



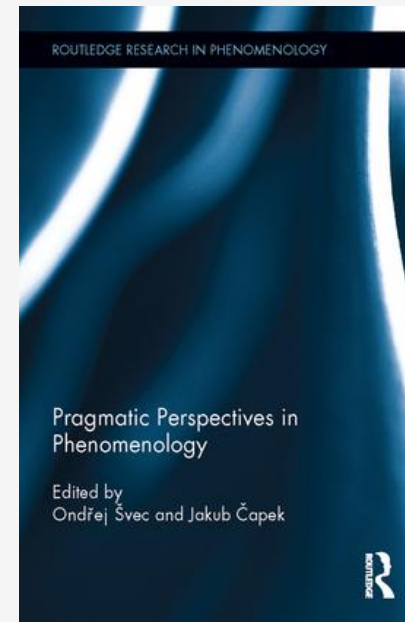
Phenomenological  
Reviews



# Ondřej Švec, Jakub Čapek (Eds.): Pragmatic Perspectives in Phenomenology

Jonathan Lewis

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This volume seeks to provide a critical analysis of pragmatic themes within the phenomenological tradition. Although the volume is overwhelmingly geared towards presenting critiques of some of the most authoritative pragmatic readings of Martin Heidegger – readings by Hubert Dreyfus, John Haugeland, Mark Okrent and Richard Rorty – a handful of the fourteen chapters expand the discussion of the pragmatic dimension of the history of phenomenology by engaging with the work of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Max Scheler and Jan Patočka. Although the contributors do well to explain their ideas, useful appropriation of the volume will require a working knowledge of the developments in twentieth-century pragmatism and phenomenology,

their basic features as philosophical enterprises and, most importantly, the central tenets of Heidegger (in particular), Merleau-Ponty and Husserl.

I will now outline what I see to be the primary claims of some of the collected papers (unfortunately, there are too many to be discussed with the level of detail required), linking those claims to the aims of the volume as a whole and providing some modest comments of my own.

For the editors, there are several characteristics of pragmatism:

1. According to pragmatists, ‘intentionality is, in the first and fundamental sense, a practical coping with our surrounding world’;
2. According to pragmatists, ‘language structures derive their meaning from their embeddedness in shared, practical activities’;
3. According to pragmatists, ‘truth is to be understood in relation to social and historically contingent practices’;
4. Pragmatism maintains ‘the primacy of practical over theoretical understanding’;
5. Pragmatism criticises ‘the representationalist account of perception’;
6. According to pragmatists, ‘the social dimension of human existence’ is prior to an individualised conception and manifestation of agency.

Although the editors and contributors do not explain whether these are necessary and sufficient conditions for a pragmatist reading of the phenomenological tradition (after all, the notion of necessary and sufficient conditions cannot be easily reconciled (if at all)

with pragmatist and phenomenological approaches to philosophical method), whether by adhering to just one of these conditions makes one a pragmatist or whether these conditions are fundamentally interrelated, we may claim (in no particular order) that pragmatists tend to subscribe to one or more of the following (indeed, individual contributors touch upon some of these themes):

- ‘Subject naturalism’ (whereby naturalism should be understood as ‘naturalism without representationalism’) is either prior to or a rejection of ‘object naturalism’ (Price 2013);
- The representationalist order of explanation, which, broadly speaking, presupposes the non-deflationary structure of identification between representations and states of affairs, is a misleading explanatory model from ontological, linguistic, experiential and epistemological points of view;
- The notion that something is ‘given’ in experience, that is, that there is something existing ‘out there’ – in reality but independent of our minds – to which our claims, beliefs, justifications, theories and meanings should correspond, is a myth;
- Semantics does not come before pragmatics – notions such as reference and truth are not explanatorily basic and cannot account for inference;
- Metaphysics tends to be deflationary in the sense that the contents of our concepts lay claim to how the world is;
- In addition to the fact that the sense of a word, term, proposition, sentence, belief, fact, value or theory is how it is used in actual practices, semantic notions of truth, reference and meaning are to be understood in terms of social norms;
- Judgments that concern normative statuses, fact-stating talk and objectivity-claims are to be understood in, and gain validity from, the realm of giving and asking for reasons.

