

## Reflections on Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Architecture

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The official title of this volume is *Analytic Philosophy and Architecture* but the editors also encouraged contributions concerning the philosophical tradition of pragmatism, which is stationed outside the opposing encampments of analytic and continental philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I shall take up this invitation in the present essay to contribute to the topic 'Pragmatist Philosophy and Architecture'. What pragmatism is, or how we should understand it in the context of architecture, will emerge as we proceed.

The specific motivation for this essay is the appearance of two books in the first decade of the twenty-first century which both invoke the name of 'pragmatism' in expressing the hope for a new beginning in the theory and practice of architecture: William S. Saunders (ed.) *The New Architectural Pragmatism* (2007); and Joan Ockman (ed.) *The Pragmatist Imagination* (2000).<sup>2</sup> In both of these collections the name of pragmatism is associated with bringing the theory and practice, or the abstractions and the realities, of architecture into some new more intimate alignment.

Nonetheless, at first glance, Saunders and Ockman mean quite different things by the term 'pragmatism'. Saunders advocates a 'pragmatic' stance in the familiar businessman's sense that one might associate with America's famous 'can do' attitude. The OED defines it thus: 'dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations.' Pragmatism is supposed to indicate a

third way beyond the two sides of the criticality vs post-criticality debate – which concerns advocating either an architecture that takes up a discursively articulable oppositional stance to the dominant culture and an architecture which sees no point in criticising economic or political power structures and instead tries to find 'adaptive syntheses' of the multiple dynamic forces and contingencies that it inevitably confronts.<sup>3</sup>

Pragmatism in this businessman's sense indicates a way beyond this debate only in so far as it alleviates two anxieties Saunders identifies with post-criticality: 1) in the reaction against the over-intellectualised criticality of the 1990s there is a danger of going too far in the opposite direction of anti-intellectualism, an understandable but self-defeating over-reaction to a period of pseudo-intellectual abstraction; and 2) there is the danger of a mindless post-modern acquiescence in the political and economic *status quo*, the fear of an architecture too complacent and spineless in its ethical and political withdrawal to take a stand on controversial issues within the wider culture.

We might characterise the contemporary architectural scene by saying that architecture schools are slowly emerging from a period of *philosophical vampirism*, according to which they suffered from a powerful need to use philosophies of all kinds – perhaps especially fashionable continental philosophies – matched by an equally powerful disappointment, an incapacity to find any real or

lasting satisfaction in any given philosophy; or, at least, not the satisfaction originally craved. But for each philosophy rejected another philosophy was adopted and the cycle continued. That Saunders uses the word 'pragmatism' without explicitly invoking the philosophical tradition that goes by that very name is too noticeable to avoid comment. What it expresses, I take it, is an understandable suspicion of philosophy in the wake of this period of vampirism, as if it is unclear what good *any* philosophy, could do for architecture. As we will see, this suspicion of philosophy is a theme of both books. But disappointment in philosophy is the flip-side of overblown ambitions for it.

Joan Ockman's collection contrasts with the Saunders collection in explicitly invoking the classical American pragmatist tradition of Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey. But a weakness of her collection is that it allows authors to define pragmatism in very different ways without attempting to say why they belong to the same general outlook. Ockman diagnoses the malady of contemporary architecture as 'the widely acknowledged schism existing between the theory and practice of architecture today.'<sup>4</sup> It is no surprise, then, that pragmatism might seem to offer some hope for a new beginning.<sup>5</sup> One of its central themes is *the attempt to overcome the theory/practice dichotomy* – that is, a fixed metaphysical dualism about the nature of things. As we will see, that has led many to the misguided view that pragmatism solves our practical or professional problems.

In the concluding *Afterword* the American historian Casey Blake adopts a suspicious attitude towards the suggestion that pragmatism might have any significant bearing upon architecture: 'What, if anything, [does] the pragmatist imagination [have] to offer the discussions of architecture, design, urban space, and political change at this turn-of-the-century moment?' More specific questions follow: Does pragmatist epistemology-as-inquiry

issue in 'any particular political position'? Does a pragmatist aesthetics focusing on lived experience recommend 'any particular approach to architecture and urban design'? Does a pragmatist approach to the public sphere – one that treats the relation between individual and society as reciprocal and organic – involve 'a commitment to particular understandings of public space, place and scale'?<sup>6</sup>

A general suspicion of pragmatism, despite its apparent celebration, is further signaled by the absence in either volume of any contribution or critical discussion of the work of Richard Sennett, an important sociologist and urban theorist who explicitly endorses a pragmatist outlook.<sup>7</sup> His definition of pragmatism, geared to his research work on modern cities and societies, is of particular interest in the present context:

[the pragmatist] movement has dedicated itself to making philosophical sense of concrete experience [...] From its origins pragmatism addressed *the quality of experience* as well as sheer facts on the ground [...] Its animating impulse remains to engage with ordinary, plural, constructive human activities.<sup>8</sup>

Let us take this as the core component of a working definition for present purposes, one that stresses a *multi-dimensional notion of experience, a complex, contingent and uncertain reality and first-hand engagement in human practices* (echoing Marx's *praxis* but without the Hegelian baggage of an absolute reason).

Curiously, Sennett neglects to mention that the ethos of craftsmanship is at the heart of pragmatism's *democratic experimentalist* epistemology. We *craft* our system of beliefs: adjusting them to fit new facts and experiences whilst retaining as many as possible in the process. Epistemology is here re-imagined as a fallible anti-authoritarian theory of collective inquiry based on empirical experimentation animated by democratic ideals of equal respect,

openness to criticism without fear or favour, and toleration of alternative approaches and dissenting opinions. The guiding principle is that everything, including the method itself, is put to the test of experience, including the experiences of others.<sup>9</sup>

### On suspicion of (pragmatist) philosophy

As we have seen, Blake asks whether pragmatism yields any *particular* positions or understandings in the realm of architecture. He doubts whether it does and whether a pragmatist revival would have any 'immediate political payoff'. But it is worth asking whether the fault lies more with the questions he expects pragmatism to answer than with pragmatism itself.

