

# DOWNLOAD PDF PRAGMATISM: A NEW NAME FOR SOME OLD WAYS OF THINKING (SELECTION WILLIAM JAMES)

## Chapter 1 : Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking - William James - Google Books

*In and , William James delivered a series of eight lectures at the Lowell Institute, Boston, and at Columbia University, New York City which he published as "Pragmatism: A New Way for Some Old Ways of Thinking".*

Everyone has a philosophy. Temperament is a factor in all philosophizing. The tender-minded and the tough-minded. Most men wish both facts and religion. Empiricism gives facts without religion. Rationalism gives religion without facts. The unreality in rationalistic systems. Leibnitz on the damned, as an example. Swift on the optimism of idealists. Pragmatism as a mediating system. Spencer as an example. Pragmatism as a method. History of the method. Its character and affinities. How it contrasts with rationalism and intellectualism. The formation of new beliefs. Older truth always has to be kept account of. Older truth arose similarly. Rationalistic criticisms of it. Pragmatism as mediator between empiricism and religion. Barrenness of transcendental idealism. How far the concept of the Absolute must be called true. The true is the good in the way of belief The clash of truths. The problem of materialism. Rationalistic treatment of it. Pragmatic comparison of the two principles. The problem of design. The question is what design. The pragmatic issue at stake in all these problems is what do the alternatives promise. Philosophy seeks not only unity, but totality. Rationalistic feeling about unity. Pragmatically considered, the world is one in many ways. One time and space. One subject of discourse. Its oneness and manyness are co-ordinate. Question of one origin. Value of pragmatic method. Various types of union discussed. We must oppose monistic dogmatism and follow empirical findings. How our knowledge grows. Earlier ways of thinking remain. Prehistoric ancestors discovered the common sense concepts. They came gradually into use. What does agreement with reality mean? Verifiability means ability to guide us prosperously through experience- Completed verifications seldom needful. Consistency, with language, with previous truths. Truth is a good, like health, wealth, etc. It is expedient thinking. Absolutely independent reality is hard to find. The human contribution is ubiquitous and builds out the given. Rationalism affirms a transempirical world. We may create reality. The healthy and the morbid reply. The original published version of this document is in the public domain. The Mead Project exercises no copyrights over the original text. This page and related Mead Project pages constitute the personal web-site of Dr. Lloyd Gordon Ward retired , who is responsible for its content. Although the Mead Project continues to be presented through the generosity of Brock University, the contents of this page do not reflect the opinion of Brock University. Brock University is not responsible for its content. Scholars are permitted to reproduce this material for personal use. Instructors are permitted to reproduce this material for educational use by their students. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, for the purpose of profit or personal benefit, without written permission from the Mead Project. Permission is granted for inclusion of the electronic text of these pages, and their related images in any index that provides free access to its listed documents.

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### Chapter 2 : Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking. von William James (Paperback) €“ L

*Pragmatism: An Old Name for Some New Ways of Thinking? James T. Kloppenberg William James was stuck. Facing the publication of Pragmatism in , he had.*

Pray postpone for a moment the question whether the two contrasted mixtures which I have written down are each inwardly coherent and self-consistent or not €” I shall very soon have a good deal to say on that point. It suffices for our immediate purpose that tender-minded and tough-minded people, characterized as I have written them down, do both exist. Each of you probably knows some well-marked example of each type, and you know what each example thinks of the example on the other side of the line. They have a low opinion of each other. Their antagonism, whenever as individuals their temperaments have been intense, has formed in all ages a part of the philosophic atmosphere of the time. It forms a part of the philosophic atmosphere today. The tough think of the tender as sentimentalists and soft-heads. The tender feel the tough to be unrefined, callous, or brutal. Their mutual reaction is very much like that that takes place when Bostonian tourists mingle with a population like that of Cripple Creek. Each type believes the other to be inferior to itself; but disdain in the one case is mingled with amusement, in the other it has a dash of fear. Now, as I have already insisted, few of us are tender-foot Bostonians pure and simple, and few are typical Rocky Mountain toughs, in philosophy. Most of us have a hankering for the good things on both sides of the line. Facts are good, of course €” give us lots of facts. Principles are good €” give us plenty of principles. The world is indubitably one if you look at it in one way, but as indubitably is it many, if you look at it in another. It is both one and many €” let us adopt a sort of pluralistic monism. Everything of course is necessarily determined, and yet of course our wills are free: And so forth €” your ordinary philosophic layman never being a radical, never straightening out his system, but living vaguely in one plausible compartment of it or another to suit the temptations of successive hours. But some of us are more than mere laymen in philosophy. We are worthy of the name of amateur athletes, and are vexed by too much inconsistency and vacillation in our creed. We cannot preserve a good intellectual conscience so long as we keep mixing incompatibles from opposite sides of the line. And now I come to the first positively important point which I wish to make. Never were as many men of a decidedly empiricist proclivity in existence as there are at the present day. Our children, one may say, are almost born scientific. But our esteem for facts has not neutralized in us all religiousness. It is itself almost religious. Our scientific temper is devout. Now take a man of this type, and let him be also a philosophic amateur, unwilling to mix a hodge-podge system after the fashion of a common layman, and what does he find his situation to be, in this blessed year of our Lord ? He wants facts; he wants science; but he also wants a religion. And being an amateur and not an independent originator in philosophy he naturally looks for guidance to the experts and professionals whom he finds already in the field. A very large number of you here present, possibly a majority of you, are amateurs of just this sort. Now what kinds of philosophy do you find actually offered to meet your need? You find an empirical philosophy that is not religious enough, and a religious philosophy that is not empirical enough for your purpose. The result is what one may call the growth of naturalistic or positivistic feeling. Man is no law-giver to nature, he is an absorber. She it is who stands firm; he it is who must accommodate himself. Let him record truth, inhuman tho it be, and submit to it! The romantic spontaneity and courage are gone, the vision is materialistic and depressing. You get, in short, a materialistic universe, in which only the tough-minded find themselves congenially at home. If now, on the other hand, you turn to the religious quarter for consolation, and take counsel of the tender-minded philosophies, what do you find? Religious philosophy in our day and generation is, among us English-reading people, of two main types. One of these is more radical and aggressive, the other has more the air of fighting a slow retreat. By the more radical wing of religious philosophy I mean the so-called transcendental idealism of the Anglo€”Hegelian school, the philosophy of such men as Green, the Cairds, Bosanquet, and Royce. This philosophy has greatly influenced the more studious members of our protestant ministry. It is pantheistic, and undoubtedly it has

