V.—DISCUSSIONS.

PRAGMATISM AND PSEUDO-PRAGMATISM.

PROF. TAYLOR's rejoinder (in N.S., 57) to my criticism (in N.S., 54 and 55) of some of his recent utterances is so interesting and relevant that it is a real pleasure to reply to it. It has however two sides. The first will doubtless have been welcomed by all interested in the questions of the hour as throwing a great deal of light on several of the darkest corners of the pragmatic controversy, and as contributing the most lucid statement of some intellectualist objections the exact meaning of which has long been a puzzle to all of us, in short as eminently calculated to dispel much of the fog which has hitherto enveloped the real issue. Personally I feel that I now know almost exactly where Prof. Taylor stands, and though he has not come out quite where I expected, I am abundantly grateful to him for clearing up the situation. I can only hope that if I reciprocate in a similar spirit of frankness, he will be able to say the same for me and that the fog will then be wholly gone.

The other side of Prof. Taylor's article consists of personal grievances and accusations against me, concerning which he seems to me to have said rather more than was either just or necessary. I shall however refer to these as lightly as possible, partly because of my gratitude for the enlightenment aforesaid, partly because I was provoked to give him the annoyance of looking up a good many references (whereof one was I grieve to say misprinted), for which allowance must be made, and, lastly, because it is a waste of time to bandy words with an opponent willing to argue honestly.

Prof. Taylor's main grievance is that he should have been suspected of syncretism, *i.e.* of attempting to graft on his old stock of absolutism doctrines springing from much younger roots: but I am at a loss to apprehend why he should take this as an insult. I can well conceive, and readily pardon, an absolutist philosopher ransacking all markets in his desire to enrich the barren doctrine that the Absolute is absolute. And though in this case the rival views look in some lights incongruous enough, I dare not (as yet) affirm it impossible for a philosopher, who fully realised the weakness of the absolutist and the strength of the humanist position in certain respects, to succeed in combining them. There was there-

fore nothing antecedently preposterous in supposing Prof. Taylor to have made this attempt. Besides both before and since he has given marked proof of a susceptible and syncretist temperament.¹ To take therefore Prof. Taylor's language (of which I gave a representative, though not an exhaustive selection) as aiming at such syncretism was exceedingly natural. It was in fact so taken in several quarters, and the mistake, such as it was, was not mine alone nor in the first instance. My own attention indeed was first called to the matter by an approving friend, and it was because of the marked similarity between Prof. Taylor's language and ours that I was moved to scrutinise his book so closely. As a result I was puzzled. Many of Prof. Taylor's utterances were distinctly what one may call 'pragmaticoid,' but it seemed on the whole more probable than their pragmatism was not genuine. Still it required very close reading to perceive that he could not mean what he seemed to say. And even when subsequently he came forward as the champion of intellectualism in the *McGill University Magazine* and the *Philosophical Review* a doubt remained.

In view of this difficulty and of the fact that Prof. Taylor was still happily alive to be questioned, I thought it best to challenge him by inquiring point-blank what he had meant. The success of this challenge is attested by the explicitness of his reply. It entirely removes all doubt as to what, psychologically, Prof. Taylor means. He does not mean to be a pragmatist, and if he has talked pragmatism it has been as M. Jourdain talked prose. But it does not follow that he did not talk it, and that his explanations are as good for others as for himself, and have succeeded in rendering his system logically coherent. The syncretism has not been eliminated but confessed, and it seems to be more deeply rooted in its structure than even now he realises. I am willing indeed to admit that this syncretism is somewhat different in kind from what I supposed. But I am now quite convinced that my criticism was justified both by the admitted laxity of Prof. Taylor's language and the grave tactical error of using 'pragmaticoid' phrases without warning the reader that they did not mean what they might very reasonably be taken to mean.

I.

I proceed to consider Prof. Taylor's explanations of the incriminated doctrines in detail. They were, he assures us, derived from

¹ Most recently e.g. in adopting the language, and on many important questions the views, of Mr. Russell's symbolic logic. And in one desirous of remaining an intellectualist this is doubtless wise. For though this latest of philosophic developments departs from absolutist 'orthodoxy' quite as far as Humanism, albeit in a diametrically opposite direction, and will, when fully constructed, probably be found to be just as incompatible with it, it appears to be intellectualist to the core, and at least avoids the confusion of logical with psychological considerations which vitiates the traditional 'logic'.

a variety of sources, and that they converged in the same direction was a coincidence; the case against them was based on 'misapprehensions' or 'commonplaces of philosophic thought'.