Blake condemns pragmatism for what it cannot do because he is too sure he knows what it hopes or aspires to do. I want to question his implicit conception of its aspirations. For why should we expect or hope pragmatism – or indeed any philosophical outlook – to have *specific* architectural or political payoffs? We must ask, what is the relation between pragmatism and the questions of special concern to architecture (at least in advanced Western countries in the early twenty-first century) that Blake poses?

In the broadest terms, philosophy is reason's reflection on itself, a study of the nature and scope of reason; but also a study of its limits. If philosophy inevitably tends towards rationalism then pragmatism is a counter to that dominant tendency – a form of *empiricism*, a movement calling for a return to experience that arises time and again in the history of philosophy as a dialectical and skeptical reaction to rationalism. Pragmatism, like empiricism generally, calls attention to the depth and variety of human experience as well as the *limits* of argument. It is most assuredly not a philosophy that puts all its stock in reason, for all its undeniable importance. As William James argues, the impact of reason or the power of an argument to change one's mind depends upon what he calls one's

'intellectual temperament' which includes personal taste and sensibility, as well as one's imagination and passions.<sup>10</sup> Pragmatism is the last philosophy to think that open, informed and serious thinking about a difficult problem in architecture or anything else must lead all who engage in it to a single agreed-upon conclusion.

Pragmatism is a form of anti-dogmatism that celebrates an open plurality of specific methods, perspectives and attitudes to the world. It aims to 'let many flowers bloom' in philosophy by *not* claiming any special authority or a priori access to the truth, over and above experience, as Dewey explains:

*[Philosophy's] primary concern is to clarify, liberate, and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience. It has no call to create a world of "reality" de novo, nor to delve into secrets of Being hidden from common sense and science. It has no stock of information or body of knowledge peculiarly its own; if it does not always become ridiculous when it sets up as a rival of science, it is only because a particular philosopher happens to be also, as a human being, a prophetic man of science. Its business is to accept and to utilize for a purpose the best available knowledge of its own time and place. And this purpose is criticism of beliefs, institutions, customs, policies with respect to their bearing upon good. This does not mean their bearing upon the good, as something itself formulated and attained within philosophy. For as philosophy has no private store of knowledge or of methods for attaining truth, so it has no private access to good. As it accepts knowledge of facts and principles from those competent in science and inquiry, it accepts the goods that are diffused in human experience. It has no Mosaic or Pauline authority of revelation entrusted to it. But it has the authority of intelligence, of criticism of these common and natural goods.<sup>11</sup>*

These words are best read against the background of a certain conception of the role or function of

philosophy – one that is overlooked or not clearly in focus in the two books under discussion.

We have already briefly considered Sennett's positive characterisation of pragmatism in the setting of urban theory, and I shall return to consider it further shortly. But in order to better understand how we are to take positive characterisations of pragmatism including that of Dewey, it is worth observing that Richard Rorty, a leading neo-pragmatist, often characterises pragmatism in *negative* terms: fallibilism (the denial of absolute certainty); experimentalism (the denial of unrevisable a priori truth); anti-foundationalism; anti-essentialism; and opposition to metaphysical realism and its correspondence theory of truth.<sup>12</sup> There is an important insight here. Although such '-isms' look like doctrines they are better understood as strategies for opposing various constant tendencies of, or attitudes towards, ways of thinking. While Sennett and Dewey put a positive spin on pragmatism, it is, in an important sense, a *negative discipline*, which has the important corollary that it leaves the question at issue *open* and so invites one to think and decide for oneself how best to respond to it. Let me explain.

Pragmatism is famous for modeling philosophy on science (although as we have seen Sennett makes a good case for modeling it on craft by way of the concept of experience – a model I shall return to). But there are two quite different ways of understanding the philosophy/science relationship here: (1) one might think pragmatism, like science, issues in something akin to the *products* of scientific inquiry – namely, beliefs or theories – the thought being that all reasonable people should accept these cognitive 'products' on the grounds that they have the right evidential and critical credentials. Call this style of philosophy *philosophy-as-ideology*; (2) alternatively, one might think of pragmatism as being like science in so far as it is a socially informed activity which advocates for certain

experimental and critical *methods* of investigation. Here 'scientific' connotes anti-authoritarianism, a fallible trial and error experimentalism and openness to criticism. Call this manner of philosophy *philosophy-as-method*. I suggest we see pragmatism in this second way, as a *method* of approach, or, let us say, an *orientation* in thinking and acting as opposed to a set of doctrines.<sup>13</sup>

The great benefit of looking at pragmatism as method rather than doctrine is that it leaves one free to believe what one likes – that is, so long as one is responsible to the initiating question and the facts of the situation and all the relevant considerations that bear on them. Indeed pragmatism's theme is *freedom* for the main task is to give one techniques or suggestions for how to free oneself from perennial confusions, obstacles, and prejudices, which continually threaten to undermine or block clear unbiased reflection.<sup>14</sup> The names of these philosophical threats are familiar: *dogmatism*; *authoritarianism*; *foundationalism*; *essentialism* and *transcendent realism*. In all cases what is at issue is not this or that particular belief or theory but our misguided attitudes towards our beliefs and theories (e.g., treating them as certain, fixed, and timeless) and the explanatory pretensions we foist upon them (e.g., that certain beliefs are foundational in our system of beliefs or that they constitute an *essence* which explains *all* phenomena picked out by a certain term or that they ultimately refer to a *really* real world beyond human experience).<sup>15</sup>

Pragmatism's attitude to problem-solving is pluralistic and anti-absolutist: we must not assume there is a single *right* answer; but, more than that, we must not attempt to relieve ourselves of the responsibility to think and decide for ourselves by supposing that a 'theory' (including pragmatism itself) will solve our problems. Pragmatism leaves you free to solve the problems that face you; what it provides is an orientation, methods, rules-of-thumb,

to avoid some perennial conceptual and explanatory pitfalls. That is the point of calling it a negative discipline.

