

"I AM AN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER"
—An Interview Series with John Capps—



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What does American philosophy mean to you?

For me, American philosophy means a critical and plural perspective that allows us to understand philosophy as one cultural practice among others, not seeking ultimate foundations, but rather improving our practices for increasingly broad, inclusive, and diverse communities. It also represents the possibility of rethinking and promoting the construction of an American identity to build a more fair and equitable society through cultural critique.

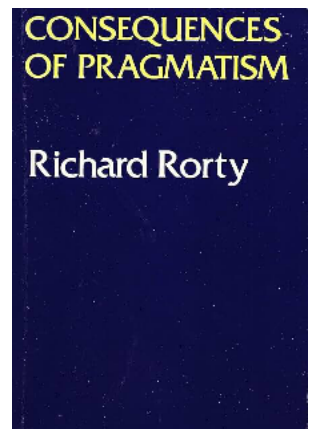
How did you become an American philosopher?

I think of myself as an American philosopher for two reasons. The first is that, as a Mexican, I belong to the (Latin) American community. So, I share some ways of thinking that we can consider typical of this plural community that is America.

The second is that, when I was a student of Philosophy of Physics, I found, in a somewhat accidental way, some theses of American Pragmatism to be my main tool of analysis. In particular, Richard Rorty taught me a sharp and penetrating analysis of the philosophical and cultural role of science. Since then, these theses have been my guide or my lenses for the analysis of science and knowledge.

How would you describe your current research?

My current line of research consists of analyzing the social, political, and cultural dimensions of science and knowledge, some specific



relationships among sciences or between science and culture, as well as historical, sociological and philosophical developments in physics. I am also trying to weave together the relationships between American pragmatism and other philosophical perspectives.

What do you do when you're not doing American philosophy?

When I'm not doing American philosophy, I'm reading as many other traditions as possible, from Robert Brandom to Chantal Mouffe, Peter Galison, Bolívar Echeverría, Helen Longino, David Graeber or Byung-Chul Han.

But I can also read novels by Rosa Montero, Jorge Ibarra, or Virgine Despentes. And I can certainly watch movies and TV series or paint. Enjoying a chat with my partner or friends and a beer is a must.

What's your favorite work in American philosophy? What should we all be reading?

It is difficult to choose a favorite work of American philosophy. I could say that all the epistemological work of classical pragmatism and inferentialism seems to me to be particularly outstanding, each in its own context. I like John Dewey's complex and profound conception of science. But Richard Rorty's ontological, linguistic, and epistemological perspective is exceptional for me. I have quite a few differences with his political perspective, but the epistemological one seems to me impeccable, and I think it is compatible with other approaches in other styles, and with other somewhat more radical political perspectives.

I do not think that there is something that we should all read, especially if we take pluralism as our basis and social goal, but I do think that it would be desirable to have an interdisciplinary and plural perspective that crosses aesthetic, scientific or social culture, as well as its intersections, contrasts and connections. I also believe that today structural critiques, particularly of capitalism, are indispensable, as well as creative attempts to imagine different societies.

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