

THE PRAGMATIST THEORY OF TRUTH AS EPISTEMIC FOUNDATIONS FOR ACTION

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Abstract

This work attempts to examine the import of the pragmatist perspective on truth as it pertains to human choice and action. Classical pragmatism argues that truth belongs to a transformative role of knowledge hence, pragmatists discountenance the correspondence theories of truth and knowledge. This explains for them the epistemic value of utility. Pragmatists held that there is an important place in the universe for human choice and initiative. Pragmatists are opposed to philosophical system which regard the world as finished, complete or impervious to effects of choice. William James argues that pragmatism is a way of distilling the genuine human significance from obscure philosophical theories and debates. Hence, true ideas are just those that can be verified, or these that are useful. Dewey reworked pragmatist theories within a naturalistic framework which sets out from biological description of living organisms and their relations to their environments, and emphasizes also the importance of social interactions in human life. He argues that intelligence is a means for humans to transform their environment in order to deal with the problems posed by uncertainty and change in natural events. Dewey sees theories of truth as correspondence as aimed at inventing magical relations between thought and the world in order to overcome nonexistent problems. In consequence, pragmatism is seen to have diverse implications for reality and philosophy. Of the all has been said it is argued whether pragmatists succeeded in

devising an alternative view of truth. In conclusion pragmatism has come to be a paradigm for the evaluation and assessment of value and judgment.

Keywords: Epistemology, Pragmatic theory, truth, Knowledge

Introduction

This work examines the foundation of the philosophical trend of pragmatism and its ideological definitions and the values it offers as philosophical thought. Pragmatism is a philosophical theory which emerged in the late nineteenth century. Pragmatism fell from favour for much of the latter part of the 20th century, but is now seeing a revival.¹ The “classical” pragmatists are C. S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Their philosophies differed a good deal, but all defended broadly the empiricist views of thought and knowledge which emphasize the role of thought in guiding action and reject various traditional empiricist psychological positions.² Pragmatism tends to reject correspondence theories of truth and attempts to ground human knowledge on a special “foundational” set of beliefs. Prominent English-speaking philosophers associated with pragmatism in more recent years include W. V. O. Quine, Richard Rort, Hilary Putnam, and Robert Brandom etc. Pragmatism began in the late nineteenth century with the work of C.S. Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. Pragmatism’s influence subsided after the death of Dewey in 1952, but is seeing a sustained revival. This work will attempt to give a rough summary of characteristic themes in pragmatist epistemology, and then look more closely at Peirce, James, and Dewey. It will gradually examine the historical transformation of pragmatism in the late 20th century and its new forms as it manifests in the 21st century.

Forms and structures of pragmatic Arguments

It is believed that Pragmatist philosophers generally reject attempts to understand human knowledge by appeal to some special set of “foundational” beliefs that support all the others. For pragmatism, both specific beliefs and general methods of inquiry should be judged by their consequences, by their usefulness in achieving human goals.³ Although pragmatists stress the role of knowledge in guiding action and solving practical problems, it is an error to see pragmatism as claiming that the direction of research, or choices between rival theories, should be guided substantially by practical or commercial demands. A detailed account of the relationship between theoretical work and practical goals was only worked out successfully by Dewey.

The nature of truth has been a central topic for pragmatists, and a source of much trouble for them in the classical period. Pragmatists generally reject “correspondence” theories of truth, theories which claim that a true belief or statement is one which represent the world as it really is.⁴ After rejecting correspondence, pragmatists have had a difficult time devising an alternative view of truth. The classical pragmatists held that there is an important place in the universe for human choice and initiative (a theme more prominent in James and Dewey than in Peirce). They opposed philosophical system which regard the world as “finished,” complete,” or impervious to the effects of choice. Pragmatists also tend to hold “humanistic” perspectives on matters involving morals and values, opposing both nihilistic views that reject all moral assessment as founded on illusion, and views that locate moral and other evaluative facts outside the everyday world or human striving and well-being.⁵

William James (1842-1910)

William James made pragmatism famous, especially in his 1907 book *Pragmatism*, the most widely read of all pragmatists writings. James had a brilliant and influential career based at Harvard, in both philosophy and psychology. James wrote a number of important works before he began calling himself a “pragmatist” and aligning his views with those of Peirce. In his earlier philosophical works, James argued that we have the right to actively choose sides on momentous, unresolved philosophical issues that will affect how we live our lives⁶.

