Pragmatic Accounts of Belief and Truth:
A Response to Aaron Zimmerman's *Belief: A Pragmatic Picture*

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E‑rrol Morris, the documentary filmmaker at whom Kuhn once threw an ashtray,[1] tells the story of Sviatoslav Richter, the concert pianist, and his pink plastic lobster.[2] It seems that, for a period in the early 1970s, Richter—who was suffering from depression—would bring a pink plastic lobster with him backstage before his performances. The lobster's presence, Richter wrote to his aunt, was necessary for him to perform (the lobster was in a box, so not obvious or alarming to others) despite making him feel a bit of a "fool." Morris imagines Richter's internal dialogue: "The lobster is a security blanket, a crutch. . . . It's only because I think I need the lobster that I really need it. But if I think I need the lobster, don't I really need it?"[3] As Morris notes:

> Isn't it enough that he thinks he needs the lobster? Isn't that the same thing as needing the lobster—thinking that you need something in order to do something? . . . Being able to do something means thinking, believing that you are able to do it. It's not enough to have the skill to play the piano. Something more is needed.[4]

That something more is *belief.*

 I think it's pretty obvious that William James would like this story. James, after all, was a connoisseur of such accounts, which he would use—with great empathy—as evidence to illustrate and support his philosophical positions. The fact that Richter's belief is both very useful and the sort where believing it makes it true, should ring bells: James's theory of truth and his will to believe doctrine are just around the corner.

I. ZIMMERMAN'S PRAGMATIC ANTI-INTELLECTUALIST ACCOUNT OF BELIEF

I think Morris's story might also appeal to Aaron Zimmerman since it seems to mesh nicely with his account in *Belief: A Pragmatic Picture.* In the quote above, Morris suggests that belief is central to action. Knowing how to do something—like play Beethoven's Piano Sonata no. 32—isn't sufficient for actually doing it: in

addition, one must believe one can do it. Richter's ability to perform and the performance itself depended on him having a certain belief. Zimmerman, too, stresses the connection between belief and action, defending a dispositional account where belief "is a disposition to use information to guide our actions."[5] Belief is thus the crucial conduit between thought and action and, in fact, it is this function that defines what belief is: "Belief is canonically manifested in controlled, attentive information-guidance and can be distinguished from other mental/neural phenomena on this basis."[6] In other words, Richter's belief that he needed a pink plastic lobster to perform, combined with his belief that it was nearby, backstage, in a box, made his subsequent actions—his musical performance—possible. And making such actions possible is a main part of what beliefs do.

Zimmerman's targets are "intellectualist" accounts of belief: namely, those that "emphasize uniquely human psychological traits,"[7] that view belief as "acceptance for the sake of truth,"[8] or that equate "belief" with "regarded as true."[9] We can see some of the problems with the intellectualist account by considering Richter's case. Richter certainly seemed to believe that he needed the pink plastic lobster to perform—that is, he certainly seems to have had a *belief*—but it's much less clear that he "regarded it as true" that he needed the lobster to perform. After all, Richter describes feeling like a "fool" for bringing the pink plastic lobster backstage. On some level, he may have known he did not *really* need the lobster. Cases like these create daylight between the concept of belief and "regarding as true."

Lest we put too much emphasis on behavior that could seem a sign of pathology or mental illness—though this never stopped James—Zimmerman offers a thorough argument against intellectualism in the third chapter of his book. The argument goes like this:

1. If belief is defined as "regarding as true" then, because propositions are truth-bearers, this would mean the belief is intrinsically propositional.

