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Pragmatism as American Exceptionalism

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PRAGMATISM AS AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Philosophy
of the University of New Orleans

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts, with University Honors
and Honors in Philosophy

by

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Abstract

The history of American philosophical thought is marked by a skepticism of epistemology and immutable truths, which is drawn under the term pragmatism. This skepticism is the genesis for the political and social attitudes that makes the United States exceptional. This thesis argues that this exceptionalism is important to the makeup of the American character and that it is being threatened by two front: ideologically driven politics, and the abuse of power by the majority. In the course of writing this essay I evaluated a large portion of the body of American philosophy as well as political and judicial writers in order to show that American exceptionalism is based upon a philosophical rejection of epistemology and immutable truth claims and that exceptionalism is integral to the progress of America as a nation.

Keywords: Philosophy, Pragmatism, Epistemology, Politics, History, America

“Thinking is the function, living is the functionary”

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Introduction

American exceptionalism, the concept that the United States stands outside the boundaries of the rest of the world in such a way as to be incomparable to other nations, has been a staple tactic that sociologists and political scientists employ to explain a perceived uniqueness that this country allegedly possesses. More often than not, they attempt to explain this exceptionalism economically or socially. For example, the sociologist Seymour Lipset describes the United States as being “qualitatively different” when compared to other states (13). While this sort of demarcation is useful in the political and social realms, it can be useful in philosophical discussions as well. Instead of inspecting the specifically economic or social aspects of this alleged exceptionalism, I shall attempt in this essay to trace this exceptionalism in terms of American philosophy, rigorous and academic as well as informal and non-traditional. I intend to show that what makes America unique is not just its political and social structures, but the way in which its people think. The method of thought of the American people leads to the traditional markers of American exceptionalism. I shall also attempt to argue that this sort of exceptionalism is under threat by the rise of ideologies and must be protected in order for the United States to remain viable and competitive in the global conversation. The American project is historically and philosophically unique, but that uniqueness is under threat from its progeny. Ideology bolstered by democracy unrestrained by a pragmatic

approach to problems leads to a stagnation of the the American experiment. At the same time, the inter-subjective character of the pragmatic view of truth reduces our ability to achieve results (or even begin to attempt to solve problems) if we do not have some sort of goal post for the conversation. I shall argue that that goal post is the continuation of the conversation. If the conversation continues, it is more likely to yield results.

The first portion of this essay consists of an inspection and explanation of the history of pragmatism as an American academic tradition. I shall thoroughly describe pragmatism's main claims and its position in relation to the epistemological and metaphysical debates in contemporary philosophy. The history of American pragmatism is partly characterized as a school of thought that rejects traditional epistemology as a legitimate field of inquiry, and thus sharply divides itself from the rest of contemporary philosophy. This divorce from other schools of philosophy allows for frank discussions about the nature and usefulness of philosophy, leading one to a question of the role of philosophy in the present and future. Additionally, pragmatism's rejection of epistemology as a legitimate field of inquiry allows for inclusion of thinkers not traditionally considered philosophers into the discussion. If we can show that the traditional conception of metaphysical epistemology (knowledge is justified true belief) is flawed, then we remove the boundary between philosophy and the rest of society. For if philosophy is no better at explaining knowledge than the rest of society is, then no discussion about philosophy can be strictly exclusive to that field. Thus, the second portion of the essay concentrates on non-traditional sources of American pragmatism in

an attempt to show that pragmatism has been an American tradition well before it was described by academia as a legitimate school of philosophy. In this tracing I will address the division between academic philosophy and other sources of philosophical thought. I will show how that division is created out of a self-preservationist instinct by philosophers. The reason for the need to address this division is that pragmatism tends to keep in the foreground the idea of contingency. The facticity of our being (living in a certain place at a certain time in a certain sociological sphere) requires us to consider our ideas and conversations not as declarations of truth external to us. It informs us that statements can be revised given new information.

In the second portion of this essay I shall address a number of counter-arguments to my proposition that pragmatism is a legitimate argument and that it is an American tradition. Initially, I will address a realist counter-argument that claims that by dispelling epistemology as a legitimate field of inquiry, the pragmatist misunderstands the nature of human knowledge and therefore cannot compete in the world of philosophical discussion. The second of these counter-arguments is a post-modern attempt to dispel my thesis as merely one story among many, that my history is just one more story on the same plane as any other story about America, and therefore cannot be taken as truth. I will then address competing descriptions of American thought, specifically the libertarian model espoused by the modern political right. This libertarian model rejects the pragmatic notion of inter-subjective agreement as the closest description of truth that we can achieve, and thus declares that the highest good in any society is the freedom of the

individual in spite of government and society. This directly conflicts with the pragmatic desire to experiment and compromise socially.

In the next portion of this essay I shall present a case for American exceptionalism as pragmatic thought being under threat. I will attempt to show that this sort of pragmatic character is vital to the overall health of the nation's psyche and thus must be protected from what I will describe as an attack upon it by ideologues. Ideologically driven opinions have come to dominate much of American political and social life, and thus the conversations we need to be having are cast aside for screaming matches about whose ideology is better. The true intent of pragmatism is to continue the conversation in order to find solutions to problems. If the conversations we are having are not forward-thinking, future oriented, then we are wasting time and effort.

Lastly, I will address the most troubling counter-argument to my thesis: is pragmatism its own enemy? If pragmatism deflates truth to inter-subjective agreement, then that democratic attitude about truth can endanger the exceptionalism that was caused by the American pragmatic character.

Pragmatism the Philosophy

American pragmatism can be understood in terms of the school of philosophy that includes Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey and subsequent neo-pragmatists like, Wilfred Sellars, C. I. Lewis, Thomas Kuhn, Willard van Orman Quine, and Richard Rorty. This school's central claim is that truth is a quality of an idea that

works. If an idea works, then we consider it to be true. If it fails, then it is false. This claim is in direct conflict with theories of knowledge that include either a rationalist approach to epistemology or a correspondence (traditionally empiricist) theory of truth¹. For example, the statement 'there is a force that acts upon all objects and that force is called gravity' is true for at least the pragmatist and the adherer to a correspondence theory of truth. The pragmatist would say that the reason that this statement is true is that allows us to explain other phenomena very well, thus the statement works. The traditional empiricist would claim that the statement is true because we can match up observations about gravity with the statement. Thus, the statement is true regardless of whether or not we believe it to be true. This split will be explained in detail below. The rationalist would take issue with the use of the word 'true' being a description of the statement, because for the rationalist, the only true statements are those that can be determined to be true via reason alone.