The revival of pragmatism during the latter half of the twentieth century and a renewed focus on exploring the nature and origins of normativity in other areas of philosophy has coincided with an increasing body of literature dedicated to exploring some of these pragmatic themes in various canonical texts in the history of Western philosophy, particularly those of Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. That said, the majority of today's most prominent pragmatists draw inspiration from their immediate predecessors. In terms of Anglo-American pragmatism, for example, references are almost always made to Ludwig Wittgenstein, Wilfrid Sellars (who, in turn, engaged extensively with the work of Kant), W. V. O. Quine, Donald Davidson, Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. Indeed, when pragmatists engage more broadly with the history of philosophy (as is the case with Robert Brandom, for example), the focus tends to be on the work of Kant and Hegel. Consequently, in the context of twentieth-century pragmatism, Rorty and Hubert Dreyfus were peculiarities in the sense that they were two of the first self-professed pragmatists (in English-speaking academic circles) to explore the pragmatic dimension of phenomenological traditions of Western philosophy. Through their correspondence, the pragmatic interpretation of the history of phenomenology, and of Heidegger in particular, began in earnest. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that Rorty and Dreyfus' respective interpretations are, perhaps, the paradigmatic pragmatist readings of Heidegger and a driving force behind pragmatic appropriations of other well-known phenomenologists, specifically, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. In terms of Heidegger exegesis, not only have they inspired equally famous readings by Haugeland and Okrent, the interpretations of Rorty and Dreyfus, as this volume testifies, continue to demand critical engagement from Heidegger scholars.

It is apt, therefore, that the book begins with an essay by Okrent – an implicit focal point for the majority of the discussions and criticisms that follow in the other chapters. Along with Okrent's introduction to some of the most important features of a normalised pragmatic reading of Heidegger, part one of the volume is made up of chapters dedicated to elaborating the pragmatic dimension of the history of phenomenology. Part two critically engages with extant pragmatic readings of the phenomenological tradition and addresses some of the issues that emerge through pragmatic engagements with texts by non-canonical authors such as Scheler and Patočka. The final section contains four contributions that attempt to advance the debates in the history of phenomenology through new perspectives.

After the editors' introduction, Okrent begins by outlining two features of normative pragmatism – a position he attributes to Heidegger and one that is also affirmed by certain figures in the current Anglo-American pragmatist movement, specifically, Robert Brandom. For Okrent, normative pragmatism is, firstly, committed to the idea that an object's nonnormative, factual properties are 'possible only if there is some respect in which it is appropriate to respond to certain situations or to certain entities in certain ways' (p. 23). Secondly, *après* Wittgenstein, normative pragmatism is committed to the claim that it is correct to respond to certain situations or to certain entities in certain ways primarily due to 'the norms implicit in behaviour rather than with following explicit rules' (ibid.). To speak about *appropriate* responses to objects, whereby appropriateness is measured according to the norms of social practices, is to think of objects as tools or equipment. According to pragmatist readings of Heidegger, tools are not primarily conceived in terms of their hermetically-sealed physical make-up in space-

time. Rather, tools are understood, initially, in terms of what they are used for – the practical contexts and instrumental ends that will be fulfilled through their use. Furthermore, whether tools are used ‘correctly’ comes down to whether they are appropriated according to the norms of tool-use derived from social practices. The key point is that both Okrent and Heidegger view linguistic phenomena as tools. In accordance with the two theses attributed to normative pragmatism, Okrent states that ‘to grasp an entity as merely present, then, an agent must grasp it as essentially a possible object of an assertion. But to grasp something as an object of an assertion is to *use* the appropriate group of assertions as they are *to be used* within one’s community’ (p. 26). It follows that an object’s nonnormative properties are ‘simply *invisible* to an agent if she can’t use assertions to make claims about that entity’ (ibid.).

