

Responses to *Limits of Pragmatism and Challenges of Theodicy*

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Introduction

My main purpose in this sketchy essay is to express my profound gratitude to and appreciation of the nineteen friends and colleagues who contributed to the Festschrift I was surprised and delighted to receive in December 2019.¹ The book contains eighteen chapters, one of them co-authored, plus the editors' introduction. It goes without saying that a Festschrift dedicated to one's philosophical work is the best possible birthday present a person committed to an academic form of life can get from their colleagues. The book addresses a number of philosophical issues ranging over almost all sub-disciplines of philosophy (except perhaps logic) and thus clearly reflects the various scholarly interests I have had over the years.

I also very much like the diversity not just of the topics of the papers but of the ways in which the authors approach their themes: some deal directly with my work, while others address issues I am certainly deeply interested in but have never been able to adequately pursue in my own publications. The volume nicely brings together my old themes, especially pragmatism and realism, and my more recent preoccupations, particularly the criticism of theodicies and other topics in ethics and the philosophy

¹ Henrik Rydenfelt, Heikki J. Koskinen, and Mats Bergman (eds.), *Limits of Pragmatism and Challenges of Theodicy: Essays in Honour of Sami Pihlström*, Acta Philosophica Fennica 95, Helsinki: The Philosophical Society of Finland, 2019. Special thanks, of course, are due to the three editors as well as the series editor of *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, Ilkka Niiniluoto, and the publisher of the book, the Philosophical Society of Finland. I will cite this volume by providing the page numbers in the text.

of religion. In fact I am trying to do the same in a recently completed forthcoming book of mine.²

I enjoyed reading all the chapters tremendously, and the only reason why my responses to some of the contributors are relatively short while those to some others are slightly more detailed is that it was obviously easier for me to connect some of the papers to my own current research than some others. In some cases I also find myself in basic agreement with the essay. None of my responses is even nearly adequate; they should be read as tentative attempts to acknowledge the contributors' invariably highly relevant points in the hope of continuing the conversations whenever possible. I have also included some brief personal comments on all the contributors and on my relationship to them in the footnotes, in some cases also adding a few words on some related people who are not involved in this book but who have been very important for my philosophical work.

1 Torjus Midtgarden

Torjus Midtgarden, a well-known expert on Charles S. Peirce's pragmatism (and pragmatism more widely),³ opens the book (and its first part, *Limits of Pragmatism*) by discussing in his chapter, "Peirce's Concept of Scientific Intelligence", the Kantian background of pragmatism generally and Peirce's views on scientific inquiry more specifically. In his careful scholarly manner, he shows how Peirce's notion of "scientific intelligence" is both indebted to Kant and can be fruitfully employed in critical engagements with, e. g., Jürgen Habermas's universal pragmatics and John Searle's speech act theory. He also suggests that Sandra Harding's feminist standpoint epistemology is relevant to the (late) Peircean emphasis on the variability and heterogeneity of the "unlimited community of inquirers" (25). This is a creative way of expanding the horizons of the Peircean notions of inquiry and the scientific method toward appreciating the insights of contemporary epistemology.

² Sami Pihlström, *Pragmatic Realism, Religious Truth, and Antitheodicy: On Viewing the World by Acknowledging the Other*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, forthcoming as an open access monograph in 2020. (Otherwise, I will mostly skip scholarly referencing in this essay.)

³ I got to know Torjus in the context of Leila Haaparanta's Nordic project on rationality in the early 2000s; since then he has been one of the key pragmatism scholars in Northern Europe, regularly contributing to relevant conferences and publications. His readings of the classical pragmatists are without exception both scholarly detailed and original, demonstrating historical accuracy entangled with philosophical insight.

I see no reason to disagree with Midtgarden's analysis; he focuses on the semiotic aspects of Peirce's thought much more strongly than I have ever done, and he wisely also maintains a critical distance to interpretations of Peirce that too directly view his pragmatism as a transformation of Kant's transcendental philosophy, while duly acknowledging Peirce's debt to Kant. His paper shows that Peirce's ideas continue to be relevant in critical reassessments of various twentieth-century and contemporary philosophical approaches that apparently might seem to have little to do with Peirce. In particular, the "unlimited" nature of the Peircean idealized scientific community—especially as applied to contemporary standpoint epistemology, and perhaps to contemporary epistemology as well as science and technology studies more widely—is a crucial element of the explorations of the "limits" of pragmatism pursued in many of the essays.

2 Ilkka Niiniluoto

Ilkka Niiniluoto's "Queries about Pragmatic Realism" also explores Kantian issues in pragmatism, starting from the pragmatic realism I first tried to formulate in my 1996 doctoral dissertation (supervised by Niiniluoto himself).⁴ He maintains that there is a tension between my views that metaphysical theses about the "world in itself" are "fruitless", as we do not possess a "God's-Eye View", on the one hand, and that the noumenal and the phenomenal world are "identical", on the other hand. This is because our knowledge of the phenomenal world would also yield knowledge of the noumenal world if the two "worlds" are basically the same (32–33).

⁴ I had met Ilkka already years before he became my supervisor, first in the context of his lectures on ontology at the University of Helsinki in spring 1990. As noted in my contribution to *his Festschrift, Approaching Truth* (eds. Sami Pihlström, Panu Raatikainen, and Matti Sintonen, London: College Publications, 2007), I remember "officially" shaking hands with him at Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki in August 1990 when I had a summer job at the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* and reported on the visit to Eino Kaila's grave organized by the Philosophical Society of Finland on the occasion of Kaila's centenary. I think of Ilkka as a permanent conversation partner in philosophy: almost everything I write needs to be considered in terms of the question, "What would Ilkka say about this?". Knowing Ilkka's work relatively well, I sense an (intentional or unintentional) allusion to one of his own earlier papers, "Queries about Internal Realism" (around 1996, if I recall correctly), critically investigating Hilary Putnam's views.

While reading Kant as a “two worlds” thinker, Niiniluoto is sensitive to the possibility of a “one world” reading, too. I am not sure, however, that the basic identity of the “two worlds” (from the perspective of the “one world” interpretation) causes the kinds of difficulties he suggests, because the identity claim should not (I would prefer to say) be understood as an ontological statement from a standpoint that would be prior to the transcendental analysis of the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognizing an objective reality in the first place. The “identity” here is something that transcendental inquiry (rather than any ontological inquiry that would be methodologically or metaphysically prior to it) yields, instead of being available to us independently of the transcendental standpoint. It is *not* an identity claim that we can make from a “God’s-Eye View” that we might imagine to be somehow external to both of those “worlds”.

