

Bringing Pragmatism (Back) In

John Dewey on Action and Experience

Alexander Antony

(University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

I. Introduction

My aim in this paper is to suggest a specific perspective on John Dewey's considerations on action and experience that can be fruitfully related to newer developments in the field of theories of social practices (see e.g. Schatzki/Knorr Cetina/Savigny 2001, Reckwitz 2002, Schmidt 2012). Decades ago Dewey and, as I would argue, also George Herbert Mead developed insights which nowadays are part of a practice-theoretical ›consensus‹ – for instance: the constitutive role of the body in experience, the notion of routine and habitual and therefore pre-reflective aspects of action coordination, forms of tacit and practical knowledge as a basis for individual and collective action, to name a few examples. But surprisingly even though Dewey is sometimes named among Wittgenstein, Heidegger and others as forerunner of practice theory, comparatively little effort is made to systematically reconstruct and (re-)evaluate his basic concepts with regard to social theory in general and practice theory in particular (there are some exceptions, of course¹). Schatzki (2001: 8) for instance speaks of a »further formative context« with regard to »American pragmatism« and explicitly mentions Dewey and Mead. In this paper I would like to give a brief outline of Dewey's conception of *primary experience* and suggest how it can be further specified by his concepts of habit and qualitative immediacy. Then I will give some indications of how primary experiences relate to secondary knowledge experiences. To conclude I will give a brief discussion why pragmatism could be relevant for theories of social practices and sociological theory in general. Due to time limitations this paper is of course highly selective and I can only spotlight some relevant theoretical ideas.

¹ With regard to aspects which are discussed in this paper and attempts to connect pragmatism to social theory and sociology see e.g.: Brinkmann 2008; Gronow 2011, Jung 2010; Kilpinen 2009a, 2009b; Ostrow 1990; Rochberg-Halton 1986, 1987, Shalin 1986.

II. Situating »Action« and »Experience« in Deweyan Pragmatism

While Mead, mainly through the influence of his social psychology on symbolic interactionism, is seen to be as one of the ›classics‹ in sociology, Dewey leads at best a kind of niche existence – even though Hans Joas in his *The Creativity of Action* (1996) did his best to recover him as a sociologically relevant thinker. I would like to argue that Dewey could and *should* be relevant for theories of social practices for a number of reasons. First of all even though Dewey's pragmatism is classified as *action* theory his conception should be distinguished from what traditionally counts as action theory in sociology – for instance with regard to Weber and Schütz². For Deweyan pragmatism is in its core an anti-dualist undertaking which tries to overcome the Cartesian separation of mind and body, subject and object or emotion and rationality – aspects which often can be found in more ›traditional‹ action theories or for example in Herbert Blumer's version of symbolic interactionism which is based on a one-sided reception and interpretation of Mead's thought (see e.g. Baldwin 1989).

At the heart of Dewey's theory of *action* lies the concept of *experience*. One can hardly distinguish analytically between these two concepts. Anyway this would be a quite unproductive enterprise, because it is the intimate connection between Dewey's action theory and his theory of experience which makes his whole approach this innovative (see also Mead 1925: 259). One can even say that Dewey is putting forward an action-theoretical conception of experience, as one could, at the same time, say that he presents an experience-theoretical view of action – always depending on the context of discussion and argumentation.

For Dewey experience at the highest level of abstraction has always to be conceived as a »trans-actional« (Dewey/Bentley 1989: ch. 4) or co-constitutive relationship between human organism and environment, neither theoretically overemphasizing the one nor the other aspect. Neither is it possible for Dewey to experience ›unperspectivated‹ environment beyond the practical references of actors, nor can there be experiencing actors independent from specific environments. (Later I will say more about this aspect of Dewey's conception of experience.) On the other hand for Dewey experience or action coordination cannot be reduced to *knowledge* experiences, as a specific and secondary form of experience, as well as experience cannot be reduced to cognitive or mental activities and states alone. In this sense pragmatist action theory is an anti-cognitivist and anti-intellectualist undertaking which puts a *broad* conception of experience at the heart of theorizing about action and social practices.

² See the pragmatist inspired criticisms by Emirbayer (2005) and Ostrow (1990: 22ff.) regarding Max Weber and Alfred Schütz.

