Steven A. Moore, ed. *Pragmatic Sustainability: Dispositions for Critical Adaptation*. Routledge 2016. 290 pp. $180.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9781138123915); $44.95 USD (Paperback ISBN 9781138123922).

Rarely does a book guided by pragmatic principles deliver as much as it promises. *Pragmatic Sustainability* is an exception to that rule. Moore, a professor of architecture and planning at the University of Texas at Austin, presents richly detailed discussions of the challenges facing sustainability from contributors in fields as varied as engineering, sociology, and marine sciences. Linking the rise of pragmatism to the concomitant concepts of evolution, ecology, and design, Moore urges that the varied approaches found in this volume might foster an 'experimental attitude' which will prove 'useful in constructing a future worth having' (xx). While this is a textbook, it is also a textbook example of a pragmatic approach to an important and ongoing problem.

The book is comprised of five parts, each containing three essays by different authors. Moore provides brief editor's introductions to each chapter. The book also includes lists of tables and figures, author overviews, a preface, general introduction, and afterword, and a necessarily detailed index. All of the chapters contain extensive notes and some include questions, cases studies, and problems for future consideration.

Part one, Grounds for Sustainability, focuses on the various ways of defining sustainability. In 'The Many Meanings of Sustainability,' philosopher Paul B. Thompson notes that the concept has withstood various calls for a change of terms. Further, sustainability's meaning varies according to the needs of those who use it. After considering a range of theorists and two specific paradigms, Thompson concludes that there is room for multiple approaches. Moreover, he urges that a 'sophisticated pragmatism' would place 'competing perspectives into genuine dialog with each other' (26). Economist Michael D. Oden takes the issue a step further in 'Equity.' He argues that questions about sustainability carry with them concerns about equity. Given that, Oden argues that productive advances are only possible 'when environmental and social justice interests are joined in a more complete normative framework of sustainability' focused on the planners' triangle: economy, environment, and equity (31). Information systems scholar Holly J. Lanham and her colleagues take a decidedly non-normative approach in 'Sustainable Development.' They argue that the planners' triangle ignores the fact that said issues occur within *complex adaptive systems* (CAS). As an alternative, they offer up the concept of the fitness landscape. Operating at the 'intersection of sustainable development and complexity science,' their approach engages the 'fundamental uncertainty and unpredictability' that the triangle approach downplays (60).

Part two, Technological Cultures, posits that 'all technologies serve the interests of their makers' (2). In 'The Coevolution of Infrastructure, Governance, and Urban Ecology,' historians Stephanie Pincetl and Erik Porse challenge the notion that the development of urban infrastructures is objective. In order to challenge this lapse into determinism, they examining the development of waters systems in the United States over the course of two hundred years. What they find are potential opportunities in approaching complexity via hybridization, where there is a mix of public and private, centralized and decentralized, components (79). In 'Our Models of Models,' architect Kiel Moe takes concerns about complexity and additivity and applies them to the concept of efficiency. Focusing on the flawed use of energy efficiency in building simulation models as a test case, he urges that technology engenders a false sense of certainty that obscures the myriad choices that undergird their

usage. The solution is to question purportedly 'ontologically ambiguous data' and 'to cultivate new habits of mind and new forms of architectural reasoning' (101). In 'Getting Ready for the Great Disruption,' architect Thomas Fisher argues for a wholesale revision of, and approach to, the role of design in society. He argues for a threefold innovation revolution: recognizing that the world is shot through with design; that the products of design are not just made for a select few; and that the act of design is not merely a capability of a learned class. Freed of pre-existing strictures, he believes that society will be opened up to a pragmatic view of what design offers, one that espouses 'a degree of humility' and encourages 'community with others' (108).