(1) Among the latter he reckons his constant use of purpose and teleology, seeing that the 'categories' of end and purpose go back to Plato, Aristotle and Leibniz, all of whom he regards as absolutists.¹

Now I am quite willing to believe that historically these categories entered Prof. Taylor's mind from the study of Plato and Aristotle, and that he is indebted for their application to Profs. Ward and Royce. But this explanation hardly seems logically sufficient seeing that (1) much prominence has been given to the definition of pragmatism as 'a thorough-going recognition of the influence of the purposiveness of thought on all our cognitive activities'; (2) that this was emphasised just because current absolutism has tried to ignore a feature so inconvenient to itself; and (3) that he had himself been expressly challenged to show how an Absolute could have a purpose. Or can it really be that Prof. Taylor has not yet become aware that there is a difficulty here, a difficulty, that is, in conceiving an Absolute, which is really absolute, i.e. a Whole which is complete, possessed by a purpose of completing itself?²

I hope therefore it will not be thought churlish of me to say that what was wanted was not an account of whence Prof. Taylor took his ideas on the matter, but a proof of their logical congruity with his absolutism. And no appeal to Messrs. Ward and Royce (and still less to the ancients) avails him here. Indeed it seems

¹ I cannot imagine why Prof. Taylor should attribute to me an insane desire to "put Plato, Aristotle and Leibniz under a ban". I have often expressed the greatest admiration for them all. They were all intellectualists no doubt, in some respects, but not one of them can properly be called an absolutist. Leibniz was (predominantly) a pluralist, Plato and Aristotle were both dualists, as even Dr. Caird reluctantly admits. Moreover, Aristotle's account of the practical reason (*φρόνησις*) is pure pragmatism, while Plato's Idea of Good verbally and in meaning coincides with the definition of pragmatism quoted above. As regards this particular question, moreover, they both had a perfect right to be teleologists, seeing that neither of them identified the good with the All, and that this identification is just the great moral and metaphysical stumbling-block in the way of absolutism. I can only suppose therefore that Prof. Taylor is not referring to the historic doctrines of these thinkers at all, but to some strangely mutilated form thereof which he has seen exhibited in some of his "Anglo-Hegelian lecture-rooms".

² Prof. Bosanquet apparently prefers to fling himself upon the other horn of the dilemma. He conceives the Whole as in 'change or progress' and therefore in 'time' (N.S., 57, p. 10). But the result is merely to attribute to the Absolute (with Lotze) a causeless and meaningless instability (*cf. Humanism*, pp. 73-75, 78). The mischief lies far deeper. The recognition of ends and purposes always rests ultimately upon selection of some kind. But the Absolute or Whole stands for a principle not of selection but of all-inclusiveness. It cannot therefore be credited with selective emphasis on any of its 'parts'.

queer to apply to those eminent writers for a guarantee of a Bradleian metaphysic, seeing that both of them have published searching criticisms of *Appearance and Reality*, and that it is quite easy, and even necessary, to understand and develop the doctrines of both in a pragmatist way.

(2) Prof. Taylor assures us that it is a misapprehension to regard his phrase about 'the instinctive demand of the intellect' as an approximation to our views. It was prompted by an aphorism of Aristotle's and a jest of Mr. Bradley's.¹ I fully believe it. But here again the question is as to the justification. For what business have 'instincts' and 'demands' in what professes to be a pure rationalism? The addition "of the intellect" no doubt makes a difference. But, I should have thought, *for the worse*. For if 'instincts' and 'demands' penetrate into the very intellect, does not this go far to prove our contention that the intellect itself is not 'purely' intellectual? And of course nothing I said ever implied that I regarded this single remark as 'committing' Prof. Taylor to the whole pragmatic doctrine.

(3) As regards the admission of postulates into science Prof. Taylor's explanation seems to read a little lamely. He mentions no sources for his inspiration, but excuses himself for ascribing a postulutory structure to science on the ground that no one could help seeing it. I could applaud the sentiment without reserve, did I not remember how very recent the discovery is, and how long the principles of all the sciences were all supposed to be 'axiomatic' truths. And even now it is incomplete. Prof. Taylor himself retains 'axioms' in metaphysics, although (as I have shown and as he has not attempted to dispute) he gives no clear account of what they are, how they are to be known and how they are to be distinguished from postulates. He merely appeals to the very deceptive (and entirely psychological) test of 'self-evidence'. He likewise excepts from the general procedure of the sciences the single science of arithmetic, in which he is confident that no postulates can be found. Thus arithmetic, in spite of its scientific isolation, appears to be "the one pinpoint of the truth" upon which, more heroically though more painfully than St. Simeon Stylites, Prof. Taylor once peroratingly declared himself willing to take his lifelong stand.²

Now he had said all this before,³ and I had duly noted it. But unfortunately the nature of arithmetical assumptions is too large a subject to be discussed on this occasion. It may however give Prof. Taylor some suspicion of the real complexity of these alleged

¹ For presumably no one would be willing seriously to describe *his own* metaphysic as "the finding of bad reasons for what one believes upon instinct". Before evolving a serious doctrine out of it Prof. Taylor should have reflected that the brilliant epigrams of which it forms one must have been put into the preface of *Appearance and Reality* because they would not have fitted into the text.

