

possible, literally NEXT to it, for instance.

Suppose, now, there were an idea that did this for a certain objective reality. Suppose that no further approach were possible, that nothing lay between, that the next step would carry us right INTO the reality; then that result, being the next thing to conflux, would make the idea true in the maximal degree that might be supposed practically attainable in the world which we inhabit.

Well, I need hardly explain that THAT DEGREE OF TRUTH IS ALSO PROVIDED FOR IN MY ACCOUNT OF THE MATTER. And if satisfactions are the marks of truth's presence, we may add that any less true substitute for such a true idea would prove less satisfactory. Following its lead, we should probably find out that we did not quite touch the terminus. We should desiderate a closer approach, and not rest till we had found it.

I am, of course, postulating here a standing reality independent of the idea that knows it. I am also postulating that satisfactions grow *pari passu* with our approximation to such reality. [Footnote 1: Say, if you prefer to, that DISsatisfactions decrease *pari passu* with such approximation. The approximation may be of any kind assignable--approximation in time or in space, or approximation in kind, which in common speech means 'copying.'] If my critics challenge this latter assumption, I retort upon them with the former. Our whole notion of a standing reality grows up in the form of an ideal limit to the series of successive termini to which our thoughts have led us and still are leading us. Each terminus proves provisional by leaving us unsatisfied. The truer idea is the one that pushes farther; so we are ever beckoned on by the ideal notion of an ultimate completely satisfactory terminus. I, for one, obey and accept that notion. I can conceive no other objective CONTENT to the notion of ideally perfect truth than that of penetration into such a terminus, nor can I conceive that the notion would ever have grown up, or that true ideas would ever have been sorted out from false or idle ones, save for the greater sum of satisfactions, intellectual or practical, which the truer ones brought with them. Can we imagine a man absolutely satisfied with an idea and with all its relations to his other ideas and to his sensible experiences, who should yet not take its content as a true account of reality? The matter of the true is thus absolutely identical with the matter of the satisfactory. You may put either word first in your ways of talking; but leave out that whole notion of SATISFACTORY WORKING or LEADING (which is the essence of my pragmatistic account) and call truth a static logical relation, independent even of POSSIBLE leadings or satisfactions, and it seems to me you cut all ground from under you.

I fear that I am still very obscure. But I respectfully implore those who reject my doctrine because they can make nothing of my stumbling language, to tell us in their own name--und zwar very concretely and articulately!--just how the real, genuine and absolutely 'objective' truth which they believe in so profoundly, is constituted and established. They mustn't point to the 'reality' itself, for truth is only our subjective relation to realities. What is the nominal essence of this relation, its logical definition, whether or not it be 'objectively' attainable by mortals?

Whatever they may say it is, I have the firmest faith that my account will prove to have allowed for it and included it by anticipation, as one possible case in the total mixture of cases. There is, in short, no ROOM for any grade or sort of truth outside of the framework of the pragmatic system, outside of that jungle of empirical workings and leadings, and their nearer or ulterior terminations, of which I seem to have written so unskillfully.

VII

PROFESSOR PRATT ON TRUTH

I

[Footnote: Reprinted from the Journal of Philosophy, etc., August 15, 1907 (vol. iv, p. 464).]

Professor J. B. Pratt's paper in the *Journal of Philosophy* for June 6, 1907, is so brilliantly written that its misconception of the pragmatist position seems doubly to call for a reply.

He asserts that, for a pragmatist, truth cannot be a relation between an idea and a reality outside and transcendent of the idea, but must lie 'altogether within experience,' where it will need 'no reference to anything else to justify it'--no reference to the object, apparently. The pragmatist must 'reduce everything to psychology,' aye, and to the psychology of the immediate moment. He is consequently debarred from saying that an idea that eventually gets psychologically verified WAS already true before the process of verifying was complete; and he is equally debarred from treating an idea as true provisionally so long as he only believes that he CAN verify it whenever he will.

Whether such a pragmatist as this exists, I know not, never having myself met with the beast. We can define terms as we like; and if that be my friend Pratt's definition of a pragmatist, I can only concur with his anti-pragmatism. But, in setting up the weird type, he quotes words from me; so, in order to escape being classed by some reader along with so asinine a being, I will reassert my own view of truth once more.