In part three, Sustainability and Place, the authors consider how notions of sustainability are contextually, and situationally, grounded. In 'Beyond Japonisme,' sociologist Simon Guy takes a pragmatic approach to place. Noting that Japanese architecture places an 'emphasis on flexibility and change' (124), he broadens the implications to encompass questions of not only what we build but how and why. A fluid emphasis on place, in Guy's view, could result in 'satisfying human needs' while being more acutely aware of the resulting costs and benefits that attend such projects (131). In 'Regionalism, Place, Specificity, and Sustainable Design in North America and Europe', architect Vincent B. Canizaro extends Guy's focus. Noting that place is about context, he surveys several approaches to regionalism before offering an alternative: *civic environmentalism* (CE), or 'the production of ecologically functional and socially just cities through democratic and participatory means' (148). Such an approach eschews accepted dictates and embraces forward thinking design that is attendant to its environment. In 'Cautious Engagement,' historical preservation scholar Jeffrey M. Chusid wants to open up a dialogue between members of his ilk and those who embrace sustainable design. Though the project of accord is beset by difficulties, Chusid urges that the dialogue is important. It is difficult to create places that are sustainable without a historical knowledge of 'how and why places have been and continue to be created' (163).

Part four, Sustainability and Cities, considers 'the very social process and scales of making long-term decisions about the urban infrastructure that render cities sustainable or not' (3). It is, as Moore posits, built on the work in the first three sections. In 'The Nature of Mill Creek,' landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn provides a case study of a West Philadelphia neighborhood designed, by those outside its confines to crush the spirits of those inside. The counter to this approach is viewing sustainable urban development through the lens of landscape literacy; that is, 'to recognize and redress injustices' embedded in existing settings while developing solutions that engage all stakeholders (173). In 'Aligning Disconnected Frames in Action,' architect Kristine Stiphany extends the critique of soulless city planning by turning her eye to Sao Paulo. Her observation? True change must ultimately rely on those whose sense of place is based on living there. A localized approach, one that appropriates outside frames of reference, provides a foundation predicated on contextual memory and open to experimentation and adaptation. In 'Regenerative Sustainability,' architect Raymond J. Cole and his colleagues urge caution in sticking too closely to objectives developed in advance. Instead, they offer the alternative of the title. Given such a view, answers emerge out of the process wherein interested parties discuss future results predicated on 'some understanding of the ecological, social, and economic consequences' of possible action plans (209).

In part five, Civil Society, Industry, and Regulation, the authors put forth the idea that regulations are social phenomena and can be examined with an eye towards what they say about future sustainability itself. In 'Social Movement, Civil Society, and Sustainability Politics,' sociologist

David J. Hess looks to lived experience for ways in which citizen activists can make a difference. The four methods—industrial opposition, alternative industrial, access, and localism—differ in shade and nuance. But they share common pragmatic strengths: 'public input' into processes and 'public debate' on the impact of said processes on material conditions (242). In 'The Role of Corporate Stakeholders in Ecosystem Management Initiatives,' economist Sean B. Cash and his colleagues again hit upon a pragmatic truth: the *a priori* is rarely mindful of the lived experience of citizenry. But, as the authors point out, citizenry is composed of individuals with objectives that often clash. In their study, they document how to engage corporate landowners by validating the motivations that will lead them to collaborate with other stakeholders. In 'Incommensurable Paradigms,' philosopher Andrew Feenberg argues against the idea that protecting the environment means giving up economic benefits. In adopting a constructivist technology approach, he posits that we can 'overleap ideological obstacles ... by realizing environmental values in the technical and economic arrangements of our society' (281).

In the introduction, Moore urged that these five parts—taken together—formed, not 'some overarching meta-narrative,' but a loosely related narrative anchored to seven thematic concerns: history, consequentialism, pluralism, determinism, secularization, disciplinarity, and storylines (3-4). Going in, one would have been hard pressed to believe that such a diverse claim could possibly be fulfilled.

But Moore and his authors succeed. Taking strands of pragmatism from the likes of Dewey, James, and Rorty, the book manages to range across topics and approaches without suffering from the diversity. If anything, it offers up an engaging example of one of pragmatism's fundamental strengths: providing a flexible method for examining contentious issues without letting itself calcify into an edict offered from on high. When faced with an issue as varied and complex as sustainability, we are lucky to have a book that points the way to possibilities for future progress.

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