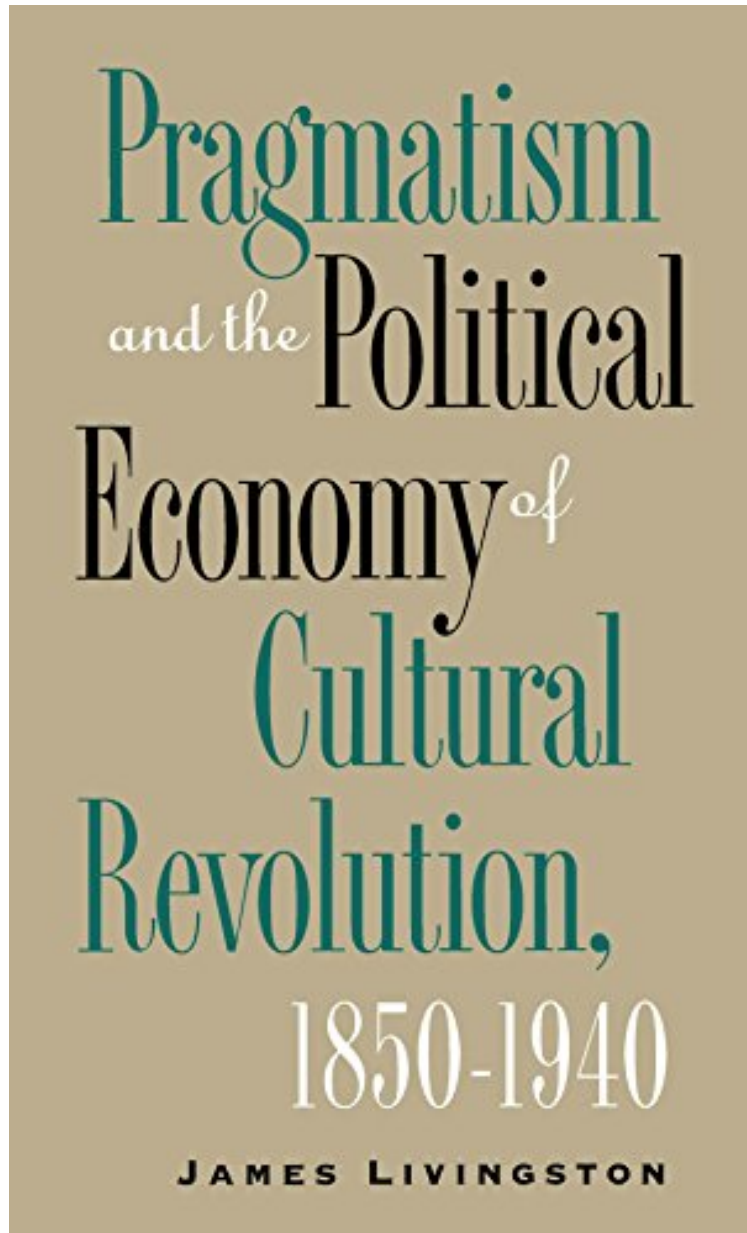


[Ebook free] Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Evolution (Cultural Studies of the United States)

Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Evolution (Cultural Studies of the United States)

James Livingston

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James Livingston : Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Evolution (Cultural Studies of the United States) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Evolution (Cultural Studies of the United States):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. bridging culture and economyBy Seaboard Lit ProfOne of the largest contributions of this book is its effort to combine economic history with cultural analysis. Livingston takes the time to distinguish important structural changes in the US economy during this period (1850-1940). More cultural historians and critics should grapple with this material--Livingston can wean us off of blanket labels ("incorporation," "Gilded Age") that leave no room for thinking through the more dynamic relations of the economic and the cultural. A second virtue of this book is Livingston's provocative, polemic argument. Although his political sympathies are with the left, he offers a strong critique of the tendency among left historians to see the emergence of corporate capitalism as the effective end to any chance for victory on the left. This "tragic" mode of analysis, Livingston argues, means we can only remain mired in a nostalgic orientation toward the past. Livingston turns to two cultural formations--literary naturalism (especially the fiction of Theodore Dreiser) and pragmatism (especially William James)--to argue for a "social self" that offers hope for political progress but is not inherently at odds with corporate capitalism. I'm still not sure if I buy Livingston's argument, but his frame of analysis and reflections on history and models of selfhood are tremendously fruitful. Although the book is largely an advanced academic study, it is clearly written and free of jargon. Well read students of American history and culture will be able to follow the analysis.6 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An unusually deep and innovative workBy Michael H. Goldhaber mgoldh@well.comThis is a work of conceptual brilliance, in its argument about why pragmatism occurred when it did, its cultural ramifications and its current importance. In addition Livingston illuminatingly connects pragmatism with post-modernism.