Moreover, *pace* Niiniluoto, I don’t think I ever deliberately dropped the minimally realistic assumption of pragmatic realism from my later accounts of pragmatism and realism (cf. 36), though undoubtedly I should be more careful to continue to emphasize it. Even so, I warmly welcome his argument that there is considerable unclarity and ambiguity in leading neopragmatists’ like Hilary Putnam’s, Nicholas Rescher’s, and Richard Rorty’s views (as well as, presumably, my own) regarding the status of the existence of the mind-independent world. I am tempted to view this pragmatic commitment to realism as a kind of necessary commitment to a *Grenzbegriff* we cannot avoid postulating as soon as we start inquiring (pragmatically and/or transcendentially) into what the objectively existing reality is “for us”.

In the later sections of his essay, Niiniluoto analyzes too other recent attempts to combine realism with pragmatism, *viz.*, Rein Vihalemm’s *practical realism* and Hasok Chang’s *pluralist pragmatic realism*,⁵ defending his own critical scientific realism but appreciating the somewhat weaker (and, as we might say, epistemologized) realisms in their own terms. In sum, pragmatic realism in the sense in which I am (still) prepared to be committed to it would have to be formulated in an unashamed Kantian way, as a kind of transcendental thesis, or combining transcendental pragmatism with empirical realism. The active interplay of pragmatism and transcen-

⁵ I should like to note that the late Rein Vihalemm was also a great friend whom I learned to know well thanks to his many visits to Helsinki and my own visits to Tartu. I attended his funeral in 2015 and a conference in his memory in 2019—where Hasok Chang was also among the keynote speakers.

dental philosophy will come up in my responses to several other contributors below. One problem in Putnam's and many other neopragmatists' views is precisely their unwillingness to understand their own positions in transcendental terms.

3 Henrik Rydenfelt

Henrik Rydenfelt's "Pragmatist Antinomy" is a powerful argument pointing out an alleged inconsistency, or at least a tension, right at the heart of pragmatism.⁶ The basic claim is that the pragmatist cannot have it both ways: a pragmatic account of meaning (derived from Peirce's original ideas) and the (quasi-Kantian) "pragmatic humanism" claiming that we in some sense pragmatically construct reality are hard to reconcile with each other. The reason for this is that the kind of pragmatic humanism Rydenfelt criticizes is indebted to Kantian transcendental idealism to the extent that it needs (its own version of) the notion of the *Ding an sich*. Even the "one-world" interpretation of transcendental idealism is, according to Rydenfelt, vulnerable to the Peircean criticism according to which we cannot form any meaningful conception of anything that is absolutely incognizable to us (but could be cognizable to a different kind of intelligence).

Rydenfelt summarizes his criticism as a dilemma: "On the one hand, if we can conceive of cognition that (supposedly) transcends the limits of our human capacities, that cognition is at once turned into a possible human cognition. On the other hand, if something really were beyond all possible human cognition, we could not even have a conception of it." (50) This could be compared to earlier criticisms of transcendental idealism, including P.F. Strawson's account of the "bounds of sense" in the 1960s and Jaakko Hintikka's discussion of the "paradox of transcendental knowledge" in the 1980s. What is distinctive in Rydenfelt's elegant argument is

⁶ Henrik was one of my best students when I taught philosophy as a young university lecturer at the University of Helsinki in the early 2000s. I first met him in 2002, and I then supervised both his master's thesis (2004) and doctoral thesis (2013). Throughout the years, he has coordinated both the Nordic Pragmatism Network (since 2008) and the European Pragmatism Association (since 2012), playing a key role in developing international collaboration in pragmatism. We have co-organized a large number of bigger and smaller events under the auspices of these informal institutions, most recently the 3rd European Pragmatism Conference in Helsinki in 2018, and we have traveled together to several pragmatism-related conferences in various countries over the years.

the way he uses Peirce to locate a problem within the pragmatist tradition itself, insofar as that tradition is given a Kantian twist.

One way out of this antinomy might be to take seriously the idea of the Kantian thing in itself as a *Grenzbegriff*, a mere limit to our cognition (see my response to Niiniluoto above). It would then still be from within our cognitive capacities—without strictly speaking postulating anything (any “thing” that would be incognizable, or cognizable only to a different kind of intelligence—that any limits to our cognition would, or could, be posited. I tried to briefly and inconclusively explore such an option in my 1996 dissertation, suggesting that the postulation of things in themselves in this *Grenzbegriff* sense might play a role in our account of pragmatic realism, but I must admit that in my attempts to develop a Kantian transcendental pragmatism (or what Rydenfelt calls “pragmatic humanism”) I have failed to pay sufficient attention to the status of the things in themselves. The problem is serious and deserves further scrutiny.

Another option, one that Rydenfelt himself seems to favor, would be a Peircean form of “anthropomorphism”, which would regard human cognition as “naturally ‘tuned’ into the way the world is” (53). However, I believe an appropriate form of pragmatic transcendental idealism accommodating empirical realism would somehow have to acknowledge, in the spirit of general fallibilism, that we might even be radically mistaken about the way the (empirical) world is. That, too, is part of our human predicament that needs to be transcendently analyzed.

4 Mats Bergman

Mats Bergman’s essay, “Pragmatic Aims and Changing Habits”, seeks to reconcile two pragmatist conceptions of inquiry, the Peircean and the Deweyan.⁷ For both classical pragmatists, inquiry amounts to a process of transforming our habits. There are certainly tensions between the two: for example, Peircean realism postulates an “external permanency” independent of our beliefs and conceptions, while John Dewey’s account is

⁷ I first met Mats already in the late 1990s when he had started to work on Peirce. As his first supervisor Ingmar Pörn retired, I became his PhD supervisor, and he was in fact the first among my PhD students to defend his thesis in May 2004. Since then, he has obviously been one of the key people of Nordic and European pragmatism collaboration, and his status as one of the leading Peirce scholars today is generally recognized. He has also successfully carried the pragmatist message over to media and communication studies both within the Finnish academia and more widely.

clearly more “constructionist”, and Dewey is generally more inclined to view science as socially applicable than Peirce (59–60). However, both share a “minimal core of meliorism”, emphasizing the “improvement of habits, including habits of thought and feeling as well as habits of action in a narrower sense”. This view of inquiry has enormous relevance to our need to critically revise our habits in the ethical and political sphere, too (cf. 66–67). In this sense, Bergman’s consideration of pragmatic meliorism provides essential background for many other papers in the book as well. A number of contributions to the second half of the book dealing with issues in ethics and the philosophy of religion also explore issues to which pragmatic meliorism is essential.

As always, I think we can learn enormously from reading Bergman’s careful interpretations of the classical pragmatists, especially Peirce, but in this essay also Dewey. His contribution resembles Midtgarden’s in its scholarly accuracy and thoroughgoing knowledge of the classics. I very much sympathize with his proposal to reconcile rather than divide—to see unities rather than disunities in the pragmatist tradition. I also agree with his way of regarding meliorism—and the (self-)critical amelioration of our habits—as highly central to the pragmatist conception of inquiry, and pragmatism generally, so there is hardly anything I would be opposed to in his paper.