² *McGill University Magazine*, p. 66. ³ *I. c.*, p. 55.

'axioms' to inform him that in lecturing on this subject I find it necessary to distinguish under *eight* heads the elements in them which rest on postulation, and under *five* those which depend on sheer empirical fact! For the most purely rational of sciences that is not a bad showing!

Even apart from such debatable matters I am surprised that Prof. Taylor should be content to accept the situation as he conceives it, to accept, that is, the postulatory procedure of nearly all the sciences as sheer fact, deserving of no special comment and possessing no significance for his theory of knowledge. If mine had got itself analogously entangled with an alien principle, I should have felt very uncomfortable, especially if I were also aware that the whole of the evidence to which I had pinned my faith was disputed by my opponents.

(4) Prof. Taylor assures me that he meant nothing pragmatic in speaking of thought as an instrument and of the intellect as an "intermediary between a lower and a higher level of immediate apprehension," and thinks that the context should have made this plain to me. Contexts notoriously are difficult things to allow for. However, in the first case I am quite willing to accept the interpretation of his context which Prof. Taylor now gives. The whole argument, he says, was an "objection to the attempt to study the knowing faculty apart from the actual contents of knowledge".

This is excellent, and even more to my liking than his original statement. For it exactly expresses our objection to the intellectualist severing of logic from psychology. But it seems inconsistent with Prof. Taylor's attitude on page 84, where he would admit no connexion between logical consequences and actual inferences.¹ And it seems to square ill with Prof. Taylor's conception of metaphysics as an '*independent*' inquiry into the general nature of reality, which is unaffected by the results of the sciences.² For do not those who thus conceive it attempt to enunciate general truths "apart from the actual contents of knowledge"? I cannot therefore but adhere to my previous conviction that, even though psychologically Prof. Taylor did not realise the scope of what he said, his remark remains connected with the instrumentalism of Prof. Dewey, and the humanist doctrine of the teleological nature of concepts, which was enunciated by Prof. James so long ago as 1879.

With regard to the intermediary function of thought on the other hand I appear to have in a manner misunderstood Prof. Taylor. I took him to refer to the fact (which well illustrates the purposiveness of thought and has an important bearing on the relation of intellection to perception), that judgment enriches perception and that mediate processes of cognition are ever returning to the immediate form, to which I had myself referred in

¹ Cp. a similar argument in *Phil. Rev.*, xiv., 265-288, and below, p. 389.

² Cp. *Ele. of Met.*, first and last chapters.

Humanism, page 199, and which I have now discussed further in the *Journal of Philosophy*, iii., 9. I had, of course, stripped off the mystical language and the reference to the Absolute in order to get at the scientific meaning of Prof. Taylor's remark, but if he considers these essential, I have nothing more to say to it.

I am glad that Prof. Taylor has taken the opportunity of explaining to what extent and in what sense he regards identity as postulatory, even though that sense seems to be nugatory. For his treatment of this point in his book seemed to be so obscure that I did not feel at all sure about it, and I therefore only referred to it lightly in passing. I must still maintain however that, but for Prof. Taylor's assurances as to his actual state of mind, no one could do otherwise than regard the passage I quoted (p. 354) as clearly subordinating the fundamental conception of the intellect called 'identity' to practical purposes. In the 'physical order' at all events it asserts that identity is not 'found' but 'made' or 'taken,' and it plainly renders the 'purpose' which 'identifies' the condition of the 'identity's' existence.

Elsewhere Prof. Taylor goes further and roundly asserts that "all identity appears in the end to be teleological" (*Ele. of Met.*, p. 335); I thought it safer therefore to credit him with more insight into the real nature of this 'axiom' than he now confesses to. I am sorry that Prof. Taylor declines to recognise its complexity, but possibly the reason is that he has so completely misunderstood my attempt to analyse its structure as actually to attribute to me the view that *all* 'identity' is a matter of postulation.¹

What is even more regrettable perhaps is that if he had not disclaimed my interpretation, his philosophy would have been relieved of awkward questions such as these. How, if we only 'recognise an identity which already exists,' can postulation be said to come in at all and in any sense? What are (human) 'purposes' doing in face of an unalterable order of absolute fact? How does such fact 'call for recognition'? And why does it need to *call*? And if it is not true that we run the risk of calling things *the same* because they look *similar*, and only call them the same when they look the same, will not our reasoning speedily come to a stop? And has not the logical axiom thereby been reduced to a psychological accident? And can an intellectualist logic consistently regard a psychological incapacity to discriminate as a legitimate basis for an 'axiom'?