2. But consider animals (many of which differ only in degree from humans).[10] The best way of explaining much animal behavior is in terms of animals having beliefs.[11] But animals don't have a concept of truth or believe *propositions.*[12]
3. So, if animals have beliefs (and we often act as if they do), then belief cannot be propositional and cannot be defined in terms of truth or as what we "regard as true."[13]
4. If belief isn't propositional, then the alternative is to think of belief as dispositional. Belief, as a result, should be defined in terms of action and will, not reason and intellect.[14]

Zimmerman makes many other points in addition, but the general strategy is to make space for a dispositional account by highlighting problems with intellectualism. The case against the intellectualist may not be completely airtight—one could argue that animals don't, in fact, have beliefs, and that we can explain animal behavior in other terms—but it's also not entirely clear what an airtight argument would even look like. On this point, Zimmerman suggests, following Carnap, that "the question of what definition of 'belief' to adopt is . . . an 'external' question, which cannot be answered on the basis of evidence and 'theoretical' reasoning alone."[15] Deciding on a definition of belief thus depends on pragmatic considerations— different definitions will have different practical consequences or be more or less useful—and so will be, in a rather profound way, "in part a question of how to live."[16]

So, what are some of the practical upshots of a dispositional account of belief? Unpacking this question is one of the book's strengths, providing vivid examples of how outwardly technical questions actually have very practical, intuitively compelling consequences. For example, as Zimmerman notes, which beliefs we ascribe to a person has implications for how we judge their character and actions. If someone performs poorly on an implicit association test, it's tempting to ascribe prejudicial beliefs to them, regardless of any explicit evidence to the contrary. Moreover, it might seem as if this follows directly from a dispositional account of belief; after all, if someone has a disposition to associate negative qualities with

a certain group of people, this might seem more than enough to ascribe prejudicial beliefs (perhaps "implicit" beliefs) to them.

Zimmerman, however, resists this conclusion: if belief is connected to *controlled* action, as he claims, then uncontrolled or implicit bias doesn't qualify as a belief. This would mean that someone who performs abysmally on an implicit bias test, despite professing to hold egalitarian positions (and especially if their behavior is egalitarian), doesn't hold prejudicial *beliefs* though they might have prejudicial *attitudes*; hence, Zimmerman's proposal is to "stop speaking of 'implicit beliefs' or 'unconscious beliefs' and to instead join social psychologists in talking of implicit racial *attitudes*."[17] The upshot of doing so is to recognize that beliefs and attitudes can diverge from each other:

> When divergence is discovered, we know the agent's mind is conflicted. According to our definition, this conflict is often best described as the agent's *believing* in racial equality while *construing* the members of other races in a manner that belies her beliefs.[18]

So, while we might find a person's attitudes disappointing, this doesn't necessarily shed light on their beliefs. And as long as their attitudes don't affect their actions, it's possible to take comfort in the fact that they don't hold prejudicial beliefs, with all that would entail for the moral fiber of their character.

This means that one of the practical upshots of a dispositional account of belief—or at least Zimmerman's version—is that it allows for a psychologically nuanced account of the connections between one's character, beliefs, and attitudes. This account, in turn, allows for a morally nuanced account of how to assess a person's character that distinguishes beliefs and attitudes. I find this conclusion pretty compelling, and it provides support for Zimmerman's claim that his dispositional account has practical implications that we need to examine when considering different definitions of belief.

These points also highlight how this is a *pragmatic* account of belief in two distinct senses. It's a pragmatic account because, first

of all, it defines belief in behavioral and dispositional terms *à la* James and Alexander Bain. But it's also pragmatic in the sense of pointing to what is practically at stake in how one defines the concept of belief—and why these practical stakes deserve philosophical consideration.[19]

James, too, was an opponent of "intellectualism"—he's known for sometimes calling it "vicious" intellectualism—though his target was somewhat different. For James, vicious intellectualism was the fallacy of "treating of a name as excluding from the fact named what the name's definition fails positively to include," a mistake he accused idealists such as Lotze, Royce, and Bradley, among others, of committing.[20] Put in somewhat clearer terms, James was criticizing the tendency to treat definitions as so complete and exhaustive that they exclude anything which either falls short of or overshoots the definition. For James, this meant accusing absolute idealists of paradox mongering;[21] for present purposes, we might wonder whether definitions of "belief" might be overly and viciously intellectualist in this sense, too. In particular, I'm concerned that Zimmerman's dispositional definition of belief—a definition I find compelling—has no room for the concept of truth.