Okrent’s chapter is a response to criticisms that Brandom has levelled against Dreyfus, Haugeland and Okrent and their respective interpretations of Heidegger. In laying out the central tenets of normative pragmatism, Okrent highlights the similarities between Brandom’s reading of Heidegger and his own. However, disagreements emerge over their respective conceptions of intentionality. According to Brandom, Okrent, Dreyfus and Haugeland adopt a ‘layer-cake’ model, according to which our meaningful, norm-governed, practical responses to certain objects in certain ways is, in a sense, pre-predicative and nonconceptual and, therefore, distinct from (but also the basis of) the propositional articulations we make concerning such objects and our engagements with their nonnormative properties. In other words, the view that Okrent supports, and that Brandom believes is based on a misinterpretation of Heidegger, claims that ‘there are two layers to Dasein’s intentionality, the nonlinguistic skilful coping involved in the

utilisation of equipment as tools that are essential to Dasein as Dasein and the linguistic, assertoric intentionality that intends substances as substances and is not essential for Dasein as Dasein' (p. 29). Okrent goes on to defend the layer-cake model of intentionality on the basis that, for Heidegger, not all interpretations of entities *as* what they are involves assertion.

In terms of defending his interpretation of Heidegger as a layer-cake theorist in the face of Brandom's reading, Okrent is convincing. That said, in terms of defending the layer-cake model of intentionality against Brandom's claim that intentionality does not contain a nonconceptual component – that all experience can be understood in terms of the space of reasons – he is less successful. The other contributions in this volume do far better justice at demonstrating some of the problems with Okrent's account than I can here. However, what I will say (paraphrasing the main issue in the Dreyfus-McDowell debates) is that although one can claim that propositions, assertions, sentences and theories are embodied, and even originate in our practical activities, that does not mean that our absorbed involvements that grasp the world *as* what it is are fundamentally and distinctly nonconceptual. Indeed, Brandom's starting point is to conceive the world 'as a collection of *facts*, not of *things*; there is nothing that exists outside of the realm of the conceptual' (Brandom 2000: 357). On that basis, he has presented a whole system of normative pragmatics and inferential semantics to support his non-representationalist metaphysical project. Whether we agree with him or not, it follows that Brandom has the means to defend the view that even those interpretations, repairs and improvements of tools and equipment that seemingly operate outside of the bounds of general acceptability, and that Okrent takes to be nonlinguistic, are predicated upon a (at least



implicitly) conceptual understanding of intentionality. In other words, our perceptions and skilful copings are permeated with the *as*-structure of interpretation that fundamentally understands seeing something *as* something in discursive terms (regardless of whether those concepts are made explicit in discursive practices).

The theme of layer-cake interpretations of both pragmatism and intentionality and the question of the dependency of skilful coping on conceptual meaning are taken up again in Carl Sachs' contribution. The starting point for Sachs is the debate between Dreyfus and John McDowell regarding the relationship between rationality and absorbed coping and the consequences of this relationship for understanding intelligibility and intentionality. Like Brandom and McDowell, Sachs recognises the problems inherent in the layer-cake model of nonconceptual skilful coping – a distinct kind of intelligibility with its own internal logic. He also acknowledges McDowell's claim that layer-cake pragmatists make the mistake 'in thinking both that rationality consists of detached reflection and that rationality is the enemy of absorbed coping' (p. 96). Unlike Dreyfus, Okrent and Haugeland, both Brandom and McDowell argue that rationality should not be construed as detached contemplation. Furthermore, intentionality is fundamentally conceptual. However, as Sachs observes, the problem with claiming that conceptuality permeates all of our skilful copings is that intentionality tends to be treated as only "thinly" embodied' (p.94). Through the work of Joseph Rouse, and by confronting the question of how absorbed, embodied coping can fit within the space of giving and asking for reasons, Sachs provides a convincing and highly innovative critique not only of layer-cake interpretations of the phenomenological tradition, but of approaches to contemporary pragmatism that do not pay sufficient phenomenological attention to the