If Prof. Taylor will try to answer these questions for himself, I should not wonder if he came away with a deeper insight into the function of human cognition in apprehending 'independent' fact and 'absolute' truth than any which intellectualism has as yet vouchsafed us. He may even come to think better of poor 'Edwin's' first attempts to construct the 'identities' he 'recognised'.

¹ Contrast *Personal Idealism*, pp. 95-97.

(5) We come lastly to Prof. Taylor's double criterion of ultimate truth and the 'three' (really *two*) passages in which his empiricist version thereof is enshrined. The first of these Prof. Taylor holds to be irrelevant because "it would be quite possible to maintain that nothing is real but experience, and yet to hold that this conclusion itself must be based on other than empirical grounds, in fact to be at once an experientialist in one's metaphysic and a rationalist in one's logic," and this is 'in fact his position'.

I confess to a gasp. I had not suspected Prof. Taylor of so remarkable an enterprise, especially in a context which seemed to insist only on the priority of immediate psychical experience to thought. And even on reflexion, it strikes one as a singularly infelicitous undertaking. For if the logical grounds of metaphysic are to be rationalistically conceived as "other than empirical," and yet "nothing is real but experience," must not the basis of the system be sought in the unreal? And even if Prof. Taylor does not mean this, but has lapsed into an ambiguous use of the words 'experience' and 'empirical' and regards his *a priori* reasonings as really falling within experience, is he not proposing to make a part of reality the criterion of the whole? And has he not bound himself to provide an *a priori* rational deduction of the possibility of all experience? This is, I believe, what even Hegel is now said to have been unjustly suspected of attempting. Anyhow, whether he makes the attempt or not, his doctrine will exemplify one of the most persistent of the failings of intellectualism, *viz.* its tendency to exalt the rational at the expense of every other aspect of reality.

The 'second' passage Prof. Taylor admits looks like empiricism; but he 'had always vaguely supposed himself to have got it from Aristotle,' and I have 'concealed the all-important point that the trial referred to was purely logical and *a priori*'. But as before in the case of the postulates, I was concerned with the principle and not with the limitation Prof. Taylor arbitrarily imposed on its use. Once it is admitted as a principle that a claim to truth may be tested by trying how it works when applied, why should its applications be restricted *a priori*? Besides to my thinking the distinction between '*a priori*' and '*a posteriori*' is only relative and therefore not here relevant.

As for the third passage Prof. Taylor's defence seems to come to a replica of what he said *sub* (4). For the reasons already stated, it still seems to me to tell distinctly on the empiricist side.

Considering Prof. Taylor's explanations as a whole therefore I must repeat that though they are beautifully explicit and psychologically quite satisfactory, they are not logically adequate. In other words Prof. Taylor must be acquitted of any intention to be pragmatic, and I must apologise for suspecting him of departing so far from the path of orthodoxy: but I may still hold that he has said things of which the meaning and implications are inconsistent with his absolutism, and we now have it on his own

authority that some of these utterances really were derived from sources alien to it and more akin to my own views. Perhaps we may agree to call these dicta *pseudo-pragmatic* and expect to find them extensively modified in the next edition of Prof. Taylor's book.

II.

The earlier part of Prof. Taylor's article challenges me to give a pragmatic explanation of some choice specimens of 'useless' knowledge, and urges some objections which I shall have great pleasure in meeting. But before taking up these matters, I must correct some misapprehensions of Prof. Taylor's concerning points of secondary importance.

First as to his inaccuracies in quotation. I only referred to them in passing (N.S., 55, p. 353), and they are worth a mention only because he had thought fit to censure Prof. James for citing the *McGill University Magazine* as the *McGill Quarterly*.¹ One of these moreover has become so habitual with our critics that I do not wonder that Prof. Taylor has difficulty in discerning its existence. He glibly criticises on page 60 "the doctrine that 'the true is the useful,'" as if that were identical with the assertion that 'the true is useful' and I had not found it necessary to draw out the formal implications of this latter in *Humanism*, page 38. Not only that, but a little lower down Prof. Taylor indulges in the very 'simple conversion of an A proposition' which I had deprecated in advance, when he infers that "all useful things are true things". As I had also pointed out, such conversion would have involved us in a denial of useful fictions.²

The other looked more invidious. I had said³ that the disguise of Mephistopheles as a mediæval devil had apparently deceived "all the other characters in *Faust*, except the Lord," and all Goethe's readers except myself. Prof. Taylor thereupon remarked that I shared, by my own confession, "with the Supreme Being the unique distinction of being the sole person in the universe to have fathomed the inner meaning of Goethe's *Faust*". That is he attributed to me a claim to share with the Deity what I had really professed to share with Goethe. The difference and the inaccuracy are, I should think, fairly obvious. For '*Der Herr*' in Goethe's *Faust* is the Deity as little as the Absolute in Prof. Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics* is the ultimate explanation of the universe. However Prof. Taylor wholly disarms any resentment I might have felt by now explaining that he was making a joke! But that I of all men should thereupon be charged with curtailing any philosopher's liberty to make jokes! I hope on the contrary that Prof. Taylor will make more 'jokes' and better ones. Still it is worth remembering that even in jesting it is better to make the cap fit.

