Foreword

As we near the millennium, Western philosophy is fragmented to an unprecedented degree. Analytic philosophy no longer dominates the anglophone world. Western Europe is no longer dominated by phenomenology or hermeneutics. The philosophical profession has become so splintered that no philosophical movement enjoys a dominant position. However, if any “ism” can be said to be moving toward dominance, it is pragmatism. The reasons for this are many, too many to explain here. Surely one reason is that economically, politically, militarily, and culturally, the U.S. today is the most influential nation in the world, and approximately half of the academic philosophers on the planet teach in American colleges and universities. It should surprise no one that the American philosophical tradition is treated with increasing respect. But there are other reasons intrinsic to the special intellectual problems of philosophy and related to immediately preceding philosophical tendencies. Some of these reasons were explored in Richard Rorty’s landmark book of 1979, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. In 1979, however, no one anticipated how many different sorts of philosophers would embrace pragmatism—not to mention those philosophers unwilling to embrace pragmatism but compelled to publish lengthy critiques of it. Moreover, the participants in this debate have not been limited to members of the philosophical profession. There is no discipline in the humanities and social sciences that has not recently contributed numerous proponents and critics of pragmatism. I hazard a conservative guess that, if a bibliography of pragmatism since 1979 were prepared, it would contain thousands of books and tens of thousands of articles. This massive and still growing interest in pragmatism is one of the reasons that an annotated bibliography (1898-1940) is needed. In his Introduction below, John R. Shook mentions other compelling reasons. Let me add to his litany.

Scholars working today in pragmatism often, indeed usually, are seriously confused about how what they are doing is related to the work of “classical pragmatists.” It is commonplace, for example, for philosophers and non-philosophers alike to suppose erroneously that Rorty’s pragmatism is fundamentally the same as the pragmatism of Dewey. Use of this bibliography should discourage that misconception; it should also discourage the equally serious misconception that every clever argument concerning pragmatism presented today is original and not to be found in the early literature. Most important, this volume will be a powerful aid in the development of the pragmatist tradition. Philosophers with a clear understanding of how they stand in relation to classical pragmatism will be in a strong position to build on and contribute to that tradition.
In concluding these remarks I must acknowledge the stupendous labor, as tedious as it was intellectually demanding, of Shook, E. Paul Colella, Lesley Friedman, Frank X. Ryan, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis. Academic philosophers are notoriously unwilling to undertake major bibliographical projects; they condescendingly suppose that such work should be done by historians and librarians. Philosophy, for this reason, is in a sorry bibliographical state compared to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Even where philosophical bibliographies exist, they are rarely as painstakingly and helpfully annotated as this one. Everyone with a serious interest in philosophy and its history should be grateful to these five academic philosophers for their willingness to do an important job in the face of professional disdain.

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