Truth is essentially a relation between two things, an idea, on the one hand, and a reality outside of the idea, on the other. This relation, like all relations, has its fundamentum, namely, the matrix of experiential circumstance, psychological as well as physical, in which the correlated terms are found embedded. In the case of the relation between 'heir' and 'legacy' the fundamentum is a world in which there was a testator, and in which there is now a will and an executor; in the case of that between idea and object, it is a world with circumstances of a sort to make a satisfactory verification process, lying around and between the two terms. But just as a man may be called an heir and treated as one before the executor has divided the estate, so an idea may practically be credited with truth before the verification process has been exhaustively carried out--the existence of the mass of verifying circumstance is enough. Where potentiality counts for actuality in so many other cases, one does not see why it may not so count here. We call a man benevolent not only for his kind acts paid in, but for his readiness to perform others; we treat an idea as 'luminous' not only for the light it has shed, but for that we expect it will shed on dark problems. Why should we not equally trust the truth of our ideas? We live on credits everywhere; and we use our ideas far oftener for calling up things connected with their immediate objects, than for calling up those objects themselves. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the only use we should make of the object itself, if we were led up to it by our idea, would be to pass on to those connected things by its means. So we continually curtail verification-processes, letting our belief that they are possible suffice.

What CONSTITUTES THE RELATION known as truth, I now say, is just the EXISTENCE IN THE EMPIRICAL WORLD OF THIS FUNDAMENTUM OF CIRCUMSTANCE SURROUNDING OBJECT AND IDEA and ready to be either short-circuited or traversed at full length. So long as it exists, and a satisfactory passage through it between the object and the idea is possible, that idea will both BE true, and will HAVE BEEN true of that object, whether fully developed verification has taken place or not. The nature and place and affinities of the object of course play as vital a part in making the particular passage possible as do the nature and associative tendencies of the idea; so that the notion that truth could fall altogether inside of the thinker's private experience and be something purely psychological, is absurd. It is BETWEEN the idea and the object that the truth-relation is to be sought and it involves both terms.

But the 'intellectualistic' position, if I understand Mr. Pratt rightly, is that, altho we can use this fundamentum, this mass of go-between experience, for TESTING truth, yet the truth-relation in itself remains as something apart. It means, in Mr. Pratt's words, merely 'THIS SIMPLE THING THAT THE OBJECT OF WHICH ONE IS THINKING IS AS ONE THINKS IT.'

It seems to me that the word 'as,' which qualifies the relation here, and bears the whole 'epistemological' burden, is anything but simple. What it most immediately suggests is that the idea should be LIKE the object; but most of our ideas, being abstract concepts, bear almost no resemblance to their objects. The 'as' must

therefore, I should say, be usually interpreted functionally, as meaning that the idea shall lead us into the same quarters of experience AS the object would. Experience leads ever on and on, and objects and our ideas of objects may both lead to the same goals. The ideas being in that case shorter cuts, we SUBSTITUTE them more and more for their objects; and we habitually waive direct verification of each one of them, as their train passes through our mind, because if an idea leads AS the object would lead, we can say, in Mr. Pratt's words, that in so far forth the object is AS we think it, and that the idea, verified thus in so far forth, is true enough.

Mr. Pratt will undoubtedly accept most of these facts, but he will deny that they spell pragmatism. Of course, definitions are free to every one; but I have myself never meant by the pragmatic view of truth anything different from what I now describe; and inasmuch as my use of the term came earlier than my friend's, I think it ought to have the right of way. But I suspect that Professor Pratt's contention is not solely as to what one must think in order to be called a pragmatist. I am sure that he believes that the truth-relation has something MORE in it than the fundamentum which I assign can account for. Useful to test truth by, the matrix of circumstance, he thinks, cannot found the truth-relation in se, for that is trans-empirical and 'saltatory.'

Well, take an object and an idea, and assume that the latter is true of the former--as eternally and absolutely true as you like. Let the object be as much 'as' the idea thinks it, as it is possible for one thing to be 'as' another. I now formally ask of Professor Pratt to tell what this 'as'-ness in itself CONSISTS in--for it seems to me that it ought to consist in something assignable and describable, and not remain a pure mystery, and I promise that if he can assign any determination of it whatever which I cannot successfully refer to some specification of what in this article I have called the empirical fundamentum, I will confess my stupidity cheerfully, and will agree never to publish a line upon this subject of truth again.

II

Professor Pratt has returned to the charge in a whole book, [Footnote 1: J. B. Pratt: What is Pragmatism. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1909.--The comments I have printed were written in March, 1909, after some of the articles printed later in the present volume.] which for its clearness and good temper deserves to supersede all the rest of the anti-pragmatic literature. I wish it might do so; for its author admits all MY essential contentions, simply distinguishing my account of truth as 'modified' pragmatism from Schiller's and Dewey's, which he calls pragmatism of the 'radical' sort. As I myself understand Dewey and Schiller, our views absolutely agree, in spite of our different modes of statement; but I have enough trouble of my own in life without having to defend my friends, so I abandon them provisionally to the tender mercy of Professor Pratt's interpretations, utterly erroneous tho I deem these to be. My reply as regards myself can be very short, for I prefer to consider only essentials, and Dr. Pratt's whole book hardly takes the matter farther than the article to which I retort in

Part I of the present paper.