Secondly I must disabuse Prof. Taylor of a notion that a merely

¹ *Phil. Rev.*, xiv., 285.

² *Humanism*, p. 87.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

autobiographical remark of mine about my feelings towards Prof. James's critics had any reference to himself. The time referred to was considerably anterior to the date of any of Prof. Taylor's publications.

It is a mistake again to read 'disapproval' into my suggestion that on one occasion Prof. Taylor may have been 'overzealous' in controversy. If I had intended that, I should justly have exposed myself to Prof. Taylor's rebukes. But I can assure him that I have no sort of objection to controversy. Far from it. I like it. And I do hope Prof. Taylor will not stop on my account. Truth moreover has nothing to fear from controversy. It introduces a human element into science, which is always stimulating and often enlightening and efficacious in clearing up confusions and misconceptions. Indeed I feel sure that if, when the new issues were first raised, they had been honestly argued with instead of being met first with attempts to burke them and then deprecated in *quid-me-alta-silentia-cogis-rumpere* tones, we should all understand both them and each other much better, and be on much pleasanter terms to boot.

No; what I was really remarking on was simply the fact that Prof. Taylor had neglected to back up a very sweeping assertion by illustrations. I feared that he had been carried away in the heat of the argument and asserted more than he could substantiate. But now that he has given me three beautiful examples of what he means by assertions which differ as proved truth and demonstrable contradiction while their practical consequences are indistinguishable, I apologise for my suspicion. It will appear later whether by thus repairing his omission Prof. Taylor has also helped his cause.

Lastly Prof. Taylor misses a very simple point when he rebukes me for taking him for an extreme intellectualist. So far from thinking him that, I was disposed to question rather whether both he and his master ought not to be far *more* intellectualistic in order to be safe in their intellectualism.¹ Nay, Prof. Taylor's seemed to me so shaky that I even thought it possible that he might be on the verge of giving it up altogether. The point of my criticism therefore was that the place he gave to emotion, etc., was inconsistent with his intellectualism. And I am astonished that he does not see this to be the plain meaning also of the passage he complains of. It was a comment merely on the (to me) incongruous combination of emotional interests and desires to know with an insistence on a belief in 'pure' thought.

Prof. Taylor's manifest failure to see this difficulty moves me therefore to ask him point blank what he takes 'pure thought' to mean and to be '*pure*' from, if not from emotional and volitional contaminations? Have a 'disinterested' interest and a 'pure' thought dependent on emotion never struck him as paradoxes?

¹ For my view of Mr. Bradley in this respect, cp. N.S., 52, p. 525.

Verbal (?) contradictions of this sort seemed to me to run through all his utterances: on the one hand he was strenuous on behalf of 'pure' thought, on the other he emphasised the importance of the emotions which sustained the intellectual life. This could not, I thought, be pure inadvertence. So I tried to elucidate it on the analogy of Kant's refusal to regard the 'pure respect for the moral law' as psychologically classifiable with the other feelings; but I confess I do not really know what Prof. Taylor can mean.

III.

We now come to what is theoretically the most important part of Prof. Taylor's paper, and also that most welcome to me as being the very thing I had long asked for, *viz.* his illustrations of absolutely useless knowledge. I must begin by expressing my gratification that I should have persuaded him of what I had to point out in N.S., 54, p. 238, *viz.* that there is a good deal of the truistic about pragmatism. Its fundamental principle is *almost* a truism, because in 99 out of 100 cases of recognised truth the test whereby this is established is pragmatic. But not quite, as Prof. Taylor supposes. For in the 100th case, it turns out that the alleged 'truth' is no truth at all. Now I had rashly supposed that the bitterness of the absolutists' opposition to the new theory was due to their perception of the deadliness of the pragmatic test in the 100th case, and that they denied its applicability to the 99 in order to preclude its application to the 100th. But now Prof. Taylor has made it clear that they have actually never understood its application to the 99! This astonishing fact is revealed by his choice of examples.

