

## PRAGMATISM AND POSITIVISM

**Evaldas Nekrašas**

Vilniaus Universitetas, Filosofijos katedra  
 Didlaukio g. 47, LT-2057 Vilnius  
 Tel. (370-2) 77 07 06; fax. (370-2) 76 18 90;  
 El. paštas nekrasas@post.omnitel.net

Like positivism, pragmatism is a kind of scientifically oriented philosophy. They have much in common. Both represent the conviction that the development of science is a decisive factor in the progress of humanity. Both share the opinion that the source of real knowledge is experience and both treat the British empiricists as their forerunners. Both pragmatism and positivism (especially 20th century positivism) are anti-dogmatic and claim that philosophy is a method rather than theory. The theories they, nevertheless formulate, resemble each other. Specifically, their theories of meaning exhibit quite a great degree of affinity. Pragmatism attaches great importance to the practical efficacy of our concepts and theories but Auguste Comte also claimed that the positive mind is interested only in what is useful and practical.

In short, pragmatism and positivism are rather close to one another. They are so close that their distinctiveness may be called into question. In fact, William James in his *The Meaning of Truth* admitted that many people hold that “pragmatism is only a re-editing of positivism” (James 1909, p. 266). James was not happy with this opinion, all the more

since he was less close to positivism than the founder of pragmatism, Charles S. Pierce. Nevertheless, James did not try to deny the resemblance between both philosophies. According to him, pragmatism “harmonizes” with positivism sharing with it “its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions” (James 1907, p. 21). By attaching to his *Pragmatism*, from which the last citation comes, the subtitle “A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking” he inadvertently reinforced the view that pragmatism is not a new philosophy. Thus two years later he found it necessary to point out that treating pragmatism as modified positivism is a serious mistake.

Of course, this is a mistake. However, pragmatism has a great deal in common with positivism. Both share many of the same roots and both represent a “progressivist” answer to the cultural and social challenges of the industrial era. One of the rather rarely mentioned *direct* reasons for the similarity between pragmatist and positivist philosophies is the fact that the intellectual background, milieu, and lifework of the founders of pragmatism and positivism – Comte’s and Pierce’s – were nearly alike.

In his well known article "What Pragmatism is" published originally in *The Monist* in 1905, Peirce stated: "The writer of this article has been led by much experience to believe that every physicist, and every chemist, and, in short, every master in any department of experimental science, has had his mind molded by his life in the laboratory to a degree that is little suspected. The experimentalist himself can hardly be fully aware of it, for the reason that the men whose intellects he really knows about are much like himself in this respect. With intellects of widely different training from his own, whose education has largely been a thing learned out of books, he will never become inwardly intimate..." (Peirce 1876, p. 181–182).

For Peirce it was quite natural to speak about a laboratory, because he spent thirty years in an institution which although not a laboratory in a narrow sense of the word, much resembled one. From 1861 until 1891 he served with the Coastal Survey (renamed in 1978 as the Coastal and Geodetic Survey) which, in fact, was at that time the main scientific agency of the United States. Now, Comte also spent a number of years in an institution which was involved in scientific inquiry, including experimental research. It was regarded as the main scientific institution of contemporary France. I mean, of course, the *École Polytechnique*.

Peirce was of a rather low opinion of Comte's standing as a scientist. Sometimes his irony is biting: "The apostle of positivism", Peirce remarks, "is a man who considers logic the last relic of theology and the calculus of probabilities as unfounded, because its conclusions when intelligible are simply those of good sense" (Peirce 1982, p. 244). Peirce derided Comte as an alleged

expert in all the sciences: mathematics, astronomy, zoology, sociology. The founder of pragmatism tested himself, however, in an even greater array of sciences: in chemistry (which he studied at Harvard, serving later, in 1896–1902 as a consulting chemical engineer at St. Lawrence Power Co.), geodesy (he represented the U.S. at International geodesic conferences in Paris, 1875 and Stuttgart, 1877), photometry (publishing *Photometric Researches* in 1878), mathematics (completing the manuscript of "New Elements of Mathematics" in 1895), logic (lecturing in 1879–1884 at John Hopkins University), and history of science. Peirce also did some research in metrology, spectroscopy, experimental psychology and other sciences.