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already blunted the edge of the traditional theism in protestantism at large. That theism remains, however. It is the lineal descendant, through one stage of concession after another, of the dogmatic scholastic theism still taught rigorously in the seminaries of the catholic church. For a long time it used to be called among us the philosophy of the Scottish school. It is what I meant by the philosophy that has the air of fighting a slow retreat. Fair-minded and candid as you like, this philosophy is not radical in temper. It is eclectic, a thing of compromises, that seeks a *modus vivendi* above all things. It accepts the facts of darwinism, the facts of cerebral physiology, but it does nothing active or enthusiastic with them. It lacks the victorious and aggressive note. It lacks prestige in consequence; whereas absolutism has a certain prestige due to the more radical style of it. These two systems are what you have to choose between if you turn to the tender-minded school. And if you are the lovers of facts I have supposed you to be, you find the trail of the serpent of rationalism, of intellectualism, over everything that lies on that side of the line. You escape indeed the materialism that goes with the reigning empiricism; but you pay for your escape by losing contact with the concrete parts of life. The more absolutistic philosophers dwell on so high a level of abstraction that they never even try to come down. The absolute mind which they offer us, the mind that makes our universe by thinking it, might, for aught they show us to the contrary, have made any one of a million other universes just as well as this. You can deduce no single actual particular from the notion of it. It is compatible with any state of things whatever being true here below. And the theistic God is almost as sterile a principle. You have to go to the world which he has created to get any inkling of his actual character: The God of the theistic writers lives on as purely abstract heights as does the Absolute. Absolutism has a certain sweep and dash about it, while the usual theism is more insipid, but both are equally remote and vacuous. What you want is a philosophy that will not only exercise your powers of intellectual abstraction, but that will make some positive connexion with this actual world of finite human lives. You want a system that will combine both things, the scientific loyalty to facts and willingness to take account of them, the spirit of adaptation and accommodation, in short, but also the old confidence in human values and the resultant spontaneity, whether of the religious or of the romantic type. And this is then your dilemma: You find empiricism with inhumanism and irreligion; or else you find a rationalistic philosophy that indeed may call itself religious, but that keeps out of all definite touch with concrete facts and joys and sorrows. I am not sure how many of you live close enough to philosophy to realize fully what I mean by this last reproach, so I will dwell a little longer on that unreality in all rationalistic systems by which your serious believer in facts is so apt to feel repelled. I wish that I had saved the first couple of pages of a thesis which a student handed me a year or two ago. They illustrated my point so clearly that I am sorry I cannot read them to you now. This young man, who was a graduate of some Western college, began by saying that he had always taken for granted that when you entered a philosophic class-room you had to open relations with a universe entirely distinct from the one you left behind you in the street. The two were supposed, he said, to have so little to do with each other, that you could not possibly occupy your mind with them at the same time. The world of concrete personal experiences to which the street belongs is multitudinous beyond imagination, tangled, muddy, painful and perplexed. The world to which your philosophy-professor introduces you is simple, clean and noble. The contradictions of real life are absent from it. Its architecture is classic. Principles of reason trace its outlines, logical necessities cement its parts. Purity and dignity are what it most expresses. It is a kind of marble temple shining on a hill. In point of fact it is far less an account of this actual world than a clear addition built upon it, a classic sanctuary in which the rationalist fancy may take refuge from the intolerably confused and gothic character which mere facts present. Its temperament, if I may use the word temperament here, is utterly alien to the temperament of existence in the concrete. They exquisitely satisfy that craving for a refined object of contemplation which is so powerful an appetite of the mind. Refinement has its place in things, true enough. But a philosophy that breathes out nothing but refinement will never satisfy the empiricist temper of mind. It will seem rather a monument of artificiality. Truly there is something a little ghastly in the satisfaction with which a pure but unreal system will fill a rationalist mind. Leibnitz was a rationalist mind, with infinitely more interest in facts than most

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rationalist minds can show. Let me quote a specimen of what I mean. Among other obstacles to his optimistic philosophy, it falls to Leibnitz to consider the number of the eternally damned. That it is infinitely greater, in our human case, than that of those saved he assumes as a premise from the theologians, and then proceeds to argue in this way. Even then, he says: But he failed to compass the extent of the kingdom of the heavens. The ancients had small ideas of the works of God. It seemed to them that only our earth had inhabitants, and even the notion of our antipodes gave them pause. The rest of the world for them consisted of some shining globes and a few crystalline spheres. But today, whatever be the limits that we may grant or refuse to the Universe we must recognize in it a countless number of globes, as big as ours or bigger, which have just as much right as it has to support rational inhabitants, tho it does not follow that these need all be men. Our earth is only one among the six principal satellites of our sun.