Blake is not alone in supposing that the job of philosophy is to offer an ideology which *solves* one's problems, by delivering specific answers to one's questions. Arguably philosophy-as-ideology is accepted by all parties to the criticality vs post-criticality debate given that it concerns, on the one hand, the actual production of critical architecture (Michael Hays gives Mies van der Rohe's work as an example) and, on the other, 'performance or practice', the effective production of architectural work.<sup>16</sup> But this conception of philosophy is self-deceptive and misleading. There is no theory or set of rules that will solve the difficult problems facing architecture today: the overwhelming size and complexity of large-scale structures, especially the urban environment itself (e.g. Koolhaas's 'Bigness'); the nostalgia for a sense of lost identity as a result of 'the fragmentation of communities'<sup>17</sup>; confronting how little autonomy or control the architect has in dealing with large and largely immovable political, economic and social forces; the logistical complexities in the co-ordination of so many professions and skilled workers in the design and manufacture of buildings; the disorientation resulting from the digital dematerialisation of buildings as new technologies transform walls into image-screens and virtual spaces seamlessly integrate with physical space; and the threat posed by design software and smart apps in the design and functioning of buildings.<sup>18</sup> It is quixotic to suppose that pragmatism or any philosophy or theory of architecture could solve such problems all at once and once and for all. If pragmatism is to help it is by putting one in a better – less confused, clearer, more free – position to respond to architecture's problems intelligently as they arise.

Here it is most important to distinguish 'theory' from *criticism* in the sense of intelligence-in-action.

Problems in any evaluatively rich domain like that of architecture, are not solved by abstract 'theory' (philosophy-as-ideology) but by the application in real-world circumstances of what Dewey called *intelligence*, which involves personal taste, choice and the capacity for good judgment; as well as taking responsibility for the actions that exhibit and realise this intelligence. So we must contest Robert Somol's claim '*that criticism isn't necessary*'.<sup>19</sup> Not only is criticism (intelligence) necessary, the main task of pragmatism-as-method is to make criticism *better*. Intelligence is improved by becoming more experimental and more democratic: expanding the range of those whose experience bears on one's own inquiries; and being open to wider social circles of information, reflection and criticism.

Pragmatism, as we have seen, is committed to pluralism – the idea that there is often no single solution to a given problem. But pluralism goes deeper than that. There is no one right *description* of a situation, or of a problem, either. That's a key reason why major philosophers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Iris Murdoch thought that a great deal of thinking has *already* been done in arriving at a *description of the problem* one faces.<sup>20</sup> The practical suggestion for architects is that the more time spent on articulating the problem, the less time, money and effort one will waste rushing forward to consider or, perhaps, realise possible, but what are, in retrospect, ill-considered solutions. To describe the problem in all its complexity is impossible since there is no end to it but to go beyond the current norm, according to which description of the problem is often taken for granted, will get one closer towards a range of better solutions, or, what we might think of as working hypotheses.

As Rorty never tires of saying, pragmatism calls attention to the need to invent new vocabularies, new descriptions, and the new possibilities they make available – and this is nowhere more important than

in the description of the typically inchoate problematic situation one is facing.<sup>21</sup> This gives pragmatism a freedom and flexibility completely absent from the metaphysical tradition; as well as a route to liberate oneself from the everyday metaphysics (e.g. essentialism, supernaturalism) we tend to unreflectively engage in.<sup>22</sup>

Pragmatism is not wedded to its solutions but always keeps a skeptical eye on them to make sure they are working, pulling their weight. This is an aspect of its science-inspired fallibilism. Indeed, for a pragmatist a solution – perhaps a building, a designed landscape or a plan for urban development – is a *working hypothesis* to be tested by (further) experience. Architects are in the awkward position of building their hypotheses. If they do not work it is not so easy to live with or to replace with a better hypothesis. What we need, then, is to change our attitude to misfires, mistakes and failures – to see them as fruitful steps we can learn from on the way to a better tomorrow. For example, a pragmatist strategy for architects might be to rethink the idea that a building is ever *completed*. Instead of thinking in the fixed terms of problem/solution we might see a project as always, in fact, a *work-in-progress* – able to be altered or refashioned in various ways if we come to see that as the better working hypothesis for the new conditions. The Sydney Opera House provides a good example of this new conception in action.<sup>23</sup>

Pragmatism is not, then, a quasi-scientific theory designed to answer architectural or urban problems that philosophers obviously do not have the training or expertise to solve. It is *not* a problem-solving method that provides ready-made solutions to problems of whatever sort one chooses: psychological, economic, political, architectural, and so on. It is better understood as a problem-solving *method*: a method of approach or orientation to problem-solving that allows problems to be more clearly articulated free from perennial philosophical

threats, some of which we have canvassed. It is a therapeutic reflection whose aim is *to prepare one to think better* about whatever it is one wishes to think about, e.g. a scheme for an architectural project, an urban transport problem or the design of a building detail. As Dewey explains,

If basic problems can be settled only where they arise, namely, in the cultural conditions of our associated life; if philosophy is fundamentally a criticism which brings to light these problems and gives them the clarity that springs from definite formulation; and if after formulation *philosophy can do no more than point the road intelligent action must take*, then *the greatest service any particular philosophical theory can render is to sharpen and deepen the sense of these problems.*<sup>24</sup>

Blake, then, is guilty of criticising pragmatism on the basis of a misconception about what it can realistically aim to achieve. His pragmatism is a straw man that hopelessly strives, without the requisite knowledge or experience, to be a rival to architectural criticism and practice.

Saunders's suspicion of pragmatism is better motivated. We are invited to ask whether philosophy is part of the problem – say, a form of needless and abstract hyper-intellectualism extraneous to architecture's genuine concerns – or part of the solution, precisely the kind of 'self-reflective thoughtfulness' and responsiveness in design that architecture needs?<sup>25</sup> Two things are worth noting here. One is that pragmatism is well aware of, and attempts to avoid, the disturbing tendency of academic philosophy to devolve into unenlightening scholasticism. Secondly, it is curious that the favoured terms of the new approach Saunders considers all seem to be borrowed from the pragmatist tradition: 'efficacy, innovation, and realism'; 'a healthy resistance to predetermining fixed ideas'; and 'experimentation'.<sup>26</sup> And the same goes for several other contributions to his volume. Consider, for example, Somol and Whiting's manifesto for post-criticality where we



find the following pragmatist terms being valorised: 'projection', 'performativity', 'pragmatics', 'contingencies', 'practice'.