II. A MID-CENTURY MODERN DIGRESSION
Zimmerman admits, rightly I think, that his account of belief is not a full-blown "theory."[22] Other pragmatists likewise avoid offering "theories" or "definitions" of philosophical concepts when doing so can lead to over-simplified or one-sided accounts. One alternative is to offer "pragmatic elucidations" of philosophical concepts that instead give "an account of the role the concept plays in practical endeavors."[23] We can find similar strategies in Wittgenstein (the idea that "meaning is use") and in ordinary language philosophy (e.g., Austin's reminder that, even though "ordinary language is not the last word. . . . only remember, it *is* the *first* word").[24] To shed light on its meaning, the general idea is to start with how a philosophical concept is used in practice. A good pragmatic elucidation requires balancing the variety of ways concepts are

actually used with the need to identify the core meaning that makes the concept philosophically interesting.

For example, consider Friedrich Waismann's pragmatic elucidation of belief in "Belief and Knowledge."[25] In this essay, Waismann claims that "belief" is an ambiguous term "having a multiplicity of meaning, an indefiniteness which we shall do well to bear in mind."[26] For example, Waismann notes that belief may be either "active" or "passive," verbalized or inarticulate, action-guiding or inert, dispositional or episodic.[27] Waismann even suggests that one can "believe a thing and, at the same time, believe the opposite,"[28] and he briefly mentions "certain queer belief-states such as described by James" where someone, perhaps while intoxicated, may "have a feeling of conviction heightened to an abnormal degree, and yet be totally unable to say what he is convinced of."[29] Waismann's point is that "belief" is used to refer to a variety of mental states: "it is almost as if different concepts were lodged in the same word-husk."[30] This is obviously not vicious intellectualism. According to Waismann, we're justified in calling many things "beliefs" even though they don't all fall under the same definition, precisely.

Having said that, some senses of "belief" do seem more paradigmatic than others, and Waismann claims that there is a "central meaning" to belief despite the variety of ways we use the term. The central meaning of "belief" is "'to hold it as true', 'to accept a statement as true', 'to acquiesce in its truth.'"[31] So, while Waismann isn't *viciously* intellectualist—he's comfortable with indefiniteness and ambiguity in our definition of truth—he *is* intellectualist in Zimmerman's sense by treating "acceptance for the sake of truth" as central to our understanding of what belief is.

I mention this because I think Waismann is onto something about the connection between belief and truth. (And not just Waismann: I suspect many pragmatists, Wittgensteinians, and ordinary language philosophers, among others, share or shared this view.) If so, this raises the possibility of being intellectualist without being *viciously* intellectualist.[32] But it all depends on what is meant

by "belief" and "truth," and it's here that, perhaps surprisingly, James might have something more to add.

III. PRAGMATIC BELIEF, PRAGMATIC TRUTH

Zimmerman makes his main argument against intellectualism in Chapter 3. In Chapter 5, he argues that the definition of belief can't be settled on purely theoretical or scientific grounds. Finally, in the last chapter, "Pragmatic Self-Deception," Zimmerman defends the position that we are sometimes entitled to "believe at will" despite knowing that what we believe isn't grounded in reality.[33] In some cases, this is because our beliefs might be "self-promoting": i.e., they are the sort of beliefs that become more likely true in virtue of being believed (many of James's examples in "The Will to Believe" are of this kind).[34] But in other cases, Zimmerman observes, it may simply be biologically adaptive to be "overly optimistic."[35] That is, having a certain belief doesn't make it more likely true, but it does make it easier to cope with, and perhaps persevere through, the many obstacles that life inevitably throws our way. To use Zimmerman's example, there may be value—and hence, one may be in some sense entitled—in believing that a medical test will come back with good news, or that one can beat a certain disease, even if one fully realizes that such beliefs are *not* self-promoting. While this may not seem scientific, Zimmerman follows James in denying that, in such cases, scientific standards should take priority: "If nothing is to be gained by reasoning in scientific ways and much to be lost, insisting that we must nevertheless reason scientifically borders on epistemic fetishism."[36] Richter, I suspect, would also agree. But in addition, as Zimmerman realizes, this amounts to severing the connection between belief and truth. While we should criticize lies and deception, Zimmerman concludes that "as the pragmatists have long insisted, respect for truth and evidence is not 'built into' the very nature of belief and credulity."[37]

