

Pragmatism and its Critics More

Ch I The Issue.

P. represents an attempt to bring an old way of thinking in sci. and social life into philosophy.
P. arose out of discussion of nature and function of thinking. The thesis maintained is that all thinking is a mode or stage of conduct. And conduct means action which is seeking the satisfying and "valuable". So a pragmatist might consistently say that conduct is second to value. However, sharp separation not possible. So values are made or increased by the conduct.

required to secure them.

Those who maintain that there is a distinct that instinct, which has a value of its own have failed to state just what that value is.

In science, the main interest is attached to work and principles that directly or indirectly bear upon life problems, i.e. control of our experiences.

The "biophors", "ions" etc of sci. have no scientific meaning or value, no scientific truth, except in their relation to an actual efficient control of these experiences.

The impersonalism of sci.

is like the impersonalism of the just judge, who takes the impersonal standpoint in order the better to serve all persons.

Willing, choosing, thinking etc. are not separate but one continuous process. Willing and choosing is thoughtful impulse and unimpulsive thought.

Certain thinkers found

1. that when ^{even} general ideas were separated from conduct they became empty.
2. Those who held idea of dual functioning of that recognized a one sided dependence of value on truth.

4. When an idea is stripped of its volitional and purposive element there is no basis on which we can call it true or false.

P. is voluntaristic but of a revised type. It throws overboard intellectualistic ~~and~~ psychology and logic.

Prag. is idealist but it does not get its ideals from another sphere. "The ideas and ideals to which it pins its faith, and from which it draws its inspiration are those which are wrought out and tried out in our world of struggle, of defeats and victories."

"It is the pragmatists contention that it is precisely ^{the} this conception of a finished and immutable world that has led to the divorce of the theoretical and practical functions of thinking, which in turn is responsible for the obscuration of the distinctions between truth and error, right and wrong, and that he is trying to restore these distinctions by restoring that ~~to~~ its place in "conduct," that is, in a process of self-supporting and self-propelling activity".

A summary of the "issue" is given on pp 21-22

II

The Rise of Absolutism

First philosophers also first
scientists (scientists)

Intellectualist historians would
say that it was the intellectual
speculative interest of Greek that
caused this work. But if so,
why was it that one unity
was not as good as another?

Why ^{was} the conception that
enabled us to reproduce and
anticipate things the valid one?

Intellectualist says coincidence
or pre-established harmony.

Pragmatist looks for an organic
connection.

Conflict between explanations

of early thinkers led to a
direction of the attention to
the problem of knowledge.

Plato's ~~psychology~~ ^{metaphysics} an
outgrowth of his effort to
meet the individualist psy.
of the Sophists. Historically,
"metaphysics might well be
defined as the essence of all
attempts to maintain a world
of continuity and order in the
face of an individualistic
theory of human consciousness"
The immutability and perfection
of the celestial archetypes that
precipitates the fundamental
issue between abstract and
pragmatics, the issue, namely,

between those who regard
the universe in the last
analysis as absolutely complete
and perfected, and those who
regard it as still developing -
the issue of a static versus
an evolving universe."

³⁸ The very presence of active
purpose in the world is prima-
facie evidence that the world
is not completed. And in a
genuine philosophical evolution
the purposive element must also
share in the evolution."

The motif of Plato's fixation
of the real world as a practical
social one.

III

Some Difficulties.

The conditions of the Platonic Institute were most favorable for the maintaining of their absolutism and idealism, i.e., a barbarian people receiving these well developed systems in place of developing their own. This served to intensify dogmatism.

A difficulty - "The method by which ideals control experience remained hidden." The impulse and ideal were too widely separated - resulted finally in hypocrisy.

Difficulty - If the celestial ideals enabled us to agree and

cooperate, how then was
disagreement and failure to
cooperate possible?

Difference between Plato and
modern absolutism anticipated
in this regard.

Refer to bottom of p 51 and top 52

Mystic and rationalist try to
solve the problem by relegating
evil, and error to appearance.

If in this way we escape evil
and error, do we not also lose
a criterion of truth?

^{Absolute} Idealist test of truth. "To be
completely true an idea must
not merely point at, or "imitate,"
but must be the whole of reality."
In so far as it is not it is false.

Lost par p 54.

The absolutist ~~has~~ seems to have crowned all truth out in his effort to account for error.

Degrees of Truth and reality.

The absolutist determines the greater or less degree of truth by reference to science and history. But is this a dependable test, and is it one that the absolutist can consistently make?

P 57, - 8 regarding math.