5 Jonathan Knowles

Jonathan Knowles takes up the complex relations between “Pragmatism, Naturalism, and Realism” by comparing Huw Price’s global expressivism to some of my attempts to develop pragmatism as naturalized form of Kantian transcendental philosophy.⁸ He questions my “dissatisfaction” with Price’s attempt to maintain a naturalized and deflationist pragmatism without any Kantian idealism or other forms of antirealism (72). I suppose one potential disagreement between us could concern the notion of *antirealism*: Knowles even claims that Peirce’s conception of truth as what would be believed at the end of inquiry is antirealistic (70), but this

⁸ Jonathan (like Torjus) is one of those philosophers based in the Nordic countries that I learned to know in the early 2000s in the context of Leila Haaparanta’s research projects (see also note 3 above). He has kindly invited me to visit Trondheim a couple of times, and he has been a regular participant in both Nordic and European pragmatism conferences over the years. In fact, it was at a workshop he hosted in Trondheim that the Nordic Pragmatism Network was founded in 2006 (by Jon Olafsson and me).

is precisely where I think the Kantian pragmatist should carefully distinguish between transcendental idealism and antirealism, maintaining that pragmatism is committed to empirical realism instead of (any) antirealism. (This is, admittedly, partly a terminological matter, but I have always believed such matters to matter, as our terminological choices shape our philosophical discourses.)

I very much admire the complicated argumentation developed by philosophers like Price and Knowles (as well as Rydenfelt) who wish to defend pragmatism and realism without representationalism, opting for some form of (global or local) expressivism instead. I guess my basic worry is that as far as I can see, we cannot coherently—thinking from within our use of language in the context of our forms of life—just easily drop the idea of language as representing an extra-linguistic reality (insofar as that idea can be given a pragmatic, rather than metaphysically-realistic, meaning). Conceptual (or pragmatic) pluralism can perhaps be fitted into this account (80), but in my own project even this pluralism needs to be given a transcendental interpretation.

Generally, however, I am not inclined to require that all pragmatists should simply take the Kantian route I have been recommending (see also my response to Hildebrand below). I am happy with different pragmatists developing different forms of pragmatism, realism, and naturalism, and not all of those views need to be based on anything like Kantian transcendental idealism. I surely have my doubts about antirepresentationalism, but I also agree with Knowles that pragmatic antirepresentationalism (when articulated, e. g., along Price's lines) need not share all the problems that, say, Rorty's version suffers from. From the Kantian point of view, however, the very idea that human cognition represents, or at least can represent, objects that are (empirically speaking) external to it—or the pragmatist version of that idea, with cognition understood in terms of practices of inquiry—cannot be easily replaced by an antirepresentationalist account.

6 Dirk-Martin Grube

While Knowles compares my views to Price's, Dirk-Martin Grube's "Comparing Pragmatism with Neo-pragmatism on Realism and Naturalism" discusses many related issues comparing some of my ideas with Joseph Margolis's version of pragmatism, on the one hand, and Rortyan neoprag-

matism, on the other hand.⁹ I am honored and even somewhat embarrassed to be juxtaposed to a considerably more senior figure in pragmatist circles, Margolis, whose work I have always greatly admired.¹⁰ Margolis's position is complex and quite impossible to summarize in a single essay, but I agree with Grube that my own favorite form of pragmatism shares a lot of common ground with it. I would also be happy to agree that there is, indeed, the tendency to deconstruct classical dualisms to be added as a central element of that common ground (90).

If Grube is correct, the Rortyan attempt to replace the realism vs. anti-realism debate with the one between representationalism and antirepresentationalism, allegedly moving beyond the realism issue in neopragmatism, is mere rhetoric. If neopragmatism of the Rortyan stripe (also shared by Wesley Robbins, as Grube notes) actually collapses to antirealism, this may be bad news to the kind of naturalized program of expressivist, antirepresentationalist pragmatism that Price and Knowles defend, too. In this sense, Grube's and Knowles's essays are in interesting ways in an implicit critical dialogue with each other, even though Knowles (like Price) is careful to distinguish his version of antirepresentationalism from Rorty's.

I suppose my own sympathies are more on Grube's side—I also think that Rortyan neopragmatists need to choose between antirealism and naturalism (95)—but then again I am not entirely convinced that Grube's own discussion does justice to Rorty's in many ways complex overall position, either. Some of the undeniably simplistic rhetoric that Rorty uses may serve genuinely philosophical goals, after all. While I agree with Grube's dictum that “[w]e pragmatists relativize without succumbing to relativism” (96, original emphasis), I also believe that Rorty's “ironism” emphasizing the historical contingency of our “final vocabularies” is something that pragmatists (of any kind) ought to take seriously even when not following

⁹ As Dirk-Martin explains, we first met in Uppsala in 2002 when examining Ulf Zackariasson's dissertation. Since then, we have regularly kept in touch and have often met at conferences on pragmatism and/or philosophy of religion. I also once gave a guest talk at his department in Utrecht. Dirk-Martin is without doubt one of the leading representatives of pragmatist philosophy of religion in particular not only in Europe but in the world, and I am very lucky to have had the chance to actively collaborate with him over the years.

¹⁰ I might note at this point that I met Joe Margolis already in 1994 when I was still a PhD student and assisted him during one of his many visits to Helsinki. I have stayed regularly in touch with him as well during the quarter of a century I have known him, and I was truly honored to be invited to his 90th birthday conference at Temple University in 2014 (as well as to co-organize a conference in honor of him in Helsinki in 2013, as mentioned by Dirk-Martin). Margolis's most recent visit to Helsinki was as late as 2018 at the 3rd European Pragmatism Conference.

Rorty into what he calls “ethnocentrism”, or any other neopragmatists into what is more often called relativism.

7 Lyubov D. Bugaeva & John Ryder

In their joint essay, “Reflections on Limits”, Lyubov D. Bugaeva and John Ryder examine a concept figuring in the title of the book and highly central to any transcendental philosophy worth the name—the one of limit(s).¹¹ They take their departure from the idea of the (transcendental) self as a limit of the world, as spelled out in Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (something that I discuss especially in my 2016 book, *Death and Finitude*, for which Ryder kindly wrote a back cover endorsement), but they soon move on to a rich discussion of a variety of construals of limits as borders, transitions, possibilities, presences, absences, beginnings, and endings (101). They also draw attention to real-life (e. g., political and geographical) limits that can be regarded as equally constitutive of our lives in the messy world we live in today as the more philosophical limits of (say) the self.