Rationalism, the epistemological school of thought that claims that knowledge comes solely from reason, rejects the notion of truth being determined by utility. The senses can deceive, according to the rationalist, and thus perception cannot be trusted for a foundation of knowledge. In modern terms, we could consider the rationalist's truth as an analytic truth: those statements that are true based solely on the definitions of the terms. The idea of the existence of purely analytic truths is in direct contrast with the pragmatist's dependence upon empirical observation, and as we shall see later in this

1. Empiricism is an epistemological school of thought that claims that all knowledge is based upon experience.

section, seems to be impossible unless we can point to a semantic/syntactical distinction. The problem in finding a semantic/syntactical distinction is that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to separate the two. It appears that content is necessary for form to have meaning, and thus there may be no analytic truths as such. The content of analytic truths must signify something, and thus these statements are dependent upon a complex web of beliefs. We shall revisit this conversation in the Quine section below.

Peirce and James

Charles Sanders Peirce has been cast aside by modern pragmatists as a philosopher unwilling to admit the logical end of his thinking. The progeny of the original pragmatists, Richard Rorty, rejected Peirce almost out of hand. “His contribution to pragmatism was merely to have given it a name, and to have stimulated [William] James” (112). What Rorty did not rightly credit Peirce with was outlining a maxim for pragmatism. The maxim reads as follows: “consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object” (Peirce, 36). In other words, the effects of the the action are what mattered to Peirce. James took this statement to be talk about truth, but Peirce made it clear in a letter to James that James had misunderstood him. This split between Peirce and William James can be understood best by Peirce's insistence upon a convergence of ideas (specifically of science) that resembles a sort of post-Hegelian fatalism.

All followers of science are fully persuaded that the processes of investigation, if only pushed far enough, will give one certain solution to every question to which they can be applied...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...that is the way I would explain reality. (Peirce, 44-45)

Here we see that Peirce is still clinging on to a realist, correspondence idea of truth, one that views human knowledge as a project that adds to itself in a way that will eventually reach an end goal: a convergent and complete knowledge of the world.

William James rejected this convergence of ideas and instead maintained a sort of relativism or, more rightly, a skepticism about our ability to know the world in the way Peirce desired.

William James fully took up the charge of pragmatism when Peirce renamed his philosophy pragmaticism in an attempt to remove himself from what he saw as impending relativism². In his essay *What Pragmatism Means*, James outlined his own maxim of his method. "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...our conceptions of these effects...is then for us the whole of our conception of the object" (95). This maxim is almost identical to Peirce's and yet separate from it in a serious way. For Peirce, the concept is secondary to the object, yet part of the experience of the object. For James, there seems to be no way to separate the object from the concept of it in a way as to divorce meaning from practical effects. This is because there is no

2. This fear of relativism has been a consistent theme throughout the history of pragmatism, although it may be overcome. See the last section of this essay for a discussion on the dangers of relativism and how it can be overcome.

way to divorce the object from the person perceiving the object to the extent that we can know anything about said object. Perception (and thus conceptualization) must occur for anything to be known about any object, and that act of perceiving is the closest thing to knowledge that the pragmatist can claim. In order for us to know anything about an object, we must be able to observe it (directly or indirectly). If we cannot observe an object then we cannot claim to know it to exist or talk about it in anything but theoretical terms. For example, black holes are believed to exist, and there is a body of evidence supporting their existence. They are, however, in principle, unable to be observed (light cannot even escape the event horizon of a black hole), and thus are theoretical. We can talk about certain objects that we *can* observe being affected by an object like a black hole, but to claim that we know that black holes exist is to claim that we can have knowledge about an object that we cannot observe if we retain the notion that knowledge must be verified separate from justification.

This division between James and Peirce was due, in part, to James' interest in settling metaphysical disputes by determining the practical results of either side of those disputes. He was thus uninterested in the metaphysical disputes that yielded no practical difference. To clarify James' point, consider the following: if one person holds a belief in metaphysical object x and another person metaphysical object y , and in the end they can agree that the real world effects of believing either position are the same, then the dispute, according to James, does not matter. Thus, either believe (in y or x) is acceptable because neither one makes a difference to the end result of the inquiry. For example, whether we

claim that a thing called 'gravity' is what causes an object to fall to the ground or not matters little because it is not the cause or concept that is important, it is the practical result, (in this case, the falling of the object). Replacing terms does not change an action. We could call gravity anything else and it would make no difference to the end result.

This led to James' writing of *The Will to Believe* and eventually to his pragmatic approach to religious belief, which boiled down to a concession that what is good for a person is what is good to believe. This latter point is due to his linking the terms *good* and *true* into an inseparable partnership. The consequences of James' maxim on epistemology are striking, for it seems to lead to a relativism characterized by no criterion for truth other than what one likes. Thus, epistemology becomes aesthetics, and that is wholly unacceptable to either side of the epistemological divide. If epistemology is aesthetics, if what is true is merely what we like, then nearly anything could be true for anyone. The adhere to the correspondence theory of truth would reject this as so far afield from their definition of truth that it is nearly absurd. Truth, for them, is a quality of a statement that matches up an observation of the world with the world itself. This conflation of aesthetics with epistemology is also troubling for the pragmatist because it seems to say that the personal, individual tastes of one individual would dictate the truth for them. James encountered another interesting ramification of his description of truth; the concept of truth that he outlines must also fall under the maxim declared in *What Pragmatism Means* ("we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve"). The descriptive term 'true' relates only to what is effective,

what is in agreement with other concepts. Truthfulness becomes a species of good, because what is good is what works.