Thus both he and Comte were scholars of Da Vincian scope. Both were educated in the best schools of their countries. Both had close contact with the best scientists of their time. Both had stellar academic ambitions. In spite of their unquestionable talents and phenomenal achievements, both stumbled, however, on the obstacles erected by the academic communities hostile to modern science. Traditionalists in universities did not want them to hold chairs and they did not get them. Perhaps exactly because of that both were very eager to emphasize the significance of science for all spheres of life.

Based on the apology for science, or, to be more exact, of natural science, their philosophies were similar but by no means identical. Peirce disagreed with Comte in many things. In general, he regarded the scientific side of positive philosophy as its asset and claimed that exactly because of that this philosophy has been of real service to the

world (cf. Peirce 1984, p. 122). He had, nonetheless, some objections both to Comte's explanation of the methods of science and to his conception of its interdisciplinary structure.

Contrary to Comte (and John Stuart Mill), Peirce was a probabilist, resembling in this (and not only in this) respect more Carnap and, especially, Reichenbach than the positivists of 19th century. At variance with Comte, Peirce held the belief that they do not differ in status from inferential knowledge. According to him, there is no absolute distinction between the adoption and rejection of a hypothesis: the degree of evidence must be taken into account in every case and not be forgotten because it may change (cf. Peirce 1986, p. 6). Thus he was a more radical probabilist than even Rudolf Carnap. As to Comte's classification of sciences, Peirce found it of limited value because of inadequate treatment of logic and psychology.

Yet he praised Comte and positivism for taking a critical stance toward metaphysics, or, rather, "ontological metaphysics". "In this respect", wrote Peirce, "pragmatism is a species of prope-positivism. But what distinguishes it from other species is, first, its retention of a purified philosophy; secondly, its full acceptance of the main body of our instinctive beliefs; and thirdly, its strenuous insistence upon the truth of scholastic realism. So, instead of merely jeering at metaphysics, like other prope-positivists ... the pragmaticists extract from it a precious essence which will serve to give life and light to cosmology and physics. At the same time, the moral applications of the doctrine are positive and potent; and there are many other uses of it not easily classed" (Peirce 1905, p. 192).

Peirce's words deserve commentary. First of all, Comte and Mill would retort, without doubt, that our instinctive beliefs may be wrong and, moreover, that some of them actually are wrong. One of the functions of science is to subject them to scrutiny. The critical examination of our beliefs is a necessity because some of them may thwart the advance of science and slow social progress.

Secondly, they would deny that their aim is to create a "purified philosophy". Yet they would claim, nonetheless, that a minimum degree of purification in philosophy is rather desirable. They would note, as many others actually did, that the ideas of the author of the article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" clearly lack the called-for clarity. A famous logician does not note, it seems, the contradiction in praising positivists for the rejection of "ontological metaphysics" while simultaneously insisting on the truth of "scholastic realism" which is a clear-cut ontological doctrine. And is this doctrine really "a precious essence" of metaphysics?

Speaking of Peirce we referred to him at least once as "the founder of pragmatism". James was kind enough to confer this title on his less fortunate friend and nobody seriously questioned it. Peirce's role in the development of pragmatism is really important. However, sometimes it is a little exaggerated. As a matter of fact, pragmatism was a product of a cooperative enterprise quite similar to the one which produced logical positivism. It would be unjust to call Moritz Schlick the founder of logical positivism although he was the leader of the Vienna Circle. As for Peirce, he was not even the formal leader of the group, out of whose meetings pragmatist philosophy emerged. I mean, of course, the Metaphysical Club.