Choices made on these issues will strongly affect our individual temperaments; we should not expect all individuals to find the same philosophies appealing. The issues James applied this doctrine include the existence of God, the freedom of the will, and the reality of moral facts. James had published a landmark work in psychology, his two-volume *Principles of Psychology* framework. He gave credit to Peirce’s role in discussions in Cambridge in the early 1870s, in a social embedded in his characteristic themes within an overtly pragmatist circle called the “Metaphysical Club”⁷ To a greater extent than Peirce and Dewey, James took pragmatism to be continuous with the tradition of English-speaking empiricist philosophers such as David Hume and J.S. Mill.

James presented pragmatism as a way to avoid the errors of the two key philosophies of his day—overly scientific and materialist empiricism on one side, and sentimental, over-optimistic religious idealism on the other. James endorsed

a version of the pragmatic maxim, as a method for finding the real content in philosophical debates, it does not typically show that these lack content; instead the maxim reveals hidden and substantial issues that are at stake the long-term direction being taken by the universe, and the role of human choice in affecting how things turn out. James saw pragmatism as a way of distilling the genuine human significance from obscure philosophical theories and debates.⁹ James was a less scientific thinker than Peirce, and more individualistic than Peirce and Dewey. He endorsed assessing ideas in terms of their “cash value”, an unfortunate phrase which led many to interpret pragmatism as vulgar and anti-intellectual.

James created a stream of criticism through his tendency to discuss the nature of truth in a vague and simplistic way. He said at various times that true ideas are just those that can be verified, or those that are useful.¹⁰ Major criticism of James rested on misinterpretations, but there is no question that he wrote about this topic imprecisely. His writings have endured, discussion of the role of individual temperament in philosophical choice never seem outdated, for example, and James’s attractive personality, imagination, and boundless energy radiate from the pages of his work.

John Dewey (1859-1952)

Dewey’s work is the culmination of the “classical” period in the pragmatists tradition. In the course of a remarkably long and productive career, Dewey published in all areas of philosophy and in psychology, education, and politics. He wrote both popular, accessible works and dense, uncompromising ones. Dewey’s work went through several phases. Early in his career he accepted an idealist philosophy of the type influenced by Hegel, and also had Christian interests.

Around the turn of the century he turned toward a more scientific approach to philosophy influenced by Darwin and by James’s *Principles of Psychology*.¹² He dropped his commitment to Christianity and he rejected all supernatural forms of religion, and did not share James’s sympathy for mystical ideas, but he continues to see value in some kinds of religious experience. Dewey reworked pragmatist themes within what he called a “naturalistic” framework a framework which sets out from a biological description of living organisms and their relations to their environments, and emphasizes also the importance of

social interaction in human life.¹³ Dewey argued that intelligence is means for humans to transform their environments in order to deal with the problems posed by uncertainty and change in natural events.¹⁴ In *Experience and Nature*, perhaps his greatest work, Dewey defended his naturalistic view of mind and knowledge, and criticized the philosophical tradition for its postulation of false divides or “gulfs”- between mind and matter thought and object, theoretical and practical. The philosophical tradition is plagued by “dualism” which lead to pseudo problems, problems of establishing contact between realms that should never been set against each other in the first place.¹⁵ The source of these dualism is a “split in being” established by the ancient Greeks, a split between the “perfect, permanent, self-possessed” and the “defective, changing, relational. “Dewey sought to replace these dualisms with a view based on various kinds of “continuity”- between mind and nature, between organism and environment, and between cognition and simpler biological capacities. For Dewey, these natural continuities also provide the material needed to resolve oppositions between fact and value. Much of Dewey’s later work is mixture of careful system building based on assertions of “continuity” and sweeping historical surveys, tracing the histories of crucial philosophical errors back and forward through thousands of years.¹⁶

Dewey defended a social theory of mind, claiming that thought exists with a language using community. His argument is that the primary role of science is to help human societies deal with problems and control their environments.¹⁷ The idea of this Dewey thought, is that, it was unscientific for scientists to direct their work according to specific practical problems. Rather, science is the study of a special subset of properties of natural affairs, relations and connections, called by Dewey “instrumental” properties. Science is most successful in expanding our capacities for problem-solving and transforming our environment when it is directed on the study of the instrumental features of nature in an open-ended way, unconstrained by immediate practical applications.¹⁸

Dewey rejected what he called the “spectator theory of knowledge,” the view the genuine knower is someone who registers what is going on but does not intervene. Instead, the proper role of knowledge is to enable humans to transform their situations in beneficial ways. This also led Dewey into some of the same arguments that James had with defenders of correspondence or “copy” theories of truth. Dewey thought that theories of truth as correspondence were aimed at inventing magical relations between thought and the world in order to

overcome what he saw as a nonexistent problem-the problem of how the mind and the external world could have any contact with each other.

