

INTRODUCTION:

ON ART, SELF AND PHILOSOPHY IN A PRAGMATIST MANNER

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Pragmatism is an extremely rich philosophical movement, and it is not only the consequence of the lack of canonized directives and rules, but also that of its experiential approach. In this issue we are showing two small slices of this philosophical abundance when we devote separate chapters to art and self with descriptions and discussions of general pragmatist questions in the background.

In pragmatism the philosophy of art began essentially with Dewey's *Art as Experience* whose ideas were developed later in different directions (Rorty, Shusterman, etc.). In this issue Roberta Dreon argues on a Deweyan basis that freedom is not enough for a good life, for we also need aesthetic aspects. Richard E. Hart's paper offers a pragmatist interpretation of Charles Johnson's work, an award-winning African-American author of novels, short stories, critical reviews and philosophical essays. He demonstrates on Johnson's collection *Soulcatcher* why his views can be called "critical pragmatism." Csaba Olay focuses on the question of refusal of a profound difference between works of art and products of popular culture. He claims that Shusterman's argumentation against this distinction is not conclusive and makes efforts to prove this difference on the basis of Adorno's and Arendt's philosophy. John Ryder shows how we can grasp the active and manipulative dimension of experience through Justus Buchler's theory of judgment. Accepting his categorization of assertive, exhibitiv and active judgment, Ryder believes that we will be able to understand art and artworks much better. Ken Stickers throws light on American philosophy, on the anarchist tradition in particular from the point of view of "arts of living." As he emphasizes, "such figures as Thoreau, Goldman, and Henri, thus provides those interested in

the notions of an 'artistry of life' and 'care of the self,' such as Foucault recovers from the ancients in his last writings, with rich resources. Moreover, the aesthetics of existence, or 'arts of living,' provide another example of how American philosophy developed important philosophical themes well in advance of the continent."

The self is an eternal topic of philosophy, since it is a theoretical self-reflection of the human being and already the first Greek philosophers claimed that understanding ourselves is the first step to the good life (*gnothi seauton*). What is more, Socrates also argued that "unexamined life is not worth living." It is beyond question that theoretically we can understand ourselves well only within the whole of Being, but this does not exclude the particular examinations of the self. James Campbell examines James's interpretation of moral growth and compares its individual and social aspects. Alexander Kremer focuses on the narrative and internarrative identity theory of the self as they manifest themselves in Rorty's and Shusterman's neo-pragmatism. Roman Madzia criticizes Mead's concept of the self on the basis of some contemporary interpretations of Husserl's phenomenology of self-awareness. He claims that self and self-awareness are not exclusively products of social interaction as Mead held it, there is rather a primitive bodily self-awareness as a precondition of social interactions which create our self.

The basis of these applications of pragmatism can always be found in more general philosophical questions and answers. These are the questions of the philosophy of history and that of epistemology and ontology. I am convinced that every philosopher must have some kind of ontological theory even if it exists in a latent form in the case of those philosophers who deny the necessity (or the possibility) of a detailed, particular ontology. The reason for this is quite simple: everybody already has a so called ontological principle in his or her world view which is actually an answer to the question, "What is the world like in itself?" If every normal individual has an

answer to this question in his or her world view, then why would the situation be different in the case of philosophers? Miklos Nyiro carries out a thorough comparison between pragmatic naturalism and philosophical hermeneutics within the frame of their non-representationalist paradigm. He takes into account Dewey's and Buchler's naturalism on the one hand and Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutics on the other. After enumerating the main similarities and differences and presenting a short genealogy of their non-representationalism, he describes their relationship with a special emphasis on truth, justification, event and interpretation. Emil Visnovsky examines the relationship between modernity and pragmatism. He claims that pragmatism is not simply the child of modernity, but it is a "type of modern practical philosophy" which, as Habermas formulated it, "embraces modernity in its most radical forms and acknowledges its contingencies, without sacrificing the very purpose of Western philosophy."

If we take to these interesting philosophical papers the two excellent book reviews of Mark A. Halawa and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroński I can be certain that every lover of pragmatism will find some delicacy in this issue.