It comes out best in his second example, which I will therefore take first. It is just the sort of simple and elementary example one might choose to illustrate the *working* of the pragmatic test of truth! The impossibility of answering truly the question whether the 100th (or 10,000th) decimal in the evaluation of π is or is not a 9, splendidly illustrates how impossible it is to predicate truth in abstraction from actual knowing and actual purpose. For the question cannot be answered until the decimal is calculated. Until then no one knows what it is, or rather will turn out to be. And no one will calculate it, until it serves some purpose to do so, and some one therefore interests himself in the calculation. And so until then the truth remains uncertain: there is no 'true' answer, because there is no actual context in which the question has really been raised. We have merely a number of conflicting possibilities, not even claims to truth, and there is no decision. Yet a decision is possible if an experiment is performed. But this experiment presupposes a desire to know. It will only be made if the point becomes one which it is practically important to decide. Normally no doubt it does not become such, because for the actual purposes of the sciences it makes no difference whether we

suppose the figure to be 9 or something else. *I.e.* the truth to, say, the 99th decimal, is '*true enough*' for our purposes, and the 100th is a matter of indifference. But let that indifference cease, and the question becomes important, and the 'truth' will at once become 'useful'. Prof. Taylor's illustration therefore conclusively proves that in an actual context and as an actual question there is no true answer to be got until the truth has become useful. This point is illustrated also by the context Prof. Taylor has himself suggested. For he has made the question about the 100th decimal important by making the refutation of the whole pragmatist theory of knowledge depend on it. And what nobler use could the 100th decimal have in his eyes? If in consequence of this interest he will set himself to work it out, he will discover this once useless, but now most useful, truth, and— triumphantly refute his own contention!

I pause before passing to the other illustrations, in order to correct a serious mistake as to the nature of the pragmatic test into which Prof. Taylor has fallen. He repeatedly (pp. 82, 83) assumes that when two practically equivalent assertions are found, I must say that both are 'meaningless'. But this is not at all what I am bound to do.

It was the earliest and simplest formulation of the pragmatic test to declare that when there is no practical difference between two assertions, *they mean the same*. They may both be true, or both be false, but neither of them need be meaningless, and clearly if the one is not, the other cannot be (except of course in so far as it claimed to be an *addition* to the knowledge conveyed by the other, in which case it may be called meaningless *qua* such an addition). *All that is meaningless is the difference between them, and so the question about them*. For this obviously disappears if the alternatives have coincided and the question is reduced to one between two verbally various forms of the same meaning. It is this, the original 'principle of Peirce,' which I have always upheld and which any one familiar with the principle must have seen to be implied in what I said. Prof. Taylor, however, has confused the meaninglessness of the difference between two assertions with the meaninglessness of the assertions themselves. And so it is no wonder he finds the whole pragmatic theory hard to take in. I am a little ashamed to labour so simple a point at such length, but I fear this error may be more widespread than I had suspected.

Before going on I must also come to an understanding with Prof. Taylor as to the meaning of the term 'practice'. It is my duty to warn him that he is not entitled to take for granted my assent to his conception thereof. When Mr. Bradley proposed to define it as the *alteration of existence*, I at once protested¹ and gave some reasons for objecting. Prof. Taylor's present definition,² though very similar, is yet less explicit than Mr. Bradley's

¹ N.S., 52, p. 534.

² Like that in *Elk. of Met.*, p. 121.

on a vital point. Does "the origination by individuals of changes in the temporal order of events" include alterations in their own thoughts and those of others? If it does, 'practice' will spread over the whole of Prof. Taylor's 'theoretic' field: if it does not, all human agency will be excluded from 'practice'.¹ In either case the definition reduces to absurdity.

I must warn him further that in formulating my theory of knowledge I have always laid the chief emphasis not on its relation to 'practice,' but on its relation to *purpose*. The 'usefulness' of truth is a direct corollary, not from the supremacy of 'practice' over 'theory,' but from the purposiveness of thought. That is why I have repeatedly and unequivocally contended that there is no such thing as 'theory' independent of 'practice,' because ultimately both are relative to purpose.² Our critics, on the other hand, while descanting on this antithesis, have been strangely silent about the more fundamental doctrine which transcends it. Prof. Taylor therefore has a great opportunity of showing himself superior to his friends by telling us whether or not he admits the purposiveness of mental life, and if he does, whether or not he thinks that it influences our cognitive activities.³ And it is the more imperative that intellectualists should speak out on this point, because if it is conceded, the whole of the pragmatic theory of knowledge may be shown to follow inevitably.

It follows from this that, when a truth is said to be useful, it may be so for any purpose, however 'theoretic' it may seem in the first instance, though ultimately, when the systematisation of ends is fully carried through, it must be useful also for the highest end of life, i.e. for what I should call 'practice'. Hence a proposition concerning the ideal creations of a science like arithmetic is true when (1) it tends to the development of the science, or (2) of another science, or (3) that science as a whole has useful applications to human life. It is unreasonable to expect every detail to be directly applicable; but when a system of thought loses its application to life it ceases to be a science, and becomes an intellectual game and is useful only as such.⁴

If this be borne in mind it will scarcely be necessary to concern ourselves very elaborately with the technical analysis and justification of what are called 'transfinite numbers'. In spite of its formidable appearance I have been utterly unable to detect any relevance in Prof. Taylor's 'illustration,' and cannot conceive

¹ I may suggest as an alternative that to define the practical as '*whatever tends to the control of events*' will be found fairly adequate to the sense in which the word has been used by us.