By cognitivism I mean a reductionist decomposition of the mind-body dualism which often manifests itself in an overemphasis of cognitive or mental activity with respect to the conceptualization of action coordination or experience. Thus subordinating the bodily basis of ›being-in-the-world‹, cognitivist approaches not only fall short capturing phenomena such as bodily skills, practical knowledge, feelings and the like. They also miss the opportunity to (empirically) ask for the complex relations between bodily and mental phenomena (e.g. the relation between affect/emotion and higher cognitive processes).

By intellectualism I mean the empirically false claim whereby human action coordination should basically rest on reflective-intentional anticipations of future action consequences and accordingly on thought or knowledge experiences in terms of using linguistic or symbolic concepts to consciously *plan* courses of action. Dewey (1917: 29) here criticizes, what he calls, a »submerging of (...) philosophy in epistemology«. His criticism regarding this intellectualist fallacy parallels Pierre Bourdieu's critique of intellectualism (Bourdieu 1990: 29, 34ff.).³ Against such one-sided reductionist views Dewey argues for a conceptualization of action coordination which emphasizes the habitual, dispositional, bodily and affective dimensions of experience. For him thought or knowledge experiences (Dewey 1983: 127ff.) based on the usage of »significant symbols« (Mead 1922) are just *one special mode* of experience which arises only under *specific* conditions, namely when habitual action becomes ›problematic‹. Therefore it should not be over-generalized to *all* forms of action coordination. Dewey radically rejects »the notion that *every* experience must be a cognitive noting« (Dewey 1917: 49; emphasis added) and therefore has to be a knowledge experience. Instead he notes that »things are objects to be treated, used, acted upon and with, enjoyed and endured, even more than things to be known. They are things *had* before they are things cognized« (Dewey 1981: 28). He is arguing here for a *primary* form of experience and an ›immediate‹, pre-reflective mode of meaning constitution (see also Ostrow 1990) which *underlies* secondary and therefore reflective knowledge experiences.⁴ Higher cognitive processes (thinking, knowing, reflective imagination etc.), so Dewey's ›modern‹ claim, and therein corresponding current research in cognitive sciences (Johnson 2010), functionally *presuppose* pre-reflective or primary forms of experiences (phenomena like affect, emotion, habits, bodily ›knowledge‹ etc.).

³ Dewey (1981: 28) writes: »By „intellectualism“ as an indictment is meant the theory that all experiencing is a mode of knowing, and that all subject-matter, all nature, is, in principle, to be reduced and transformed till it is defined in terms identical with the characteristics presented by refined objects of science as such.«

⁴ He uses the terms »primary« and »secondary« in *Experience and Nature* (1981: 15ff.) to denote two different forms of experience, but not without reflecting upon the interrelations between both modes.

Dewey's conception of primary experience covers those, nowadays often discussed, phenomena to which Michael Polanyi (1983) refers to as acts of *tacit knowing*. Not only cannot primary experiences, therein as in other aspects Dewey agrees with Polanyi's conceptualization, be (completely) verbally explicated (Dewey 1981: 74f.) and are often ›working‹ out of consciousness (Kestenbaum 1977: 24, see also Jung 2011) but primary experiences also constitute a fundamental characteristic of ›being-in-the-world‹, and I would argue, are for that reason relevant to theories of social practices and (sociological) action theory in general.

III. Conceptualizing Primary Experience: Habit and Qualitative Immediacy

As was indicated before, for Dewey experience has always to be understood as a trans-action and therefore as *co-constitutive* relationship between human organism and environment.⁵ It is interesting to observe how Dewey specifies this abstract statement. Because in order to clarify what he means by experience (in particular *primary* experience) he often uses a seemingly metaphorical depiction which can be found over and over in his various writings. In his essay *The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy* for instance Dewey characterizes experience as »a matter of *simultaneous* doings and sufferings« (1917: 11, emphasis in the original). Elsewhere he to a lesser extent emphasizes the simultaneousness of doings and sufferings but the processual interplay of both dimensions of experience in a more *temporal* perspective. Experience there (1988: 17) is grasped as »an interaction [that] consists of connections between doing-undergoing-doing . . .«. Irrespective of how the relation between doings and sufferings actually – that means: on empirical grounds – looks like and independent from concrete empirical phenomena under investigation, it is clear with regard to Dewey's specifications that he is referring to the relationship(s) between *activity* and *passivity* in experience, as two analytically distinguishable aspects. Or to put it differently and a little more ›technical‹: He refers to the co-constitutive relationship between *active-dispositional* and *passive-receptive* dimensions of action coordination. I would suggest that Dewey's concepts of »habit« and »qualitative immediacy« are suitable to further clarify the two mentioned dimensions of experience.