He repeats the 'as'-formula, as if it were something that I, along with other pragmatists, had denied, [Footnote: Op. cit., pp. 77- 80.] whereas I have only asked those who insist so on its importance to do something more than merely utter it--to explicate it, for example, and tell us what its so great importance consists in. I myself agree most cordially that for an idea to be true the object must be 'as' the idea declares it, but I explicate the 'as'-ness as meaning the idea's verifiability.

Now since Dr. Pratt denies none of these verifying 'workings' for which I have pleaded, but only insists on their inability to serve as the fundamentum of the truth-relation, it seems that there is really nothing in the line of FACT about which we differ, and that the issue between us is solely as to how far the notion of workableness or verifiability is an essential part of the notion of 'trueness'--'trueness' being Dr. Pratt's present name for the character of as-ness in the true idea. I maintain that there is no meaning left in this notion of as-ness or trueness if no reference to the possibility of concrete working on the part of the idea is made.

Take an example where there can be no possible working. Suppose I have an idea to which I give utterance by the vocable 'skrkl,' claiming at the same time that it is true. Who now can say that it is FALSE, for why may there not be somewhere in the unplumbed depths of the cosmos some object with which 'skrkl' can agree and have trueness in Dr. Pratt's sense? On the other hand who can say that it is TRUE, for who can lay his hand on that object and show that it and nothing else is what I MEAN by my word? But yet again, who can gainsay any one who shall call my word utterly IRRELATIVE to other reality, and treat it as a bare fact in my mind, devoid of any cognitive function whatever. One of these three alternatives must surely be predicated of it. For it not to be irrelevant (or not-cognitive in nature), an object of some kind must be provided which it may refer to. Supposing that object provided, whether 'skrkl' is true or false of it, depends, according to Professor Pratt, on no intermediating condition whatever. The trueness or the falsity is even now immediately, absolutely, and positively there.

I, on the other hand, demand a cosmic environment of some kind to establish which of them is there rather than utter irrelevancy. [Footnote: Dr. Pratt, singularly enough, disposes of this primal postulate of all pragmatic epistemology, by saying that the pragmatist 'unconsciously surrenders his whole case by smuggling in the idea of a conditioning environment which determines whether or not the experience can work, and which cannot itself be identified with the experience or any part of it' (pp. 167-168). The 'experience' means here of course the idea, or belief; and the expression 'smuggling in' is to the last degree diverting. If any epistemologist could dispense with a conditioning environment, it would seem to be the antipragmatist, with his immediate saltatory trueness, independent of work done. The mediating pathway which the environment supplies is the very essence of the pragmatist's explanation.] I then say, first, that unless some sort of a natural path exists between the 'skrkl' and THAT object, distinguishable among the innumerable pathways that run among all the realities of the universe, linking them promiscuously with one another, there is nothing there to constitute even the POSSIBILITY OF ITS REFERRING to that object rather than to any other.

I say furthermore that unless it have some TENDENCY TO FOLLOW UP THAT PATH, there is nothing to constitute its INTENTION to refer to the object in question.

Finally, I say that unless the path be strown with possibilities of frustration or encouragement, and offer some sort of terminal satisfaction or contradiction, there is nothing to constitute its agreement or disagreement with that object, or to constitute the as-ness (or 'not-as-ness') in which the trueness (or falseness) is said to consist.

I think that Dr. Pratt ought to do something more than repeat the name 'trueness,' in answer to my pathetic question whether that there be not some CONSTITUTION to a relation as important as this. The pathway, the tendency, the corroborating or contradicting progress, need not in every case be experienced in full, but I don't see, if the universe doesn't contain them among its possibilities of furniture, what LOGICAL MATERIAL FOR DEFINING the trueness of my idea is left. But if it do contain them, they and they only are the logical material required.