embodied dimension of intelligibility. Undermining Dreyfus' distinction between the 'space of reasons' and the 'space of motivations', Rouse follows McDowell (and Brandom) in, firstly, rejecting the view that rationality is found in detached contemplation and, secondly, claiming that discursive practices are embodied. Where Sachs sees McDowell as paying only lip service to an embodied conception of rationality, Rouse uses developments in evolutionary theory to naturalise the space of reasons and, by implication, our norm-governed engagements with the world. Having arrived at the claim that discursive practices are conceived as 'highly modified and specialised forms of embodied coping' (p. 96), Sachs builds on Rouse's account by defending a distinction between sapient intentionality and sentient intentionality in order to demonstrate that 'McDowell is (mostly) right about sapience and that Dreyfus is (mostly) right about sentience' (p. 88).

Whereas Okrent and Sachs' respective contributions tackle the Dreyfusian tradition of Heidegger scholarship, Andreas Beinsteiner provides a critical assessment of Rorty's engagement with the pragmatic dimension of Heidegger's thought. The focus is on Rorty's purely language-oriented interpretation of the 'history of Being'. According to Beinsteiner, even though Rorty agrees with Heidegger's claim that our vocabularies and practices are contingent, Rorty's criticism of Heidegger's 'narrative of decline', which is characterised by a lack of recognition regarding the contingent nature of both meaning and language, is problematic. For Beinsteiner, the issue Rorty has with the idea that contemporary Western society, when compared with previous epochs, is less able to grasp the contingency of language rests upon Rorty's two conflicting versions of pragmatism – instrumental pragmatism and poetic pragmatism. According to

Beinsteiner, when Rorty argues for social hope as opposed to decline, he has seemingly failed to acknowledge the contingency of his own language and has, as a result, fallen into the trap that instrumental and poetic pragmatism disclose in different ways. Ultimately, Rorty is trapped within his linguistic conception of intelligibility, one that, he believes his instrumental conception of language has some sovereignty over, when, in fact, according to Beinsteiner, our conception of meaningfulness not only precedes the purposes of our language, it grants Rorty's language with the purpose of instrumentality in the first place. In the remainder of the chapter, and in the face of what he sees as Rorty's linguistic treatment of meaningfulness, Beinsteiner offers a challenge to Rorty's critique of the narrative of decline by demonstrating technology's ability to guide our understanding of intelligibility.

One of the problems with Beinsteiner's critique is that Rorty is clearly aware of the dangers of becoming trapped in non-contingent conceptions of one's language and understanding of meaningfulness. Rorty acknowledges that we can and, indeed, must aim for as much intersubjective agreement as possible by opening ourselves up to other cultures and their associated languages. As he explains, 'alternative cultures are not to be thought of on the model of alternative geometries'; 'alternative geometries are irreconcilable because they have axiomatic structures, and contradictory axioms. They are *designed* to be irreconcilable. Cultures are not so designed, and do not have axiomatic structures' (Rorty 1991, 30). Consequently, by engaging with different cultures, it is at least a possibility that our language and conception of intelligibility can be destabilised and transcended. However, Heidegger claims that exposure to other cultures through media technology will fail to transform our conceptions of language and meaningfulness.

As is evident from Beinsteiner's contribution, Heidegger's claim rests upon a one-sided interpretation of technology, one that is justified by criteria located in his own 'final vocabulary'. This raises a problem, one that is emphasised when Beinsteiner makes claims regarding the pragmatic dimension of technology that coincide with Heidegger's narrative of decline (even though Beinsteiner states that his point 'is not to defend a supposed Heideggerian pessimism against Rorty's optimism' (p. 64)). A critic would likely argue that if Beinsteiner wishes to argue for the contingency of language and meaning and, thereby, avoid falling prey to the criticisms he levels at Rorty, he needs some criteria for judging the 'primordially due to new media and communication technologies' (p. 64). Indeed, in order to avoid the charge that he is trapped within Heidegger's vocabulary, such criteria would need to come from elsewhere. Unfortunately, a comprehensive and justified account of such criteria is noticeably absent in both the work of Heidegger and Beinsteiner's contribution.