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*William James wrote the book - Pragmatism: A new name for some old ways of thinking". Pragmatism reflected a quality often looked upon as genuinely American: the inventive, experimental spirit that judged ideas on their results and their ability to adapt to changing social needs and environments.*

This book is a series of lectures James gave more than a hundred years ago to help explain pragmatism as a method, not as just yet another philosophical position. Seeing truth not as Truth and the self as something clear and solid we need to discover but multiple, social, shifting, flexible, continually constructed I read this as I have read it before for a grad course I am teaching on Language, Literacy and Democracy. Seeing truth not as Truth and the self as something clear and solid we need to discover but multiple, social, shifting, flexible, continually constructed in engagement with experience. Which makes it sound like a lot of contemporary postmodern philosophy. Right, the ideas have been around for centuries, nothing new, James says, and these skeptical "show me" ideas continued through the work of contemporary pragmatist practitioners such as Richard Rorty. Anti-"isms," which can be single theoretical explanations of the world, like Marxism, Feminism, anti-racism. Single bullet explanations that are fixed and a-contextual. Grand Theories that claim to explain How the World Works. Bull hockey to that, James says. The central idea here is that the meaning or truth of any idea "philosophical, political, social, or otherwise" has validity only in terms of its experiential and practical consequences. In other words, you think this, you believe this. What difference does it make in the world? What good is to believe that? James and pragmatism HATE abstractions and the emptiest most ethereal reaches of philosophizing. James is also responding to Darwin, who was of course all the rage in the late nineteenth century. Darwin says, among other things, that we are mostly determined by our biology, by genetics. He shows us this true through scientific experiment. And he has a point. But James says nope, anything that claims you are completely determined by any one thing in particular ways is just plain limited. You are changing and always will be. Not fixed by experience but open because of it. James and the pragmatists say that you in part make yourself and your world. A hopeful view, perhaps a little naive, you say, you cynic, but as a teacher, I have to believe in possibilities for learning and life, and James helps me not be so. He helps, at least. And as someone in academia, I hitting it helps to be less certain than too damned cocksure of oneself. James, the brother of novelist Henry, was one of the great thinkers of his time.

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Runs on Windows , Mac and mobile. Trained as a doctor, James never practiced medicine. Perhaps due to his own struggles with depression and melancholy, he was drawn to philosophy and psychology. That interest turned into a serious academic career. Known as the father of American psychology, James is the founder of functional psychology and cofounder of the James-Lange Theory of Emotion. He also wrote an important work on the psychology of religious experience. Many philosophers consider Pragmatism: In the book, James lays out his philosophical pragmatism, building on the work of his friends John Dewey and Charles Sanders Peirce. James defines pragmatism as a methodology that steers between the Scylla of rational absolutism and the Charybdis of empirical materialism. It is a method, says James, of choosing theories. In pragmatism, the validity of an idea is judged by whether or not it has results, not by whether it is a priori true. Truth, for James, does not live in any one proposition. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its validation. As such, James affirms rationalism by making its ultimate value contingent upon empiricism. In the digital edition, this valuable volume is enhanced by amazing functionality. Scripture citations link directly to English translations, and important terms link to dictionaries, encyclopedias, and a wealth of other resources in your digital library. Take the discussion with you using tablet and mobile apps. With Logos, the most efficient and comprehensive research tools are in one place, so you get the most out of your study.

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## Chapter 5 : Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking, by William James : Lecture VI

*Pragmatism - A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking by William James. William James (January 11, - August 26, ) was an American philosopher and psychologist who was also trained as a physician.*

The tender minded tend to be idealistic, optimistic and religious, while the tough minded are normally materialist, pessimistic and irreligious. But this has not weakened religious belief. People need a philosophy that is both empiricist in its adherence to facts yet finds room for religious belief. For James, then, Pragmatism is important because it offers a way of overcoming the dilemma, a way of seeing that, for example, science, morality and religion are not in competition. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem now is this: Does the man go round the squirrel or not? Pragmatic clarification disambiguates the question, and once that is done, all dispute comes to an end. So James offers his pragmatism as a technique for clarifying concepts and hypotheses. He proposed that if we do this, metaphysical disputes that appear to be irresolvable will be dissolved. When philosophers suppose that free will and determinism are in conflict, James responds that once we compare the practical consequences of determinism being true with the practical consequences of our possessing freedom of the will, we find that there is no conflict. As James admitted, he explained the pragmatic method through examples rather than by giving a detailed analysis of what it involves. He made no claim to originality: Peirce and James participated in these discussions along with some other philosophers and philosophically inclined lawyers. As we have already noted, Peirce developed these ideas in his publications from the s. As we shall see there were differences in how they understood the method and in their views of how it was to be applied. Later thinkers, for example John Dewey and C. Lewis, developed pragmatism further. This was tied to the study of the normative standards we should adopt when carrying out inquiries, when trying to find things out. Sections 2 and 3 will be concerned, primarily, with pragmatism in the narrow sense. Then, in section 4, we shall explore some of the views that are associated with pragmatism in the wider sense. The pragmatist maxim As we have seen, the pragmatist maxim is a distinctive rule or method for becoming reflectively clear about the contents of concepts and hypotheses: This raises some questions. What sort of thing does it recognize as a practical consequence of some theory or claim? Second, what use does such a maxim have? Why do we need it? And third, what reason is there for thinking that the pragmatist maxim is correct? Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object. For all his loyalty to it, Peirce acknowledged that this formulation was vague: The principle has a verificationist character: This is clear from his later formulations, for example: The entire intellectual purport of any symbol consists in the total of all general modes of rational conduct which, conditionally upon all the possible different circumstances and desires, would ensue upon the acceptance of the symbol. We become clearer about the concept hard, for example, by identifying how there can be conceivable circumstances in which we have desires that would call for different patterns of action if some object were hard from those it would call for if the object were not hard. If I want to break a window by throwing something through it, then I need an object which is hard, not one which is soft. It is important that, as Peirce hints here, the consequences we are concerned with are general ones: Sometimes he writes as if the practical consequences of a proposition can simply be effects upon the believer: Peirce sees uses for his maxim which extend beyond those that James had in mind. He insisted that it was a logical principle and it was defended as an important component of the method of science, his favoured method for carrying out inquiries. This is reflected in the applications of the maxim that we find in his