But I think it matters very much what is meant, here, by truth. Properly understood—and by "properly" I mean "pragmatically"— a good case can be made for linking belief and truth. Not exactly in the way that "intellectualists" might connect them, but something

close. James, of course, had a lot to say about truth. Some of his more infamous claims support the relatively crass interpretation that James equates truth with utility.[38] (And, indeed, this was how many of his early critics, such as Russell and Moore, interpreted him.) But James also had many sober things to say about truth as well. For example:

> Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-fication. Its validity is the process of its valid-ation. . . . True is the name for whatever idea starts the verification-process, useful is the name for its completed function in experience.[39]

In other words—at least on a somewhat charitable reading—James's pragmatic account of truth aims to do two things. First, it aims to describe what we *do* when we use the concept of truth and, second, it aims to give a pragmatic account of what truth means. James's answer to the first question is that we use the concept of truth to show our trust: to call a belief true is simply to signal that we consider it dependable, reliable, and solid enough to act upon. James's answer to the second question (at least when he is being a bit more careful) is that truth amounts to verification. When we say a belief corresponds to the facts, what we mean, pragmatically, is that it is verifiable. Verifiability is what *makes* a belief true.

The upshot of this is that James has a way of linking belief to truth while avoiding some of the more vicious forms of intellectualism. On James's view (as on Zimmerman's), beliefs are fundamentally about guiding action. The difference is that James treats those beliefs that successfully guide action as fully "true"—in fact, for James, this is simply what truth means. This suggests that a "respect for the truth" *is* built in to a pragmatic account of belief, at least to the extent that beliefs are supposed to lead to effective actions, and the successful outcome of such actions is what James means by truth. Put in other words, a belief that did not aim at some successful action—one that did not aim at the truth—would scarcely

deserve to be called a belief at all. ("Daydream" or "reverie" might be a better term.)

Of course, one might want nothing to do with James's theory of truth. Even if we read it charitably, it faces serious problems.[40] But there are other pragmatic accounts of truth, and some of these allow a built-in connection with belief. Examples aren't hard to find. Misak's version of a Peircean account of truth and Price's argument that truth introduces a "convenient friction" both present truth as a norm that defines assertoric discourse and inquiry more broadly.[41] Without the norm of truth, according to Price, assertions would not be assertions: rather, they would be more akin to idle musings or the uncritical restaurant reviews of a "community of dedicated lunchers."[42] Likewise, for Misak, truth functions as a norm that sets standards for how inquirers should conduct themselves:

> Once we see that truth and assertion are intimately connected—once we see that to assert that *p* is true is to assert *p*—we can and must look to our practices of assertion and to the commitments incurred in them so as to say something more substantial about truth.[43]

If truth is a norm of assertion or inquiry, as these "new" pragmatists argue, then it's not much of a leap to see it as a norm of belief as well—which would mean that respect for truth *would* be built in to the concept of truth. After all, it would be precisely this respect for truth, for getting things right, that makes a belief a belief.[44]

I'm not sure Zimmerman would be happy with this solution. Misak's conception of truth is broadly Peircean—truth means long-range durability—and Peirce is a defender of scientific rationality, so linking belief to a pragmatic theory of truth of this type might just be a way of reintroducing scientific rationality through the back door.[45] (Not surprisingly, this mirrors the differences between James and Peirce: James's impulse to equate truth with mere utility or subjective preference versus Peirce's view that truth is the final destination of sustained scientific inquiry.) But I'd like to suggest that there are still significant upsides to linking a dispositional account of belief with a pragmatic account of truth. As we saw

Zimmerman note, earlier, such practical benefits deserve consideration.