Returning to the Dreyfusian tradition of Heidegger scholarship, Tucker McKinney's contribution addresses a long-standing problem with layer-cake approaches to pragmatism; specifically, the issue of whether and how (what Okrent calls) 'the nonlinguistic skilful coping involved in the utilisation of equipment as tools that are essential to Dasein as Dasein' (p. 29) can be reconciled with self-conscious inquiry and the resulting 'first-personal knowledge of one's activity' (p. 71). In the face of traditional approaches to philosophy of mind that interpret self-consciousness in terms of self-representing contemplation, which he acknowledges is a form of self-consciousness that Heidegger criticises, McKinney sees Heidegger as advancing a conception of positional self-awareness 'as an action-guiding practical knowledge of *what to do* to sustain one's

being in the world, realised in our affective lives' (ibid.). Whereas typical pragmatist readings of Heidegger claim that our nonconceptual and non-representational ability to skilfully and habitually cope with the world means that the capacity to represent (the world and our representations of the world) through concepts is both merely derivative and something we can identify or attribute to ourselves only *after* our unselfconscious practical activities, McKinney defends the view that, according to Heidegger, 'our engagements with entities are permeated with a sense of our own agency, our own active and participatory engagement with objects' (p. 78).

In the face of problematic normalised and normalising pragmatic readings of Heidegger, many will welcome McKinney's contribution. Whether it provides 'a new ontology of self-possessed activity' is questionable. Indeed, the approach shares some affinities with Hegel's account of self-consciousness, Wittgenstein's conception of private language and (more obviously) Habermas' work on the relationship between self-awareness, affectivity and intersubjective communicative action. The basis for divergence stems from McKinney's focus on 'attunement' [*Befindlichkeit*], which he translates as 'findingness' but can also be interpreted as 'affectivity' (Crowell 2013) and 'state-of-mind' (Braver 2014), and its concrete manifestation as 'mood' or, more literally, 'tuning' [*Stimmung*] (such as when the sound of a musical instrument changes depending on how it is tuned).[1] At a very basic level, Heidegger describes moods as 'fleeting experiences that "colour" one's whole "psychical condition"' (GA 2, p. 450). From a phenomenological point of view that McKinney adopts in his discussion of the concept of fear, moods influence how things are meaningfully encountered in the ways they are during *my* practical engagements. On the basis of moods, *my* activities express an understanding of

my own agency (p. 83). Furthermore, and this is matter that McKinney does not discuss (but Heidegger does), it is an existential-ontological condition of my capacity to interpret the world that I, *myself*, must be affectively attuned. Without attunement, any act of skilful coping would not present itself to me as intelligible. Consequently, in terms of a phenomenological reading of the concept of mood and ontological considerations of attunement, there is, as McKinney recognises, scope to innovatively extend non-Cartesian debates regarding the nature of self-consciousness.

Turning to part two of volume, in which the contributors focus specifically on the phenomenological dimension of the work of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Scheler and Patočka, Jakub Čapek's contribution exemplifies some of exegetical challenges that face traditional pragmatist readings of the phenomenological canon. On the basis of Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'perceptual faith', which describes 'how our involvement in the world precedes and sustains all perceptions, the true *and* the false' (p. 141), Čapek argues that although Dreyfus and Charles Taylor's pragmatic readings do not address 'perceptual faith' directly, their understanding of objects as mere correlates of our practical involvements, which Čapek sees as a consequence of the 'primacy of the practical' in pragmatism, generates a restricted interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's account of perceptual experience. Čapek acknowledges that Merleau-Ponty does in fact claim that perception is an engaged, interested and skilful activity that allows us to cope with the world (in contrast with the interpretation of perception as an intermediary in a two-step, realist epistemological model, whereby passive receptions of something like sense data are synthesised as representations of external objects). However, that does not mean that the objects we perceive can be completely reduced to the meanings we