This latter statement is the breaking point between epistemological realists and anti-realists. The realist is interested in matching up concepts to the world to verify that they are true, and the anti-realists claim that there is no matching up to be done. The realist's position is consistent with the traditional conception of knowledge. That conception has three requirements: that *s* believe that *p* is true, that *s* is justified in believing that *p* is true, and *p* is, in fact, true. For example, the statement 'I know that the sky is blue' would be true if and only if I were to believe it to be true, I am justified in believing it to be true, and that it is, indeed, true. The pragmatist, the anti-realist in this case, challenges the ability of *s* to verify that *p* is true in a way separate from justification. The Jamesean pragmatist points out that there seems to be no way to separate truth from justification because of the subjective nature of experience. We can have one million confirmations of the same phenomenon, and we can make a statement about that phenomenon that we are justified in believing to be true (there were a million confirmations, after all), but we cannot then verify the statement independently from those justifications. To attempt to do so would be to attempt to escape the mental processes we, as humans, ceaselessly perform, and gain some sort of objective perspective on the world.

The pragmatist argues that there is no way to have an objective, external view of the world in order to verify truth claims. All we have is inter-subjective agreement.

Instead of searching for agreement with the world and our statements, pragmatism urges us to seek agreement with each other's statements. This leads to a coherence concept of truth, one that requires us to seek justification for the truth of statements not in a matching up with the real world, but a consistency with other statements of beliefs that we hold to be true. In other words, under the coherence theory of truth, justification is a matter of being consistent with other statements in an entangled web. Willard Van Orman Quine, as we shall see below, addressed this explicitly in his seminal work, *The Two Dogmas of Empiricism*.

James' other contribution to pragmatism was the birth of the idea that he called radical empiricism. James accused supposed empiricists of relying upon systems like logic and mathematics in the same way that prior generations of philosophers relied upon God. In order to be a radical empiricist, we must subject all truth claims to the possibility of revisability, including mathematics and logic, otherwise we are discussing the metaphysical, which we have no justification for discussing. Systems such as mathematics and logic are unable to justify their own existence independent of themselves. They are internally consistent, but are not able to be justified externally. Here we can see, at the inception of pragmatism, there was a skepticism about epistemology and its relation to the human mind. James eventually turned to psychology and in fact may be credited with inventing the field in an attempt, in part, to escape the trap of philosophy, the trap of talking about the mind as a metaphysical entity.

Dewey's Politics and Experimental Philosophy

By the second decade of the twentieth century, John Dewey had taken up the reigns of pragmatism. While he was a philosopher, he felt that he fit the role of an educator even more so. His attack on the Founding Fathers' metaphysical mistake is one of the most significant rebuttals to the concreteness of metaphysical principles ever put forth. In *Liberalism and Social Action*, he cuts to the chase, challenging the concept of immovable objects of inquiry by questioning Jefferson's teleological claim to God-given rights. One of Dewey's most positive contributions to philosophy was to extend the scientific method to philosophy, not how the positivists (and phenomenologists on the Continent) did, but by allowing experimentation to be a part of the process of inquiry. In his essay *The Need For a Recovery of Philosophy*, Dewey calls philosophy, especially the kind that had been turned into an academic discipline, “unusually conservative...clinging to problems...the association of philosophy with academic teaching has reinforced this intrinsic conservatism” (219). He goes on to give one of the most succinct descriptions of pragmatism, the American philosophical contribution, ever written.

It is often said that pragmatism, unless it is content to be a contribution to mere methodology, must develop a theory of Reality. But the chief characteristic trait of the pragmatic notion of reality is precisely that no theory of Reality in general, *uberhaupt*, is possible or needed. It occupied the position of an emancipated empiricism or a thoroughgoing naïve realism. It finds that 'reality' is a *denotative* term, a word used to designate indifferently everything that happens (222).

This sentiment, that attempting to develop a theory of reality is a worthless pursuit, is rooted in the pragmatic rejection of epistemology as a legitimate field of

inquiry. If we give up the notion that it is possible to describe the world in a way that is verifiably true, independent of experience (which seems impossible even for the most staunch realist), then we are free to pursue conversations that actually make a difference in end result. Questions about the nature of knowledge and reality do nearly nothing for the overall edification of mankind. Instead, we can turn to questions about how to better the quality of life for individuals and societies. This is not to say that reality should not be described, but that a consistent, whole, theory of reality seems unachievable given the limitations of human observation and the revisability of all statements. Science readily admits this, while philosophy still clings on to the desire to explain the entirety of reality.

By the time Dewey was in his twilight years, he was not interested in the linguistic turn that American philosophy had taken and thus was left on the shelves of philosophical history until Richard Rorty resurrected his sentiment thirty years later.

Kuhn's Description of Science Applied to Philosophy

In the mean time, however, Thomas Kuhn shook the world of the philosophy of science in his work *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions*. In that essay he outlines what he observes to be a split between “normal” and “abnormal” (or revolutionary) science. Kuhn introduced the idea of paradigms: cultural and historical spheres characterized by vocabularies and social practices that are indicative of the science being conducted. The facticity, the time, place, and society in which the science is being conducted matters to the outcome of that science. When there is no serious competition,

science is in the “normal” phase, predicting and explaining within that current paradigm. For example, the period between Newton's writing of *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* and Einstein's publication of his *annus mirabilis* papers (especially the paper on special relativity) could be considered a period of normal science in which the Newtonian paradigm was worked within. After Einstein's revolution, physics moved into an abnormal phase, upheaving much of what had been done prior to that time. Eventually, Kuhn claims, there is a competing theory for a certain piece of the paradigm that shifts the conversation away from the current paradigm so much so that it revolutionizes the vocabulary of science and thus is incommensurable when compared to the previous paradigm. A new paradigm is then born, although that change is not noticeable for some time.

The pragmatic notion we can get from this work is that if science, which is the torch-bearer of modern empiricism, must admit fallibility in its truth claims, then philosophy, the primary truth-claimant of history, must be seen not as seeking truths, but seeking reasonable explanations. Why would philosophy be any more privileged in its ability, or better equipped, to describe the world than science is? Science should admit, in the face of this argument, that it is not in the business of epistemology, but rather in the business of reasonable explanation. If science must admit that it is in the business of arguing what is reasonable to believe (and not what is the truth), then philosophy must do the same. The consequences of this turn from certainty to revisability was echoed in Willard Van Orman Quine's later work.