The apparent weakness is that that runs to arise. i.e.

strictly logical, which consists in the identity of thought with the changeless reality" and that in its practical everyday workings.

Can the absolutist consistently tolerate this dualism?

Royce's distinction between the purposive character of *pro* ideas in their practical working, and their representative character in relation to the absolute.

IV

The Rise of Pragmatism

The march of the present day is toward the conception of a self containing experience.

"The very essence of modern humanity is the desire and determination to have a voice and a vote in the cosmic councils. It is, again, the spirit of democracy."

To do this the world
must be plastic and continuous.
In this respect the world
of the empirical naturalist
and that of the rational idealist
fact. . And now Darwin!

"If it should be true that
not only biological species,
but all species—chemical,
physical, geological, astronomical,
mathematical, political, and
religious,—are mutable, and
therefore amenable to manipulation
and control, what possibilities
loom!"

"Variation in species implies at
least the possibility of a purposeful
species of variation."

Teleological variation.

(1) logically, in recognition of entelechial value of thinking hyps.

(2) psy. in detailed analysis

(a) of volitional, purposive character of ideas, but of their social character.

That not simply algebraic symbolizing. All of toothache.

IV

How Ideas "Work"

True ideas are the ideas that 'which work in the way they set out to work'. Working means control of the original experience which is subject of the idea.

Idealist and realist maintain that that does not connect the

avowal of the strength of the
pragmatist position.

A difficulty that static
absolutism has not disposed
of is "that there appears no
necessary connection between
the absolute system and the
determination of truth and error
in any given case."

The criticism of "subjectivism".
Probably main reference here is
to "need". Need, for the
pragmatist arises in a complex
objective situation. The
individual consciousness is regarded
simply as an agent inside
the situation.

"The pragmatist's 'objectivity' is not

that which is indifferent to,
"independent of" and "unmodified"¹⁴⁷
by "thought." There is in the
situation a part that is
unchanged. "The permanent
thus appears as that content in
a "situation" the changes of
which are irrelevant to that
situation".

Dualism in that thought
is subordinated to immediate
experience. In answer
to this criticism it is
asserted that there is an
organic unity between the
stream of experience and thought.
The real duality exists in
the systems of the absolutists

idea with its object but ~~only~~
finds this connection.

Pragmatist replies, How can
we tell them whether this
relation is found rightly or
wrongly.

The moment pain is connected
with the tooth, the tooth
ceases merely to be the cause
of the pain, it now begins
to be the cause of the
ceasing of the pain.

Top p 93.

For the pragmatist, "thinking is
just a process in which 'things'
produced in the past recombine
or interact to produce new things."

Hist. is not finished so long
as it continues then acts of
knowledge to produce new results.

Agreement and disagreement
between pragmatism and realism
on one hand and idealism on the
other pp 108-9

Ch VI

Truth Value

For the absolutist truth-value
is a value for the special thinking
instinct. Truth is that which
satisfies the cognitive need.
But says the P. what is this
cognitive need, what is its
peculiar satisfying material or object
Its content always turns out
to be the material of some other instinct.

Perhaps the formal processes,
but this the absolutist has
already scorned. If mere formal
that mere enough is content would
be immaterial.

Separating that process from content
received than other senses produced
discontinuity and unmeasurable
antinomies. The idealist to
meet this difficulty had that
ultimately produce its own content
as well as form.

The P. found that thought
arose when there was
dissatisfaction among the other instincts.
Its satisfaction lay in quelling
this dissatisfaction.

Continuity is preserved by having

the instincts in conflict
develop into both process and
content of thinking.

Truth may have an immediate
value, but P^r insists that
we must keep in mind that the
content of this "immediate"
value is just this entire
experience of conflicting instinctive
values undergoing mediation and
reevaluation.

P 123

Ch VII

Pragmatism and its Critics

Pragmatist critics have used
Pragmatist weapons. And left
their own walls unfortified.
Is not this a tacit assault

when they contend that ~~the~~
thought functions entirely
independent of experience.

Chapter VIII

The Pragmatic "Universal."

P. is not primarily concerned
with the question of unity
and plurality. "Its chief
metaphysical problem is that
of change, of development."

"the social problem of thinking
of the world in such a way
as to leave the individual a
chance to be truly and therefore
responsibly efficient"

186 "Universality does not mean an
absolutely changeless pervenience of

all intelligence. It means rather the continuity of experience - the fact that experience is a self-developing process."

"Pragmatism is not an attempt to sponge these "traditional laws of thought" from the statutes. It simply insists that in themselves they do not constitute the final test of truth. They constitute the cues and guides of the generalizing process."

How can we tell truth from error?

Gabina