On the one side all primary experiences are based on an active-dispositional dimension. Dewey here speaks of habit, which he describes, quite similar to Bourdieu's concept of habitus (Bourdieu 1990: 52ff.), as

⁵ For this aspect of Dewey's thought see in particular Kestenbaum's brilliant book (1977).

»a [pre-reflective; A.A.] predisposition to *ways* or modes of response, not to particular acts except as, under special conditions, these express a way of behaving. Habit means special sensitiveness or accessibility to certain classes of stimuli, standing predilections and aversions, rather than bare recurrence of specific acts« (Dewey 1983: 32).

Concerning his conceptualization of habit which, as the citation above indicates, should not be equated with bare routines, Dewey (1983: 124) explicitly speaks, even before Gilbert Ryle (2009), of »*know[ing] how* by means of our habits«, in difference to »knowledge that involves reflection« (Dewey 1983: 125).

On the other side Dewey's conception of primary experience involves what he calls »qualitative immediacy« (see in particular Dewey 1984a). Qualitative immediacy or just »quality« for Dewey applies to the more passive-receptive dimension of primary experience and action coordination in general. It explicitly contains what Dewey calls »affectivity«, »feeling« or simply »having«. Important here is that his conception of qualitative immediacy not only applies to the pre-reflective perceiving of environment aspects of experience but also explicitly to the »*self-perceiving*« of actors – be it consciously or not. Examples could be the phenomenal or bodily aspects of emotional experiences, different forms of proprioception, bodily cognition, and even more complex forms like intuition or for instance a sense of adequateness with regard to moral or aesthetic matters. It is important to note that qualities are rather *felt* than known and therefore constitute a primary form of perception. *Together* the active-dispositional dimensions, in the form of habits and the passive-receptive dimensions in the form of qualitative immediacies, co-constitute in their interplay (e.g. in sensory-motor coordinations as the most basic type of action coordination) the core of primary experiences and immediate meanings.

Often it can be quite complex, for instance in the case of kinesthesia, to analytically separate habits and qualities. Dewey in *Human Nature and Conduct* (1983: 32) speaks of the »feeling of habits« and brings closely together the habit and quality aspect of action coordination: »Immediate, seemingly instinctive, feeling of the direction and end of various lines of behavior is in reality the feeling of habits working below direct consciousness.« On other occasions the more *processual* relation of habits and qualities will temporally and spatially transcend situational boundaries.

Jazz musicians⁶, for example, as competent music *players*, who have been working on the fine-tuning of their motor skills for years, will, in comparison to laymen, also *listen* ›differently‹ and with a ›deeper‹ understanding to the performance of their colleagues because they ›know‹ with their habits. Even though habitually formed motor acts are not executed overtly, they are the ›outside‹-of-the-situation-constituted conditions of the only seemingly passive-receptive dimensions of acts of ›competent‹ listening in the here and now which are qualitatively experienced. This means that the competence of playing music is a prerequisite to ›competently‹ listening to music. To understand the act of listening in the here and now sociologists have to empirically reconstruct the situation-transcendent »associations« that »format« (Latour 2005) the acts of listening.

It is important to note that Dewey with his concepts of habit and qualitative immediacy gives us a theoretical heuristic at hand to empirically investigate and ›describe‹ the variety of primary experiences. But without doubt these sometimes vague but however »sensitizing concepts« (Blumer 1986: 140-152) need empirical specification and application in research practice.