accord them in our practical dealings. Even though Merleau-Ponty claims that our ontological commitments are embodied to the degree that an object is, as Čapek says, ‘a correlate of the body’, it is a feature of phenomenologically-oriented ontology that an object transcends ‘action-relevant predicates’ such that it is irreducible ‘to all that makes it a familiar part of our surroundings and of our activities’ (p. 152). In the sense that the ontology of things is dependent upon embodied perception to the degree that ‘in perception, we are directed to the things themselves, not through their appearances but to things themselves as they appear’ (p. 147), Čapek draws upon Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the transcendent dimension of ontology to argue that the latter’s account of ‘perceptual faith’ leaves room for an ‘interrogative, non-practical or disinterested’ dimension to perception (p. 143).

The only downsides to Čapek’s chapter are that he provides neither an in-depth account of the meaning of ‘the interrogative mode’ of perception (minimal references are made to perception as ‘transcend[ing] things’ and affirming ‘more things than are grasped in it’ (p. 154)) nor a discussion of how specifically pragmatic interpretations of the history of phenomenology could be revised in light of such a phenomenologically-oriented conception of disinterested perception. This is indicative of the limitations of the volume in general. Specifically, because the majority of the contributions employ interpretations of texts in the history of phenomenology to either elaborate upon or challenge more paradigmatic readings, there is little room for exploring the implications of such scholarship for debates at the forefront of contemporary phenomenology and pragmatism.



Bearing in mind the limitations imposed on the volume due to the purely hermeneutical approach taken by the majority of the authors, it should be said that James Mensch does offer interpretations of Aristotle, William James, Heidegger, Patočka, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Levinas in his contribution. But these readings are for illustrative purposes only, employed to elaborate upon the respective natures of pragmatic and theoretical attitudes in philosophy and their relationships to broader concepts of objective truth and freedom. For Mensch, what defines the pragmatic attitude is not only (as Čapek highlights in his contribution) the treatment of objects and their properties as mere correlates of practical involvements, but, more specifically, the reduction of an object's essence to instrumentality – 'its function as a means for the accomplishment of my projects' (p. 191). The pragmatic attitude is seen as particularly problematic for the philosopher 'who seeks simply to understand' (p. 194) as it results in a performative contradiction. Conversely, the theoretical attitude deals with the 'objectivity' of phenomena 'in terms of the evidence we have for what we believe about them' (p. 195), evidence that can transcend our means-ends understanding of objects. Mensch goes on to explain the relationships between the respective ontological commitments that arise from the pragmatic attitude and the theoretical attitude in terms of the concept of freedom. Following Heidegger, Mensch recognises that there are many possibilities for the intelligibility of objects and their properties, and it is up to the philosopher to choose which possibility to actualise. In short, for Mensch, freedom is an ontological condition on the basis of which philosophers choose to adopt a theoretical attitude that suspends their pragmatic concerns in order to inquire into the 'intrinsic sense' of objects *qua* their objectivity. Furthermore, whereas the pragmatic attitude does not allow the object to 'transcend the [pragmatic] conventions that govern our speaking' (p. 199), the 'intrinsic



sense' of an object does make room for such transcendence because (due to the fact that it is conceptually constituted and predicated upon intersubjective agreement) we can recognise the alterity of other objectivity claims that call my claims into question. Indeed, Mensch states that it is the alterity of the 'Other' that makes both philosophical freedom and a theoretical inquiry into the 'intrinsic sense' of things possible.