² N.S., 52, p. 583, and N.S., 55, pp. 361-362, which latter passage Prof. Taylor ignores in spite of the italics and the direct application to himself.

³ Cp. N.S., 54, p. 287.

⁴ I have never denied the existence and academic importance of such intellectual games. Nor does Pragmatism deny their usefulness as such. It is only disposed to question whether (like other games) they have not been a little overdone.

how or of what it is, in his opinion, an illustration. I cannot see, that is, how the 'transfinites' can be used as an illustration of 'useless truth,' for the simple reason that they appear themselves to exemplify the usefulness of number. They are, that is, not numbers at all, properly speaking, but a *use of number*, proceeding from an application of number to space, and the paradoxes they involve would seem to be ultimately reducible to the old difficulty of representing the continuous by the discrete. Since Zeno's days this has been recognised as a thorny problem; but how can it possibly affect the validity of number? I cannot therefore understand how the use of 'transfinites' in numbering space intervals can possibly refute any theory as to the nature of number, and can only infer that Prof. Taylor has either mistaken the nature of the 'transfinites,' or (more probably) that of the issue between us.

If however Prof. Taylor dissents from this conclusion I must beg him to make his point a little more explicit. To make his 'illustration' good, let him show us (1) that the 'empirical' and the 'rationalist' theories of number are the only two conceivable and that one of them is right (for if they are *both* wrong, they will not illustrate his contention); (2) that they are strictly incompatible, and (3) that there is an issue between them to which the 'transfinites' are relevant. He should next show us (4) how he conceives the 'transfinites' to arise, and (5) to bear on either theory, and (6) explain what are the 'marked logical advantages' thereby accruing to one of them. Lastly (7) he should try to show how these 'advantages' constitute one theory of number a 'proved truth' and the other a 'demonstrable contradiction'. As regards this last point his language was indeed far from confident, though it would hardly lead one to infer that many competent mathematicians (very reasonably) consider the 'transfinites' as equally compatible with either theory. As regards the other points he was wholly silent. To have argued them all would no doubt have been a long and arduous task, but an illustration which cannot be rendered intelligible without technicalities which had to be avoided was surely a bad one. And it was at least necessary to show that it was relevant, which, so far, it does not appear to be.

I pass therefore to Prof. Taylor's third illustration, that from metaphysics. This I may claim to have answered by anticipation. If it were true that neither Berkeleian nor any other idealism made any practical difference to the 'every day realism' on which we act, it would add nothing to our knowledge and be held to collapse into a meaningless subtlety, a distinction without a difference. Needless to say, however, this was not Berkeley's opinion: he ascribed to his theory the utmost moral value as disposing of materialism. Nor is it mine; Prof. Taylor can find a discussion of the practical difference a real belief in a real idealism should make in *Humanism*, pages 197-198.

The notion therefore that Berkeleianism makes no practical difference is Prof. Taylor's, and is no doubt what has helped him to the conclusion that Berkeleianism is false and open to a 'formal logical disproof'. That this should be so would of course be unfortunate for all the theories that make use of Berkeley's proof of idealism (including apparently Prof. Taylor's own¹); but even so the illustration gets into difficulties. For if the Berkeleianism which coincides with 'empirical realism' is a 'demonstrable contradiction,' are we to understand that the latter is a 'proved truth'? If so, what becomes of Prof. Taylor's own idealism? If not, what does it profit his point to find that sundry *errors* have practically indistinguishable consequences? Had he not to show that of two such assertions the one may be proved *true* and the other erroneous?

I must conclude therefore that Prof. Taylor has nowhere made out his allegation that of two propositions which are practically, i.e. for every purpose, the same, the one may be a useless truth and the other a harmless falsehood. The challenge therefore to our critics (which concluded my last article in N.S., 58, p. 175) to confute Pragmatism and have done with it, by producing an indisputable case of useless knowledge, still stands. Prof. Taylor's 'illustrations,' so far from meeting it, have only exhibited our woeful failure (up to date) to impress on him a clear apprehension of the pragmatic test of truth. And yet Prof. Taylor had distinguished himself by the extent to which he has written about and studied this very matter! Who after this will dare to affirm that the human mind is unbiased by emotion and offers an unobstructed passage to the entry of pure truth?

Prof. Taylor proceeds further to catechise me as to what 'having consequences' may mean (p. 84), and asks: "do you mean *logical* consequences, assertions which are *implied* by the truth in question and ought to be recognised as following from it, whether they happen to have been actually drawn or not? Or do you mean *actual effects* . . . or both these different things at once?"