He also thought correspondence theories belong with a spectator view of the role of knowledge. He did not take seriously the idea that “copying” the world can be a means to transforming it; he saw these inevitably as rivals. Dewey wrote often of the role played by knowledge in “transforming” or ‘reconstructing’ the world, but this “transformation” should not be understood as implying an idealist metaphysical view. Dewey opines that knowledge is a factor in changing things in the world because knowledge has a role in guiding action, which transforms things by means of physical relationships. This treatment of thought and action, is a resistance to a “closed” conception of the universe and an assertion of the significance of human choice. Dewey insisted on the reality of the progressive re-shaping of the by world by human choice, though this reshaping is limited in scope, contingent in its effects, and draws on craft skills as well as ideas.

Dewey was a significant figure in US political and social thought. He defended a version of liberalism and wrote extensively about the proper structure of a democratic society. At various times he was attacked by both the right and the left. He hoped for a more “democratic” economic order, but kept communism at arm’s length. Dewey’s best known political activity was his chairing of an international inquiry into Stalin’s trial of Trotsky. The inquiry entitled its report “Not Guilty”.

Dewey wrote about art and took a lifelong interest in education. When he was at Chicago he established an experimental school. Dewey favored a problem solving approach to all types of learning and his ideas remained influential in education during decades when his name had almost dropped out of English-speaking philosophy.

Understanding Pragmatic Theory

The notion of pragmatism is that it is a philosophical trend closely tied to the investigation of and the recognition of that which is “practical.”¹⁸ William James remarks that the history of the idea shows that pragmatism is a term derived from the same Greek word/meaning action, from which our words ‘practice’

come. Peirce, however, is recognized as the originator of what has become the modern pragmatic theory. He learnt philosophy from Kant, with the unique feature of the theory of an inseparable connection between rational cognition and rational purpose: and that consideration it was which determined the preference for the name pragmatism.¹⁹ Pragmatism rests, on the two pragmatic theories of truth presented above. Peirce's presents the statement of the "principle" of pragmatism, which he called the "pragmatic maxim". This maxim, according to Peirce, was intended to "furnish a method for the analysis of concept. ... The method prescribed in the maxim is to trace out in the imagination the conceivable practical consequences. The consequences for deliberate, self-controlled conduct-of the affirmation or denial of the concept, and the assertion of the maxim is that herein lies the whole of the purport of the word, the entire concept. ²⁰ The whole function of thought is to produce habits of action. It therefore means, we have, to determine what habit it produces, for what a thing means is simply what habits involves....what habit it depends on when and how it causes us to act.²¹

Every stimulus to action is derived from perception; as for the how every purpose of action is to produce some sensible result. This enables us to count down to what is tangible and conceivably practical, as the root of every real distinction of thought, no matter how subtle it may be; and there is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice.²²

Truth is incompatible with waywardness on our part. Woe to him whose beliefs play fast and loose with the order which realities follow in his experience; they will on where or else make false connection.²³

Kuklick criticizer James's subjective element, i.e. a criterion of truth which an individual believes to be correlated with fact. James claimed that truth is not to be defined in respect of an individual but truth as an "inevitable regulative postulate-that is forever satisfying for all, the truth proved satisfactory for all in the long run.²⁴ James here is making the claim that there is a correlation between belief and action> Belief (a term within which subsumed the notions of idea and hypothesis) is an instrument of action, and its truth.²⁵ This consists in its verification , i.e in having the experiences that the belief predicts we will have. A true belief is verified by a truth process of specific involvement. The truth process allows individual subjective evaluation. Truth process is recognized to be a means by which verification and validation of true belief is asserted when an

individual has not the time nor opportunity to embark personally on the truth processes as concerns each and every belief.

A true belief by this description, does not come to exist only upon verification by somebody. For James, true belief virtually pre-exists when every condition of their realization is present, i.e. every condition except that of being the experience who verifies. James claimed that in the verification of a belief the truth-process had to be loyal to and mindful of the past true beliefs held by our ancestors.²⁶ The point of James, is to be understood in term “usefulness” in this context demanded of a true belief that in its proving itself good to be believed, that belief could not contradict residual beliefs held in the past. James makes here the commendable suggestion that the residual beliefs with which the more recent verified true beliefs must correlate are those beliefs of the past which are themselves true by verification.