There is one suggestion in Bugaeva’s and Ryder’s very interesting paper I slightly disagree about. They seem to suggest that my discussion of death as a limit is committed to a version of “Heideggerian authenticity”, running the risk of “intellectualizing the human condition”, while most people “lead normally meaningful & lives & without ever confronting, and certainly not in a carefully reflective way, the fact of their own deaths” (102). I think I must agree that this is what happens at an everyday level. Nevertheless, a philosophical inquiry into death and mortality cannot rest satisfied with such an ordinary conception of meaningfulness any more than, for example, an epistemological inquiry into the ways we are able to know anything about the world around us can be committed to naïve realism. (I do admit, as a Jamesian pragmatist, that over-intellectualization may be a genuine problem, too.) Far from

¹¹ The context within which I got to know Lyuba and John is the Central European Pragmatist Forum (CEPF), co-established by John and Slovakian philosopher Emil Visnovsky around 2000. (I had first met Emil in Boston in 1998, and along with many of the contributors to this book, he has also been one of my regular pragmatist collaborators over the decades.) I suppose I first met Lyuba at a CEPF conference in Potsdam in 2004, but I had briefly met John already at a conference in honor of (now the late) Peter H. Hare in Buffalo, NY, in 2000 (another pragmatism scholar crucially important to my own development). Lyuba was also a visiting fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies when I was its Director, and I remember visiting St. Petersburg a couple of times with her as a local guide.

following Heidegger, I think we should appreciate Emmanuel Levinas's criticism of Heidegger's lack of attention to *the other's* death and mortality. Contemplating my own death may not yield authentic meaningfulness, after all, but may indeed be a form of "bad faith", an illusion shielding me from the harsh reality of real deaths and sufferings around me.

In terms of my 2016 book, our death and/or mortality cannot as such make life meaningful (nor necessarily meaningless), but our realizing the limits of our human condition set by our inescapable mortality makes the issue of meaningfulness vs. meaninglessness a possible issue for us in our lives. The "meaning-making" role of the limiting concept of death thus operates at a meta-level, so to speak.

8 Leila Haaparanta

Leila Haaparanta's article, "The Pragmatic Method and the Philosopher's Practice", continues the discussion of the pragmatic method already included in some other essays (e. g., Midtgarden's, Bergman's, and Rydenfelt's), but the focus is now more *metaphilosophical*: Haaparanta investigates the kind of commitment to "practice" that the (pragmatist) philosopher needs to make.¹² As a key point of comparison to the pragmatic method, Haaparanta refers to Robert Brandom's accounts of the practice of "giving and asking for reasons" (111), observing some highly relevant similarities to the Jamesian method I have recommended.

Interestingly, Haaparanta suggests that pragmatist metaphysics may be closer to phenomenological than to analytic metaphysics, while differing from (transcendental) phenomenology in its refusal to parenthesize the natural world (115). It remains to be discussed whether, and how, such pragmatist metaphysics could still involve transcendental methodology, albeit not exactly in the phenomenologists' sense (see also my responses to some other contributors below, including Hildebrand). I am very pleased to note that Haaparanta seems to view my proposal to connect the pragmatic method strongly with the ethical evaluation of our

¹² I first met Leila already as a student in the early 1990s, though I never attended her classes. After her appointment to the University of Tampere in the late 1990s, we regularly collaborated in the context of various Academy of Finland as well as Nordic research projects. We were close colleagues in Tampere for a couple of years (2005–2007), when I was an acting professor there. I have learned enormously from Leila over the years and decades—philosophically but also more generally. She has been one of the senior colleagues who have introduced me to the academic way of life, an exemplary figure both as a serious scholar and a professor trying to cope with the increasing pressures of the academia.

metaphysical and other ideas in a positive light. I also obviously agree with her rejection of an instrumentalist rendering of pragmatism: ethical theories are not tools (115). Rather, ethics is constitutive of our practices of life generally, and I have always had the impression that this is a fundamental point of agreement between Haaparanta's views and mine.

Accordingly, the "practice" that the pragmatic method advises us to attend to when investigating the true meaning of our concepts and conceptions (or "ideas", as the classical pragmatists usually liked to put it) is an ethically loaded practice, perhaps comparable to what Wittgensteinian philosophers prefer to call our "form of life".

9 Heikki J. Koskinen

The final paper of the first part of the book is Heikki J. Koskinen's "Pragmatism, Recognition, and Philosophical Identity".¹³ Writing as one of the leading recognition theorists today, Koskinen analyzes the components of a pragmatist philosophical identity—something that clearly needs a careful analysis, given the continuous lack of clarity regarding how exactly the pragmatist tradition ought to be defined or characterized, either historically or in the contemporary scene. He argues that we need the concept of *recognition*, more specifically the schematism provided by the systematic recognition theory we owe to Axel Honneth and his followers, for this analysis.

As identities based on recognition more generally, the pragmatist identity may also have its unwelcome features; we might even perceive an implicit reference to Star Wars¹⁴ in Koskinen's remark about the "*dark side*" of the pragmatist identity (cf. 123). Our (self-)identifying as pragmatists, or our recognizing others as having that identity, may also lead to our disregarding some other relevant philosophical concepts, to blindness to

¹³ Over the past six years (2014–2019), Heikki and I have been colleagues at the Academy of Finland Centre of Excellence, "Reason and Religious Recognition", led by Risto Saarinen (see below) at the Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki, but our friendship goes much further back in history: Heikki was one of the students who attended the very first lecture course I gave at the University of Helsinki in fall 1993 ("Introduction to the Philosophy of Science"), and I was later his supervisor at the master's level (1998) and at the doctoral level (2004). We also collaborated within a number of Leila's projects in the early 2000s (see above), and over the years we have both co-organized a number of philosophical events and made several memorable conference trips together, not only within Europe but also to, e.g., the US, Japan, and China.

¹⁴ Recognizing this presupposes knowing that Heikki is a Star Wars fan.

some potentially important phenomena, as well as to restrictions in our thinking abilities, or even to the dangers of inauthenticity and loss of autonomy (124–125).

Koskinen is clearly right about the fact that pragmatist identities—and recognitions of those identities—are not immune to the kinds of problems that basically any social identities and recognitions might involve. Pragmatists are certainly not innocent regarding the possible threats of identity politics; a pragmatist identity may also invoke power struggles and potentialities for not only inclusion but also exclusion. It might be a very interesting exercise to put Koskinen's analysis to concrete work by studying some controversial case of a pragmatist identity. To take an obvious example, Rorty's neopragmatism has occasionally been denied the status of pragmatist philosophy—though on the other hand Rorty himself notoriously neglected Peirce's (the tradition's founder's) role by quipping that he merely gave pragmatism its name and inspired James. The history of pragmatism, like that of any other philosophical orientation, is a history of clashes of requests for and acts of recognition as well as non- or misrecognition.

At the meta-level, a responsible pragmatist should follow Koskinen in recognizing the significance of this phenomenon and thus taking critical distance to their own practices of recognizing, or failing to recognize, fellow philosophers (or others) as pragmatists or as anything else. Any pragmatist, or any philosopher for that matter, should also agree with him about the "job description" of philosophers: thinking out of the box (126). Even this job description, of course, is something that may suffer from too narrowly established identities.