The philosophy of pragmatism haunts Saunders's volume, unnamed. My proposal is that if we consider philosophy as orientation rather than ideology, then there is no need for skeptical reticence about invoking pragmatist philosophy in an architectural context.

### **Pragmatism and criticism: the case of Rem Koolhaas**

Let us now reconsider, from a pragmatist perspective, the criticality vs post-criticality debate, which sets the stage for both Saunders's and Ockman's collections. Rem Koolhaas seems a fitting target for this discussion given his preeminent status as an architectural critic, star architect and champion of the new post-critical movement. It is also worth remarking that he embraces several pragmatist themes himself without ever calling himself a pragmatist. Koolhaas's 'pragmatism' makes it especially interesting in the context of the present discussion to re-examine the surprising and unsettling claim that the architecture he recommends is uncritical or 'post-critical'.

*Delirious New York* (1978), Rem Koolhaas's retroactive manifesto for Manhattan, and the later *S,M,L,XL* (1995), can both be read as expressing a pragmatist vision of architecture.<sup>27</sup> The architectural condition Koolhaas calls *Manhattanism*, which is further elaborated in his 'theory of Bigness', is articulated in terms of the key pragmatist ideas of uncertainty, contingency, experimental social arrangements and the condition of not-knowing or, put otherwise, our need to make things up as we go along. Koolhaas argues that the new scale of architecture in modern mega-cities renders large-scale architecture and urban design uncontrollable. Consequently, old 'issues of composition, scale, proportion, detail are now moot'.<sup>28</sup> The effects

of Bigness are thus uncertain, both at the level of programme and as an effective and affective element of an urban environment. The moral for the architect is that there is no theory, no science, no ethics – in short, no knowledge – that is available to the architect to solve his or her problems in the new 'culture of congestion'.<sup>29</sup> Koolhaas's skepticism about architectural knowing fits well with the pragmatist tradition that focuses more on actual practices of successful making (craftsmanship) rather than an abstract, fixed and universal 'knowledge'.

But rather than experience this loss of the certainty and stability of knowledge as a tragedy, a key feature of Koolhaas's new polemical vision is the frenetic enthusiasm with which he expunges the dream of certainty, knowledge and control to revel in a new age of experiment and surprise. In epistemological terms this might be seen as analogous to replacing the Cartesian dream of absolutely certain knowledge that inaugurated modern philosophy with the fallibilism and experimentalism of pragmatism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In aesthetic terms it is an argument within post-Kantian aesthetics for prioritising sublimity over beauty. Koolhaas articulates a new architectural sublime, which finds a delirious pleasure in the incomprehensible 'bigness' of New York's urban environment – which, from the perspective of traditional architecture, is terrifying for the very same reason.<sup>30</sup>

Of particular importance for our purposes is Koolhaas's sense that one must destroy once and for all the nostalgic idea of an architecture that presumes to offer ideological opposition to the economic and political realities of capitalism. Koolhaas sees architecture and urbanism as inevitably having to accommodate themselves to contemporary economic and political forces. Its message to architects is that they are not to work nostalgically and hopelessly against capitalism but to fully develop whatever new possibilities there are

for the creation of 'territories with potential', and of 'enabling fields that accommodate... [indefinite] form[s]', 'discovering unnameable hybrids', and 'endless intensifications and diversifications' within the existing conditions of contemporary society. On this basis Koolhaas concludes that '[architects and urbanists] have to dare to be utterly uncritical'.<sup>31</sup>

As I read him Koolhaas has here fallen into the fallacy of oppositional thinking that has come to typify the criticality vs post-criticality debate. Since he wants to challenge the wholesale rejection of capitalism in the critical traditions inspired by Marx he finds himself denying the relevance of criticism for architecture *in general*. Criticality has to be opposed by an equally totalising uncriticality. Hence the term that is used to describe his stance: *post-criticality*. But why this extremism?

There is no inconsistency in thinking that while architecture must make 'strategic realignments' and adopt 'compromised positions' in its relation to capitalist power it can, indeed *must*, remain critical – even if not in the starkly oppositional sense that Koolhaas means to reject.<sup>32</sup> Pragmatism allows us to see why. When Dewey speaks of '[philosophy's] primary concern [...] to clarify, liberate, and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience' it should be noted that he means to include the goods that inhere in our experience of globalised corporate capitalism and of flawed democracies as represented by, paradigmatically, the USA.

The pragmatist outlook rejects any overarching Hegelian story about reason-in-history or any universalist conception of the good that sees capitalism as inherently and unalterably alienating or as an irrevocable social pathology. Absolutism and universalism are familiar examples of rationalistic metaphysical thinking that pragmatism works hard to oppose. Only when they are cleared away can we free ourselves to see capitalism and democracy

not as something fixed once and for all but, like any other dynamic social or political structures, capable of change, evolution and improvement.

Capitalism is an umbrella term standing for a range of different possible systems of private property, corporate capitalism being only one. And even contemporary corporate capitalism is not homogeneous but manifests a multiplicity of heterogeneous forces. One can expose and criticise the wrongs and disvalues of capitalism in order to help alleviate social injustices and inequalities and to better realise actual and latent goods in the present situation. Here, skepticism of the temptations of metaphysical thinking (in this case, monism and absolutism) plays an indispensable role in making available the option of criticising capitalist society from *within* in order to overcome its shortcomings and to manifest its goods. The work of pragmatism in this context is to clarify, criticise and overcome wrongs and to clarify, liberate and extend goods within capitalist society.

