

PRAGMATISM FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

[PRAGMATISMO A PARTIR DA PERSPECTIVA DE UMA FILOSOFIA SOCIAL]

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ABSTRACT: Pragmatism is a philosophy that has made a unique contribution to the history of philosophical thought. Practicalism in combining and inheriting the view of modern intellectual and bringing the stylish colors of western philosophical schools quite well. Pragmatism started with the theories of Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, which Schiller, Lewis, Hook developed, and Quine, then continued to grow into neopragmatism which is manifested in Rorty's literature and politics. Rather than asking which variants are qualified as authentic Pragmatism, it is better, more effective, and forward-looking to ask what we can learn from the old and salvage from the new.

KEYWORDS: Pragmatism; social philosophy; the vitality of Pragmatism

RESUMO: O pragmatismo é uma corrente filosófica que deu uma contribuição singular à história do pensamento filosófico. Ela oferece praticidade ao combinar e herdar a visão do intelectual da modernidade e realçar, de forma elegante, as cores e estilos das escolas filosóficas ocidentais. O pragmatismo se inicia com as teorias de Peirce, James, Dewey e Mead, ao que Schiller, Lewis, Hook continuaram suas pegadas, quando Quine, depois, continuou a desenvolver o que se chamou de neopragmatismo, que se manifesta na literatura e na filosofia política de Rorty. Ao invés vez de nos perguntarmos quais variantes seriam qualificadas como pragmatismo autêntico, sugerimos que seria melhor, mais eficaz e mais atual perguntarmos o que podemos aprender com o antigo a fim de salvar o novo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Pragmatismo; filosofia social; A vitalidade do Pragmatismo

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatism as a school of philosophy with scientific tendency, somewhat including the irrational element of non-

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classical philosophy, began in the second half of the 19th century and flourished in the early 20th century. It is a distinctive aspect of American thought with contributions to the trove of Western philosophy. This trend has penetrated deeply into American life, politics, culture, and society and has become the "semi-official philosophy of the American lifestyle". Pragmatism is influenced by the living conditions and social nature of America and was born during a period when the philosophical world was experiencing the crisis of worldview and especially method of perception. In addition, the vitality of Pragmatism also has effects on other countries, such as China. In addition to the differences compared to the traditions of Chinese people, it also has significance in their education renovation. Pragmatists advocate *"the reconstruction of the entire philosophical world"* with *"the third way"* of philosophy as the key to overcome both materialism and idealism and reject the fundamental philosophical issues that have been raised for centuries. They see the main task of philosophy is to determine scientific epistemology and methodology. They place the object of study of philosophy and science in the scope of contemporary life and experience worth mentioning, attach philosophical issues to specific issues of science, especially experimental science, associate philosophy with real life and call it Instrumentalism. M.Festenstein put philosophy in social life with the role of representing the democratic thought of society and establish human belief in contemporary society as well as the future of mankind. The discussion of classical Pragmatism and neopragmatism aims to see the vitality of philosophy and assess its role in the development of Pragmatism; Shusterman, R., for his part, questions the future of humanity through the views of Pragmatism.

The question is, what values did Pragmatism leave to today's social life? And what are its manifestations in social behaviors, namely human behaviors? The article explores and explains the essential philosophical content of Pragmatism with worldview and methodology. The report delves into describing the beginning and development of Pragmatism and clarifying the fundamental issues of philosophy and their manifestations in social life. On that basis, it evaluates the two sides of this ideology.

2. METHODS

Each philosophical doctrine has its method of explaining its perceptions to prove its positive meanings and strong arguments in social life. Pragmatism, too, expresses its viewpoints in its way instead of traditional ones. Then, each pragmatist, in turn, has his way of explaining his method. Thus, the practices of Pragmatism must be trusted and directly tested by each individual in the society. Personal values are ranked first in the socio-human flow. However, despite their new ways of expressing themselves, the primary views are still the same. The thought of method as a technique to attain efficiency in a less laborious and time-consuming route is called by pragmatists as the economical method. From there, arguments about effectiveness and benefits are discussed with an insight into the conception of truth. Thus, Pragmatism almost entirely inherits D.Hume's empiricism and phenomenology, considering empirical natural science as the theoretical basis of philosophy, avoiding the fundamental philosophical issues with the ambition to reform traditional philosophy. This doctrine created the hidden power of society, which acts as the basis for mental life and is compatible with the "strive and thrive" lifestyle of the American people. In this article, the authors use the methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism to see how the relationships in the movement and development of Pragmatism in social life are manifested with such an approach to Pragmatism. The topic is discussed using the following research methods: Method of logic-history, method of analysis - synthesis, and practice of comparison. With the above analysis, the approach to Pragmatism in general and the methodology of Pragmatism in particular, from a scientific perspective, have great significance to contribute to the re-evaluation of the two-sided values of this school of philosophy

3. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The beginning of American Pragmatism and the view on Pragmatism of pragmatists

As the ideology of the bourgeoisie and a "philosophy of truth" -

Pragmatism began in the early 70s of the 19th century in America. It indeed became an independent philosophical movement in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Pragmatism originated from the "Metaphysical Club" of Harvard University (1871). According to C.S. Peirce, the club is called by that name "to avoid what needs to be avoided." It is actually meant to address two central and topical issues. Pragmatism was initiated by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), then developed by William James (1842-1910), and culminated in the pragmatic philosophical thought of John Dewey (1859-1952).

Pragmatism at any stage, whether being classical Pragmatism or neopragmatism, presents its worldview as subjective idealism and solipsism. Pragmatism believes that the central focus of philosophy is to arrive at an understanding of the truth, whose criterion is usefulness. In other words, the dominant thought of Pragmatism is: The meaning of our concepts must be tied to the context, the "here and now" of apparent reality, which are perceivable by the sensory organs of humans. Commager - an American historian who worshiped Pragmatism, Theories and speculations disturbed the American, and he avoided abstruse philosophies... as healthy men avoid medicines. No philosophy that got much beyond common sense commanded his interest, and he ruthlessly transformed even the most abstract metaphysics into practical ethics. The American was incurably valuable, and it was appropriate that the one philosophy which might be called original with him was that of instrumentalism

Thereby, it can be seen that Pragmatism is a kind of positivism because its initial policy is to describe the empirical truth to gain practical effects. Thus, Pragmatism almost entirely inherits D.Hume's empiricism and phenomenology, considering empirical natural science as the theoretical basis of philosophy, avoiding the fundamental philosophical issues with the ambition to reform traditional philosophy. Not only C.S. Peirce and W. James disagree with each other, pragmatists themselves, in the process of building this philosophy, cannot reach a consensus of how to call it. Thus, it is " pluralism" to W. James; "humanism" to Schiller; "prospectivism" to Seamen; and "instrumentalism" to J. Dewey. Nonetheless, those are just different names for the same thing because C.S. Peirce is recognized as a development initiator. It was him who founded Pragmatism. The most outstanding merit of C.S. Peirce is the systematization of methods and generalization of theories raised at the

"metaphysical club".

Pragmatism is essentially influenced by the philosophical ideas of earlier philosophers, such as: Socrat, J.Locker, Bercy, D.Hume, Kant, Holbach, and even Nietzsche,... which include the ideas of empiricism, nominalism, utilitarianism, and positivism.

In terms of terminology: Pragmatism is derived from the Greek word "pragma," which means "action" or "affair." Meanwhile, the reality is the standard of the truth, and action is the cause that leads to the effect. Pragmatism has keenly taken this as its goal. Therefore, some pragmatic philosophers have loudly declared their philosophies to be "practical philosophy," "philosophy of action," or "philosophy of life." However, the "reality" that Pragmatism refers to is only the reality that human (the subject) has experienced, processed and reformed, and is entirely subjective. To Pragmatism, "belief" is established as an individual's earnest aspiration because it is the starting point of all that happens in life.

The category of "action" or "practice" refers to the subject's purely subjective will. Meanwhile, "effectiveness" is the conformity of objective reality to the subject's interests. J. Dewey said that "the true meaning of human action is how to act to benefit his life and to achieve the success he planned." The one who laid the foundation for Pragmatism is C.S. Peirce, and the one who preserved, promoted, and brought it to a higher level is W. James. Meanwhile, J. Dewey is "a worthy pragmatic descendant" who made the whole world know of Pragmatism as the doctrine that underlies the American mental life. C.S.Peirce, W.James, and J.Dewey are likened to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle of ancient Greek philosophy. The later development of Pragmatism in America is thanks to G.H. Mead and C.I. Lewis. As the head of the Chicago school in America, G.H. Mead, with his theory of social behavior, made a tremendous theoretical contribution to Pragmatism. Meanwhile, C.I. Lewis is the one who had the idea of combining Pragmatism and logical positivism.

3.2. The foundations for existence and the development of Pragmatism

Pragmatism has affirmed its existence through two basic foundations: *First*, Hegel's objective idealism, once dominated the philosophical world, has lost its historical position, and now has to

step back and leaves the stage to the "trendy expressions". *Second*, the perception of the metaphysical method and the term "metaphysics" were once scorned and vilified, but now people have to compromise and accept them. Therefore, the word "metaphysics" at that time was interpreted as: "half ironic and half insolent".