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writings. First, he used it to clarify hard concepts that had a role in scientific reasoning: We shall discuss his view of truth below. It also had a role in scientific testing. The pragmatist clarification of a scientific hypothesis, for example, provides us with just the information we need for testing it empirically. In later work, Peirce insisted that the maxim revealed all the information that was need for theory testing and evaluation EP2: The pragmatist clarification revealed all the information we would need for testing hypotheses and theories empirically. As Peirce described contemporary versions of this distinction, the highest grade of clarity, distinctness is obtained when we can analyze a concept for example into its elements by providing a verbal definition. This was provided by applying the pragmatist maxim. As well as treating the pragmatist maxim as part of a constructive account of the norms that govern inquiry, Peirce, like James, gave it a negative role. A more vivid non-logical example of using the concept to undermine spurious metaphysical ideas was in showing that the Catholic understanding of transubstantiation was empty and incoherent EP1: Here another difference between James and Peirce emerges. James made no concerted attempt to show or prove that the principle of pragmatism was correct. In his lectures, he put it into practice, solving problems about squirrels, telling us the meaning of truth, explaining how we can understand propositions about human freedom or about religious matters. But in the end, inspired by these applications, we are encouraged to adopt the maxim and see how well things work out when we do so. Since Peirce presented the maxim as part of the method of science, as a logical or, perhaps better, methodological principle, he thought that it was important to argue for it. Indeed, after , he devoted much of his energy to showing that the maxim could receive a mathematical proof. He used several strategies for this. In , he relied upon the idea that beliefs are habits of action: Applying the pragmatist maxim to the clarification of a proposition, he argued, involved describing the habits of action we would acquire if we believed it EP1: In the lectures on pragmatism which he delivered at Harvard in , he adopted a different strategy. He offered a detailed account of the cognitive activities we carried out when we used the method of science: His strategy then was to argue that the pragmatist clarifications brought to the surface all the information that was required for responsible abductive reasoning, and that our use of inductive and deductive arguments made no use of conceptual resources that could show that pragmatism was mistaken. Although he remained optimistic of success in this, he was never satisfied with his results. Pragmatist theories of truth These differences in motivation become clearest when we consider how both Peirce and James applied their pragmatist maxims to the clarification of the concept of truth. It possesses a form of unreflective clarity: It is at this stage that the concept of truth enters the discussion: So we have to turn to his remarks about truth to see how the kind of mind-independence captured in the abstract definition of reality is to be understood from a pragmatist perspective. This reflects a law which is evident from scientific experience: So with all scientific research. Different minds may set out with the most antagonistic views, but the progress of investigation carries them by a force outside of themselves to one and the same conclusion. This activity of thought by which we are carried, not where we wish, but to a foreordained goal, is like the operation of destiny. No modification of the point of view taken, no selection of other facts for study, no natural bent of mind even, can enable a man to escape the predestinate opinion. The opinion which is fated to be ultimately agreed to by all who investigate, is what we mean by the truth, and the object represented in this opinion is the real. That is the way I would explain reality. These thoughts, however, have been caused by sensations, and those sensations are constrained by something out of the mind. This thing out of the mind, which directly influences sensation, and through sensation thought, because it is out of the mind, is independent of how we think it, and is, in short, the real. It is explained in terms of this fated agreement of convergence through the process of inquiry rather than in terms of an independent cause of our sensations. It articulates a metaphysical picture that all pragmatists tried to combat. See Misak , 69f where Cheryl Misak emphasises that Peirce does not offer a traditional analysis of truth. Rather, he provides an account of some of the relations between the concepts of truth, belief, and inquiry, She describes this as a naturalistic understanding of truth, and calls it an anthropological account of how the concept is used. And his writings on this topic rapidly became notorious. They are characteristically lively, offering contrasting formulations, engaging slogans, and intriguing claims