The first upside is that this combination preserves the intuition that "regarding as true" is part of the "central meaning" of belief. As Waismann and others have noted, belief and truth seem closely connected—though what exactly is meant by truth often goes unstated. The suggestion, here, is that by incorporating a pragmatic account of truth, this connection can be preserved without the negative side effects of intellectualist accounts. For example, if animals have beliefs, there's no impediment to their having true beliefs in addition: to use Zimmerman's example, if a dog believes its owner is nearby, and she is, then the dog has a true belief.[46] Does the dog "regard it as true" that its owner is nearby? In a strictly intellectualist sense, perhaps not, but if "regard as true" is taken in dispositional and behavioral terms, then this formulation seems unobjectionable. If "regarding as true" means acting as if a certain state of affairs holds, and if the dog acts as if its owner is nearby, then in this pragmatic sense the dog regards it as true that its owner is nearby. Still, it's probably undeniable that some will balk at redefining both belief and truth. My suggestion is to view this as a package deal.

This leads to the second upside of linking pragmatic accounts of belief and truth. As Zimmerman notes, lately there's been a lot of discussion about truth, the importance of truth, and the precarious role of truth in our current political climate.[47] No one would disagree that, as he puts it, "we must resist the blatant lies, fabrications, and inconsistencies of those demagogues who have the most to gain from a 'post-truth' society."[48] But Zimmerman is also concerned that we not "overreact to the propaganda that surrounds us today by pretending that social activity is itself a form of science."[49] Here I'd like to flag two concerns. The first, more obvious, point is that it seems we can generally use *more* science not less. Whether the topic is climate change, gun safety, or vaccinations, etc., there's a good case that being more scientific in our social and political activity would be beneficial. Moreover, this is a commitment many pragmatists are comfortable making. Historically, the most

prominent defender of a tight connection between democracy and science is Dewey, who saw the two as nearly synonymous as, for example, when he wrote that "democracy is only estimable through the changed conception of intelligence that forms modern science."[50] So, it seems plausible that more science, not less, is the prescription for an ailing democracy. Second, forging a close link between belief and truth provides an argument for the importance of truth that is independent of the practical value of believing truths over falsehoods. (After all, some false beliefs are quite useful.) The argument is simply this: if truth is a norm of belief (and assertion and inquiry), then a commitment to the truth is built in to what we do just about any time we open our mouths or have an action-oriented thought (i.e., a belief). Playing fast and loose with the truth doesn't just have corrosive practical consequences—consequences which might be debated, I suppose—but it actually betrays a certain kind of performative contradiction or fundamental incoherence. And, in a neat move, this latter point is not debatable because entering the debate manifests a commitment to the very norm supposedly in question.[51]

I'm under no illusions that philosophical arguments, by themselves, have significant practical consequences. (Though McIntyre has recently argued that some versions of postmodernism did have an outsized and mostly negative effect.)[52] But regardless of that, it's still good to get our philosophical house in order, and if a philosophical position entails greater respect for the truth then, all things being equal, that's a point in its favor. I'd suggest that's the case here. A pragmatic account of truth adds to the practical benefits of a pragmatic account of belief. Combining the two is just the pragmatic thing to do.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

I began with Errol Morris's account of Sviatoslav Richter and the pink plastic lobster he carried around in the early 1970s. Morris observes that the ability to do something requires more than just skill: it also requires the *belief* that one has the ability to do it. Richter believed, for a time, that he needed the lobster to perform on

stage: this belief played a necessary role in his ability to perform certain actions. This is an evocative example of Zimmerman's thesis that belief is "a disposition to use information to guide our actions" and this action-guiding function defines what a belief is.[53]