James holds that true belief of the past can be verified to be false. In one respect this “mutability of truth” presents an alternative to dogmatism which is based upon a claim of the absoluteness or immutability of truth. The great assumption of the intellectualists is that truth is essentially an inert static relation. When you’ve got your true idea of anything, there’s the end of the matter for. James a true proves itself good to be believed because it allows of itself constant reflection and, if in our reflection, a retrospective judgment asserts that there is a belief which is true, despite the judgments of the past thinkers, the belief verified by our own experience sheds a “backward light” upon the past.²⁷ The benefits of “mutability of truth”, are short-lived, for the notion seems to be counterintuitive. The notion most often associated with true belief suggest that the truth of such a belief is time-independent.

The pragmatic theories of James and Charles Peirce are marked at this point: James suggests that individuals participate in making beliefs true by specific reference to verified and verifiable individual’s experiences? Peirce does not agree. It would appear that James has interpreted the “Pragmatic Maxim” to require a definition of the true to reveal the True practical and relative effects.²⁸ James supports his interpretation, with the idea that what is tangible and practical is at the root of every real distinction of thought, no matter how subtle it may be; and there is no distinction of meaning so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. Thus his linkage of the Pragmatic Maxim to this claim that term “practical” is derived from classical Greek origins. Practice,

the step to the formulation of a definition reflecting the historical tie between practical and relevant is a short one.

A true belief has specific actions as indicated by specific sensible effects. This for James leads to his notion of “good”, for the action associated with the true belief involves the achievement of specific effects through the consistency of behavioral responses, i.e. experiences. Truth means, that ideas become true just in so far as they help us to get satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience.²⁹ The Jamesian definition for truth lacks clear presentation of criteria by which the true belief may be asserted. The confusion arises by James, on the one hand, claiming that true beliefs are constructs of historical development forming “one great stage of equilibrium in the human mind’s development. We plunge into the field of fresh experience.

Pragmatism and the Critical Role of Philosophy

Pragmatism is at the core of idea that philosophical reflection should be continuous with everyday life.³⁰ This is the reason why Dewey argues that philosophy should follow an “empirical method’. This creates a ground for the philosopher to adopt a detached perspective and to engage in the elaboration of theories that are not informed by actual lived experiences. This Dewey calls the great vice of philosophy’: intellectualism and its companion revisionism. According to Dewey, intellectualism exhibits an unwarranted distrust for the ordinary and induces “disillusionment with life’. Intellectualist philosophies neglect the richness of lived experiences. Under their gaze ordinary experiences are distorted and ultimately replaced with theoretical construction that cannot find a place in our lives.³¹ Dewey puts it thus: “the most serious indictment to be brought against non-empirical philosophies is that they have cast a cloud over the things of ordinary experience. Common experience is capable of developing from within itself methods which will secure direction for itself and will create inherent standard of judgment and value.³² According to pragmatism, philosophy must start in medias res in the middle of things, in the stream of life. It is important to note that this internalist or immanent perspective is not a mere celebration of the ordinary. It is particularly important to note this today, give the theoretical anemia (or even anorexia) that has become pervasive in academia. For the pragmatist, the quietest yearns for a return to a lost, pre theoretical innocence, which in the eyes of the pragmatist, is unattainable. Dewey remarks, “we cannot achieve recovery of primitive naiveté. For Dewey, by focusing on ordinary life experiences philosophy does not simply become the voice of

common sense, for philosophical reflection is, essentially critical and transformative. The relationship between philosophy and everyday life experiences is a two-way street: philosophical reflection must start from experience, but it must also return to it and enrich it. For Dewey, the 'primary concern' of philosophy should be "to clarify, liberate and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience".³²