This club or, rather, discussion circle, was established on *James'* initiative in Cambridge, Massachusetts, probably in 1870. Its core members were James, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Pierce, Chauncey Wright, Nicholas St. John Green, and Joseph Bangs Warner. As in Vienna, many members of the Metaphysical Club were university (mainly Harvard) professors. Yet there were at least two differences regarding the composition of both assemblies: the Metaphysical Club included two theologians, and was *dominated* by lawyers. Out of 12 Club members at the beginning of the 1870s, exactly half were lawyers; the most brilliant among them was, of course, Holmes. In Vienna, lawyers played a secondary role and no theologian, as far as I know, took part in the Thursday discussions at the Mathematical Seminar of Vienna University. The Vienna Circle was dominated by philosophers, logicians, mathematicians, and physicists.

The name "Metaphysical Club", half-ironical, reflected the Club's opposition to agnosticism and at the same time served as an indication that its members sought to discuss philosophical and not just scientific questions. It was James' intention expressed in a letter to Holmes, that the questions to be discussed in the group had to be "the very tallest and broadest" (cf. Fish 1964, p. 4).

The different composition of both assemblies and the different interests of their members, not to mention the differences of time, place, intellectual and cultural surrounding explain why they have produced different philosophies. But the mode of production was similar: intensive discussion at the end of which it was not always possible to determine whose contribution was most important and who said what. Later James

and Peirce even had difficulties in determining who of the club members used the term "pragmatism" for the first time.

Notwithstanding some evident differences, both groups shared a deep interest in science and its social and cultural implications. Members of the Metaphysical Club fully understood the significance of positivism which at that time was in fashion both in Europe and America. In fact, Chauncey Wright, the oldest and, it seems, most highly regarded member of the Club, at times described himself as a positivist (cf. Kuklick 1979, p. 63).

Drawing parallels between both groups and their activities, it pays to point to the fact that the Metaphysical Club had its equivalent to the Manifesto of Vienna Circle. After a year or two of intensive discussions at the Club, Peirce set to work out the *credo* of the Club, the outline of its philosophical position. The paper prepared by Peirce was read at a meeting of the group in 1872 and was published – in a modified form – later, in 1876. It seems that one of the reasons for the delay was Peirce's intention to take into account critical remarks made by the members of Club when discussing the initial text, as well as ideas put forward in subsequent meetings. The final text is more than well known – it is, *of course*, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear".

The Metaphysical Club was not long-lived (neither was the Vienna Circle). In 1876 the Club was reorganized. Green and Wright had died shortly before. Peirce was at the time in Europe, and Holmes's interest in philosophy had greatly diminished (cf. Fish 1964, p. 19). By the way of reorganization some new members were included but that did not save the Club: it dissolved finally in 1879.

I have already mentioned that some members of the renowned Cambridge assembly were theologians. They would be out of place in worldly Vienna Circle of 1920s and 1930s. Yet in the earnest New England of the 1870s religion was an important matter, and it was a serious concern for most of the members of the Metaphysical Club. Notably James was a deeply religious person (he was a son of an elder Henry James, a disciple of Swedenborg). Peirce was a declared theist as well.

Defining his relation to positivism in an early unfinished paper (it was published fully only in 1984) dedicated specifically to the appraisal of the merits and shortcomings of positivism, Peirce regarded the religious aspect of positivism as its weakest side. He spared no efforts to show that positivism does not promise much to the passions which, according to him, are “really intimately bound together and connected in our nature”.

Not only Peirce but all pragmatists place special emphasis on “the love of life” and various human actions which by no means are reducible to cognitive acts. Being human involves affections, passions, instincts, will, longing for love and success. In their view, positivism is a rather dry and scholarly, although neither Comte nor Schlick would find such a view justified. In laying stress on the vitality of man and the richness of life, pragmatism is reminiscent of Peirce’s and James’s contemporary Nietzsche. Contrary to him, they held, however, that if we do not find God in our hearts, rather we are dead, but not God. Peirce clearly regarded belief in God to be part of “the main body of our instinctive beliefs”. Like Peirce, James never regarded the questions concerning the God and moral truths to be purely intellectual ones. In general, pragmatism displayed quite