But accepting this account of belief doesn't mean severing the connection with truth—especially if we approach truth in a similarly pragmatic fashion. Did Richter believe that it was true that he needed the pink plastic lobster? Earlier I suggested perhaps not: after all, he conceded feeling like a "fool" for having this belief. But we can now see how Richter regarded it as true that he needed the pink plastic lobster. After all, he believed he needed the lobster and went to some lengths to keep it close by. This wasn't a dream or a reverie or idle speculation on his part. The most straightforward explanation of the difference—between believing and idle speculation—is that Richter *regarded it as true* that he needed the lobster and for that reason was prepared to act to keep it close by, which he did. Pragmatically speaking, there is no difference between "believing" and "regarding as true": these mean the same thing. And that means we can enjoy the benefits of a dispositional account of belief *and* give truth the respect it deserves.

Zimmerman concludes his book with a plea that we "leave space for play, and hopeful belief, and trust."[54] I agree. I'd even add that there is space for pink plastic lobsters. But there is also space—lots of it—for truth.

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NOTES

[1] Errol Morris, *The Ashtray*.

[2] Morris, "The Pianist and the Lobster."

[3] Morris, "The Pianist and the Lobster."

[4] Morris, "The Pianist and the Lobster."

[5] Zimmerman, *Belief*, 81.

[6] Zimmerman, 98.

[7] Zimmerman, 19.

[8] Zimmerman, 43.

[9] Zimmerman, 43.

[10] "Dolphins figure things out for themselves. . . . They improve upon entrained practices, recognize these improvements for what they are, and share their innovations with peers and kin. These are paradigmatic processes of belief formation and transmission, and we're not the only apes to employ them" (47).

[11] "Nonhuman animals have beliefs. This is an obvious truth: a datum on which we can premise our inquiries" (44).

[12] "But though many animals represent each other's representations, only humans construct sentences and sort them into truths and falsehoods. So an analysis of belief in terms of propositions 'regarded' as true or accurate starts off on the entirely wrong foot. Belief is neither essentially nor invariably propositional" (44).

[13] "From the 'fact' that belief does not always have a propositional object, and from the 'fact' that believers needn't regard anything as true in holding their beliefs, we have derived the conclusion that believing does not entail believing-true" (46, fn).

[14] "If language isn't necessary for thought, it isn't necessary for belief in thought's conclusions. Since reasoning is (arguably) a series of thoughts culminating in a belief, language isn't necessary for reasoning, as Hume emphasized so long ago. Nor is language sufficient for thought. . . . The test, again, is action, not just words and feelings" (71).

[15] Zimmerman, 124.

[16] Zimmerman, 125. Or, as Zimmerman puts the point earlier: "Acceptance of the pragmatist definition of 'belief' is best seen as a philosophical choice among empirically equivalent but socially divergent alternatives. . . . If we adopt Bain's definition, we are choosing a picture to live by" (21).

[17] Zimmerman, 112.

[18] Zimmerman, 105.

[19] Zimmerman describes these as "ground-level" and "meta-level" theses: first, a ground-level analysis of what belief is and second, a meta-level claim about how to assess different ground-level definitions (98).

[20] James, *A Pluralistic Universe,* 32.

[21] Slater, "James's Critique of Absolute Idealism," 177.

[22] Zimmerman, 97. "While the pragmatic definition of 'belief' . . . is not without consequence for our thinking about actors and other animals, it would be unduly hyperbolic to describe it as a 'theory' of belief. Instead . . . [it] is best conceived as a placeholder for a family of theories of belief" (97).

[23] Misak, *New Pragmatists*, 68. See also Wiggins, "An Indefinabilist Cum Normative View," 317.

[24] Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," 11. Emphasis in original.

[25] I focus on Waismann because of his proximity both to Wittgenstein and Oxford ordinary language philosophy; plus, his work is not as well-known as it should be. Waismann had a very fraught relationship with Wittgenstein before ending up at Oxford during the heyday of ordinary language philosophy. "Belief and Knowledge" was written around 1950 but only published posthumously. For biographical details see McGuinness, "Waismann: The Wandering Scholar."

[26] Waismann, "Belief and Knowledge," 168.