IV. The Interplay between Primary and Secondary Forms of Experience

Secondary knowledge experiences occur – I would add: tendentious –, as was indicated before, when pre-reflective and habitual forms of action coordination get disintegrated – e.g. when there is a conflict between two different tendencies to act, insecurity with regard to future action courses and so on. Dewey considers reflective knowledge experiences as functional with regard to overcoming ›problematic situations‹ by means of processes of thinking based on the use of significant symbols (higher cognitive processes).⁷ The problematic situation is defined, analyzed, actors form hypotheses (in the sense of reflective anticipations of future action consequences) and ›test‹ them experimentally in order to overcome the inhibition so that action coordination can take its course.⁸ Due to time limitations I am not able to consider this process of reflection in all its complexity. But there is *one* important thing that I want to call attention to. One of Dewey's central claims is that not only secondary knowledge experiences are functional with regard to the ›reconstruction‹ of problematic situations but

⁶ For a study of jazz improvisation see Sudnow 1978.

⁷ Considering the ›mental‹ as ›functional‹ with regard to the reconstruction of disintegrated action coordination is an idea which goes back to functionalist psychology (Dewey 1986, Mead 1903).

⁸ A similar idea can also be found in Giddens' (2008) differentiation between practical and discursive consciousness (see also Joas 1993).

that also primary experiences are functional with regard to the operation of secondary knowledge experiences. One cannot understand the second dimension in its functionality without taking into consideration the first one. Against this background Dewey is arguing in a similar way as is often done with regard to the rules-regress problem (Renn 2004: 238). Thereby it is worthy to let Dewey himself speak to get an impression of his argument. With regard to the operation of an »undefined pervasive quality of an experience« (Dewey 1987: 198) he writes:

»The best evidence that such is the case is our constant sense of things as belonging or not belonging, of relevancy, a *sense which is immediate*. It cannot be a product of reflection, even though it requires reflection to find out whether some particular consideration is pertinent to what we are doing or thinking. *For unless the sense were immediate, we should have no guide to our reflection*. The sense of an extensive and underlying whole is the context of every experience and it is the essence of sanity. (...) Without an indeterminate and undetermined setting, the material of any experience is incoherent« (ibid., emphasis added).

To put it simply: Dewey is arguing here that primary experiences (e.g. in the case of intuition) are *guiding* the operation of secondary knowledge experiences. For instance at the moment when one is thinking one cannot think about why and how she is thinking as she thinks. Under these circumstances thought processes would get inoperative. Because then the thinking process would lose the guiding function of habits and qualities. Instead the thinking about thinking would be, in this case, guided by primary experiences, which are, as this example should show, indubitable (see in particular Shusterman 1997: 162ff.).

With Mead (but with Dewey too) the argument can also be made in the other direction: from secondary knowledge experiences to primary experiences or – to put it a little different – from processes of thinking and reflective imagination to attitudes and action tendencies.

V. Conclusion: Why Pragmatism Could be Relevant

I would argue that pragmatism could be relevant for sociological theory in general and theories of social practices in particular because, as was shown with regard to Dewey, a concept of experience is articulated that allows to do justice to the manifoldness of social practices. With a pragmatist conception of experience and action coordination one is able not only to capture practices with regard to its skillful (motor-)dimension, but also as forms of ›being-in-the-world‹ which have an affective-receptive dimension, an aspect of social practices that should

not be ignored, neither in theoretical nor in empirical work. Even though there are (first) attempts to integrate affective, senseous and emotional aspects in practice theory (Reckwitz 2012) there is a lot to do in the future. And Dewey may be a good companion with regard to such topics. On the other hand the analytical – but not functional! – differentiation between different forms of experience allows for questions concerning the relationship between these – e.g. with regard to recursive relations between discursive and non-propositional forms of action coordination as well as with regard to the relation between primary and secondary forms of experience, as was indicated above.

When meaning constitution, as was depicted, is not primarily an affair of reflective intentionality and cognitive processing, but of action coordination as it is *experienced*, then important methodological questions arise: How then, against this background, one could ask how a meaning reconstructing or a *verstehende* sociology would look like? To give two examples with regard to problems concerning the empirical reconstruction of meaning constitution that could arise: First of all, the investigation of primary experiences has to deal with problems of verbalizing and ›translating‹ empirical phenomena into theoretical discourse. Hirschauer (2006) here speaks accurately about the »silence of the social« (see in particular *ibid.*: 431). On the other hand methods of data production which rely on visual and auditive dimensions of social phenomena have difficulty getting »access« (Hirschauer) to primary forms action coordination. Therefore problems of observability (Schmidt 2012: 226ff.) of forms of primary experiences arise (see also Antony 2015). I would argue that pragmatist action theory can offer new perspectives and can lead to the investigation of phenomena which have been (mainly) neglected until now in sociological research. Thus a broad theoretical conception of experience and action coordination could even stimulate methodological and methodical discussions.