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which often seem to fly in the face of common sense. We can best summarize his view through his own words: The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite assignable reasons. Expedient in almost any fashion; and expedient in the long run and on the whole, of course. Ideas are not become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience. This suggests that a belief can be made true by the fact that holding it contributes to our happiness and fulfilment. This is unfair; at best, James is committed to the claim that the happiness that belief in Santa Claus provides is truth-relevant. It is easy to see that, unless it is somehow insulated from the broader effects of acting upon it, belief in Santa Claus could lead to a host of experiential surprises and disappointments. The pragmatist tradition So far, we have concentrated on the pragmatist maxim, the rule for clarifying ideas that, for both Peirce and James, was the core of pragmatism. When we think of pragmatism as a philosophical tradition rather than as a maxim or principle, we can identify a set of philosophical views and attitudes which are characteristic of pragmatism, and which can lead us to identify as pragmatists many philosophers who are somewhat sceptical about the maxim and its applications. Some of these views may be closely related to the maxim and its defence, but we shall now explore them rather as distinctive characteristics of the pragmatist tradition. Like some other philosophers, the pragmatists saw themselves as providing a return to common sense and the facts of experience and, thus, as rejecting a flawed philosophical heritage which had distorted the work of earlier thinkers. In each case, Descartes self-consciously made a break with the scholastic tradition, and, in each case, the outlook that he rejected turns out to be the outlook of the successful sciences and to provide the perspective required for contemporary philosophy. We are to try to doubt propositions and we should retain them only if they are absolutely certain and we are unable to doubt them. The test of certainty, as Peirce next points out, lies in the individual consciousness: And the examination of our beliefs is guided by reflection on hypothetical possibilities: See Hookway , chapters 2,3.

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*True is the name for whatever idea starts the verification-process, useful is the name for its completed function in experience. True ideas would never have been singled out as such, would never have acquired a class-name, least of all a name suggesting value, unless they had been useful from the outset in this way.*

The roots of pragmatism are traced as far back as the classical period, where the Academic Sceptics rejected the idea that there was an absolute truth that could be achieved Rescher, In education, pragmatism has evolved into "a multi-faceted movement aimed at changing school practice" Englund, , p. To pragmatists, the direction of formal education is to develop a progressive pattern of growth and learning. Pragmatism is basically about the experiential, as opposed to gaining truth through ideas. Instead of relating to the abstract, people relate to the concrete; an empiricism that has a physical character Moore, To Peirce, "truth simply is," as "all understanding must itself be the product of doing; whatever we know is the product of inquiry, an activity of ours" Rescher, , p. William James continued the evolution of pragmatic thought To James, "truth pivots on the successful guidance of experience" p. Both saw truth to be grounded in experience. John Dewey systemized and grounded his pragmatism in the social. Truth is not static, but it is "what gets endorsed and accepted in the community" Rescher, , p. Truth is validated through social acceptance and custom; when truths "no longer satisfy social needs, otherâ€œtruths are found to replace them" p. Inherent in the framework of pragmatism is that ideas are true insofar as they are useful in a specific situation, "what works today in one case may not work tomorrow in another case" Younkins, , p. There is no reality that is constant or absolute; reality occurs when people interact with their environment, shaping it to their wills. People are "free to choose their own way of thinking and to create whatever reality they want to embrace" Younkins, , p. Pragmatism is a philosophy of personal experience. Shusterman explains that the self is "an individual, â€œa changing creation" p. To Dewey, every self produces actions but is also the product of its acts and choices; no person is "a fixed, ready-made, finished self" p. Life is growth itself and that "growth is not something done to the young, but instead is something they do" Thayer, , p. Children experience social and intellectual growth; growth cannot be imposed upon them. The main goal of thought is to reconstruct a situation in order to solve a problem. Younkins states that truth cannot be known in advance of action. One must first act and then think; only then can reality be determined. To Thayer , pragmatists define the process of thinking the activity of inquiry as "a process having certain phases occurring within certain limits. The democratic ideal is considered to infiltrate every aspect of life Younkins, When speaking in terms of educating for democracy, the role of education is not to transfer one image of American identity, but "to foster mutual respect among the diverse cultures and peoples that make up the American people" Ryan, , p. People experience personal development to achieve and this benefits democracy. Only "enlightened individuals can operate a thinking democracy. To pragmatists, a progressive education equals a progressive society equals democracy Marcell, In education, the pragmatist philosophy has evolved into "a multi-faceted movement aimed at changing school practice" Englund, , p. Until the 20th century, education had largely been considered a preparatory process for life in which the students learned what teachers wanted them to learn in order to become educated Marcell, For pragmatists, the direction of formal education is to develop a progressive pattern of growth and learning. Growth becomes an ongoing self-corrective educative process in which the students are provided the dynamics to expand their capacity to grow and learn. They acquire "the habit of learning; they learn to learn" Marcell, , p. The process of learning itself becomes its own end. Hence, people become life-long learners of their own lives: Applications Pragmatism in Schools Progressive schools who base their education on the philosophy of pragmatism teach their students "how to know and how continually to grow in their capacity of knowing" Marcell, , p. These schools produce students who constantly strive "to acquire new knowledge and who progressively seek newer and deeper meaning to that knowledge" p. Progressivists foster a social consciousness that develops thinking, as children "serve and adapt to others" Younkins, , p. Through exposure

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to a social environment, children can examine natural human processes and develop their own thinking processes. Moore explains that the most valuable and effective learning takes place when children follow the development of a The entire section is 3, words.