Before I discuss Quine's role in the pragmatic lineage, it is necessary to emphasize the point that Kuhn has made here. Instead of seeking immutable truths, it is more edifying to mankind for science and philosophy both to seek reasonable explanations. This is because it appears that it is impossible to get to the sort of truth that nearly the entirety of the history of philosophy attempted to achieve. Instead, we can seek a consensus on what is most reasonable to believe, which in turn can be the stand in for our truth-talk. If science admits that it is not in the business of making truth statements, but in making statements that are most reasonable to believe because it cannot make truth statements as such, then philosophy should be unable to do anything but the same. The only way in which philosophy would be able to claim the ability to make truth statements is to say that it has special access to the world in a way that science does not. That position of privilege seems to be untenable and hubristic.

Quine's Web of Belief

In his essay *The Two Dogmas of Empiricism*, Quine directly attacks the positivist understanding of empiricism, which holds that there are two types of statements: analytic and synthetic. Analytic statements are those statements that are true based solely upon the definition of the terms. For example, the statement “All bachelors are unmarried men” is considered to be an analytic statement for the positivists. This is because the term 'bachelor' and the term 'unmarried men' are synonymous. All other statements are considered to be synthetic statements. This offers a different, more approachable sense of

the *a priori*. Instead of being merely a statement true external to experience, the positivist approach claims that “the truth of sentences claimed to be known independent of experience was reducible to matters of language” (Orenstein 871). Quine rejects this notion of synonymy as a means to argue for *a priori* truths. Instead, he offers a holistic view of meaning. While his essay is intended to address problems in philosophy of language, we can extrapolate his ideas to encompass philosophy in general. If meaning is found only in relation to an entire web of belief that can be disrupted by changes, and everything is in principle revisable, then it seems difficult to retain the view of philosophy as a discipline that is attempting to get the world right. If the truth of statements is not able to be verified in a correspondence view, then we are left with an inter-subjective view of knowledge. He continued this holism in *Pursuit of Truth*, where he also attacked the distinction between syntax and semantics.

Much like the inability for us to separate the objective and subjective (which is the anti-realist position), Quine pointed out that it seems impossible to separate syntax from semantics. This is because all statements are statements about things, they have content. To remove content, semantics, is to remove the statement's ability to mean anything. To have a purely syntactical language would be to have a language void of meaning, and since the purpose of language is to convey meaning, this would be, to the pragmatist, useless to pursue.

Rorty's End-game

Richard Rorty, in his work *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* explicitly attacks the previous two hundred or so years of focus on epistemology as a legitimate field of inquiry. Following Quine's lead, he attached himself to an inter-subjective view of knowledge such that the field of philosophy of mind required little attention. Rorty argues in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* that the pursuit of the mind from Plato through contemporary philosophers has been misguided. This is mistake was made because of a desire to explain how we know what we know, and thus forced us in modern times to find a solid picture of the mind as an object of philosophical inquiry. This is not to say that neuroscience does not offer us a picture of how the brain works. Rorty attempts to sever mind-talk from brain-talk. The mind, according to Rorty, is not a metaphysical entity. If philosophy of mind is jettisoned as metaphysical talk (and thus useless to the pragmatist), then epistemology follows. This is because epistemology as a field of inquiry is based upon our questions about the mind. The question "how do we know what we know" makes little sense if we discard the idea of a mind. The modern philosopher is left with little to nothing to talk about, and thus philosophy may be considered dead. This claim is radical and not without complications. That said, it is the end result of at least three centuries of American pragmatic thought, both academically rigorous as well as informal. Rorty is a child of the American thought process.

The Character of American Thought Generally Conceived

At this point it seems necessary to reiterate my goal. In order to show that

America is exceptional in its thinkers, we must take a step back from the formal aspects of American thought and view it as a body of work. Not including informal works is to ignore voices that can lend to a more rich understanding of the difference between American thought and previous Western thought. One of the most immediately striking qualities of American thought is that it has a tendency, perhaps even a desire, to blur lines that were formerly thought to be strict. Mind/body, analytic/synthetic, syntax/semantics, these are all divisions that the American philosopher questions. James began to question the mind/body problem, considering it to be fruitless. Both Dewey and Rorty continued in this tradition, with Rorty adding the lessons of Quine's skepticism about the analytic/synthetic and syntax/semantics distinction. The skeptical character of these philosophers is what is marked in the history of American philosophy.

Now that we have a clear understanding of the trajectory of American philosophical thought, we may be able to speak to the culture underlying that thought. While some of the authors that will be mentioned in the section below are not philosophers in the academic sense, it seems rather restrictive to exclude them from discussion. If we restrict our understanding of the history of American philosophy to only those that published and taught in a formal academic setting, we are doing ourselves an injustice. The field of philosophy has been historically self-conscious of its own place in academia. The question of its usefulness has haunted the field since science has come to explain a number of things thought previously to be solely able to be explained philosophically. Therefore, philosophers have been reluctant to include works that have

been shelved in literature as worthy of being inspected for philosophical merit. That reluctance, I argue, is merely an act of self-preservation. To include non-rigorous, perhaps even literary works in the discussion is to violate the distinction between philosopher and the rest of the society in which he writes, thus threatening the field as a discipline and the philosopher as a separate type of intellectual. We should not exclude works that illuminate a subject just because they lack the rigor of Carnap or the obscurantism of Heidegger. To do so would be to purposely exclude other voices that could add to the overall discussion of the history we are attempting to trace.

I shall begin by discussing Alexis de Tocqueville's observations of the philosophy of the American people. I shall then illuminate Thomas Jefferson's pragmatism. Lastly, I will address 20th and 21st century American figures including Oliver Wendell Holmes and Barack Obama as possible candidates for pragmatic judicial and political correlates respectively. In this tracing of the pragmatic character of American thought, we should keep an eye to the future. It is possible that the pragmatic exceptionalism is under threat, both from a strengthening of ideologies, but also from unfettered, democratic view of the truth.

A Frenchman's Observation

In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville set out on a journey to observe the American penal system. What he found, however, had little to do with prisons and much more to do with the character of the American people. In his definitive tome on his experiences in

America, *Democracy In America*, Tocqueville pinpointed what he felt was the “Philosophic Method of the Americans” (403). He claims that the Americans do not care much for European philosophy, and have no school of their own. They do have a method, however, which can be characterized by taking “tradition only as information, and current facts only as a useful study for doing otherwise and better; to seek the reason for things by themselves and in themselves alone, to strive for a result without letting themselves be chained to the means, and to see through the form to the foundation” (403).