What motivates philosophical reflection is "the interest of a more intense and just appreciation of the meanings presents in experience". Dewey proposes for philosophical reflection that we ask whether or not such reflection result in the clarification and 'enrichment' of experience. Both intellectualism and quietism fail test, for they neither shed light on nor enrich experience. Intellectualism and quietism fail this test, for the neither shed light on or enrich experience. Intellectualism enjoys the added danger of distortion, and quietisms the added danger of conformity. But both are equally uncritical; intellectualism dismisses the ordinary without engaging critically with it; quietism celebrates it without questioning it. Intellectualists and quietists cannot criticize or transform life experiences because either they choose to talk about something else entirely or they refuse to say anything that can conflict with these experiences. These philosophical perspectives cannot clarify the normative principles that shape our lives and structure our practices and they leave them intact. This cannot be otherwise, for the philosophical illumination and enrichment of life experiences are to be achieved by means of criticism, and intellectualism and quietism make the critical function of philosophy impossible. Philosophical reflection cannot play its critical role in the assessment of life experiences by departing from them completely or not at all. That is, philosophy cannot fulfill its critical function when the critical distance is so great that the object of criticism is no longer in sight, or when there is no critical distance whatsoever. By emphasizing the dialectical relation between life experiences and philosophical reflection pragmatism tries to vindicate the critical function of philosophy.³³ Pragmatism makes critique possible by dissolving the false dichotomy that intellectualism and quietisms present us with: either theory or life. So long as we accept this dichotomy, philosophy will remain uncritical: it will be stuck in a pendulous movement that leads nowhere, swinging between the extremes of construction and deconstruction, going from compulsive theory building to obsessively tearing down theoretical edifices. But, as Richard Shusterman has argued, it is a mistake to think of theory and practice, of philosophy and life, as opposites. Shusterman contends that American pragmatism is a return to a practical perspective in philosophy that was especially influential in the Hellenistic

tradition: a conception of philosophy as an “art of better living through self-examination and self-creation.³⁴ He argues that this practical view of philosophy reconciles the immediate and the theoretically mediated aspects of our lives. This pragmatic view of philosophy makes clear that theory and practice, far from being mutually exclusive, are dependent on one another. It is precisely in this dialectical interdependence that the critical activity of philosophy resides.³⁵

Dewey describes philosophy as critique. The critique has both negative and positive aspect. In its negative aspect, “philosophy is a critique of prejudices, “a kind of intellectual disrobing³” by which “we inspect critically (the intellectual habits of our culture) to see what they are made of and what wearing them does to us”. The negative dimension, claims that philosophical criticism aims at a positive outcome, namely: the reconstruction or transformation of experience.³⁵

The results of critique are to be incorporated into our subsequent experience. The incorporated results of past reflection, welded into genuine materials of first-hand experience, may become organs of enrichment. Clarification and emancipation follow when prejudices are detected and cast out. Through philosophical reflection our lives can be liberated from harmful prejudices and enriched by critically examined experiential structures.³⁶ The critical activity of philosophy is at the service of a positive function: the clarification and enrichment of life experiences. On Dewey’s view, philosophical criticism is reconstructive or transformative: it aims at “a qualitative transformation, a re-making of experience. For Dewey, what is most characteristic of philosophical criticism, is that it sets apart from other forms of critique, is its generality. Philosophy is inherently criticism, having its distinctive position among various modes of criticism in its generality; a criticism of criticism, as it was’. But no matter how general, it is important to note that, on this pragmatist view, philosophical criticism is always situated and piecemeal. Dewey argues that the critical activity of philosophy does not proceed according to a master plan, a grand narrative, or a fixed framework. It is never global and detached. It is always done for a purpose and in a context.³⁷ The critical reconstruction of experience is as situated as experience itself. There are many aspects and varieties of human experience, but, according to Dewey, some generic traits of experience that deserve special philosophical attention. One of these traits is that experience is always and necessarily both individual and social: it involves experiential subjects as well as communities of experience.³⁸

The fruits of critical reconstruction of experience are the clarification and the enrichment of experience. For the individual, the critical activity of philosophy should aim at self-knowledge and self-realization. Similarly, at the level of groups, the critical reconstruction of collective experience should result in an increased group self-understanding and in the betterment of communal life.³⁸ The pragmatist notions of experience and critical reconstruction in their social dimension. The central goals of the ensuing discussion is to elucidate the contribution that pragmatism can make to the philosophy of ethnicity, that is, to identify the theoretical resources available in the pragmatists tradition for the understanding of ethnic experiences and the improvement of the communal life of ethnic groups.³⁹ For the pragmatist the topic of ethnic identity was largely neglected, except by classic race theorists, such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke, who wrote on the topic explicitly. In recent decades, however, ethnicity has become a topic of discussion taken up by pragmatist. The issue of race and ethnicity are an intimate issue in classic pragmatism and that even today the philosophy of race and the philosophy of ethnicity go hand in hand.