[27] An "active" belief is one that is "the result of an activity," perhaps "the consequence of certain observations and reflections of my own"; a passive belief, in contrast, is one a person came to "without paying much

heed. . . . like a moist sponge" (168). Waismann's example of an "inarticulate" belief is to imagine "a man being forcibly dragged into a fire" (169)—he seems to have gotten this example from Wittgenstein. The man's mental state is "certainly much akin to belief" but is not the result of a process of reasoning. (Waismann also notes that animals may have beliefs in this sense.) "Inert" beliefs—unlike those that are "like a force . . . apt to discharge itself into action" (172)—lead neither to specific actions nor to general tendencies to act in certain ways. Waismann's example is a belief in Goldbach's conjecture where "no action will issue from that" (172). Finally, Waismann argues that belief is sometimes "episodic" in the sense of pointing to a specific situation rather than a general disposition: "at this moment I began to believe him" (171), he claims, makes perfectly good sense, suggesting that "there is an almost continuous line running from the one pole, the purely dispositional, to the opposite one, the purely episodic" (172).

[28] Waissman, 178.

[29] Waissman, 170.

[30] Waissman, 172.

[31] Waissman, 167.

[32] This moderate intellectualism might also be called "pseudo-intellectualism," but, unfortunately, the name is already taken.

[33] Zimmerman, 128-129.

[34] Zimmerman, 129.

[35] Zimmerman, 130.

[36] Zimmerman, 139. Zimmerman quotes James from *The Will to Believe*: "I simply refuse obedience to the scientist's command to imitate his kind of option, in a case where my own stake is important enough to give me the right to choose" (Zimmerman, 139).

[37] Zimmerman, 140.

[38] Such as: "you can say of it then either that 'it is useful because it is true' or that 'it is true because it is useful.' Both these phrases mean exactly the same thing." (James, *Pragmatism*, 98).

[39] James, 97, 98.

[40] For two of these see Campbell, *Experiencing William James*, and Misak, *The American Pragmatists*.

[41] See Misak, *Truth, Politics, Morality* and "Pragmatism and Deflationism," and Price, "Truth as Convenient Friction."

⁴² Price, 177.

⁴³ Misak, *New Pragmatists*, 70.

⁴⁴ This sidesteps the question of whether belief is propositional, but pragmatists in general haven't been overly concerned with nailing down truth-bearers. Dewey, idiosyncratically, viewed truth as a property of judgments, not propositions, and Peirce's best-known description of truth frames it in terms of "opinions" ("the opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth").

⁴⁵ Misak, *Truth, Politics, Morality*, 49.

⁴⁶ Zimmerman, 59.

⁴⁷ See McIntyre, *Post-truth*, and O'Connor and Weatherall, *The Misinformation Age*.

⁴⁸ Zimmerman, 139.

⁴⁹ Zimmerman, 140.

⁵⁰ Dewey, "Intelligence and Morals," 39. Of course, Dewey tended to view science in broad and general terms and democracy as "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" ("Democracy and Education," 93).

⁵¹ Misak and Talisse, "Pragmatist Epistemology and Democratic Theory," makes the connection between belief and truth in the context of offering an epistemic defense of democracy:

> Our argument, which comes from the founder of pragmatism, C.S. Peirce, has it that aspiring to truth is a constitutive norm of belief. When we believe or assert something, we are claiming that it is true, and vice-versa. . . . [W]e see the conceptual tie between belief and truth-aspiration as providing a fundamental norm for epistemic conduct. If one finds that one's belief that *p* does not recede in light of evidence against *p*, one no longer is able to regard one's state with respect to *p* as properly a *belief*. In such cases, the diagnostic language of obsession, delusion, self-deception, and confabulation ought to be introduced to characterize the state in question. (367)

In their view, not only is truth a norm of belief, but a commitment to truth brings with it a commitment to democratic norms.

⁵² See McIntyre, *Post-Truth*.

⁵³ Zimmerman, 81.

⁵⁴ Zimmerman, 140.