10 Wayne Proudfoot

The second part of the book, *Challenges of Theodicy*, opens with Wayne Proudfoot's article, "Recognition, Theodicy, and Experience".¹⁵ Proud-

¹⁵ When I first met Wayne in 2008, having invited him to a pragmatism workshop I co-organized with Henrik at the University of Jyväskylä (where I held my first permanent professorship since 2006), a workshop that eventually yielded a book Henrik and I edited for Palgrave Macmillan, *William James on Religion* (2013), I had already known of him, of course, for a long time. I was aware of his seminal work on religious experience and had cited his papers on James already in some relatively early publications of mine. Later I had the pleasure of visiting him at Columbia University a couple of times, and whenever I have a chance to go to New York I always make sure Wayne and I get together at least for lunch.

foot basically agrees with the “antitheodist” reading of William James’s pragmatism, as presented in my joint book with Sari Kivistö, *Kantian Antitheodicy: Philosophical and Literary Varieties* (2016), as well as some of my other writings on James. He goes on, however, to examine the concept of recognition in James, citing key passages from, e.g., “The Dilemma of Determinism” (a widely read essay reprinted in James’s collection *The Will to Believe*, 1897) that I now note I have failed to cite in support of my own interpretation of James. It is easy for me to agree with Proudfoot that James’s criticism of healthy-mindedness (in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902) is based on the view that healthy-mindedness involves a kind of “myopia and self-deception that characterize refusal to recognize suffering and evil that is a vivid and real part of life” (137). In fact I have recently been thinking about the possibility of explicitly employing the concept of *self-deception* in the critique of theodicies and theodicism—but that is another story.

The second part of Proudfoot’s essay deals with the concept of religious experience, on which he published a major monograph, *Religious Experience*, in 1985. He makes a fundamentally important point regarding the methodology of the study of religion by arguing that one may recognize and respect a person, as well as their sincerity and the importance of a (religious) experience in their life—or, say, an experience of meaningless suffering unaccountable by means of any theodicy—without necessarily agreeing with their *explanation* of that experience (an explanation which may be constitutive of the experience itself) (140). I completely agree with this suggestion, and I think Proudfoot’s methodological observation, partly based on and clarifying his account in the 1985 book, should specifically be incorporated in discussions of theodicies as recognition-failures—as it is, indeed, a lesson essential for all of us interested in the methodology of religious studies.

There is one minor point I wish to make, though: it seems to me that the criticism of theodicies and the entire philosophical controversy regarding apparently meaningless suffering should primarily focus on *justification* rather than explanation. There is no reason to deny that we can in a perfectly ordinary scientific, historical, or everyday sense explain why a certain experience of suffering takes (or took) place, even though we cannot even attempt to sincerely, non-self-deceptively, justify it as an element of any “God’s-Eye View” scheme of things. Moreover, when saying that there is something “incomprehensible” in suffering and evil, we rarely mean that we would be unable to explain it; it is, rather, the impossibil-

ity of fitting it into any justifiable world-picture (e. g., a divine plan of ultimate salvation) that is at issue.

11 Risto Saarinen

Risto Saarinen's chapter, "Gifts and Burdens", elaborates on my antitheodist views (partly developed in collaboration with Sari Kivistö; see above) in the context of his long-time interest in theories of gift exchange.¹⁶ He insightfully proposes to rearticulate the antitheodist idea of the disproportionality and "immeasurability" of suffering—that is, the idea that we cannot instrumentalize (others') suffering into the service of any alleged good or render it meaningful in terms of any imagined overall harmony—in terms of the notion of a "negative gift" (or "burden", *onus* in Latin). "We can only recognize meaningless suffering adequately when we refrain from explaining and justifying it in economic terms" (147), Saarinen explains, and therefore suffering, antitheodistically viewed, belongs to the same conceptual order as gifts, that is, the non-economic order rather than the one of economic exchange. If we attempt to "justify, measure and comprehend" burdens, we will be alienated from their fundamental nature (148–149).

I very much appreciate Saarinen's willingness to employ his own favorite theoretical vocabulary in this attempt to cash out in gift-theoretical terms what the "seriousness" of antitheodicy comes down to. This proposal enriches and deepens the antitheodist project I think we ought to continue to articulate and defend. Our minor disagreement, or perhaps rather just a minor difference in emphasis, is related to what he says about the chances of the gift- and burden-theoretical interpretation to "slightly increase the amount of optimism and light-mindedness that a sympathizer of antitheodicy is allowed to display", enabling a kind of

¹⁶ I met Risto sometime in the late 1990s, though I cannot recall any specific first meeting. He has been one of my closest colleagues at the Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki, since my appointment as Professor of Philosophy of Religion there in 2014, and already well before that we collaborated actively, for instance during my years at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Having acted as one of the three "team leaders" within Risto's Centre of Excellence, "Reason and Religious Recognition" (2014–2019; see above), I have learned to admire his experience and multifaceted skills as an academic leader and as one of the world-leading scholars in his own field. He is one of those senior colleagues I feel I continue to learn from immensely. (Let me add that in summer 2019 I had the pleasure of contributing a joint paper with Sari to Risto's *Festschrift* honoring his 60th birthday.)

“ethical openness with regard to various undeserved gifts and burdens” (151). I am not exactly sure what to make of this, because I don’t think the antitheodist needs to deny that there may be positive undeserved gifts in our lives, too. Generally, I would be happy to link antitheodicism with pragmatist (especially Jamesian) meliorism (cf. my comments on Bergman’s paper above and Zackariasson’s paper below), rather than optimism. The concept of “light-mindedness”, whatever it exactly means, might, however, invite some (possibly undeserved?) Jamesian-based criticism, recalling James’s rejection of “moral holidays”.

It is most important to acknowledge, with Saarinen, that whatever gifts there may be in our lives, they are also “undeserved”. Our being grateful for the good things we have undeservedly received can, however, easily turn into a (quasi-)theodist logic according to which everything is in the end controlled by some (divine or secular) harmonious scheme. Our sincere gratitude could be corrupted into the acceptance of an unjust world-order, even if we accept the fact that the gifts we receive are undeserved. This potential meta-level return of theodicies needs further critical scrutiny: is our gratitude for gifts inevitably (quasi-)theodist?

12 Ulf Zackariasson

Ulf Zackariasson’s “‘We are all survivors’—survivor guilt and pragmatic meliorism” starts out with remarks on Steven Spielberg’s famous 1998 film, *Saving Private Ryan* (which, incidentally, I also briefly discussed in one of the chapters of my Finnish book, *Elämän ongelma*, 2010).¹⁷ Citing literature on the psychology of “survivor guilt”, he seems to basically agree (or at least not to disagree) with my account of “transcendental guilt” (as presented in my 2011 book, *Transcendental Guilt*) while interestingly arguing that pragmatic meliorism may be an appropriate way of dealing with—and may even emerge as a response to—such guilt. In his view, pragmatic philosophical anthropology should fully embrace meliorism, acknowledging that life cannot be taken easily (“light-mindedly”?)