References

- Antony, Alexander (2015/in print): »Tacit Knowledge and Analytic Autoethnography. Methodological Reflections on the Sociological Translation of Self-Experience«, in: Frank Adloff/Katharina Gerund/David Kaldewey (eds.): *Revealing Tacit Knowledge: Embodiment and Explication*, Bielefeld: transcript.
- Baldwin, John D. (1988): »Habit, Emotion, and Self-Conscious Action«, in: *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 35-57.
- Blumer, Herbert (1986 [1969]): *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1990): *The Logic of Practice*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Brinkmann, Svend (2008): »Culture as Practices: A Pragmatist Conception«, in: *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 192-212.
- Dewey, John (1917): »The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy«, in: John Dewey et al.: *Creative Intelligence. Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, pp. 3-69.
- Dewey, John (1972 [1896]): »The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology«, in: John Dewey: *The Early Works, 1882-1898. Volume 5: 1895-1898*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, pp. 96-
- Dewey, John (1981 [1925]): *Experience and Nature, The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 1: 1925*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, John (1983 [1922]): *Human Nature and Conduct. An Introduction to Social Psychology, The Middle Works, 1899-1924. Volume 14: 1922*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, John (1984a [1930]): »Qualitative Thought«, in: John Dewey: *The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 5: 1929-1930*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, pp. 241-262.
- Dewey, John (1984b): *The Quest for Certainty. A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action, The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 4: 1929*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, John (1987): *Art as Experience, The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 10: 1934*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dewey, John (1988): »Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder«, in: John Dewey: *The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 14: 1939-1941*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, pp. 3-90.
- Dewey, John/Bentley, Arthur F. (1989): *Kowing and the Known, The Later Works, 1925-1953. Volume 16: 1949-1952*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Emirbayer, Mustafa (2005): »Beyond Weberian Action Theory«, in: Charles Camic/Philip S. Gorski/David M. Trubek (eds.): *Max Weber's Economy and Society. A Critical Companion*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 185-203.
- Gronow, Antti (2011): *From Habits to Social Structures. Pragmatism and Contemporary Social Theory*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Giddens, Anthony (2008 [1984]): *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hirschauer, Stefan (2006): »Putting Things Into Words. Ethnographic Description and the Silence of the Social«, in: *Human Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp. 413-441.
- Joas, Hans (1993): *A Sociological Transformation of the Philosophy of Praxis: Anthony Giddens's Theory of Structuration*, in: Hans Joas: *Pragmatism and Social Theory*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 172-187.
- Joas, Hans (1996): *The Creativity of Action*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Johnson, Mark (2010): »Cognitive Science and Dewey's Theory of Mind, Thought, and Language«, in: Molly Cochran (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Dewey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 123-144.
- Jung, Matthias (2010): »John Dewey and Action«, in: Molly Cochran (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Dewey*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 145-165.
- Jung, Matthias (2011): »Verkörperte Intentionalität – Zur Anthropologie des Handelns«, in: Bettina Hollstein/Matthias Jung/Wolfgang Knöbl (eds): *Handlung und Erfahrung. Das Erbe von Historismus und Pragmatismus und die Zukunft der Sozialtheorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, pp. 25-50.
- Kestenbaum, Victor (1977): *The Phenomenological Sense of John Dewey: Habit and Meaning*, Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press.
- Kilpinen, Erkki (2009a): »The Habitual Conception of Action and Social Theory«, in: *Semiotica*, No. 173, pp. 99-128.
- Kilpinen, Erkki (2009b): »Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Action«, in Sami Pihlström/Henrik Rydenfelt (eds.): *Pragmatist Perspectives*, *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, Vol. 86, pp. 163-179.
- Latour, Bruno (2005): *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mead, George Herbert (1903): »The Definition of the Psychical«, in: *Decennial Publications of the University of Chicago, First Series*, Vol. III, pp. 77-112.
- Mead, George Herbert (1925): »The Genesis of the Self and Social Control«, in: *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 251-277.
- Mead, George Herbert (1922): »A Behavioristic Account of the Significant Symbol«, in: *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 19, No. 6, pp. 157-163.
- Ostrow, James (1990): *Social Sensitivity. A Study of Habit and Experience*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Polanyi, Michael (1983): *The Tacit Dimension*, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith.
- Reckwitz, Andreas (2002): »Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing«, in: *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 243-263.
- Reckwitz, Andreas (2012): »Affective Spaces. A Praxeological Outlook«, in: *Rethinking History*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 241-258.
- Renn, Joachim (2004): »Wissen und Explikation – Zum kognitiven Geltungsanspruch der ›Kulturen‹«, in: Friedrich Jaeger/Burkardt Liebsch (eds.): *Handbuch der Kulturwissenschaften. Band 1: Grundlegung und Schlüsselbegriffe*, Stuttgart: Metzler, pp. 232-250.
- Rochberg-Halton, Eugene (1986): *Meaning and Modernity. Social Theory in the Pragmatic Attitude*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rochberg-Halton, Eugene (1987): »Why Pragmatism Now?«, in: *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 194-200.
- Ryle, Gilbert (2009 [1946]): »Knowing How and Knowing That«, in: Gilbert Ryle: *Collected Papers, Volume 2: Collected Essays 1929-1968*, London: Routledge, pp. 222-235.
- Schmidt, Robert (2012): *Soziologie der Praktiken. Konzeptionelle Studien und empirische Analysen*, Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Shalin, Dimitri N. (1986): »Pragmatism and Social Interactionism«, in: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 9-29.