This singular statement about the Americans is striking considering the rationalist/empiricist divide going on in Europe at the time. If Tocqueville was correct, then the Americans did not have a school of philosophical thought, but merely a method; they used tradition only as a starting point, and facts only as tools to participate further in the world. This is, without a doubt, the same sentiment that William James offered in *What Pragmatism Means* nearly eighty years later. Tocqueville continues by claiming that the Americans use what he calls “the precepts of Descartes,” but he is not referring to his rationalism, he is referring to his employment of methodological skepticism (403). This entire way of thinking is a direct result of democracy, not just as a political system, but as a social engine, according to the author. American democracy (socially and politically) rejected the notion of the aristocracy, the idea of institutionalized class, and thus allowed for a group of people who would not have been heard in France or Great Britain to be heard in America. Without formal classes, the American people were able to see possibility in their lives, and thus developed a skeptical attitude about problems. “So,

therefore, as I studied American society, more and more I saw in equality of conditions the generative fact from which each particular fact seemed to issue, and I found it before me constantly as a central point at which all my observations came to an end” (3).

Tocqueville continues by claiming that the Americans “easily conclude that everything in the world is explicable and that nothing exceeds the bound of intelligence,” which is a direct tenet of contemporary pragmatists like Rorty (404). He is describing the recognition that there is sentiment in the American people that is rooted in skepticism, that is not hindered by talk about the relation between the world and the human being. By claiming that the American people feel as though everything can be explained, that is not to say that they feel as Peirce did, that there was a convergence of ideas that would eventually explain everything. The feeling is more that there is nothing beyond the grasp of the human intellect, nothing that we cannot be skeptical about.

In this short chapter, Alexis de Tocqueville arrives at the salient point that democracy itself generates this method of thought. Pragmatism appears to be not just an American phenomenon, but a democratic one. The American style of democratic society spawned this philosophical method.

Jefferson's Separation of Church and State

One of the main points of pragmatism (particularly for people like Dewey and Rorty) is that there needs to be a clear separation between the private and the public, and that the public must take priority. This separation and elevation of the public over the

private is necessary for the conversation to continue. Democracy in America is based upon an understanding that politics and society are the same thing. We are as equal in our politics as in our society, thus, the public has to take priority. If the private, the individual, took precedent over the public, over society, then the cooperative spirit of pragmatism would be lost to selfishness and staunch individualism. In *An Act For Establishing Religious Freedom*, presented to the assembly of Virginia in 1786, Thomas Jefferson explained this need, and went further by placing religion in the same private sphere as other ways of thinking. “Our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, more than our opinions in physics or geometry” (247). He goes on to say that there should be no religious test to determine if a person is fit for public office. This is useful, he says, not only for the freedom of the individual, but also of the church, for if a particular church is favored by a government, it “destroys all religious liberty” by mixing the state and church in a way that distorts both spheres' characters (248). By keeping a separation of church and state, both the government and the church are protected from each other's influences. The state prevents becoming a theocracy and the church prevents becoming an socially controlling arm of the government.

While this bit of legislation appears to be a trifle now, it is a major break from the ways of the Europeans at the time. Jefferson appears to be concerned with two distinct issues here. First, he appears to believe that by keeping church and state separate, individual liberty will be retained. Secondly, the state is allowed to function free of religious constraint. These two ideas place religion on the same level as other schools of

thought that we typically think of as having claims to truth, thus reducing religion to the level of the secular. These two concerns are pragmatic considerations for his project: America.

Pragmatism in Action

In order to show that pragmatism is not just a philosophical method, or that it is more than merely some strange amalgamation of practices that a Frenchman observed, I shall proceed to give two examples of pragmatic figures in American history.

The first, Oliver Wendell Holmes, sat on the Supreme Court for the first three decades of the 20th century. During his time on the bench he wrote thousands of opinions and in those revealed his pragmatic view of jurisprudence. Holmes viewed the study of the law as a practice in prediction about how a judge will rule. In *The Path of The Law*, he writes “the object of our study, then, is prediction, the prediction of the incidence of the public for through the instrumentality of the courts” (145). He argues in this essay that theory cannot be the guide to the method he is speaking of. “Theory is apt to get the cart before the horse, and to consider the right or the duty as something existing apart from and independent of the consequences” (146). Here Holmes is deflating theory into practice, viewing the law pragmatically, not as something different from human behavior, and thus finds that the legal duty is merely what sort of action one should take to be in the court's favor. This is thoroughly pragmatic, as it shows that supposedly solid institutions such as the law are as revisable as any other institution. Instead of claiming that the law

works a certain way because it begins with theory and ends in practice, Holmes claims that it should all be practice.

The second example from American history that I shall explore is Barack Obama. The current president of the United States, although now embroiled in the thick of running a country, wrote extensively on his rejection of ideology and firmly-held beliefs when it came to decision making. In his work *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama pinpoints the American pragmatic sentiment.

It is not simply that a gap exists between our professed ideals as a nation and the reality we witness every day. In one form or another, that gap has existed since America's birth. Wars have been fought, laws passed, systems reformed, unions organized, and protests staged to bring promise and practice into closer alignment. (22)

Obama continues by claiming that democracy, and its subsequent pluralism, allow us to view truth in a different way, as values that some hold and others do not. That way, the conversation can continue so long as the private remains subservient to the public; this is the same point that Dewey and Rorty both emphasized in the social and political worlds, but it can also be reflected in the pragmatic philosophical world as well. By bringing the idea of practice to the forefront, we can see how that would change epistemological and metaphysical questions. If we were concerned with the end result, the practice, of a problem, then we would disregard talk that has no practical result. In other words, if we are pragmatic in our attitude about philosophy in the same way as we are pragmatic in our attitude about the social and political, then we would find that the bulk of philosophical problems would disappear. There would be no need to question the

difference between mind and body, or the analytic and the synthetic, if we would seek the practical results of viewing the problem from one way or another. Instead of focusing on the problem, we could focus on the effects of taking one particular stance or another, and in most situations we would find that either stance yields the same practical result.

