



# What Pragmatism Was (American Philosophy)

*F. Thomas Burke*

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## **What Pragmatism Was (American Philosophy) F. Thomas Burke**

F. Thomas Burke shows how the original "maxim of pragmatism" was understood differently by the two earliest American pragmatists, William James and Charles S. Peirce. Burke reconciles these differences by casting pragmatism as a philosophical stance that endorses distinctive conceptions of *belief* and *meaning*. In particular, on Burke's view, a pragmatist conception of *meaning* as encapsulated in the pragmatic maxim should be understood as both inferentialist and operationalist in character.

Burke unravels a complex early history of this philosophical tradition, discusses contemporary conceptions of pragmatism found in current US political discourse, and explores what this quintessentially American philosophy means today.

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