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## Chapter 7 : Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking / William James

*William James's Pragmatism is likely the most illuminating and entertaining account of pragmatism ever composed. It is, however, more than a popular exposition prepared for the academic.*

James spent almost all of his academic career at Harvard. He was appointed instructor in physiology for the spring term, instructor in anatomy and physiology in , assistant professor of psychology in , assistant professor of philosophy in , full professor in , endowed chair in psychology in , return to philosophy in , and emeritus professor of philosophy in . James studied medicine, physiology, and biology, and began to teach in those subjects, but was drawn to the scientific study of the human mind at a time when psychology was constituting itself as a science. He taught his first experimental psychology course at Harvard in the " academic year. Louis Menand suggested that this Club provided a foundation for American intellectual thought for decades to come. On hearing the camera click, James cried out: I say Damn the Absolute! Du Bois , G. Lewis , and Mary Whiton Calkins. Antiquarian bookseller Gabriel Wells tutored under him at Harvard in the late s. James was increasingly afflicted with cardiac pain during his last years. It worsened in while he worked on a philosophy text unfinished but posthumously published as *Some Problems in Philosophy*. He sailed to Europe in the spring of to take experimental treatments which proved unsuccessful, and returned home on August . His heart failed on August 26, at his home in Chocorua, New Hampshire. He was buried in the family plot in Cambridge Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was one of the strongest proponents of the school of functionalism in psychology and of pragmatism in philosophy. He was a founder of the American Society for Psychical Research , as well as a champion of alternative approaches to healing. He challenged his professional colleagues not to let a narrow mindset prevent an honest appraisal of those beliefs. In an empirical study by Haggbloom et al. He had four siblings: Henry the novelist , Garth Wilkinson, Robertson, and Alice. They had 5 children: Henry born May 18, , William born June 17, , Herman born , died in infancy , Margaret born March, and Alexander the artist born December 22, . Writings[ edit ] William James wrote voluminously throughout his life. A non-exhaustive bibliography of his writings, compiled by John McDermott , is 47 pages long. The *Briefer Course*, was an abridgement designed as a less rigorous introduction to the field. These works criticized both the English associationist school and the Hegelianism of his day as competing dogmatisms of little explanatory value, and sought to re-conceive the human mind as inherently purposive and selective. His pragmatic theory of truth was a synthesis of correspondence theory of truth and coherence theory of truth , with an added dimension. Truth is verifiable to the extent that thoughts and statements correspond with actual things, as well as the extent to which they "hang together," or cohere, as pieces of a puzzle might fit together; these are in turn verified by the observed results of the application of an idea to actual practice. They also were called true for human reasons. They also mediated between still earlier truths and what in those days were novel observations. Purely objective truth, truth in whose establishment the function of giving human satisfaction in marrying previous parts of experience with newer parts played no role whatsoever, is nowhere to be found. He writes, "First, it is essential that God be conceived as the deepest power in the universe, and second, he must be conceived under the form of a mental personality. In other words the "Absolute" with his one purpose, is not the man-like God of common people. The mind, its experiences, and nature are inseparable. In *What Pragmatism Means*, James writes that the central point of his own doctrine of truth is, in brief, that "Truths emerge from facts, but they dip forward into facts again and add to them; which facts again create or reveal new truth the word is indifferent and so on indefinitely. Truth is the function of the beliefs that start and terminate among them. To the contrary, he supported an epistemological realism position. James went on to apply the pragmatic method to the epistemological problem of truth. A belief was true, he said, if it worked for all of us, and guided us expeditiously through our semihospitable world. James was anxious to uncover what true beliefs amounted to in human life, what their "cash value" was, and what consequences they led to. A belief was not a mental entity which somehow mysteriously

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corresponded to an external reality if the belief were true. Beliefs were ways of acting with reference to a precarious environment, and to say they were true was to say they were efficacious in this environment. In this sense the pragmatic theory of truth applied Darwinian ideas in philosophy; it made survival the test of intellectual as well as biological fitness. The lectures inside depict his position on the subject. In his sixth lecture he starts off by defining truth as "agreement with reality". With this, James warns that there will be disagreements between pragmatics and intellectualists over the concepts of "agreement" and "reality", the last reasoning before thoughts settle and become autonomous for us. However, he contrasts this by supporting a more practical interpretation that: For how much more they are true, will depend entirely on their relations to the other truths that also have to be Acknowledged. Pragmatism , p. Saying that these truths agree with the realities pragmatically means that they lead us to useful outcomes. Belief in anything involves conceiving of how it is real, but disbelief is the result when we dismiss something because it contradicts another thing we think of as real. In his "Sentiment of Rationality", saying that crucial beliefs are not known is to doubt their truth, even if it seems possible. James names four "postulates of rationality" as valuable but unknowable: God, immorality, freedom, and moral duty. However, a claim that does not have outcomes cannot be justified, or unjustified, because it will not make a difference. This idea foresaw 20th century objections to evidentialism and sought to ground justified belief in an unwavering principle that would prove more beneficial. Both argued that one must always adhere to fallibilism , recognizing of all human knowledge that "None of our beliefs are quite true; all have at least a penumbra of vagueness and error", and that the only means of progressing ever-closer to the truth is to never assume certainty, but always examine all sides and try to reach a conclusion objectively. Free will[ edit ] In his search for truth and assorted principles of psychology, William James developed his two-stage model of free will. In his model, he tries to explain how it is people come to the making of a decision and what factors are involved in it. He firstly defines our basic ability to choose as free will. Then he specifies our two factors as chance and choice. James says that in the sequence of the model, chance comes before choice. In the moment of decision we are given the chance to make a decision and then the choice is what we do or do not do regarding the decision. When it comes to choice, James says we make a choice based on different experiences. And will be drawn from as a positive solution. But in his development of the design, James also struggled with being able to prove that free will is actually free or predetermined. People can make judgements of regret, moral approval and moral disapproval, and if those are absent, then that means our will is predetermined. In *The Will to Believe*, James simply asserted that his will was free. As his first act of freedom, he said, he chose to believe his will was free. He was encouraged to do this by reading Charles Renouvier , whose work convinced James to convert from monism to pluralism. In his diary entry of April 30, , James wrote, I think that yesterday was a crisis in my life. At any rate, I will assume for the presentâ€”until next yearâ€”that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. Old-fashioned determinism was what we may call hard determinism. It did not shrink from such words as fatality, bondage of the will, necessitation, and the like. Nowadays, we have a soft determinism which abhors harsh words, and, repudiating fatality, necessity, and even predetermination, says that its real name is freedom; for freedom is only necessity understood, and bondage to the highest is identical with true freedom. James described chance as neither hard nor soft determinism, but " indeterminism ". He said The stronghold of the determinist argument is the antipathy to the idea of chance This notion of alternative possibility, this admission that any one of several things may come to pass is, after all, only a roundabout name for chance. What is meant by saying that my choice of which way to walk home after the lecture is ambiguous and matter of chance? It means that both Divinity Avenue and Oxford Street are called but only one, and that one either one, shall be chosen. Philosophy of religion[ edit ] Excerpt James did important work in philosophy of religion. In his Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh he provided a wide-ranging account of *The Varieties of Religious Experience* and interpreted them according to his pragmatic leanings. Some of the important claims he makes in this regard: Religious genius experience should be the primary topic in the study of religion, rather than religious institutionsâ€”since institutions are merely the social descendant of genius.