Realism Contra Pragmatism

The realist/anti-realist debate can be traced back at least to the beginnings of empiricism. Empiricism claims that all knowledge is a product of experience, and thus without observation, we cannot know anything. This is in direct opposition to the rationalist stance that knowledge is derived from reason alone. I believe it is fair to say that the empiricists won that debate, but in winning they produced a new set of questions, foremost of which is whether or not objects and events exist independently from our perception of them. George Berkley's idealism was a logical result of empirical thinking. In his essay *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, he claimed that all things that exist are ideas, and thus can only be known to exist through perception. The crux of his argument is the famous line “*esse est percipi*,” (to be is to be perceived). In order to exist, things must be perceived (because everything is an idea), but since we as individuals cannot perceive everything all the time, then either things pop in and out of existence depending upon whether or not we are perceiving them, or there is another entity that perceives everything all the time. That last landing point obviously pushes to an argument for God. That notion is bizarre and radical, and is rather unsatisfying to the

modern skeptic.

In more contemporary times we have a debate about the same issues that Berkeley struggled with most notably, do objects exist independent of our observation, and if so, how can we know that they exist? Two schools of thought have sprung up surrounding this issue. On one side, there are the epistemological realists, and on the other, there are a few varieties of anti-realists (including pragmatists).

Epistemological realism is the school of thought that says that the object of any thought exists independently of the mind. In other words, objects exist whether or not observation occurs. For instance, it does not matter whether or not you observe an object via sensory perception. The object must exist in order for you to possibly have that sensory perception (bracketing hallucinations or other neuropsychological phenomena). As a simple example, consider the following. We have a fairly complete understanding of the way in which the human eye works. Light either reflects off of or is emitted from an object and ends up entering the eye. The epistemological realist would claim that the object that either emitted the light or reflected it must exist in order for that perception (via light stimulus) to occur. That seems reasonable to believe. The realist may take one step further and claim that objects exist before we perceive them. While that may be the case, it is not necessarily so. If the realist is an empiricist then he must admit that the only way in which we have knowledge about anything is because of perception, thus there is no way to know, prior to our perception of an object, that that object exists.

Epistemological realism leads to a correspondence theory of truth, for if what we

know about the world exists independently of our minds, then what is in our minds are representations of the real world external to it. A process of correspondence must then occur. The process begins with the existence of object x , then the observation of object x , a representation of that observation is then impressed, implanted, or otherwise retained in the observer's mind, and finally the representation is matched up to the object. The closer the match, the more true the observation. Thus, the issue lies with verifying the truth claim of a statement. Not only must we be justified in believing that a statement is true, we must also find some way of verifying it independently of our justification for believing it to be true. This seems impossible to do for all objects of thought if we can only know about those object via perception. In other words, empiricism requires us to question our ability to match any statement up to the world in such a way as to verify the truth of the statement.

In regards to my thesis, it is important to remember that we must reject epistemology as a legitimate field of inquiry in order to be able to experiment and thus find new ways to describe the world. Instead of matching statements up with observations as the epistemological realist claims that we must do, we can see which statements perform better in real world results. I have shown above via the description of Quine's work that correspondence theories of truth are difficult if not impossible to defend in the face of the malleability of truth claims. At this point I offer one idea to consider: if we were less interested in chasing truth values about observations and were more interested in using the labels of true and false to describe what worked in an overall system, then

perhaps we have more fruitful, more practical conversations.

In response, the realist would reply that if pragmatism's attitude toward epistemology was successful, then all of our statements would be rendered meaningless. If we have no means by which to match up our descriptions to the outside world, then we are forever doomed to what is in our own minds with no access to the real world external to our minds. The pragmatist would then reply in two ways. First, our rejection of epistemology does not render statements meaningless, but it does make them revisable. In arguing that all statements are meaningless if not matched up to the real world is to assume the conclusion that we must have that matching up for meaning to exist. The pragmatic notion of truth forces meaning to be made via intersubjective agreement and not by some matching up with the outside world. Secondly, the pragmatist would be joyous that the realist would realize that there is no way for any observer or collection of observers to make that leap outside of experience, and match their thoughts up with the real world. This is the difficulty of the traditional epistemological model (justified true belief). It is impossible due to our limited station in the universe as human beings to not only justify a statement, but then verify its truth value. That process of verification is merely more justification. It is never anything more than justification. There does not seem to be a means of creating a clear delineation between justification and determination of the truth value of any statement, and thus, philosophy (as well as science) is a not a seeking of truth, but an attempt to show what is most reasonable to believe.

Lastly, the epistemological realist would respond that the pragmatist has developed some sort of solipsistic view of the universe, that objects do not exist until they are observed (and that only continued observation would preserve their existence). This is a straw man, one that is repeatedly lobbed at the pragmatist. Despite what some quantum physicists say, the real issue here is the separation between ontology and epistemology. The question of how we know what we know is entirely different from the question of what we know to exist. Until something is observed (or its effects observed in the case of subatomic particles and the like), there is no way for us to know that it exists. This is firmly empirical. Pragmatism is essentially an extension of empiricism, one that does not lose sight of the fact that all we know about the world we know via experience (with the addition of inter-subjective agreement about those experiences.).

In summary, the realist is stuck chasing truth values, trying to impossibly match up their impressions of observations with objects in the real world. Meanwhile, pragmatists are busy experimenting, attempting to solve real world problems, and going with what is agreed upon at the time. In essence, the pragmatist's approach to epistemology reflects the character of American exceptionalism described above: being skeptical of truths lead to the ability to change things. The realists are stuck in the same mode of thinking as the religious, while the pragmatists are changing with a changing world. Instead of seeking a solid confirmation of belief, (like the religious do) the realists should admit that that pursuit is actually a pursuit of more justification of their claim and that verification of the truth of the statement in the way they desire is impossible.

A Postmodern Response

The second counter to my claim that America is exceptional because of its method of thinking is a postmodern critique, specifically a Lyotardian one. Jean-François Lyotard, in his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* gives us a rejection of the meta-narrative³. If we can no longer rely on any sort of realism to guide us to the truth of matters, of the correct history, then how do we legitimize our claims?

