "possibility" of knowledge; (iv) but Hegel's critique of Kant's account of transcendental inquiry exposes Kant's arbitrary and indemonstrable use of certain would-be privileged powers of reason; so that (v) the only possible correction of Kant's innovation, consistent with (iii), requires historicizing transcendental reasoning itself, or construing Kant's transcendental necessities as "dialectical necessities," which is to say, we must concede that the *a priori* is never more than an *a posteriori* posit; furthermore, (vi) as it happens, pragmatism is the leanest variant of the Hegelian intuition, wedded to naturalism and the doctrine of the flux; also, (vii) all the principal movements of current Eurocentric philosophy – pragmatism, analytic philosophy, and continental philosophy – draw their resources from, or are affected by their conformity with, the philosophical innovations produced by the work of Kant and Hegel, consistent with (iii)-(v); (viii) pragmatism also champions a moderate version of naturalism, whereas analytic philosophy has favored in its most influential efforts indemonstrable, extreme reductive and/or scientific versions of naturalism; and continental philosophy, extreme forms of extranaturalism; in addition, (ix) pragmatism adheres, at least implicitly, to some extent even explicitly, to Hegel's master themes of historicity and enculturation, whereas analytic philosophy characteristically avoids both or treats both reductively; hence, (x) in its attempt to reconsider – and resolve – philosophy's present stalemate (i), pragmatism rightly claims a productive advantage in pursuing the prospect of a rapprochement among the main movements of the Eurocentric world, but it is an advantage that supersedes its own hegemony.

What I am proposing here, might, not unfairly, be termed a dialectical prophecy. It's a prophecy because it sketches a genuinely inventive, but also a possible, future that the present currents of philosophy could actually support. It is not a merely autobiographical confession, though I am, indeed, personally committed to it and find it viable and convincing. It's a dialectical prophecy because it's a fair candidate for persuading currently active philosophers of every stripe that it genuinely harbors the best philosophical policy we are likely to advance, among all the competing currents that can now claim an active following, and because, in being that, it captures what Hegel means by "dialectical" necessity. It's not literally necessary – certainly not fated – in the plain sense that history may still discount it or pass it by. In that sense, dialectical necessity is always retrospective: what was rightly necessary *ante*, in the dialectical way, is always

identified, *post*, among the actual turns of history; wherever our commitment proves inadequate to our evolving vision, we simply offer an extended dialectical correction and move on.

This helps to define the sense in which the normative in philosophy, science, and morality is always practical or praxical, the sense in which the practical is always concretely grounded in the actual flux of life and thought, the sense in which what is normative in practice is not quite the same as what is normative (and still “practical”) in a utopian spirit a little distance beyond the primacy of the practical. In short, I see no way of explicating the sense in which pragmatism is genuinely and promisingly “Hegelian” without explaining the sense in which to understand that is to understand the rationale of that rapprochement that a review of the whole of Eurocentric philosophy now recommends, dialectically, wherever it may be viewed from the competing vantages of pragmatist, analytic, and continental philosophy. In that sense, the philosophical future, as much as any moral/political future, constructs its own appropriate dialectical past!

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### **Address/Endereço**

Joseph Margolis  
727 Anderson Hall, Broad and Montgomery St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19122

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