strong anti-intellectualist tendencies, and this is a very important characteristic distinguishing it from positivism (late Comte being the main exception). We use the word “anti-intellectualist” in the sense it was used by Morton White, who distinguishes anti-intellectuals and anti-intellectualists. The latter, contrary to the former, are not hostile to intellectuals but press the claims of the heart against those of the head. In Peirce’s version of pragmatism this trait is not conspicuous. Yet in James’ pragmatist philosophy, and especially in essay “The Will to Believe” (1897) reasons of the heart quite often play the upper hand against reasons of the mind. White, in all probability, is right regarding James as “a grandchild, if not a child of the romantic movement” (White 1969, p. 89). Notwithstanding all the homage he pays to science, James did not hold the opinion that reason, observation and experimentation alone can establish the truth.

Renouncing the positivist attitude towards religion, pragmatists were not able to renounce in the same romantic fashion the positivist attitude towards metaphysics. If they would dare go so far, they had no right to present themselves as “prope-positivists” because it was clear to everybody interested that the anti-metaphysical attitude is a constitutive element of positivist philosophy. Pragmatists wanted to be progressive, and that required their taking a critical stance towards the metaphysical tradition. Therefore they were keen to emphasize their disdain for “metaphysical abstractions” and “useless questions”. Yet their disdain was half-hearted, and their conception of metaphysics much more ambivalent than that of positivists. Pragmatists desperately tried to avoid both the Scylla of positivism and the

Charybdis of metaphysics but their ship was caught more than once on the rocks.

In their awkward maneuvering pragmatists tried to apply at least three different strategies. The first one was condemning metaphysics as lacking a firm ground, producing fierce disputes without chance to reach an agreement, and having no practical interest. It has been used very widely.

The second strategy outlined already by Peirce but elaborated by James, is to treat metaphysics not as an odd discipline involved in abstract discussion but as a body of important truths and beliefs which are instinctive and/or established by way of passions, emotions, and feelings. At least in "The Will to Believe" James adheres, it seems, to the opinion that metaphysics is a creature of sentiment.

The third strategy is closely bound to James' version of the pragmatic theory of truth, which, it seems, lacks logical consistency. On the one hand, he says that "True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify" (James 1907, p. 77) and that "Truth for us is simply a collective name for the verification process" (ibid., p. 84). If James would consistently hold the opinion that truth is a "verification process", he should reject not only "first things, principles, 'categories', and supposed necessities" as he does indeed, but also "the last things" which he does not. However in James' "Pragmatism" as well as in other works, an interpretation of truth sounding very much like the positivist one, goes hand in hand with a different one according to which "an idea is true so long it is profitable to our lives" (James 1907, p. 30).

It is possible to argue that James uses the term "verification" in a much broader sense

than positivists did. There are indeed some differences caused not in the least part by the fact that James verifies ideas and positivists rather propositions. Yet by all means, "profitable at the moment" and "verified" are distinct things.

The second interpretation of truth, according to which the true is everything which has value for concrete life, gives perfect ground for the assimilation of metaphysics. As long as it is "profitable" for life, it creates no problem for pragmatists. The same may be said about theology. James elucidates his position by the means of discussing transcendental idealism's idea of the Absolute. He finds this idea "majestic" and yielding religious comfort to a class of minds, even if it looks rather remote and sterile. "But as far as it affords such a comfort", writes James, "it surely is not sterile; it has that amount of value; it performs a concrete function. As a good pragmatist, I myself ought to call the Absolute true "in so far forth" then; and I unhesitatingly now do so (James 1907, p. 29).