¹⁷ As already noted above, Ulf defended his doctoral thesis at Uppsala University in 2002 with Dirk-Martin Grube as the opponent, and I had the pleasure and honor of being a member of the examination committee. Since then I have regularly worked together with Ulf in developing Nordic collaboration both in the philosophy of religion and in pragmatism scholarship. Ulf has been a great colleague and friend in the contexts of both the Nordic Society for Philosophy of Religion and the Nordic Pragmatism Network.

but insisting that we can always do better (or, even if we fail, “fail better”, as Zackariasson quotes an apt recent formulation by Ana Honnacker, another scholar of pragmatist philosophy of religion; cf. 158).

Just like Saarinen’s theory of gifts and burdens can crucially supplement antitheodicism, Zackariasson’s version of meliorism can in my view be a vital enrichment to a pragmatist understanding of (transcendental) guilt. I would like to add one thought about *Saving Private Ryan*, however. While Zackariasson rightly maintains (e.g., 153, 161) that Ryan’s question, “Was it enough?”, and his desperate concern about his having “earned”—or failed to earn—his survival (at the cost of all the losses of lives on the way), will never be silenced, as this is indeed the transcendental dimension of guilt (“In the transcendental sense, a *human* life will always be permeated by guilt”, 161), I have also occasionally entertained the hypothesis (not at all incompatible with Zackariasson’s interpretation) that the final scene of the film, with Ryan’s arguably somewhat pathetic tears at his rescuer’s grave, is *ironic*. (I am not proposing this as any sort of expert of film analysis, of course.)

After all, Ryan seems to have lived a perfectly ordinary life, a life with no distinctive achievements or “earnings”, a life, that is, whose accomplishments may not have “earned” his survival to him in any sense that would be different from anyone else’s having earned a life. The moral criticism central to the film, arguably, focuses on the very idea of (possibly) earning a life—and hence on the (e.g., theodicit) attempts to understand human life in the kind of economic terms criticized in Saarinen’s theory of gifts and burdens. In order to appreciate this criticism in Spielberg’s film, one must maintain a certain kind of ironic distance. However, to be able to do so one must also be able to appreciate the kind of issues of survivor guilt (possibly in their transcendental aspects) that Zackariasson draws our attention to.

13 Timo Koistinen

Timo Koistinen focuses on the Wittgensteinian tradition in the philosophy of religion in his essay, “Contemplative Philosophy and the Problem of Relativism”.¹⁸ As usually, he demonstrates deep knowledge of

¹⁸ I first met Timo as early as 1994, when we were PhD students and were both invited to participate in a panel on the relation between science and religion organized by K. V. Laurikainen. Later we, among other things, co-edited a Finnish collection of essays on the philosophy

D. Z. Phillips's views in particular and a genuine concern with understanding and developing the methodology of both moral philosophy and the philosophy of religion. More specifically, Koistinen defends Phillips's "contemplative" Wittgensteinian approach against the standard charge of relativism. Citing Phillips, he points out that in the Wittgensteinian sense "practices" are not simply systems of beliefs or even grounded in beliefs; they are, rather, contexts within which beliefs are expressed and can be judged as true or false (168).

From the pragmatist perspective, I might want to add that beliefs can still play a central role in any human practices, but beliefs themselves must be understood as "habits of action" and as, hence, irreducibly practice-embedded and practice-involving. In this respect, it seems to me that there is no major disagreement between, say, pragmatist philosophy of religion and the Wittgensteinian approach exemplified by Phillips. From both standpoints, it would be extremely problematic or even absurd to suggest, for instance, that our practices of moral responsibility and deliberation would be dependent on our (purely) theoretical beliefs about, say, the metaphysics of free will that would be allegedly independent of ethics (though this is not an example specifically discussed by Koistinen). Clearly, free will is a notion that is absolutely crucial for ethics—only free actions can be morally evaluated—but this does not mean that we would or even could *first* settle the epistemological and metaphysical issues concerning free will in order to *then* turn to ethical considerations. On the contrary, I entirely agree with Koistinen and Phillips that our moral practices involve notions such as the freedom of the will in a "constitutive" sense.

Unsurprisingly, I would be prepared to take the further step of understanding such constitutivity in a Kantian-inspired transcendental sense (without sacrificing its pragmatic character, though). In this respect, I have always wondered why Phillips, as Koistinen notes (170), needs to contrast his views so sharply with transcendental philosophy. There is, therefore, a lot more to discuss regarding the methodology and metaphilosophical assumptions of the Wittgensteinian paradigm—in relation to both pragmatism and transcendental philosophy.

of religion (2003) and have over the past few years been close colleagues at the Faculty of Theology. It is a great privilege to be able to develop the small field of philosophy of religion at our university—to plan teaching and research, to co-supervise doctoral students, etc.—together with an always friendly, reliable, and flexible colleague like Timo.

14 Vincent Colapietro

Vincent Colapietro's chapter, "A Solitude 'So Profound the Word Itself Has No Meaning'", is one of the few publications that cite my early work on solipsism, the 2004 book *Solipsism: History, Critique, and Relevance* published in a little-known Finnish series;¹⁹ however, instead of any explicit analysis of the solipsism issue itself, he offers us an original and insightful reflection on a number of interpenetrated themes surrounding this topic, finding the leading quote included in his title in one of Toni Morrison's novels.²⁰ Colapietro moves more easily than most philosophers today in the thickets of strict analytic argumentation, postmodern (or "Continental") discourse, as well as literary interpretation. The present essay is yet another demonstration of the breathtaking breadth of his philosophical concerns, and I am pleased to note that my somewhat different approach to the problem of solipsism may have inspired some of his thinking about the meaning of loneliness, solitude, and narcissism, as well as the concept of the self in a Peircean context (on which he has earlier published seminal works).

I may have exaggerated a bit when saying that our (or my) most important philosophical duty is to avoid solipsism, but by this I meant little more than what Colapietro himself means by saying that he sees "nothing more pressing than acknowledging the reality of others" (180). This is where, more generally, the issues of pragmatist metaphysics, ethics (including transcendental guilt), and antitheodistic philosophy of religion join hands. The seemingly easy and almost trivial task of taking other human beings (and, possibly, non-human beings) into consideration in our lives is something that needs serious ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical analysis, and I trust that Colapietro and I agree about the necessity of involving literary reading and interpretation in this project. This is therefore one of those essays in the book that I see no reason to disagree with, although its overall focus is rather different from my own explorations of solipsism.

¹⁹ If anyone is interested in what I have tried to say about this topic, I would (instead of the 2004 volume) recommend turning to a forthcoming book updating the earlier views: Sami Pihlström, *Why Solipsism Matters* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020).

²⁰ I recall meeting Vincent for the first time at the World Congress of Philosophy in Boston in 1998, where he presented a friendly critical comment on a paper I delivered on pragmatism and transcendental philosophy. Since then, I have always enjoyed our meetings at various conferences, including several organized by the CEPF and the European Pragmatism Association. Vincent is one of those American pragmatism scholars who have always been willing to develop truly global collaboration in pragmatism.