Evaluation

In the preceding page we have examined the tenet and systemic development of the school of pragmatic's. Its logical growth and tenacity are not denial of some perceived flaws of the school of pragmatics. Pragmatism is a multifaceted philosophy that has been applied and conceptualized in many different ways and professions. It is a doctrine whose supporters have always been engaged in critical internal debates. For instance, Peirce and James, whose disagreement about fundamental assumptions of pragmatism led Peirce to rename his version of pragmatism into pragmatism, or the more contemporary debate between Rorty and Haack, which shows that the pragmatic philosophy is still vibrant and alive.⁴⁰ While this internal disagreement enabled the field to flourish and grow, the conflict is also a growing ground for criticisms', especially for those who strive for certainty. Critics argues that pragmatism lacks explicitness and rigor, as it does not aim to uncover certainty. Pragmatism therefore cannot be seen as a process of scientific inquiry, making it relativistic in its core. The main concern is: if there is no way of finding absolute truth or certainty, how can we know that something is better than another? Certainty as a philosophical concept is not addressed in pragmatic philosophy, as we can never know whether something is absolute. ⁴¹ Pragmatism as a non-dualist philosophy reject the object subject categorization, which is a pre-condition for certainty.

Pragmatists believe that object and subject cannot be separated and are therefore intersubjectively connected. More precisely, intersubjectivity describes the state in which subject and objects impact and shape each other in the everyday practice. It erases the subject-object division, which makes it impossible to uncover objective or absolute certainty, or truth.⁴² The pragmatists address the issue of certainty by systematically bridging theories and experience. Truth is merely determined by the problem-solving ability of theories or any other form of knowledge. Theories are merely tools that become true successfully solving a particular problematic situation. This process is inherently rigorous, as theories or scientific knowledge is often formulated in a precise and structured way. One can never know for certain whether a specific theory solves a certain problem; even though it has been verified multiple times. Theories are therefore constantly tested, verified, and falsified by a practical community of inquiry.

The pragmatist's main point of attack has been on the absolutist's criterion of truth and error. The force of absolutism attacked the incomplete, diffused, and often crudely fortified positions of pragmatism. The pragmatist attack by professor Creighton is summarized in the following objections, which run as follows:

1. Ambiguity in the use of the 'practical purpose'
2. The necessary subjectivity and relativity of the position.
3. The lack of any principle by means of which experience can be unified.
4. The sharp opposition amounting to a real dualism between thought and the antecedent experience out of which it is said to arise.
5. The presupposition of the indispensable background between logical and ontological systems that are at variance.⁴³

These are the subtle practical questions meant for the pragmatists' constructions as a basis for operation for them to be genuine and germane in the corridor of knowledge. The pragmatist's inability to delve into the quest of absolutism is ranked a major flaw for its procedures as these have become a phenomenon in the existential encounter.

The next criticism of pragmatism, is the doubtful aptness in philosophical discussion. This must be seen in the failure of making a connection between the absolutist's general definition of truth and error and the standard actually employed in testing any particular. There is no relation between pragmatists

metaphysical and his instrumental logic. There is not so much obvious contradiction as impel irrelevance etc.⁴⁴

The definition of reality as fixed, as unmoving and unmovable, whether it be a 'system of immutable ideas', a 'fixed purpose,' or a 'changeless sentiency', and then pass to the decision of the degree of truth or error in any specific case, it appears that our actual tests have no specific cases, it appears that our actual tests have no discoverable connection with the general definition. Professor Creighton objection to pragmatism is that "every real thought has some degree of truth. It is therefore implied that it has some degree of error. If it 'touches reality' at some point, it also may fail to 'touch' at others; and the problems is: How are we to tell when, where, and to what extent it' touches' and fails to 'touch' reality? The real problem in any given case, therefore, is to determine which of two or more possible ways or judging about reality is truer and more adequate.⁴⁵

Professor Creighton establishes that every experience appeals to verification. It is to be noted that the system to which we appeal is not a fixed circle of abstract that the power of determining truth through their own internal consistency.⁴⁶ It is rather the concrete and fluid process of thinking, in which the nature of reality functions, both as something already partially determined. How then will the school of pragmatism be able to fulfil this entire process?

Conclusion

The age in which the pragmatists came on board seems to be an age of interest of evaluating relevance based on achievement, hence the criteria for judgment are premised upon the thrust of value, gains, utility etc. This seems a wonderful approach but could be injurious in the long run if the assessment of people is based merely on utility. Hence what should be accepted in this regard, is that accommodation of this utility criteria alongside other issues should be considered in the discus of the paradigm for determination and conclusions.

It must be acknowledged that pragmatism as another school of thought in philosophical judgment is a most objective view and cannot be looked down upon. Hence it will be one of the necessary yardstick which should be imbued in the human person in the furtherance of a progressive delivery. When the human zeal is geared toward achievement of utility and growth, the there is no fear of extinction.

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