Critics would likely argue that Mensch's distinction between pragmatic attitudes and theoretical attitudes is altogether too simplistic, resulting in an argument that is explanatorily weak. Indeed, due to the reification of pragmatic and theoretical attitudes, it would be difficult to abstract any genuine pragmatic (let alone broader metaphilosophical) concerns without being charged of straw-man-building. For example, contemporary Anglo-American pragmatists would challenge the claim that the pragmatic attitude purely apprehends the essence of objects in terms of its instrumentality. For example, as Beinsteiner observes earlier in the volume, Rorty advocated both instrumental and world-disclosing dimensions of pragmatism. In addition, as already mentioned, Brandom is a pragmatist, one that, simultaneously, adopts a theoretical attitude in order to inquire into Mensch's conception of the 'intrinsic sense' of objects. Brandom is clear that not only do the contents of our concepts lay claim to how the world is, the meaning of our concepts is derived from the reasoning practices and inferential processes of discursive practitioners in the space of giving and asking for reasons. Furthermore, Brandom is also aware that freedom plays a pivotal role in the realm of contestable objectivity-claims. He argues that judgment, in terms of committing oneself to deploying concepts and, simultaneously, taking responsibility for the integration of the objectivity-claims and their associated conceptual contents with others that serve as

reasons for or against them, is a 'positive freedom' (Brandom 2009, 59). I do not have the space to expand further. Suffice it to say, however, that Brandom's inferential semantics and normative pragmatics articulates a number (if not all) of the themes that Mensch attributes to the theoretical attitude.

If Mensch's characterisation of the pragmatic attitude is representative of a concrete approach in pragmatism, then perhaps one could claim that it only holds for layer-cake readings of Heidegger. Even then, however, the likes of Dreyfus and Okrent are careful to explain the fact that what Mensch apprehends as the theoretical attitude is dependent upon, and, ultimately, derives from, our shared, practical involvements in a world that is constituted by the activities of others, rather than something we can 'choose' to adopt completely outside of our practical copings and activities (a choice, based on Mensch's account, without any causal repercussions and considerations and no rational constraint or motivation). Furthermore, whereas Mensch claims that the ontological condition of the 'Other' allows us to disclose a theoretical alternative to the pragmatically-apprehended world, the Dreyfusian tradition is well aware that we, as a skilful and absorbed copers, are 'being-with' [*Mitsein*], in the sense that when we encounter something as both meaningful and as what it is, it discloses to us those 'others' that also find the same thing meaningful in the same ways. To stress the importance of the 'Other' for the conditions of the theoretical attitude in particular, as Mensch does, is to severely misinterpret or (worse still) ignore the concept of the 'Other' in layer-cake pragmatism. This begs the question that if what Mensch defines as the pragmatic attitude does not successfully capture the complexities that surround layer-cake approaches to pragmatism, let alone contemporary pragmatism in general, then why should

pragmatically-oriented philosophers take Mensch seriously? Furthermore, why should they care? Perhaps one could argue that Mensch's chapter is a lesson in what can happen when not enough attention is paid by phenomenologists to developments in pragmatism, just as this volume as a whole discloses the problems that arise from pragmatic interpretations of the history of phenomenology.

Does the volume as a whole succeed in meeting its aims? If the aim of the volume is to offer a 'complex analysis of the pragmatic theses that are present in the works of leading phenomenological authors', then (despite the proclivity for Heidegger at the expense of other central figures from phenomenological tradition, including those that are still alive and still researching), I would say 'yes'. However, as the volume is oriented towards the relationship between pragmatism and phenomenology through interpretations of canonical works in the history of Western philosophy, there is very little meaningful discussion of the theoretical implications of the dialogue for either current phenomenologically-oriented philosophical research or the pragmatic dimensions of contemporary metaphysics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science and ethics. In this sense, the title of the volume is misleading and perhaps should be taken as 'pragmatic perspectives in *the history of phenomenology*'. Nevertheless, there are some excellent papers here that not only articulate the pragmatic turn in the history of phenomenology, but offer much-needed insight into the problems associated with long-standing pragmatic interpretations of the works of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Husserl.

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[1] Sachs also addresses the concept of attunement when he argues that affordances and solicitations (traditionally distinctive of embodied coping) should also be contextualised within the space of reasons.

📅 Wednesday January 3rd, 2018   👤 Jonathan Lewis   📁 Reviews, Volume 3 (2017)   🔖 Consciousness, Heidegger, Husserl, Intentionality, Merleau-Ponty, Normativity, Phenomenology, Pragmatism

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