'Everything we do and say is critical', Koolhaas has remarked, 'but architecture itself can't be critical of anything'.<sup>33</sup> Despite acknowledging the ubiquity of criticism, Koolhaas hopelessly attempts to quarantine architecture into a distinct realm of uncriticality by way of the artificial distinction of architecture and architect, product and producer. Apparently, this is the only way he can find to express a pragmatist desire for architecture to be understood in relation to *actual* (as opposed to merely imagined or idealised) circumstances; and to oppose an old image of mythical power and control for a new image of experimental intervention, however modest or limited, within an environment of largely uncontrollable social, economic and political forces.

To return architecture to the realm of praxis Koolhaas is fully justified in rejecting intellectual positions that recommend disengagement from current economic and political conditions and that consequently lack any genuine efficacy. But an



architecture that works within the conditions that it cannot avoid need not be uncritical, as Koolhaas and the champions of post-criticality influenced by him suppose. Post-criticality is a myth. It is really a criticism of a certain style of criticism mislabelled as post-criticism. What needs clarification, however, is the way a work of architecture *can* be critical since it clearly cannot model itself on discursive revolutionary criticism of which Marx's *Communist Manifesto* is perhaps the most famous example.

I suggest we reread the criticality vs post-criticality debate as not really about the possibility of a critical architecture but about the *form* criticism takes in the contemporary situation where the architect is confronted by the problems of not-knowing, minimal autonomy and yet, in spite of everything, the desire to create. This is really a question about architectural *agency*: how can an architect have a *voice* in the production of buildings, landscapes, urban plans and so forth, where the relevant information to take account of is overwhelming in range and complexity and one is working alongside other professions (engineers, builders, joiners, interior designers, project managers, landscape designers etc.) under economic and political conditions over which there is little, if any, control?

Michael Hays, a leading defender of criticality, has convincingly argued that we must locate the architectural agent somewhere in the conceptual space between the extremes of autonomous creation of form and agential nihilism – the fanciful notion that an architect is a mere ‘cog’ in a vast cultural mechanism. Although they differ in matters of sensibility, style and emphasis, it is hard to see how Somol and Whiting – leading proponents of post-criticality – *could* disagree with this characterisation. Surely they do not advocate the ‘death of the architect’ or, if they do, that has about as little plausibility as the ‘death of the author’ of French structuralist literary criticism.<sup>34</sup>

It has to be admitted, however, that Hays muddies the waters by employing the term ‘oppositional’ to characterise criticality.<sup>35</sup> This makes the difference between his position and that of Somol and Whiting appear starker than it might be. The important point is that a critical architecture need not be an oppositional architecture. Indeed one of the primary functions of criticism is to propose new solutions to problems by recommending ‘alternative (not necessarily oppositional) arrangements and scenarios’, as Somol and Whiting usefully put it.<sup>36</sup> Effective melioristic interventions into what is, inevitably, a dynamic social system do not require a radical opposition or overthrow of existing institutions or power structures.<sup>37</sup>

Koolhaas and his post-critical followers are right that neo-Marxist hopes of a revolutionary architecture (more extreme in its opposition to the *status quo* than anything Hays envisioned) is mere wishful thinking rather than productive engagement in the built environment and the complex web of forces that meet there. Richard Rorty sums up the pragmatist attitude towards neo-Marxism and other revolutionary ‘solutions’ to the problems of corporate capitalism by remarking, ‘there is no science of history, nor any big discovery (by Marx or anyone else) of the one right, proper, adequate, context in which to place unemployment, mafias, merchants of death, globalized labour markets and the rest.’<sup>38</sup> But the alternative to the oppositional model is not acquiescence in a passive post-critical malaise. What we need is a new model for ‘a practice [that] would find material for experimentation, critique, and theoretical speculation in the methods and procedures of day-to-day architectural practice’, as Stan Allen articulates it.<sup>39</sup> Where is such a model to be found?

### **The architect and the ethos of craft**

One promising proposal is to see architecture as a craft as Sennett articulates it in *The Craftsman* (2008). Sennett argues for a conception of craft

that transcends the instrumental, its value not being exhausted in satisfying some pre-determined function. The book's guiding idea is that *making is thinking*. Indeed we could expand this formula to say, *making is thinking and valuing*, according to which the product made inevitably expresses certain thoughts and values.<sup>40</sup>

The question how a profession like architecture (or science or business...) can be ethically or politically engaged can seem more difficult to answer than it is when asked against the background of an assumed fact/value dichotomy – another metaphysical obstacle to clear thinking. But, as James and Dewey convincingly argued, facts presuppose values of all kinds (e.g. cognitive, aesthetic, ethical, political).<sup>41</sup> As Sennett remarks, regarding the ethos of craft, 'Pragmatism wants to emphasize the value of asking ethical questions during the work process; it contests after-the-fact ethics, ethical enquiry beginning only after facts on the ground are fixed.'<sup>42</sup> The same goes for cognitive, political, aesthetic or religious values. Max Weber's misconception of science as a value-free activity has had an undeserved influence on the culture because it simply overlooks the obvious fact that science itself is a *value-laden activity*, whose importance depends on realising the *value* of objectivity, not to mention the democratic values involved in collective scientific inquiry.<sup>43</sup> As Charles Peirce, the original instigator of pragmatism, was one of the first to see, scientific inquiry – our paradigm of discovering facts – is a collaborative social activity that depends on instituting democratic *values* of open communication, freedom from dictatorial authorities, equal respect for others and toleration of criticism.<sup>44</sup>

Overcoming the fact/value dichotomy is only one example of a pragmatist method Sennett invokes to good effect: that is, the method of rejecting fixed metaphysical dualisms, and putting in their place, as required, flexible occasion-sensitive distinctions. From a pragmatist perspective, we can allow that

although for certain purposes we might be able to draw a conceptual distinction between certain facts (e.g. urban population densities, the circulation patterns of a building) and certain values (e.g. beauty, justice, equality of opportunity), there is no hard and fast and universal fact/value duality written into the nature of things.<sup>45</sup>

Contemporary architecture is wedded to a genius (or 'star') model of production that stresses individual creativity, the ruthlessness of rankings and the impossibility of explaining the creative process. The mystery of creation is precisely what the term 'genius' is used to connote; as well as the completeness of the finished 'work' – not just a solution but *the* solution. The craft model, alternatively, stresses the value of cooperative endeavor, shared experience and collective trial and error; as well as the adaptability of the 'work' over time.<sup>46</sup>

Architecture has a unique and curious position in the history of aesthetics since it is for many, an oxymoron: an art *and* a craft! Much has been written about the intense paradoxicality of this condition – the clash between the Kantian idea of art as a 'useless' object of disinterested contemplation and architectural functionality, being a useful object of human habitation.<sup>47</sup> But, note, this problem *only* arises if we accept the post-romantic idea that there is an exclusive *ontological* distinction between art-objects and craft-objects.