I am perplexed by the superior importance which Dr. Pratt attributes to abstract trueness over concrete verifiability in an idea, and I wish that he might be moved to explain. It is prior to verification, to be sure, but so is the verifiability for which I contend prior, just as a man's 'mortality' (which is nothing but the possibility of his death) is prior to his death, but it can hardly be that this abstract priority of all possibility to its correlative fact is what so obstinate a quarrel is about. I think it probable that Dr. Pratt is vaguely thinking of something concreter than this. The trueness of an idea must mean SOMETHING DEFINITE IN IT THAT DETERMINES ITS TENDENCY TO WORK, and indeed towards this object rather than towards that. Undoubtedly there is something of this sort in the idea, just as there is something in man that accounts for his tendency towards death, and in bread that accounts for its tendency to nourish. What that something is in the case of truth psychology tells us: the idea has associates peculiar to itself, motor as well as ideational; it tends by its place and nature to call these into being, one after another; and the appearance of them in succession is what we mean by the 'workings' of the idea. According to what they are, does the trueness or falseness which the idea harbored come to light. These tendencies have still earlier conditions which, in a general way,

biology, psychology and biography can trace. This whole chain of natural causal conditions produces a resultant state of things in which new relations, not simply causal, can now be found, or into which they can now be introduced,--the relations namely which we epistemologists study, relations of adaptation, of substitutability, of instrumentality, of reference and of truth.

The prior causal conditions, altho there could be no knowing of any kind, true or false, without them, are but preliminary to the question of what makes the ideas true or false when once their tendencies have been obeyed. The tendencies must exist in some shape anyhow, but their fruits are truth, falsity, or irrelevancy, according to what they concretely turn out to be. They are not 'saltatory' at any rate, for they evoke their consequences contiguously, from next to next only; and not until the final result of the whole associative sequence, actual or potential, is in our mental sight, can we feel sure what its epistemological significance, if it have any, may be. True knowing is, in fine, not substantially, in itself, or 'as such,' inside of the idea from the first, any more than mortality AS SUCH is inside of the man, or nourishment AS SUCH inside of the bread. Something else is there first, that practically MAKES FOR knowing, dying or nourishing, as the case may be. That something is the 'nature' namely of the first term, be it idea, man, or bread, that operates to start the causal chain of processes which, when completed, is the complex fact to which we give whatever functional name best fits the case. Another nature, another chain of cognitive workings; and then either another object known or the same object known differently, will ensue.

Dr. Pratt perplexes me again by seeming to charge Dewey and Schiller [Footnote: Page 200] (I am not sure that he charges me) with an account of truth which would allow the object believed in not to exist, even if the belief in it were true. 'Since the truth of an idea,' he writes, 'means merely the fact that the idea works, that fact is all that you mean when you say the idea is true' (p. 206). 'WHEN YOU SAY THE IDEA IS TRUE'--does that mean true for YOU, the critic, or true for the believer whom you are describing? The critic's trouble over this seems to come from his taking the word 'true' irrelatively, whereas the pragmatist always means 'true for him who experiences the workings.' 'But is the object REALLY true or not?'--the critic then seems to ask,--as if the pragmatist were bound to throw in a whole ontology on top of his epistemology and tell us what realities indubitably exist. 'One world at a time,' would seem to be the right reply here.

One other trouble of Dr. Pratt's must be noticed. It concerns the 'transcendence' of the object. When our ideas have worked so as to bring us flat up against the object, NEXT to it, 'is our relation to it then ambulatory or saltatory?' Dr. Pratt asks. If YOUR headache be my object, 'MY experiences break off where yours begin,' Dr. Pratt writes, and 'this fact is of great importance, for it bars out the sense of transition and fulfilment which forms so important an element in the pragmatist description of knowledge--the sense of fulfilment due to a continuous passage from the original idea to the known object. If this comes at all when I know your headache, it comes not with the object, but quite on my side of the "epistemological gulf." The gulf is still there to be transcended.' (p. 158).

Some day of course, or even now somewhere in the larger life of the universe, different men's headaches may become confluent or be 'co-conscious.' Here and now, however, headaches do transcend each other and, when not felt, can be known only conceptually. My idea is that you really have a headache; it works well with what I see of your expression, and with what I hear you say; but it doesn't put me in possession of the headache itself. I am still at one remove, and the headache 'transcends' me, even tho it be in nowise transcendent of human experience generally. But the 'gulf' here is that which the pragmatist epistemology itself fixes in the very first words it uses, by saying there must be an object and an idea. The idea however doesn't immediately leap the gulf, it only works from next to next so as to bridge it, fully or approximately. If it bridges it, in the pragmatist's vision of his hypothetical universe, it can be called a 'true' idea. If it only MIGHT bridge it, but doesn't, or if it throws a bridge distinctly AT it, it still has, in the onlooking pragmatist's eyes, what Professor Pratt calls 'trueness.' But to ask the pragmatist thereupon whether, when it thus fails to coalesce bodily with the object, it is REALLY true or has REAL trueness,--in other words whether the headache he supposes, and supposes the thinker he supposes, to believe in, be a real headache or not,--is to step from his hypothetical universe of discourse into the altogether different world of natural fact.