My aim is not to subject pragmatist theory (or theories) of truth to a detailed critique – there is no lack of its critical appraisals. Yet I want to draw attention to one circumstance. The deficiencies of the pragmatist theory of truth are caused by the pragmatist use of the concept of experience in an extremely broad sense. Already in the first works of Peirce it is employed in a broader sense than it was used by positivists, and James broadened it even more, enriching it with all kinds of emotional and religious experience. On the other hand, by means of interpreting experience as an active encounter with the world, they brought their conception of experience closer to Marx's conception of *praxis*. Merging individual and social experience, emo-

tions and *praxis*, James substantially modified and, in fact, blurred the notion which in empiricist philosophy had very likely a little too narrow but relatively clear-cut sense. Positivists never accepted such a radical re-interpretation of this fundamental notion. Disagreement regarding the scope of the notion of experience forms the basis of all arguments between positivists and pragmatists.

When John Dewey assumed the role of the leader of the pragmatists in the 1920s, more or less at the same time when logical positivism appeared in the philosophical arena, relations between pragmatism and positivism entered a new stage. Their contacts became much more intensive and the development of the links between the two movements culminated in the start of real cooperation between them.

The first decades of the 20th century were marked in America by rising interest among philosophers in making philosophy more scientific. This interest was felt both inside and outside of the pragmatist movement. Yet only the direct contact of younger American philosophers with logical positivists and other representatives of European analytic philosophy in the early thirties began to produce tangible results.

Upon returning from visits to Europe, Americans started to introduce the ideas and conceptions of logical positivism to the American philosophical community. Some reports on the new developments on the European continent attracted considerable attention. An article "Logical Positivism: A New Movement in European Philosophy" published in 1930 in *Journal of Philosophy* by Albert Blumberg from John Hopkins and Herbert Feigl, then at Harvard, is especially worthy to note. Some time later, in 1936,

John Sommerville and, independently, Ernest Nagel recognized significant connections between pragmatism and logical positivism, both in efforts to clarify meanings and in social attitudes. In December of 1935 Rudolf Carnap moved to America (Feigl was there already from 1930) thus setting off an exodus of logical positivists to the U.S.

A ground for the assimilation of the ideas of logical positivists in America was rather propitious. To some philosophers it seemed so favorable that they envisaged the possibility of creating out of the two trends – positivism and pragmatism – one, unified movement. Charles W. Morris saw clear advantages in the two contemporary forms of empiricism joining forces. According to him, "Both in method of treatment and in obtaining access to an elaborated body of material in the formal and physical sciences, pragmatism has much to gain from its European cousin. In return, pragmatism can offer its store of socially and biologically oriented analysis of such concepts as "mind", "consciousness", "self", "truth", "symbol" and can perhaps aid logical positivism in doing justice to the full range of interests which have generally characterized the activity of philosophers by saving it from the scholastic spinning of webs which a too narrow concern with the logical analysis of a restricted set of meanings might tend to encourage" (Morris 1937, p. 23). He proposed the name "Scientific Empiricism" for the philosophy uniting both "cousins" and, maybe, some other related developments.

In the late 1930s this idea did not seem extravagant. The differences between positivism and pragmatism which we have examined so far abated. On the one hand, logical positivism was much more cautious in its

pronouncements regarding religion than were some positivists of the 19th century. It had no plans to create a new religion to replace Christianity, as had Comte. On the other hand, pragmatists of the thirties were much less dependent on religion than Peirce and James. Especially Dewey showed almost no interest in religion.

Both pragmatism and positivism changed a little in their attitudes towards metaphysics as well. Younger pragmatists were not especially interested in transcendental speculation. Logical positivists, in their turn, became much more tolerant towards metaphysics. By the end of the thirties logical positivists did not regard it as meaningless anymore. They acknowledged, *de facto*, that they did not manage to win their battle with metaphysics; they did not override it by means of the logical analysis of language. The social and political positions of both movements, with the moderate leftist reformer Dewey now in charge of pragmatism, became closer as well.