Pragmatism usefully clarifies the conceptual landscape here by making clear that the distinction between art and craft is really a distinction at the level of *conception*. To think of it as an ontological distinction leads to the traditional confusion about the status of architecture we have just considered.<sup>48</sup> But there is nothing untoward about the very same object – a building, say – qualifying as art *and* as craft in so far as it fulfills the different aesthetic and social functions that each of these terms designate: say, that art *feels* like it makes the kind of

sense that demands articulation but, somehow, it makes more sense than we can put into words; whereas craft involves the skillful making of things which, at a minimum, satisfy certain predetermined ends.<sup>49</sup> Both have expressive powers, so there is no conceptual obstacle to the idea that architecture expresses thoughts and values (e.g. of the architect as artist or craftsman, or of a tradition or culture). Of course, like any other expressive medium, its power to communicate particular thoughts and values depends upon how critically attuned and sensitively appreciative its audience or users are.

As Sennett argues, pragmatism encourages us to think of 'experience as a craft', one that turns subjective feelings into objective (in this case meaning *inter-subjective*) values as one learns to skillfully master the impersonal standards of good craftsmanship.<sup>50</sup> *Experience* is a key term in pragmatist philosophy. The pragmatist treats experience itself as a site of *work*: one needs to learn which of one's hunches to trust – or, to use other metaphors, to develop an eye, ear, or nose for the valuable features of things – returning to re-experience persons, places, objects or relationships that excite our interest, however fleeting or inchoate, in order to better appreciate the ideas or values they express or excite. Learning to attend to the differences or discriminations that matter to us – which is, incidentally, what the eighteenth century aesthetic term 'taste' is all about – is a requirement for being able to clearly articulate these experiences, to make them communicable. In other words, one has to learn to learn from experience, including the experience of others.

There are four aspects to this process of learning to learn from experience that are of particular relevance to the practice of architecture: 1) *alert receptivity* – without the imaginary (fixed? a priori?) knowledge of theory, the architect must be attentively receptive to the multiple and dynamic demands, forces and constraints at

work in the project – its full circumstances.<sup>51</sup> Such awareness is a precondition for the potent critical act of description of the problem, which is the fundamental starting point of any project or proposal; 2) *particularity of the problem* – like a craftsman, an architect should regard the problem that confronts him or her at a certain time and place as unique, taking account of a very particular and complex web of conditions and relationships. This is part of the reason that there is no ready-made (rule-governed, formula-driven, computational) solution to an architectural problem. Like a craftsman, an architect must put trust in her past experience and the set of embodied skills that grow out of it, and the good judgment one acquires to deal creatively with the problem at hand – including, of course, good judgment about the use of technology in the design process; 3) *improvisation* – since the problem is unique (to some extent at least) there is inevitably a degree of improvisation required. And in improvising one leaves something of oneself (not necessarily something personal) in inanimate things. 4) *quality* – good work is always critical.<sup>52</sup> Learning to discern good work is fundamental since good craftsmanship (in the widest sense) manifests intelligence, the skillful negotiation of many factors and conditions in the creation of something impressive, noble, or beautiful that did not exist before.

I have distinguished philosophical theories/ ideologies from *criticism* in the sense of experimental intelligence, something that we can all be credited with but which, at the same time, can be improved upon through pragmatist methodology and heuristics. As the literary critic William Hazlitt said, 'We are nothing if not critical'.<sup>53</sup> From the pragmatist perspective all action, even habitual action, is permeated by criticism – though an agent need not be (fully) aware of that; and it may not be, often will not be, criticism at its best.<sup>54</sup> So when Saunders says: 'The central question is whether architects who in their work try to resist and criticize the norms of the general contemporary culture/society are

engaged in a futile and self-deluding activity',<sup>55</sup> we must answer, emphatically, *no!* What is futile and self-deluded is for an architect to expect pragmatism or any philosophy or theory to solve his or her problems in producing architecture. And if it did do that there would be no architecture because there would be no *architect* responsible for it.

Confusion about the role of philosophy or theory leads architects to embrace two misguided ideas: that philosophy can play no useful role in the production of architecture; and that unless one declares explicit allegiance to some ideology one is post-critical, beyond the bounds of criticism. The first misses the distinction I have drawn between philosophy-as-ideology and philosophy-as-method. The second overlooks the fact that we are always already critical. But being unaware of this fact or being uncertain or unconfident or confused about it makes it seem as if a post-critical stance is a possibility, perhaps even desirable. It also leads architects away from the pragmatist's central task (modeled on that of the craftsman) to work on their own experience, and improve upon their own experimental and social intelligence-in-action.<sup>56</sup> Architecture is the embodied expression of intelligence-in-action in response to one's experience of the needs and opportunities of the built environment.

The genius model of architectural production is partly to blame for this situation where architecture is unsure of itself since it is only the star architect who has the freedom to create as they wish – most architects perhaps feeling they lack the requisite freedom from constraint to truly express themselves. The genius is also the one who creates completed works of art, by a process that, from the point of view of others trying to learn from their example, is a total enigma. What tends to get valorised are contingencies of fame (e.g. that one architect wins a prize when another, equally deserving, doesn't), flashes of artistic inspiration, and the immutability of the 'work' – architecture in its mode of art. The

patient effort of intelligence applied to the particular problem at hand in all its experienced complexity and conditionedness and temporality – architecture in its mode of craft – tends to be overlooked. In this circumstance pragmatism can help to make the architect's implicit intelligence explicit, to make it more experimental, more democratic, and more articulate. And in the context of Sennett's articulation of a craft ethos for contemporary society, pragmatism can work to enliven our sense of the *value* of intelligence (i.e. criticism in the best sense).