15 Martin Gustafsson

Martin Gustafsson analyzes one of the best-known Wittgensteinian concepts, that of rule-following, in his piece, “Blind Obedience”.²¹ I am very much in agreement with him about the need to avoid dichotomous oppositions such as “the priority of practice over intellect” (183) that some pragmatism-inspired interpreters of Wittgenstein may have read into Wittgenstein’s rule-following considerations. A truly pragmatist picture of Wittgenstein would, indeed, find practice and intellect mutually interdependent instead of conceiving their relation in terms of any priority claim (184), in addition to overcoming a number of other unpragmatic dichotomies that may lead Wittgenstein interpreters astray in a variety of ways.

In the context of this general (pragmatist) context of understanding Wittgenstein, Gustafsson offers us a penetrating analysis of what Wittgenstein famously says about “blind” rule-following at § 219 of the *Investigations*. Blind obedience in rule-following is not merely a “brute reflex response” but requires a “background of established linguistic practice mastered both by speaker and hearer” (187). This is something that I would be willing to consider a transcendental condition for the possibility of any meaning, rule-following, or normativity, but I of course understand that many readers of Wittgenstein, presumably including Gustafsson, are not entirely happy with bringing such Kantian transcendental terminology into this Wittgensteinian context.

Be that as it may, it seems to me that Gustafsson succeeds in articulating what is essential in a pragmatic transcendental reading of Wittgenstein when arguing that the presence of a “background linguistic practice” is required even by immediate, unreflective (“blind”) obedience; indeed, “the possibility of obedience goes hand in hand with the possibility of critical

²¹ If I remember correctly, Martin had just received his Uppsala PhD in 2000 when he was invited to speak at a small conference on Wittgenstein and philosophical methodology which I (co-)organized in Helsinki (and which eventually led to the 2006 volume, *Wittgenstein and the Method of Philosophy*, that I edited for the *Acta Philosophica Fennica* series). This was the first time we met. I was truly delighted when Martin was later appointed to his current professorship at Åbo Akademi; he has now for several years made a strong contribution to philosophy in Finland, both continuing and in original ways developing the strong Wittgensteinian tradition that especially “Swedish” philosophy in Finland has fostered. I would here like to point out that some other (broadly speaking) Wittgensteinian scholars in the “Swedish” segment of Finnish philosophy—especially Martin’s predecessor Lars Hertzberg as well as Thomas Wallgren in Helsinki—have also been extremely important for my own work, and I continue to learn from them.

reflection and disobedience”, as we can “obey unreflectively” only if we can also “reflect, criticize and disobey” (188). This I take to be an exemplary pragmatic-cum-transcendental analysis (without using those terms) of presuppositional relations and necessary conditions needed for the possibility of the kind of activities we regard as linguistic, or more generally normative—or human. These reflections can also be used to illuminate what has been called the “contingency of necessity” in Wittgensteinian contexts: it is a contingent fact about our practices and forms of life that orders are “by and large” obeyed (cf. 189), but this fact makes the very *concepts* of order and obedience (and thus the modal structures of rule-following) possible. As Gustafsson suggests toward the end of the paper, the classical pragmatists might have more or less agreed about this picture of practices, obedience, and critical reflection (190)—and I entirely agree.

16 Sarin Marchetti

Sarin Marchetti, one of the leading James scholars in the younger generation, writes about “Jamesian Liberalism and the Self”.²² He persuasively argues that James, who is not conventionally read as a political thinker, stands in an original manner in the tradition of liberal thought, largely due to his conception of the self “as contingent and mobile” (193). According to James, we live in a world of risk and uncertainty, and understanding human freedom as an ethically and politically (and not merely metaphysically) loaded concept is a practical necessity in this situation. Marchetti goes as far as to claim that James’s “entire philosophical vision” can be regarded as “a positive response to chance, possibility, and probability” (197). I find this suggestion compatible with my own proposal to view James’s pragmatism as framed by an antitheodistic attitude to evil and suffering as something contingent (that is, avoidable) to be fought against, never to be just accepted as a necessary element of a deterministic universe.

Marchetti’s paper is, again, one of those with which I cannot think of having any obvious disagreements (though clearly I would be slightly

²² In comparison to my rather long acquaintance with many other contributors to the *Festschrift*, I have known Sarin for a somewhat shorter time—just about a decade. I have come to appreciate him as one of the most insightful scholars working on Jamesian and more generally pragmatist ethics in his generation. His own active mobility has also been a source of delight, as I have had the pleasure of being invited to very interesting conferences he has organized in Dublin (2013) and Rome (2019).

more willing to introduce transcendental concepts into the Jamesian framework, as Marchetti of course very well knows). I find it extremely important for our understanding of James's pragmatism to insist, with Marchetti, that the Jamesian conception of "freedom as self-transformation" offers us no metaphysical grounding for morality but on the contrary reminds us that our moral reactions to the world we live in contribute to (re)shaping our reality into whatever structure it may take (200). This notion of freedom also challenges some of the received ideas of liberal thought and thus helps to rethink the very tradition of liberalism.

In this sense, Marchetti's essay can also be seen as implicitly responding to some of the concerns regarding realism and idealism that several papers in the first part of the book raise. It can also be read as a warning against tendencies to overlook the thoroughly ethical character of the concept of freedom. From the perspective of (Marchetti's) James, it makes little sense to try to settle the metaphysics of freedom independently of the—often painful—ethical employment of freedom.

17 Hanne Appelqvist

Hanne Appelqvist, internationally known as a perceptive commentator of Wittgenstein in particular, focuses on Kant rather than Wittgenstein in her chapter, "Kant on Religious Faith and Beauty".²³ Indeed, she is one of the central voices in Wittgenstein scholarship today insisting that we should take very seriously the Kantian background of Wittgenstein, thus reading the latter as a transcendental philosopher in his own distinctive sense. I have always agreed with her regarding this general line of thought and overall approach to Wittgenstein, though my conception of what transcendental philosophy may or should come down to—especially in relation

²³ Hanne, along with Heikki (see above), was one of the students who attended the first university course in 1993, so I have known her, too, for more than 25 years, following her career in the academia from her Columbia PhD via various scholarships to her current job at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Some of my views on solipsism, transcendental philosophy, and ethics, among other things, are heavily indebted to the discussions I had with her already in the mid-1990s. (In relation to Hanne, I would like to acknowledge a great philosophy teacher who, I think, has been at least as important for her as for me: Heikki Kannisto. It was Kannisto's research on Wittgenstein, as well as his teaching on Kant, Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, and philosophical anthropology in the early 1990s that fundamentally shaped my own approach to transcendental philosophy. Unfortunately, Kannisto's work has never received the international attention it would deserve.)

to pragmatism—is presumably “softer” and less strict, so to speak, seeking to accommodate a family of potentially rather different accounts of transcendental philosophy under one umbrella.