The development of Pragmatism. Pragmatism officially became a doctrine when C.S. Peirce presented the essay titled "How to make our Ideas Clear" and the article of Determination of the human nature published in the Popular Science Monthly - 1878. These are the first bricks that laid the foundation for American Pragmatism. To C.S. Peirce, "philosophy of methods needs to successfully imitate science and take detailed and precise research as its premise, based on diverse experience rather than relying on individual decisions. Here, Peirce emphasizes that human activities must be based on reality and appreciates experiential knowledge. To act, man must take the objective world as his starting point. However, nothings or phenomena are inherently immovable - they are always in the process of movement and development. Thus, Peirce opposes conservatism and stagnation in performing activities, the attitude of standing still, and the worship of authority that promotes freedom. This view is prominently demonstrated in Peirce's fallibilism, which states that no conclusions or beliefs drawn from the use of scientific methods can have justification that guarantees their truth. They can be overturned and thus are all in the process of being constantly reviewed. This is a highly appreciated point that proves the pragmatic attitude of a natural scientist. Unfortunately, when going into the interpretation of reality and experience, Peirce excluded the objective foundation of the issue. He took as the criterion of clarity is the concept, and the actual effect is born from the idea.

As for W. James, he is the first to conceive of Pragmatism as a new philosophical system that suits the lifestyle and sentiments of Americans. With his ambition, W. James argued that Pragmatism could change the whole history of philosophy by opposing rationalism as ambition and a method of asserting its existence. Pragmatism is fully armed and militant. But, at the outset, at least, it stands for no particular results. It has no dogmas and no doctrines save its method.. As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, it lies amid our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one, you may find a man writing an

atheistic volume; in the next, someone on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third, a chemist investigating a body's properties. In a fourth, a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated; in a fifth the impossibility of metaphysics is being shown. But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it".

J. Dewey is considered the pinnacle of Pragmatism as he emphasizes the importance of sociality in human existence. However, he did not rely on a scientific basis to explain human sociality; instead, he considered the social attribute of man to be only biological. Nevertheless, Dewey also noticed the distinction between man and animals through their respective behaviors. When the environment stimulates an animal, it will have adaptive responses; however, these are only instinctive reactions. Meanwhile, man is a higher being with creative and intellectual capabilities, so when faced with phenomena, he must consider and devise a plan to actively adapt to the situation and achieve his goals. Here, Dewey emphasized man's role, and that in human activities, man should not be passive but instead know how to promote his role. However, it is from here that Dewey absolutized subjectivity. He said: Man is a unique being with a creative mind, but what does it take to survive and improve society? The answer to this question can open up the entire methodology in Dewey's philosophy. Since Dewey focused on the effects of experimentation and examination, his process is called the examination-based method or the experiment-and-examination method. In *How We Think* (1910), J. Dewey presented his five steps of investigation: "1. a felt difficulty; 2. its location and definition; 3. suggestion of possible solution; 4. development by the reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; 5. further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief." In general, Dewey's five-step reasoning is not unreasonable, and to a certain extent, it shows the order of discovering scientific knowledge. However, this method still has limitations. All the examinations, according to him, are proceeded within the scope of experience, but he explained experience using an ideological approach. Thus, J. Dewey developed Pragmatism by delving into the study of the significance and value of philosophy in society, putting philosophy in the relationship with education, politics, etc. and applying the methodology of Pragmatism to life as general principles of ethics to deal with issues like freedom, equality,

justice, and the state.

After the Second World War, in the philosophical system, Pragmatism subsided, giving rise to several intellectual movements from Europe, such as logical empiricism, analytic philosophy, phenomenology, existentialism, etc. The appearance of those schools of philosophy contributed to the American philosophical treasure, making American philosophy more diverse and insightful. Among the dominant intellectual movements in America at that time, analytic philosophy was the most appreciated.