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The intense, even pathological varieties of experience religious or otherwise should be sought by psychologists, because they represent the closest thing to a microscope of the mind—that is, they show us in drastically enlarged form the normal processes of things. In order to usefully interpret the realm of common, shared experience and history, we must each make certain "over-beliefs" in things which, while they cannot be proven on the basis of experience, help us to live fuller and better lives. An Encyclopedia classes him as one of several figures who "took a more pantheist or pandeist approach by rejecting views of God as separate from the world. Ineffability - no adequate way to use human language to describe the experience. Noetic - universal truths revealed that are unable to be acquired anywhere else. Transient - the mystical experience is only a temporary experience. This way of thinking about emotion has great consequences for the philosophy of aesthetics as well as to the philosophy and practice of education. To this simple primary and immediate pleasure in certain pure sensations and harmonious combinations of them, there may, it is true, be added secondary pleasures; and in the practical enjoyment of works of art by the masses of mankind these secondary pleasures play a great part. Classicism and romanticism have their battles over this point. The theory of emotion was also independently developed in Italy by the Anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi. This obvious answer to a seemingly trivial question has been the central concern of a century-old debate about the nature of our emotions. It was important, not because it definitively answered the question it raised, but because of the way in which James phrased his response. He conceived of an emotion in terms of a sequence of events that starts with the occurrence of an arousing stimulus the sympathetic nervous system or the parasympathetic nervous system ; and ends with a passionate feeling, a conscious emotional experience.

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## Chapter 8 : Editions of Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking by William James

*The present dilemma in philosophy -- What pragmatism means -- Some metaphysical problems pragmatically considered -- The one and the many -- Pragmatism and common sense -- Pragmatism's conception of truth -- Pragmatism and humanism -- Pragmatism and religion.*

What does agreement with reality mean? Verifiability means ability to guide us prosperously through experience. Completed verifications seldom needful. Consistency, with language, with previous truths. Truth is a good, like health, wealth, etc. It is expedient thinking. I believe that our contemporary pragmatists, especially Messrs. Schiller and Dewey, have given the only tenable account of this subject. It is a very ticklish subject, sending subtle rootlets into all kinds of crannies, and hard to treat in the sketchy way that alone befits a public lecture. But the Schillerâ€™Dewey view of truth has been so ferociously attacked by rationalistic philosophers, and so abominably misunderstood, that here, if anywhere, is the point where a clear and simple statement should be made. First, you know, a new theory is attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true, but obvious and insignificant; finally it is seen to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it. Our doctrine of truth is at present in the first of these three stages, with symptoms of the second stage having begun in certain quarters. I wish that this lecture might help it beyond the first stage in the eyes of many of you. Truth, as any dictionary will tell you, is a property of certain of our ideas. In answering these questions the pragmatists are more analytic and painstaking, the intellectualists more offhand and irreflective. The popular notion is that a true idea must copy its reality. Like other popular views, this one follows the analogy of the most usual experience. Our true ideas of sensible things do indeed copy them. Shut your eyes and think of yonder clock on the wall, and you get just such a true picture or copy of its dial. You perceive that there is a problem here. Where our ideas cannot copy definitely their object, what does agreement with that object mean? Some idealists seem to say that they are true whenever they are what God means that we ought to think about that object. These views, you see, invite pragmatistic discussion. But the great assumption of the intellectualists is that truth means essentially an inert static relation. You are where you ought to be mentally; you have obeyed your categorical imperative; and nothing more need follow on that climax of your rational destiny. Epistemologically you are in stable equilibrium. Pragmatism, on the other hand, asks its usual question. How will the truth be realized? What experiences will be different from those which would obtain if the belief were false? That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known-as. This thesis is what I have to defend. The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: But what do the words verification and validation themselves pragmatically mean? They again signify certain practical consequences of the verified and validated idea. They lead us, namely, through the acts and other ideas which they instigate, into or up to, or towards, other parts of experience with which we feel all the while-such feeling being among our potentialities â€™ that the original ideas remain in agreement. The connexions and transitions come to us from point to point as being progressive, harmonious, satisfactory. Such an account is vague and it sounds at first quite trivial, but it has results which it will take the rest of my hour to explain. The importance to human life of having true beliefs about matters of fact is a thing too notorious. We live in a world of realities that can be infinitely useful or infinitely harmful. Ideas that tell us which of them to expect count as the true ideas in all this primary sphere of verification, and the pursuit of such ideas is a primary human duty. The possession of truth, so far from being here an end in itself, is only a preliminary means towards other vital satisfactions. If I am lost in the woods and starved, and find what looks like a cow-path, it is of the utmost importance that I should think of a human habitation at the end of it, for if I do so and follow it, I save myself. The true thought is useful here because the house which is its object is useful. The practical value of true ideas is thus primarily derived from the practical importance of their objects to us. Their objects are, indeed, not important at all times. I may on another occasion have no use for the house; and then my idea of it, however