The rise of corporate capitalism was a cultural revolution as well as an economic event, according to James Livingston. That revolution resides, he argues, in the fundamental reconstruction of selfhood, or subjectivity, that attends the advent of an 'age of surplus' under corporate auspices. From this standpoint, consumer culture represents a transition to a society in which identities as well as incomes are not necessarily derived from the possession of productive labor or property. From the same standpoint, pragmatism and literary naturalism become ways of accommodating the new forms of solidarity and subjectivity enabled by the emergence of corporate capitalism. So conceived, they become ways of articulating alternatives to modern, possessive individualism. Livingston argues accordingly that the flight from pragmatism led by Lewis Mumford was an attempt to refurbish a romantic version of modern, possessive individualism. This attempt still shapes our reading of pragmatism, Livingston claims, and will continue to do so until we understand that William James was not merely a well-meaning middleman between Charles Peirce and John Dewey and that James's pragmatism was both a working model of postmodern subjectivity and a novel critique of capitalism.

Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution is an achievement of considerable sophistication and virtuosity. It is in some ways a pathbreaking cultural study, filled with boldly original arguments and provocative reinterpretations of familiar material.--Indiana Magazine of History[A] provocative juxtaposition of economic and intellectual history.--Journal of American History[Livingston's] discussions, often lengthy and learned, of marginalist economic theory, James's use of the term 'cash-value,' Lewis Mumford's misguided romanticism, Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, and the *New Woman* are, quite simply, brilliant.--American Historical This is a remarkably compelling example of cross-disciplinary work. An expert in social and economic history, Livingston has reached deeply into the resources of literary and cultural theory to produce a new narrative and analytic frame for understanding the world we live in. This book will greatly reward all serious scholars and students of American culture.--Jonathan Arac, University of PittsburghFew books are as ambitious as James Livingston's study of the cultural revolution that, he persuasively demonstrates, took place in the United States . . . between 1890 and 1920. Livingston engages with boundless energy and intelligence technicalities of economic development, the nation's literary traditions, thorny philosophical questions, and finally debates about the most effective way to conduct cultural analysis.--Nineteenth-Century ProseJames Livingston's new book brilliantly reanimates the vocabulary of American pragmatism and brings into new alignment America's greatest contribution in philosophy with our economic and social history.--Richard Poirier, Rutgers, The State UniversityWith this book, James Livingston joins the very select company of Americanists who have successfully initiated a dialogue between economic and cultural history. He rethinks the transition from proprietary to corporate capitalism, and from producer to consumer society. . . . This is a dazzling, innovative interpretation--admirable in its sweep and fascinating in its details and local insights. Livingston writes memorably across a wide range of disciplines, and he does so without ever sacrificing complexity. A remarkable achievement.--Michael T. Gilmore, Brandeis UniversityProvocative, polemical, scolding, prophetic, Livingston's book proposes a brilliant new interpretation of the origins and character of modernity in the United States. . . . An integrated work of criticism and history, *Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Cultural Revolution* raises a host of issues in the process of teaching its lessons, not least of which is its own example of cultural studies as history with an eye on the future.--Alan Trachtenberg, from the ForewordThis book ranks among those of first importance in the interpretation of modern American intellectual history, and because it is especially rich in relating intellectual history to economic, social, and cultural history, it is of similar importance in the interpretation of modern American civilization more

broadly.--Martin J. Sklar, Bucknell University
From the Back Cover
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