I define postmodern as incredulity toward meta-narratives...To the obsolescence of the meta-narrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements-- narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on...Where, after the meta-narratives, can legitimacy reside?

In this description of the state of contemporary philosophy, we can see the postmodernist chief complaint about any truth claim: there seems to be no way to rank one set of descriptions (narratives) above another. If meta-narratives are useless to determining the legitimacy of truth claims, then where can we go from there? There seems to be little to any postmodern answer to this question. If postmodernism were correct (and there is no way to legitimize that claim given the postmodern's inability to rank one narrative above another) then all narratives would have just as much bearing on reality as any other. This is a significant problem for anyone interested in creating real

3 . A meta-narrative can be described as an idea that explains a broad range of knowledge.

world results.

One could argue that postmodernism and pragmatism are similar in attitude towards truth, but there is one major difference. The pragmatic response to the eschewing of meta-narratives as a form of legitimization of truth claims is to accept inter-subjective agreement as the basis for knowledge. If we consider what we tend to agree upon as the truth, then while that truth is subject to change, it is also the only way for us to make out in the world. Postmodernism and pragmatism both agree that epistemological realism is an untenable stance, yet postmodernism is unwilling to go the extra step and assign rank to inter-subjectivity the way that pragmatism does. If pragmatism were to merely throw up its hands the way that postmodernism appears to, then it would be giving up on the experimental nature of its proposal. The pragmatist is interested in action, in results, and that requires an acceptance of the malleability of truth claims, and running with tentative claims until they yield results. The question becomes which results are desirable, and the only way to answer that question is to witness the results and the social attitudes towards those results.

Therefore, when we apply the pragmatist's counter of the postmodernist's critique to the thesis of this essay, we can safely find comfort in the inter-subjective agreement of many great American thinkers. American thought is pragmatic at its core because that description seems to work better, yields more results, than any other description.

Politics and Pragmatism

The inter-subjective nature of pragmatism also has political ramifications, especially in regards to American politics. America is exceptional in its political structure as much as in its method of thought. One the indicators of such exceptionalism is a clash throughout American history between the individual and society. From the rugged cowboy to the Wobbly organizer, the character of America has been that of a tension between what is best for the individual and what is best for society. Pragmatism is essentially democratic because it depends upon inter-subjective agreement to settle disputes. If what is true is what a group of individuals agrees upon as true, then society holds primacy over any one individual.

This socialistic sentiment disgusts the American individualist, the political character that I will refer to as the libertarian. Libertarianism is a school of political philosophy that desires the most freedom for the individual and the least government involvement. Before we inspect how libertarianism and pragmatism clash, we must understand one thing about American political discussions: government is a product of society. Unlike the Western European regimes that the founders of the United States viewed as oppressive, the structure of the American governments (local, state, and federal) are democratic, and thus they are created and regulated by society. There is no institutionalized aristocracy, and therefore the people truly drive society, and as a result, the government. The individual has a tense relationship with this arrangement. If the public takes primacy and society makes up government, then the individual (if viewed through a certain political lens) is constantly at odds with the government⁴.

4. This tension will be discussed further in the section below.

Pragmatism is on board with the democratic sentiment, for if knowledge is what we agree upon, then the resultant body of knowledge is created democratically. We need each other to aid in defining the terms of our world. Libertarianism rejects this notion of a democratic agreement on truth, for if truth depends upon what a society agrees upon then the individual needs society to function on a very basic level.

Pragmatism Under Threat: The Rise of Ideology

In the following section of this essay I shall describe what I believe to be one of the most pressing issue of our time in America: a rise in ideology in our conversations that restrict real solutions from being found and implemented. The pragmatic historical tradition described above is an indicator of American exceptionalism, but that does not mean that the tradition will continue without effort. We exist in an interesting and vital point of history, one in which the American people must make fundamental choices about lifestyle, economics, politics, and a host of other issues. In order to do so and be democratic and wise in our decisions, we must have a civil conversation that is characterized by a willingness to experiment and compromise. In other words, we must be pragmatic.

It is a very unfortunate case that the sort of conversational tone I describe above is far from reality. It appears that what we have instead is a constant screaming match between at least two parties, and their intentions appear to be to win the argument instead of solving the problem. I shall outline below what I see as major turning points in the past

half century that has led to this point, and what I feel must be done to ensure that America retains its exceptional edge by retaining its pragmatic character, for while the history of American thought is characterized by a pragmatic attitude, that does not mean that that attitude will persist on its own. We could very easily slip into a dark age of ideologically driven decision making that will reduce our competitive edge in the world and destroy our ability to effectively communicate on a global level.

Despite the rigorous discussion in academic circles surrounding what makes the United States different than other countries, the battle for the American mind is being fought almost completely outside of that arena. In fact, while actors within institutions of higher learning want to argue that they are above the fray, they have been firmly planted in the middle of the multiple ideological arguments that are eroding the pragmatic character of America. I shall use a timeline of the past fifty years or so to show that ideology has risen to new heights, which makes tempered, continuous discussion with an emphasis on results very difficult to hold.

My timeline begins in the 1960s. This decade can be characterized by a rise of a new liberalism, one interested in cultural diversity, as well as political and economic equality. As a direct counter to this rise of the left, a small group of influential people argued that this general movement went against the principles of liberty because of the expansion of government needed to do so. On one side of the spectrum we have Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., an idealist of the highest order, and on the other, we have Milton Friedman, a strong proponent of libertarianism⁵. While the former influenced

5. This is not to say that Friedman was against King and the civil rights movement. He was very much

at least two generations of liberals, the latter gave a voice to the rise of the new right. By the time that Lyndon B. Johnson declared a war on poverty in 1964, the country was already in the grips of an ideological struggle that continues to this day.