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verifiable, will be practically irrelevant, and had better remain latent. Yet since almost any object may some day become temporarily important, the advantage of having a general stock of extra truths, of ideas that shall be true of merely possible situations, is obvious. We store such extra truths away in our memories, and with the overflow we fill our books of reference. Whenever such an extra truth becomes practically relevant to one of our emergencies, it passes from cold-storage to do work in the world, and our belief in it grows active. True is the name for whatever idea starts the verification-process, useful is the name for its completed function in experience. True ideas would never have been singled out as such, would never have acquired a class-name, least of all a name suggesting value, unless they had been useful from the outset in this way. From this simple cue pragmatism gets her general notion of truth as something essentially bound up with the way in which one moment in our experience may lead us towards other moments which it will be worth while to have been led to. This is a vague enough statement, but I beg you to retain it, for it is essential. Our experience meanwhile is all shot through with regularities. Truth, in these cases, meaning nothing but eventual verification, is manifestly incompatible with waywardness on our part. Woe to him whose beliefs play fast and loose with the order which realities follow in his experience: Experience offers indeed other forms of truth-process, but they are all conceivable as being primary verifications arrested, multiplied or substituted one for another. Take, for instance, yonder object on the wall. We let our notion pass for true without attempting to verify. If truths mean verification-process essentially, ought we then to call such unverified truths as this abortive? No, for they form the overwhelmingly large number of the truths we live by. Indirect as well as direct verifications pass muster. Where circumstantial evidence is sufficient, we can go without eye-witnessing. Just as we here assume Japan to exist without ever having been there, because it WORKS to do so, everything we know conspiring with the belief, and nothing interfering, so we assume that thing to be a clock. We USE it as a clock, regulating the length of our lecture by it. The verification of the assumption here means its leading to no frustration or contradiction. For one truth-process completed there are a million in our lives that function in this state of nascency. Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. But this all points to direct face-to-face verifications somewhere, without which the fabric of truth collapses like a financial system with no cash-basis whatever. You accept my verification of one thing, I yours of another. Another great reason "beside economy of time" for waiving complete verification in the usual business of life is that all things exist in kinds and not singly. Our world is found once for all to have that peculiarity. So that when we have once directly verified our ideas about one specimen of a kind, we consider ourselves free to apply them to other specimens without verification. They work as true processes would work, give us the same advantages, and claim our recognition for the same reasons. All this on the common-sense level of, matters of fact, which we are alone considering. But matters of fact are not our only stock in trade. When they are true they bear the name either of definitions or of principles. It is either a principle or a definition that 1 and 1 make 2, that 2 and 1 make 3, and so on; that white differs less from gray than it does from black; that when the cause begins to act the effect also commences. Their relations are perceptually obvious at a glance, and no sense-verification is necessary. Moreover, once true, always true, of those same mental objects. It is but a case of ascertaining the kind, and then applying the law of its kind to the particular object. You are sure to get truth if you can but name the kind rightly, for your mental relations hold good of everything of that kind without exception. If you then, nevertheless, failed to get truth concretely, you would say that you had classed your real objects wrongly. In this realm of mental relations, truth again is an affair of leading. We relate one abstract idea with another, framing in the end great systems of logical and mathematical truth, under the respective terms of which the sensible facts of experience eventually arrange themselves, so that our eternal truths hold good of realities also. This marriage of fact and theory is endlessly fertile. Our ready-made ideal framework for all sorts of possible objects follows from the very structure of our thinking. We can no more play fast and loose with these abstract relations than we can do so with our sense-experiences. They coerce us; we must treat them consistently, whether or not we like the results. The rules of addition apply to our debts as rigorously as to our assets. The hundredth decimal of pi, the ratio of the circumference to its diameter, is predetermined ideally

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now, tho no one may have computed it. If we should ever need the figure in our dealings with an actual circle we should need to have it given rightly, calculated by the usual rules; for it is the same kind of truth that those rules elsewhere calculate. Between the coercions of the sensible order and those of the ideal order, our mind is thus wedged tightly. Our ideas must agree with realities, be such realities concrete or abstract, be they facts or be they principles, under penalty of endless inconsistency and frustration. So far, intellectualists can raise no protest. They can only say that we have barely touched the skin of the matter. Realities mean, then, either concrete facts, or abstract kinds of things and relations perceived intuitively between them. They furthermore and thirdly mean, as things that new ideas of ours must no less take account of, the whole body of other truths already in our possession.

### Chapter 9 : Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking by William James

*Pragmatism, a new name for some old ways of thinking; popular lectures on philosophy Item Preview.*