Starting from the Kantian notion of the “highest good”—and the related “break between morality and happiness” (204), which (as I have suggested with Sari Kivistö) makes Kant an antitheodist thinker—she interestingly argues that we need insights from Kant’s Third Critique in order to adequately make sense of the practical need, or necessity, to assume God’s existence (as a postulate of practical reason). Appelqvist has in a series of works suggested that we ought to appreciate Kant’s aesthetic ideas in the core areas of his philosophy, including ethics and philosophy of religion in particular (as well as, by extension, Wittgenstein’s version of transcendental philosophy), and this paper continues to develop that overall argument. We need the program of the Third Critique to argue, with Kant, that we may legitimately see the world as if it were organized purposefully by a divinity (209). An analysis of what Kant has to say about judgments of beauty accordingly plays a crucial role in Appelqvist’s account of this key link between the Second and the Third Critiques.

I would be ready to continue to develop the Kantian notion of legitimate hope in the Jamesian context of pragmatism as a melioristic “philosophy of hope”, but I am sure Appelqvist’s account of Kant would not accommodate such an impure rendering of the transcendental theory of purposiveness. However, as a polished reading of Kant in its own right, I have nothing to protest about in Appelqvist’s paper; it makes a compelling case for an interpretation of Kant that brings the Third Critique to a central place within Kant’s overall philosophical program.

18 David L. Hildebrand

The final paper of the collection, David L. Hildebrand’s “Pihlström’s Pragmatist Metaphysics”, is subtitled “Transcendence and Meliorism”.²⁴ This

²⁴ David and I first met (I think) at the conference in honor of Peter H. Hare in 2000 (mentioned earlier), but we had corresponded already prior to that. I have always appreciated David as one of the most original pragmatism scholars of his (i. e., our) generation in the United States, and it is invariably a great pleasure to catch up with him at conferences. He once spent a month in Helsinki, visiting the Helsinki Collegium, and his central positions at the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP), including its presidency, have been instrumental for the development of trans-Atlantic collaboration between SAAP and European pragmatism scholars.

may sound slightly surprising, given that I have always insisted on pragmatism (and pragmatist metaphysics) as being “transcendental” in a sense derived from Kant, rather than “transcendent”. It seems to me that the distinction between the transcendental and the transcendent is a fundamentally important one, and too often neglected by many philosophers, even by many pragmatists (including James and Dewey themselves). On the other hand, employing a “transcendental method” in pragmatist metaphysics might even lead us to discussions concerning the metaphysical status of transcendence (cf. 214), especially in the context of pragmatist philosophy of religion.

I think Hildebrand and I have always agreed about the need—especially for the pragmatist—to adopt a “living perspective” in philosophizing (213). The proper starting point for pragmatist metaphysics, too, is the practical one amidst our human form(s) of life (with the proper caveat concerning the need to avoid any sharp dichotomy between practice and intellect; cf. my response to Gustafsson above). I suppose one of our few disagreements concerns the need to bring Kant into this picture in the first place. Hildebrand—amply citing my work, to the extent that I feel almost embarrassed about the time he seems to have spent reading many obscure things I wrote—carefully notes the various qualifications I have felt necessary to add to the claim that we should understand pragmatism as a form of transcendental philosophy. He then asks—and this is a fair critical question to ask—why we need to go back to Kant at all: “what is the Kantian remainder” and why is it important (222)? Indeed, as good pragmatists we do have to ask, “what does this actually *do* for us?” (224), and certainly Hildebrand succeeds in reminding us that it is not obvious that the pragmatist has much to “gain” from the transcendental method.

Hildebrand is right to suggest that my stubborn insistence on the need for, or the pragmatic usefulness of, the transcendental method is based on the desire to accommodate a kind of necessity (the presuppositional necessity of practice-laden transcendental conditions) into the thoroughly contingent and always reinterpretable practices within which our lives take place. He is also right to note that it is not easy to see “what [I am] after” (225), given all the reservations I have had to add to these formulations in order to have my cake and eat it too, that is, to remain both Kantian and pragmatist. I have no easy or obvious response here. I suppose this is partly a temperamental issue, to echo James; some of us, given their individual philosophical trajectories, may be temperamentally more inclined than some others to try to bring the pragmatist focus on contin-

gency and the Kantian focus on transcendental necessity together. A more philosophical reason for the “need” to invoke Kant might be that only a pragmatist form of transcendental idealism can make sense of pragmatic realism (compare my responses to several authors of the first part of the book, especially Niiniluoto).

I am not saying that all pragmatists should turn Kantians (nor, of course, vice versa), but I do hope to have been able to offer some reasons (layered with many, many qualifications) for why at least some of them, given the kinds of temperamentally emerging philosophical concerns they have, might. Perhaps this is one instance of an attempt to take seriously the “personal and perspectival approach to philosophy” (225), the pragmatic approach Hildebrand has himself defended at least since his exemplary early book on Dewey (2003);²⁵ if so, the always recurring tension between the universal and necessary (in transcendental philosophy) and the contingent and changing (in pragmatism) needs to be faced by the (Jamesian) pragmatist.



There is no way of even trying to summarize the themes and arguments contained in this wonderful book, even at the most general metaphilosophical level. In their various ways, all the contributors have reminded me, and us, that there is so much more to learn and to reflect on in our philosophical endeavors. I am truly grateful to them all for this opportunity to continue our conversations, and I look forward to elaborating on the many points they raise as actively as possible.

I would like to add that I also appreciate the nice balance of the Festschrift. Among the contributors, I am pleased to find my supervisors and senior colleagues (Niiniluoto, Haaparanta, Saarinen), scholars I have had the pleasure of supervising in turn (the three co-editors Rydenfelt, Bergman, Koskinen), other local colleagues based in Finland (Koistinen, Gustafsson, Appelqvist), as well as a group of distinguished philoso-

²⁵ I reviewed David's book, *Beyond Realism and Antirealism*, for *Sats* in 2003. Let me note here that I have over the years had the pleasure of reviewing books by some of the other Festschrift contributors as well, at least Niiniluoto, Rydenfelt, Haaparanta, Zackariasson, Koistinen, and Marchetti.

phers, mostly leading pragmatism scholars, from outside Finland (Midgarden, Knowles, Grube, Bugaeva, Ryder, Proudfoot, Zackariasson, Colapietro, Marchetti, Hildebrand). This selection of authors may remind us that philosophy is, or at least ought to be, inter-generational in both directions—one's work is always indebted to one's teachers and senior colleagues and received by one's students or former students—as well as both local and international. While many of the essays examine limits (of the self, of pragmatism, of morality, etc.), the book as such crosses limits rather than establishing them.

Finally, let me note that I very much like the editors' decision not to use definitive articles in the book title. The book is titled *Limits of Pragmatism and Challenges of Theodicy*, rather than "The Limits of Pragmatism and the Challenges of Theodicy". This is well in line with pragmatic pluralism and the general pragmatist emphasis on contingency. There could always be more limits and more challenges than we have so far come up with, and this book, like any serious book, leaves such contingent matters open. We must stop somewhere, at some limit, but there could always be more.