- Shatzki, Theodore R. (2001): »Introduction: Practice Theory«, in: Theodore R. Schatzki/Karin Knorr Cetina/Eike von Savigny (eds.): The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory, London: Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- Schatzki, Theodore R.; Savigny, Eike von, Knorr Cetina, Karin (eds.) (2001): The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory, London: Routledge.
- Shusterman, Richard (1997): »Somatic Experience. Foundation or Reconstruction?«, in: Richard Shusterman: Practicing Philosophy. Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life, New York: Routledge, pp. 157-177.
- Sudnow, David (1978): Ways of the Hand. The Organization of Improvised Conduct. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Alexander Antony

DFG-Graduiertenkolleg "Präsenz und implizites Wissen"

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

E-Mail: alexander.antony@fau.de

Web: <http://www.soziologie.phil.uni-erlangen.de/team/antony>

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Pragmatism, by William James. This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. Title: Pragmatism. A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking. Author: William James.Â from whom I first learned the pragmatic openness of mind and whom my fancy likes to picture as our leader were he alive to-day. Preface. The lectures that follow were delivered at the Lowell Institute in Boston in November and December, 1906, and in January, 1907, at Columbia University, in New York. They are printed as delivered, without developments or notes. Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towa Pragmatism and utilitarianism are two philosophies based like the others on postulates. However, the postulates of pragmatism are hierarchically more fundamental than those of utilitarianism. For pragmatism the final purpose of the mind is to transform the world, not to know it. It is a postulate that immediately answers the question of the mind's relationship to the world, without any additional criteria. Utilitarianism incorporates moral criteria. Pragmatism has to reign supreme. Marketing spend versus profits. If youâ€™re lucky enough to be involved in a business which deals in sales units that can be measured precisely in number, turnover and profit, your job here is that much easier. Take full advantage of your ability to put exact figures on your marketing spend versus the subsequent profits which result from that expenditure. For example, if you put an advert in the newspaper for a certain amount of money, you would probably need to include some sort of voucher redemption code with the ad so that you can then match the subsequent sal Pragmatism originated in the United States around 1870, and now presents a growing third alternative to both analytic and â€˜Continentalâ€™ philosophical traditions worldwide. Its first generation was initiated by the so-called â€˜classical pragmatistsâ€™ Charles Sanders Peirce (1839â€“1914), who first defined and defended the view, and his close friend and colleague William James (1842â€“1910), who further developed and ably popularized it.Â who also engaged in productive dialogue with one another. As the progressive Deweyan â€˜New Dealâ€™ era passed away and the US moved into the Cold War, pragmatismâ€™s influence was challenged, as analytic philosophy blossomed and became the dominant methodological orientation in most Anglo-American philosophy departments.