What is interesting to note about the 1960s ideological debate is that it was framed in terms of liberty and justice, creating a sort of dual vocabulary depending upon the point of view adopted. For instance, King considered justice to be a social good that demands attention by all of society, placing liberty of individuals lower than social justice. In his letter to a group of clergymen written in a jail cell in Birmingham Alabama, he writes, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny” (14). Here we see that King gives all of society the task of ensuring justice for everyone within our society. He also points out that there is no way to extract the individual from the society, and thus every action we make is at some point or another socialistic. This is in contrast to Friedman's vision of liberty. “Freedom is a rare and delicate plant. Our minds tell us, and history confirms, that the great threat to freedom is the concentration of power” (2). What Friedman describes here is a split between the individual, society, and government. Liberty is the ability to do what one pleases with as little government and social interference as possible. Since the main tenet of America's political philosophy is that the government is made of people working for the people despite class or social status, government and society are essential the same thing, which makes this power struggle

interested in expanding minorities liberty, but he blamed a large government for creating the inequality problem in the first place. See Chapter VII *Capitalism and Discrimination* in Capitalism and Freedom.

between the individual and society dubious.

With the split between the libertarian and the progressives like King, we had the seeds for the largest, and longest running argument of in post civil war American history: is government the solution to the problem, or the creator of it? This problem was raised and decided upon in one of the most famous quips by any American president.

In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem. From time to time we've been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. Well, if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? (Woodger and Burg 356)

By the time Ronald Reagan had informally declared war on the same government he was charged with running, the ideological split over the need for and power of government had deepened. With the suspect economic policies of the 1970s and the collective five years of recessions during that decade and the 1980s, there was enough fuel to add to the anti-government fire. In 1994, the most blatant description of the new right's ideology was formalized in the Contract with America, which outlined a need for a smaller congress and called for limitations on federal regulations and entitlements. This was concurrent with the Democrat William J. Clinton's first term as president. The Contract was partly responsible for Congress being controlled by Republicans and the standoffs between the executive and legislative branches that ensued, including the government shutdowns of 1995 and 1996.

The contested election of George W. Bush added more to the divisiveness of the

political and social environment. This was followed rather quickly by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. For a brief period ideology seemed to have been put aside in favor of unity, but that sentiment quickly eroded. The left was concerned about the reaction that the Bush administration had demonstrated and the right was concerned with defending America from its detractors.

The next decade seemed to be marked by divisive politics and a rise in ideological journalism. It may be too early to tell what the first decade of the 21st century means in its historical context, but one of the largest themes is the insistence by ideologues that their vision for America is the best. What is lost in this fray are solutions to serious problems we are facing as a nation. If we are interested more in fixing the compass of the nation to a certain predetermined ideological goal than to experiment and entertain new ideas that come from practice, then we will have lost the pragmatic tradition. This appears to be happening. From a poor economy to climate change, there seems to be little room for the pragmatic voice that wants to experiment, to try new things, and not decide beforehand how the country should be. The pragmatic mindset that Tocqueville described so vividly has been all but corrupted by the vitriol of ideologies. If this is truly the case, if the pragmatic character of America is waning, then its exceptionalism is waning with it.

Is American Pragmatism creating its own Enemy?

The possibility of pragmatism birthing its own enemy is startling, but real. While pragmatic intersubjective agreement denies the type of ideologically driven politics

described above, it also lacks a safeguard from becoming a din of voices that could drive the conversation to undesirable results. In other words, the pragmatic sentiment that makes American exceptional could be under threat by the misguided agreement of the majority. We have moved from an age of information to an age of individual content creation and broadcast. We all have voices and we now have the means to have a global audience. With that expansion of voices comes the ability for a majority to rise out of that mass and claim truth.

That claim may be undesirable for any number of reasons. For example, the theory of evolution is disputed in America, despite a near consensus in the scientific community and a large body of evidence to support it. If all it takes for something to be true is to have a large enough inter-subjective agreement about a subject, then we would have a situation in which the theory of evolution would not be true for society, but true for the scientific community. This is unacceptable.

Richard Rorty, in his essay *Religious Faith, Intellectual Responsibility, and Romance* explains William James' sentiment on truth.

The view that there is no source of obligation save the claims of individual sentient beings entails that we have no responsibility to anything other than such beings...So talk about our responsibility to Truth or Reason, must be replaced by talk about our responsibility to our fellow human beings (148).

This puts the obligation of our talk of truth in a human oriented, utilitarian sort of way. Instead of attempting to satisfy some sort of objective condition for truth, we should be thinking of truth in terms of what helps our fellow person. With that in mind, we can find

a guidepost for tempering tyrannical majority truth claims: we are all involved in a project of which the goal is to allow as much freedom as possible for others so that they can be a part of the project. Claims that evolution is not true despite massive amounts of scientific evidence are usually backed up by religious claims, which are for Rorty (and James) private justifications for a public project. Science is public in the sense that it admits its revisability, religion is should be kept private because it requires beliefs in eternal truths that stifle conversation.

Here we see that while the majority can be abusive and can misguide the conversation, if we are to keep a strict division between private and public projects such that the conversation is allowed to continue without fear of roadblocks (like claims to eternal, unchanging claims to truth). Our obligation is not to satisfy some strict principle of verification for truth claims, but is to determine what is most reasonable to believe.

Conclusion

In this essay I have attempted to show that throughout American history there has been a common thread to the American character. From its founding fathers to its professional philosophers, pragmatism has been dominant in America's personality. This is a direct result of the sort of social democracy that is unique to the United States. The conditions that were created by the removal of institutionalized classes. This removal led to a skepticism about supposedly solid ideas, which in turn led to experimentation and a pragmatic approach to philosophy, politics, and society. The American rejection of

traditional epistemology is a large part of this exceptionalism. The public sphere is dominant over the conversation, and yet Americans still retain a healthy, protected private sphere. This is America's legacy, its anti-philosophical offering to the intellectual conversation of the history of the world.

The pragmatic tradition does not mean, either logically or historically, that it will continue. This tradition is threatened by two sides. The United States is faced with a troubling rise in divisiveness spurred by ideologies that do nothing to further conversations. They all but stop those conversations from happening. It is also threatened by a mixing of the public and the private in the overall conversation in a way that allows for the majority to restrict the conversation without regard for the minority. Perhaps we would be well advised to remember John Dewey's spirit of political and social experimentation, to cast aside what Richard Rorty calls conversation stoppers, and attempt to keep this exceptional machine running. Otherwise, we may indeed find ourselves behind the rest of the world in nearly every aspect while we are busy arguing over whose ideas are the true ones before we see their effects.

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APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that Philip Lee Wells has successfully completed
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