In the theory of meaning logical positivists found more points of contact with pragmatists than did the positivists of 19th century. Pragmatism primarily was a theory of meaning based on Peirce's famous rule for attaining the highest grade of comprehension: "consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the objects of our conception to have. Then our conception of these affects is the whole of our conception of the object" (Peirce 1876, p. 124). Logical positivism, unlike classical positivism, was primarily a theory of meaning itself, at least in the 1920s and 1930s. Of course, it was interested in the meaning of concepts and propositions, not of "objects", and instead of "practical

bearings" logical positivists preferred to talk about "observable consequences". Nevertheless, precisely the theory of meaning or, to put it more broadly, the theory of signs, including syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, was one field in which cooperation between pragmatists and logical positivists promised to be especially fruitful.

A very important stimulus for cooperation was the shared interest in the unity of science. Pragmatists, and especially Dewey, supported many ideas of the unity of science movement initiated by the logical positivists. Moreover, it was precisely in this area that the real cooperation between pragmatists and logical positivists began. Dewey took part in carrying out the project of creating the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*. He not only wrote a study entitled "Theory of Valuation" published as separate issue of the *Encyclopedia* (see Dewey 1939b) but joined forces with Neurath, Bohr, Russel, Carnap and Morris in preparing the introductory issue of the *Encyclopedia* in which he examined the unity of science as a social problem; (see Dewey 1939a).

There were, of course, some differences between Dewey and the logical positivists in their understanding of the proper means to achieve the unity of science. Aiming at the advance of the sciences, Dewey was more interested in fathering cooperation between scientists, which was important for practical reasons, than in establishing a unified world conception on the basis of a single, unified language of science. Clearly having the physicalism of logical positivists in mind, he found it necessary to emphasize that "the needed work of cooperation cannot be done mechanically or from without... The attempt to secure unity by defining the terms of all the

sciences in terms of some one science is doomed in advance to defeat” (Dewey 1939a, p. 34).

Dewey held the opinion that the most important task in advancing the unity of science is to build bridges between the sciences. He emphasized that a distinction has to be made between science as an attitude and method, and science as a body of knowledge. Attitude and method come before facts and theories, and Dewey stressed that he is much more interested in achieving a unity in attitude and method than in creating a unified scientific description of the world.

Cooperation between scientists and *their* unity was especially important for Dewey, who was interested in the full use of science’s social potential. He saw powerful forces interested in the isolation of science from common life. Only a united scientific community would overcome this artificial isolation and thus increase its power and ability to solve the problems of everyday life. By reminding us that the scientific method is not confined to those who are called scientists and must be used in dealing with social problems, Dewey resembles Comte. An important difference between them, however, lay in Dewey’s striving to secure the link between science and democracy. Comte, on the contrary, wanted to use science for social reform conducted from above.

His own theory of scientific inquiry Dewey calls *instrumentalism*. In a review of the development of American pragmatism Dewey defines instrumentalism as “an attempt to establish a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgments and inferences...” (Dewey 1925, p. 14). Logical positivists could define *their* theory of inquiry in exactly the same words, and say, with Dewey, that they aim at a theory

of the general forms of conception and reasoning.

Dewey’s theory of such forms found its fullest expression in his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938). It differs substantially from the logic of science developed by the logical positivists. Some of the differences between them are the direct result of the differences in their definitions of inquiry. Dewey conceives it as “the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole” (Dewey 1938, p. 104). For the logical positivists this definition sounded strange or, at least, very vague.

Although in his *Logic* Dewey moved rather away from radical holism, which he took initially from Hegel, and assimilated some pluralist elements of British empiricism, he still speaks about the transformation of a situation in which the researcher is submerged, into a “unified whole”. He is not interested in formulating requirements which a single scientific statement has to meet, or methods to be used in establishing the degree of its empirical support. In opposing epistemological atomism, he is closer not to logical positivism but rather to post-positivism.