I have quoted this passage at length because it beautifully exemplifies the false antithesis to which its false abstractions conduct the logic of intellectualism. 'Logical consequences' cannot be separated from psychological effects in the way supposed; they are always first of all psychological effects, and it is only when they are there that their logical value can be estimated. No truth therefore has logical consequences *in abstracto*: they come into being only when some one has psychologically drawn them. By saying that they follow 'logically' we only affirm our belief that all 'reasonable' human minds would consent to draw them; by saying that they existed 'potentially' before we drew them, we

¹ Cp. *Ela. of Met.*, pp. 64-66, where, in spite of his protestations, Prof. Taylor never logically gets off subjective ground.

only antedate conclusions which seem to us so inevitable that we feel we should have drawn them at any time had we had occasion to do so. For all that, we may often observe that reasonings which possess for one mind the highest degree of logical cogency are voted individual fads by the rest.¹ This plainly shows that the feeling of logical necessity is as psychological as any other.

In short, by calling consequences 'logical,' we do not really mean that they could exist without a psychological context. We mean that they are psychological consequences of a peculiar value which it is important to distinguish. 'Logical' processes are primarily psychological, but selected from among the merely psychological, and honoured with a special mark of distinction. So far therefore from being accidental, the psychological consequences are essential to the constitution of 'truth,' and logical consequences would be no consequences at all unless they 'happened to have been actually drawn'. The science of logic so far from being 'independent of,' i.e. unconnected with, psychology, differs from it only in the difference of purpose with which it works over the same material.²

Prof. Taylor proceeds to find a difficulty in the obvious fact that 'not only truths but also falsehoods have consequences' which should be easily dispelled by this conception of the logical as a *valuable* sort of psychological product. He complains that I afford no guidance on the "all-important point" of "how the consequences of truths as such differ from those of error as such". And then he proceeds to quote a passage which plainly gives my answer, to the effect that the 'true' is what forwards and the 'false' what thwarts a human purpose (primarily logical). Or in other words 'true' and 'false' are the forms of logical value, positive and negative.³ The answer to Prof. Taylor's question is simply: 'In value'. I cannot put the matter more clearly or concisely.

Of course, this answer is *general*, as befits a general theory of knowledge. What answers in detail are 'good' and 'true' as responses to what human interest is a question for the special methodology of each science, and also for social conventions. And until an actual case is presented, it is impossible to show how precisely certain truths forward certain interests.⁴

¹ In one of his empirical moods Prof. Taylor has himself made some excellent comments on this fact. See his *Problem of Conduct*, pp. 369-371.

² Contrast Prof. Taylor's treatment in *Phil. Rev.*, xiv., 3, in 'purging logic of psychological accretions' and asserting that "the notion of an individual thinking mind is absolutely irrelevant" to the nature of truth. How all this is compatible with the very "specific emotion" which he finally finds to be essential to the existence of logical assertion (pp. 287-288) is of course the puzzle noted above (pp. 888-4).

³ Cp. *Humanism*, pp. 54-58 and *MIND*, N.S., 58, pp. 160-176.

⁴ Prof. Taylor's poser about the doctor who risks his practice by brutal veracity fails from ignoring the divergences (explained in *Humanism*, pp. 58-60) which arise from the fact that an individual's purpose is not always

As for the phrase "*pro tanto* true" which Prof. Taylor suspects of dishonest 'hedging,' it was simply intended to convey a warning that our first predications of 'truth' are rarely our last, as our proximate are rarely our final ends. 'True' like 'good' is predicated at different levels, and as we proceed from the lower to the higher purposes, a valuation made at a lower level is not of necessity sustained. It is this process which gives rise to the methodological principles, which abound in all the sciences, and may be called 'truths' or 'fictions' according to the standpoint from which they are regarded.

This exhausts the points in Prof. Taylor's article which I can think relevant to the issue, though some have had to be treated more briefly than their importance demands. But I hope I may have succeeded in making it clear that if pragmatist epistemology is more revolutionary, it is also more systematic and adequate, than its humble beginnings in Dr. Peirce's magazine article appeared to portend. And it resembles natural products, and differs from the artificial 'systems' of individual philosophers, also in this that it possesses the capacity of growth.

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socially valuable nor are his interests always harmonious with those of society. The 'good' and the 'true' ἀπλῶς are not always so τινι, as Prof. Taylor might have remembered from Aristotle. Usually the social valuations prevail over the individual, and we are conventionally obliged to call 'good' and 'true' what may be 'bad' and 'false' for us. Far more complicated cases, which it is interesting to work out, arise however in connexion with the 'transvaluation' of old values and the establishment of new ones.