After this period of decline, Pragmatism was mentioned with a focus on the development of linguistic analysis. Pragmatism puts itself at the heart of everyday linguistic communication, including language in science and philosophy. The primary tendency of this philosophy is associated with neopositivism, so it is not far from Pragmatism. The general spirit of this philosophy is to reject the philosophical and scientific view that philosophy has an independent object, thus believing worldview is not included in the content of philosophy and that philosophy is not too big a distinction. In America, analytic philosophy is developed mainly by Carnap and Goodman. And here, it is transformed into logical empiricism with two interpretations: logical positivism and neopositivism. However, according to H. Putman (an American philosopher trying to restore Pragmatism in terms of science and theory), analytic philosophy "has accomplished many great things, but in the end, all of them are negative." R. Rorty also sympathizes with Putman: "Analytic philosophy" finally has faced difficulties that sometimes cause it to recall Pragmatism. These two pragmatic descendants also argue that, since it is impossible to bypass the hindrance of language, philosophy cannot, therefore, play the role of judging science and ethics in the name of philosophy's particular perceptions regarding the foundations of science and ethics. Pragmatism and social life. The social part of Pragmatism. To act, man must take the objective world as his starting point. However, nothings or phenomena are inherently immovable - they are always in the process of movement and development. Thus, in performing activities, Peirce opposes conservatism and stagnation, the attitude of standing still, and the worship of authority that promotes freedom. This view is prominently demonstrated in Peirce's *fallibilism*, which states that no conclusions or beliefs drawn from the use of scientific methods can have justification that guarantees their

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Generally, in Pragmatism, this school of philosophy is considered a trend that implies a new directional attitude instead of practical results. That attitude turns away from the beginning, the principles, the "categories," and the hypothetical necessity, heading towards the end, the results, the effects, and the events.

To say that pragmatism withers right in the land of its birth is incorrect because, despite no longer being the focus of academic discussions, its fundamental principles have become the standards of American thinking and action. The position of Pragmatism is ingrained in the American psyche and society. The currents of European philosophy that influenced American philosophy are only recognized academically. As for practical effects on American life, they do not worth much. Morris asserted that: logicism, linguistic/analytic philosophy, phenomenology, and existentialism are "in agreement in terms of nature" with Pragmatism. "Each of the issues they emphasize is considered by pragmatism as a focus in the whole system."

It can be seen that, from the end of the 20th century onwards, some European philosophical trends in America have revealed many contradictions in terms of theory (primarily analytic philosophy). Therefore, there has been a movement to restore Pragmatism in the US, led by several prominent representatives as mentioned above (H. Putman, R. Rorty, and W. Quine). The tendency of returning to Pragmatism is seen as a "return to oneself" and characterizes the identity of American culture. In "American Civilization," Jean Pierre Fichou sees Pragmatism as one of the eight mainstream ideas of the American civilization. Pragmatism denies pre-existing values, systems of thought and reasoning, and only acknowledges the importance of each individual's experience. That attitude is celebrated by Americans and illustrated by the word "youthfulness." An American cultural researcher once said: "What binds Americans together is interest, not ideology."

W. James observed the world as an arena between good and evil

as conceived by Puritanism; it almost became a mechanism that distinguishes between good and evil to the extreme. Within the framework of good and evil, people have to confront each other to find a path for themselves and accumulate experience. It is those experiences that contribute to creating the image of a prosperous and free America. As pointed out by J. Dewey, the method of education is: to understand something, and you have to take it upon yourself and only accept knowledge after it is discussed and analyzed. This policy is very suitable for industrial, experimental scientific research. Americans and the Western world have thoroughly adopted this ideology because it creates the independence of thinking and freedom for active creativity and respects individualism.

Such ideologies of Pragmatism are in line with the doctrine of Puritanism and are adopted by Jefeer to apply to and orient American society. He argues that people tend to be good, so it is necessary to build good physicality for individuals to act freely. Therefore, in America, the will of individuals is always appreciated and becomes a companion of Pragmatism. Taking personal experience and efforts as the foundation and valuing randomness, Americans have embraced a pluralist lifestyle and a multi-party democratic political institution.

Pragmatism continues to exist and develop with significant influence: First, the philosophy of Pragmatism itself as a theoretical basis still has specific reasonable points. For example: Requiring the authenticity and clarity of thought; fact-checking in the context of "here and now"; the truth must be specific and associated with practical results, and has value within each individual; placing much value to technical factors and considering techniques as a means to benefit people. Second, the promotion of "selfishness and utilitarianism" has contributed to stimulating and evoking the thought of private property in people and directing them to individualism, "for oneself." Therefore, Pragmatism is supported by many people and received warmly. However, when the pragmatic philosophy is absolutized and elevated to a doctrine, to a philosophy of life, and Pragmatism, all justified have become absurd. This can be considered the most significant limitation, even the most serious mistake of American pragmatic philosophy and Pragmatism.