There are more elements of his conception of inquiry which bring Dewey closer to the postpositivists than to logical positivists. Dewey explicitly declares that he wants to establish principles of inquiry on the basis of study of actual methods of inquiry used by experimental sciences. As for the logical positivists, they were more interested in inferring the principles of inquiry from principles of logic and logical semantics, than

from the practice of inquiry. Another difference is no less important: although logical positivists emphasized the intersubjectivity of the results of scientific inquiry, they regarded it essentially as an individual endeavor. For Dewey inquiry is a collective enterprise presupposing that a community of researchers is able to cooperate. And much earlier than Quine, Dewey held that no knowledge claim may be regarded as absolutely certain. Inquiry, according to Dewey, is a self-correcting procedure, and any knowledge claim may be criticized and eventually rejected.

In the words of Morton White, "John Dewey has spent a good part of his life hunting and shooting at dualisms: body-mind, theory-practice, percept-concept, value-science, learning-doing, sensation-thought, external-internal" (White 1969, p. 121). Logical positivists, on the contrary, were very proud of all dichotomic distinctions they were able to make (or thought that they were able to make). Of course, the elimination of dualisms makes Dewey's conceptions a little blurred. This is also the case with Dewey's notion of experience.

Earlier we briefly examined the pragmatist, or rather, Peirce's and James', notion of experience. It is worthy to return to it. It plays a key role in Dewey's philosophy. If logical positivists spoke about experience – and being empiricists, they spoke about it strangely only rarely, especially after closing their discussion on protocol sentences in the early thirties – they understood it primarily as observation. Although they used to make it fairly clear that experience includes experimentation as well, they regarded it only as a subsidiary source of empirical facts, and were not interested in the role experiment plays, say, in physics. They projected all research

activities onto the plane of the language of science and were interested mainly in concepts, sentences and their logical relations. Thus even as an epistemological notion, their notion of experience was rather narrow.

For Dewey, experimentation is an essential part of experience as a form of knowing. But experience means for Dewey much more. Experience is for him a form of a person's existence. Man is a being who acts, enjoys, and suffers. Experience is man's direct contact with nature and with other human beings. Thus the experience Dewey speaks about, is *whole* person's experience.

The everyday life of the person is always Dewey's reference point. A very important trait of this life is its openness to the future and its active creative character. In this, Dewey emphasizes that his point differs from that of empiricism: "Whereas for empiricism, in a world already constructed and determinate, reason or general thought has no other meaning than that of summing up particular cases, in a world where the future is not mere word, where theories, general notions, rational ideas have consequences for action, reason necessary has a constructive function" (Dewey 1925, p. 12–13).

A distinctive feature of Dewey's conception of experience setting it apart from that of logical positivism, is the presence of values. He underlines that "Desires, affections, preferences, needs and interests ... exist in human experience; they are characteristics of it" (Dewey 1929, p. 36). Values are not unchangeable objects of a higher realm. They exist in the world in which we live, they are part of our experience, they direct it. We depend on them, therefore "The thing which concerns all of us as human beings is precisely the greatest

attainable security of values in concrete existence" (Ibid., p. 28).

In his article in the "Library of Living Philosophers" volume on Dewey, Reichenbach acknowledges that "In restoring the world of everyday life as the basis of knowledge ... Dewey ... is establishing the sphere of values, of human desires and aims, on the same basis and in analogous form as the system of knowledge" (Reichenbach 1939, p. 163). For Dewey there is no fundamental difference between both spheres, that of value and that

of knowledge. Dewey's analysis of valuation blends ethics and social theory by establishing a direct relation between valuation and knowledge of the consequences of the decisions made in the past. This knowledge, subjected to critical investigation, makes possible improvement of our valuations. Thus, according to Dewey and in sharp contrast to the point of view of logical positivists, facts may constitute an empirical basis for valuations which are by no means only purely emotive attitudes.