Let me conclude by noting that when the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century, Ludwig Wittgenstein, wanted a symbol to stand for a body of careful critical thinking he employed an image of architecture as craft,

In the elder days of art,  
Builders wrought with greatest care  
Each minute and unseen part,  
For the gods are everywhere.<sup>57</sup>

## Notes

Thanks to Ursa Komac for encouraging me to pursue these ideas.

1. It is, in fact, not easy to distinguish analytic and continental philosophy in terms of content or historical influences. Analytic philosophy, long considered to be ahistorical and obsessed with science and logic, now takes an interest in art and culture no less than in the history of philosophy, including its own. And Kant, often seen as the godfather of continental philosophy, is also an important influence on the analytic tradition. The differences, then, are mostly matters of style and presentation; although it remains true that many analytic philosophers do not make contact with the post-Kantian Idealist tradition that plays a key role in continental thought.
2. Joan Ockman, ed., *The Pragmatist Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000); William S. Saunders, ed., *The New Architectural*

*Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

3. A paradigmatic statement of critical architecture is K. Michael Hays, 'Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form', *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 14–19. The post-critical position is perhaps best expressed by Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, 'Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism', *Perspecta* 33, *Mining Autonomy* (2002): 72–77.
4. Joan Ockman 'Pragmatism/Architecture: The Idea of the Workshop Project' in Joan Ockman, ed., *The Pragmatist Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000), 16–23, 16.
5. The philosophical tradition of pragmatism is characterised by several distinct historical manifestations: classical pragmatism (Charles Peirce, William James, John Dewey) which we might date from the publication of William James's *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* in 1907; post-1970s neo-pragmatism (e.g., Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam); and post-1990s linguistic pragmatism (e.g., Robert Brandom, Huw Price). Henceforth I will use the term 'pragmatism' to refer to the philosophical movement as a whole without specific attention to these sub-categories.
6. Casey Blake, 'Afterword: What's Pragmatism Got To Do With It?' in *The Pragmatist Imagination*, 266–7.
7. See, in particular, the section titled 'Conclusion: The Philosophical Workshop' in Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 286–291.
8. *Ibid.*, 286–287, emphasis added.
9. What we should be careful to avoid are classical pragmatist theories of truth. In philosophy, originally the label 'pragmatism' meant a commitment to a broadly empiricist conception of meaningfulness that Peirce called 'the pragmatic maxim': 'Consider what [sensible] effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these [sensible] effects is the whole of our conception of these objects.' (Charles Peirce, ed. Justus Buchler, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York: Dover, 1965), 31). In essence it says that meaning is a matter of verification conditions, which are public, sharable and have practical consequences. Many people today associate pragmatism with the application of this maxim to the concept of *truth*, namely: Peirce's convergence theory of truth; and James's instrumental theory of truth. Since both these theories have serious flaws I see no reason to focus on this historical aspect of pragmatism's early reception when characterising it as a living philosophy today. For further discussion see David Macarthur, 'A Kant-Inspired Vision of Pragmatism as Democratic Experimentalism', in Gabriele Gava and Robert Stern, eds., *Pragmatism, Kant & Transcendental Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2015), 67–84.
10. William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1907), 11.
11. John Dewey, *Later Works, vol. 1: Experience and Nature*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston and Larry Hickman (Charlottesville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985[1925]), 304–305. Emphasis added.
12. See Richard Rorty, 'Introduction – Relativism: Finding and Making' in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (London: Penguin, 1999), xvii–xxxii.
13. For further elaboration of this idea see Macarthur, 'A Kant-Inspired Vision'.
14. Dewey's position is summed up in this remark: '[philosophy's] chief function is to free men's minds from bias and prejudice and to enlarge their perceptions of the world about them.' *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920), 21.
15. I read the contemporary pragmatist, polemicist and social critic Cornel West as sharing this outlook concerning the mission of pragmatism when he speaks of 'enabling methodological insights that facilitate history writing and cultural analyses of specific past and present architectural practices, not ontological and epistemological conclusions that promote mere avant-gardist posturing'. 'Race and Architecture', in *The Cornel West Reader* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 462.
16. Somol and Whiting, 'Notes around the Doppler Effect', 75.

17. David Kolb, 'Has Architecture Lost its Bearings?' The text is a talk given at a Philosophy and Architecture Conference in Boston in 2012: <http://www.dkolb.org>
18. Maria Lorena Lehman. *Sensing Architecture*, 2012, <http://sensingarchitecture.com>
19. Quoted in Saunders, *New Architectural Pragmatism*, x.
20. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958 [1953]); and Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge, 1970).
21. See Richard Rorty, 'Introduction' in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).
22. For further discussion see David Macarthur, 'Metaphysical Quietism and Everyday Life', in G. D'Oro & S. Overgaard, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Philosophical Methodology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 270–296.
23. Jørn Utzon won the design competition for the building in 1957; it was still under construction when Utzon was forced to resign, after a change of government, in 1966. The plans were significantly altered and the building completed under the direction of Peter Hall in 1973. Since 1999, with input from Utzon and his son Jan, various modifications to the building (e.g. the Utzon Room, a refurbished Western Foyer) have been made in the interests of public accessibility and expanded utility.
24. John Dewey, 'Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder', in *Later Works: vol. 14*, 89. Emphases added.
25. Saunders, 'Introduction: Accept, Resist, or Infect? Architecture and Contemporary Capitalism' in *New Architectural Pragmatism*, vii–xvii, xi.
26. *Ibid.*, xiv–xv.
27. Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); and *S, M, L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995).
28. Koolhaas, *S, M, L, XL*, 500.
29. Rem Koolhaas, "Life in the Metropolis" or "Culture of Congestion", *Architectural Design* vol. 47, no. 5 (August 1977), 319–325.
30. Koolhaas writes, 'Manhattanism is the only program where the efficiency intersects with the sublime.' *Delirious New York*, 174.
31. Koolhaas, *S, M, L, XL*, 970–971.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Quoted from an interview with Jonathan Glancey in the *Guardian*, 7 October 2011.
34. Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977). Barthes's claim that 'the author is dead' (i.e. that the author of a text is irrelevant to its critical interpretation) depends on two outmoded ideas: 1) a Cartesian conception of intentions as 'private' prior plans in the mind of the author; and 2) a monistic view of literary interpretation according to which the meaning of a literary work is given by the author intentions at the time of its composition (i.e. the author as the 'God' of his or her text – so that the death of the author is the death of the author-as-God). We might say Barthes makes the mistake of treating his (quite correct) criticism of a traditional and influential conception of the author as criticism of the author as such.
35. Hays defines 'critical architecture' in two different ways: (1) as 'one resistant to the self-confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time'; and (2) as one 'that claims for itself a place between the efficient representation of preexisting cultural values and the wholly detached autonomy of an abstract formal system'. In this paper I exploit the possibility that one might support the second of these conceptions while rejecting the first oppositional conception. Unlike the first, the second allows for re-evaluation, change and improvement of existing cultural values without having to resist them outright.
36. Somol and Whiting, 'Notes around the Doppler Effect', 75.
37. For example, Nadir Lahiji proposes a neo-Marxist recovery of radical political thought as the best critical response to the capitalist condition of alienation within which architecture becomes a mere image of