3.3 The vitality of Pragmatism in social life

Pragmatism has proven its vitality in the culture, politics and society of America. American Pragmatism appreciates the role of experience in practice and human perception. Experience, according to Pragmatism, is the dominant attribute of man. That experience is practical knowledge, so it is necessary to create practical consequences that can be examined by existential senses. Therefore, quantity is more important than quality. The meaning of experience is brought by quantitative results. In particular, the inherent appeal of Pragmatism comes from the values of democratic freedom and distinctive popular culture, plus the ingenious dissemination strategies, which have been very successful in dominating the hearts and minds of Americans who made America a strong country. It can be said that today, American Pragmatism exists in every corner of American life and penetrates the culture and lifestyle of the youth in countries around the world as well. In this regard, Pragmatism has the advantages of American humanity and civilization. The deep penetration of Pragmatism and its practical results are immediately seen in areas like education, law, diplomacy, etc., and less visible ones like military, defense, etc. Pragmatism has become a factor of American culture, which has spread to and penetrated most continents. Therefore, to some extent, American Pragmatism is a representative image of America in the world. The influence of American Pragmatism on the globe is primarily expressed through American lifestyle and culture. Pragmatism is also present in the UK, France, Austria, Germany, Italy, China, etc. Today, in America and around the world, Pragmatism has its second generation of philosophers, notably Susan Haack (1945), Jürgen Habermas (1929), Richard Berstein (1932), and Cheryl Misak (1961).

In the early decades of the 21st century, the world witnessed the vital resurrection of Pragmatism in America, Germany, Russia, etc. along with nationalistic intentions. Today, in the world as a whole and in America, American Pragmatism makes sense as a method to improve the practical efficiency of human activities.

With the current process of globalization in Vietnam, the preservation and promotion of traditional values of the nation are associated with refining human culture, including American culture. The spread and impact of American culture also profoundly impact the Vietnamese people's cultural life. In general, the trend of cultural

development is to diversify, modernize, globalize, and increasingly focus on efficiency and suit the objective circumstances of each country. Therefore, practical application of Practicalism to Vietnam will contribute to creating educational objectives, educational functions, educational orientation to create humane and noble cultural values. The movement and development of culture and society is not an instinct but is greatly influenced by the way, guidelines, laws, policies, and management of the country's system of institutions. Therefore, understanding the ideology of practicalism is the basis for Vietnam to strengthen state management's role further to promote advantages, opportunities, limit difficulties, overcome challenges to adjust the movement and development trend of culture in the direction of advanced, bold national identity.

With a view of emphasizing experience in the philosophy of Pragmatism, the methodology based on empirical theory has strongly influenced the social life of individuals and social people in modern life. That Pragmatism emphasizes. Besides, the view of democracy and the realization of democracy in society for each country and the whole world, regardless of rich or poor, strong or weak, has made the world aware of the principle of democracy. pragmatism as a school that lays the foundation for multinational cooperation in many fields such as economy, culture, society, etc. Thus, with the view of linking philosophy with practice, Philosophy life, upholding experience, disregarding the reflective nature of nature, and the thought of building a free and democratic society with education, culture, and morality as the foundation for social reform. Therefore, Pragmatism is recognized as the reformers of American pragmatic philosophy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With views and activities linking theory and practice in education, Pragmatism, especially J. Dewey, has really had profound practical value not only within the United States but also with the education system of today.

The essential feature that distinguishes Pragmatism from other Western philosophical schools is that it emphasizes that science must be based on real-life, taking belief as to the starting point, action as the primary method, and "efficiency" as the ultimate purpose. Charles Morris, for example, argued that for pragmatists, human behaviors are asserted as the topic that they (i.e., Pragmatism) are most concerned about, and declared: "Philosophy is practical and active philosophy." Thus, it was once considered typical reasoning for the egoistic

worldview and capitalist individualism. Therefore, Pragmatism is intimately related to the capital market economic institution that pursues the purpose of profit. Pragmatism's theory of life, belief, and action are easy to be taken advantage of to reason for capitalist individualism. Therefore, it makes later generations feel that Pragmatism is "the philosophy of traders."

4. CONCLUSION

As a philosophical trend, Pragmatism has been increasingly affirming its essential position in each country's political and socio-economic life at different levels of influence. The assessment of Pragmatism should follow the principle of objectivity and according to each country's specific historical circumstance. In its existence, though, Pragmatism has met the primary aspiration of man for good values, such as being engaged in, experiencing, creating, and expressing himself in a world full of information as it is today.

In the current trend of globalization, international economic integration has become an objective certainty. The issue of cultural integration is inevitable for the existence and development of each country and nation. The absorption of humanity's cultural quintessence to deepen traditional cultural values of the government has always been an urgent need in the current period. Therefore, the study of American Pragmatism will create a solid foundation to promote the traditional values of national culture.

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NOTES:

Compliance with Ethical Standards: This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.