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## PRAGMATIZMAS IR POZITYVIZMAS

Evaldas Nekrašas

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas pragmatizmo ir pozityvizmo santykis. Žvelgiant iš postmodernistinės perspektyvos, šios dvi filosofijos kryptys atrodo radikaliai skirtingos – postmodernistai labai kritiškai vertina pozityvizmą, kaip ryškiausią jų taip nemėgstamos modernybės apraišką, o kai kuriomis pragmatistų idėjomis tiesiogiai ar netiesiogiai remiasi ar bent jau apeliuoja į jas, kaip tikrus ar tariamus savo koncepcijų šaltinius. Tokio požiūrio pagrindumas gali būti ginčijamas. Šiame tekste kaip tik ir siekiama išsiaiškinti, kuo pragmatizmas ir pozityvizmas skiriasi, o kuo yra panašios ar net giminingos filosofijos kryptys.

Pozityvizmas padarė tiesioginę įtaką pragmatizmui, ir daugelis pastarojo atstovų tai atvirai pripažino. Nors pragmatizmo pradininkas Charles'as S. Peirce'as gan skeptiškai vertino Auguste'ą Comte'ą kaip mokslininką, jis, o kartu ir visas pragmatizmas, iš esmės perėmė jo ir kitų pozityvistų antimetafizines nuostatas, nors jas kiek ir sušvelnino. Abi filosofijos kryptys akcentavo mūsų žinių praktinio naudingumo reikšmę ir mokslo, kaip svarbaus socialinės pažangos veiksnio, vertę. Šiuo požiūriu jos vertintinos kaip dvi scientistiškai orientuotos filosofijos formos.

Galima rasti įdomių paralelių tarp veiksmų, sąlygojusių pragmatizmo ir pozityvizmo idėjų formavimosi procesą, konkrečiai, panašumų tarp Peirce'o ir Comte'o intelektualinių biografijų. Dar svarbiau, kad empirizmas buvo tiek pozityvizmo, tiek pragmatizmo teorinis šaltinis ir pagrindas. Skirtumas tik tas, kad pozityvizmas (gal išskyrus Comte'ą) patyrimo sampratą tiesiogiai perima iš empirizmo. Pragmatizmas šią sampratą išplečia. Viena vertus, į ją (ypač

Williamas Jamesas) įtraukia emocinę ir religinę patirtį. Kita vertus, pragmatizmas sujungia individualią ir socialinę patirtį, traktuoja patyrimą kaip aktyvų, o ne pasyvų santykį su pasauliu, ir jo patyrimo supratimas ne tiek jau daug skiriasi nuo marksistinės *praxis* sampratos.

Pragmatizmas kaip filosofija, kurios esminis elementas yra dar Peirce'o pateikta instrumentinė prasmės koncepcija, ypač artimas XX amžiaus pozityvizmui, kuris vadovaujasi panašia prasmės samprata. Svarbiu stimulu pragmatistams ir pozityvistams bendradarbiauti buvo jų pritarimas mokslo vienovės idėjai, nors pragmatizmas labiau pabrėžė mokslinio pažinimo metodų ir nuostatų, o pozityvizmas – mokslo žinių vienybę. Charles'as W. Morris buvo giliai įsitikinęs, kad abi filosofijos kryptys tiek artimos, kad jas galima ir reikia sujungti siekiant sukurti vadinamąjį „mokslinį empirizmą“.

Šio sumanymo įgyvendinti nepavyko, nors žymiausių loginio pozityvizmo atstovų imigracija į JAV sudarė itin palankias sąlygas abiejų kryptų atstovams tiesiogiai bendradarbiauti. Tiek loginiai pozityvistai, tiek jaunesnės pragmatistų kartos atstovai, ypač jų lyderis Johnas Dewey, ypatingą reikšmę skyrė tyrimo logikos plėtotei. Tačiau jos uždavinius jie suprato nevienodai. Juos skyrė ir tai, kad Dewey siekė įveikti svarbiausias – tokias kaip teorijos ir praktikos ar vertybių ir žinių – perskyras, kurių nauda ir reikšme griežtumo, tikslumo ir apibrėžtumo siekė loginiai pozityvistai nebuvo linkę abejoti.

*Raktažodžiai: pragmatizmas, pozityvizmas, loginis pozityvizmas, metafizika, patyrimas.*

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