- corporate power; everything and everyone being reduced to commodities. While pragmatists like Dewey think the problems of capitalism, alienation and marketing are real enough they question the proposed neo-Marxist solution for its inefficacious romantic idealism. 'Philosophy and Architecture: Encounters and Missed Encounters, Idols and Idolatries' in *The Missed Encounter of Radical Philosophy with Architecture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
38. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 220–221.
  39. Stan Allen, 'Stocktaking 2004: Questions about the Present and Future of Design' in Saunders, *The New Architectural Pragmatism*, 101–106, 103.
  40. It would be totally missing Sennett's point to see in his proposal a nostalgic call for a return to old world craft-making, medieval guilds or an age before machines. His book concerns the articulation of a craft *ethos* that is equally applicable to the modern technologically advanced workplace, e.g. Linux open-source programmers are appealed to as contemporary realisation of this ethos.
  41. Of course, values also presuppose facts, e.g. about the human animal and our basic needs, what sustains us, what brings us pleasure and pain and so on.
  42. Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 295–296.
  43. Max Weber, 'Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy' [1904] in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, ed. and trans. E. A. Shils and H. A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949). The point about the value-ladenness of science is elaborated in David Macarthur, 'Science and the Value of Objectivity' in Giancarlo & Sarin Marchetti, eds., *Facts and Values: The Ethics and Metaphysics of Normativity* (London: Routledge, 2016).
  44. Charles Peirce, 'The Fixation of Belief' in *Philosophical Writings*, 5–22.
  45. Sennett's conception of craft as an ethos also challenges the following potentially metaphysical dualisms in a similar spirit: theory vs practice; science vs art; head vs hands; work vs play; technique vs expression; and art vs craft. Whether a distinction is metaphysical or not depends largely on its explanatory pretensions.
  46. Here the creative process, if not always or even usually communicable by way of language, is to some extent transmissible through the training, rules of thumb and hints that a master provides an apprentice – which may involve an appeal to non-linguistic resources like diagrams, models, demonstrations, repetitive practice exercises, etc.
  47. See, for instance, Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997).
  48. Adolf Loos, for example, thought that *because* architecture is craft it *cannot* also be art – exceptions being tombs and monuments that play a symbolic role. See his 'Architecture' [1910] in *Adolf Loos: On Architecture*, ed. Daniel and Adolf Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 2007), 73–85.
  49. This is my rubric for art, which I realise is controversial. For the present point please substitute your favourite definition of art – so long as it is not an essentialist (i.e. metaphysical) definition.
  50. Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 288.
  51. Without the pragmatist attitude of testing one's theories against experience (in a broad and collective sense) on what basis should anyone accept a given 'theory'?
  52. Joan Ockman, who shares certain features of the pragmatist outlook on architecture that I am recommending, writes, 'The complexities of contemporary practice demand not only strategic realism, but also critical discernment and conscience. Indeed, while architects have a minimal responsibility to do no harm, they many also aspire to do some good'. 'One for the Sandpile', in *Journal of Architectural Education*, vol. 62 no. 3, (2009): 26–27, 99, 27. My only problem with this remark is that aspiring to do good is not something *additional* to criticism; it is part of the *point* of criticism.
  53. Quoted in David Bromwich, *Romantic Critical Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 9.
  54. Michael Speaks appeals to a notion of 'design intelligence' that aligns remarkably well with Deweyan 'experimental intelligence' as I have explained it. He writes: 'Intelligence is today the source of all value added and consequently the source of all that is

innovative [...] it is design intelligence, that “unseen” array of techniques, relationships, dispositions and other intangibles that allow post vanguard practices to innovate by learning from and adapting to instability’. Michael Speaks, ‘Design Intelligence: Part 1: Introduction’ in *Architecture and Urbanism* vol. 12 no. 387 (2002): 11–18. But Speaks goes on to say that intelligence is *not* a philosophical or specialised theory of anything. This is true enough but we must remember that philosophy-as-orientation precisely depends upon improving intelligence.

55. Saunders, ‘Introduction’ in *New Architectural Pragmatism*, vii.
56. Dewey once described philosophy as ‘a criticism of criticisms’. *Experience and Nature*, 298.
57. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, revised 2nd ed., trans. Peter Winch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 39. Wittgenstein, who in the early 1930s was listed in the Viennese city records as an architect, toyed with the idea of using these words of the poet Longfellow as a motto for his most famous work, the posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations*.

### **Biography**

David Macarthur is an Associate Professor in the Philosophy Department at the University of Sydney. He works at the interface of contemporary pragmatism, Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language and psychology and the philosophy of art. In addition to these topics, he has published articles in leading philosophy journals and books on liberal naturalism, metaphysical quietism, skepticism, common sense, perception, ordinary language, philosophy of architecture, and philosophy of photography and film.