

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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**THE PRAGMATIST
PHILOSOPHY OF
THE MODERN
BOURGEOISIE**

Publisher's Note

This edition of *The Pragmatist Philosophy of the Modern Bourgeoisie* has been edited in form from the draft translation of the Chinese 1973 edition published by the People's Publishing House, Shanghai. The content of the original has been retained in full.

Cover: Portraits of William James and John Dewey (top to bottom), two of the foremost U.S. theoreticians of pragmatism.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MODERN BOURGEOISIE'S PHILOSOPHY OF PRAGMATISM

Pragmatism is a school of subjective idealism. An American, Charles Sanders Peirce, was the first who used the term pragmatism in philosophy. In 1878, Peirce wrote an article titled "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," which was published in the journal *Popular Science Monthly*. In this article, he said that to make people have a completely clear idea of a thing, it is only necessary to think about what kind of actual effect this thing has. The idea of effect is the entirety of our idea of the thing. The idea of a thing exists when it has actual effects on people. Without actual effects means to be without any idea about this thing. This is the theory of pragmatism put forward by Peirce. This theory is in contradiction with the materialist viewpoint that ideas are reflections of objective things. Twenty years after this theory was published, in 1898, another American, William James, mentioned this again in his lectures on philosophy at the University of California. Pragmatism became disseminated and the pragmatist movement in the U.S. was formed. In 1907 James published a book entitled *Pragmatism*. Pragmatism as a philosophic school of the bourgeoisie was then formed. Therefore, strictly speaking, it was at the beginning of the present century that pragmatism appeared as a philosophic school.

Pragmatism is a reflection of the viewpoint of the vulgar utility of the bourgeoisie.

It was particularly welcomed by imperialism, which is easy to understand. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, capitalism developed into the stage of imperialism. Capitalist exploitation was unprecedentedly cruel and aggressive war was unprecedentedly barbarous. Imperialism needed such a philosophy to explain that acts of exploitation and aggression are all reasonable and correct! Action follows from needs. Any action that follows from needs is reasonable. Therefore, aggressive acts that follow from imperialist needs are also reasonable. In this way, pragmatism used its philosophy of action to justify imperialism.

The theoretical foundation of pragmatism is the empiricism of modern subjective idealism. The mind produces experience and experiences create the world. This is the road that empiricists of subjective idealism take to negate the existence of the objective world. From the first half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, a new branch was born of the empiricism of subjective idealism: positivism. The founders of positivism were Auguste Comte of France, and John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer of England. Positivists hold that only experience is a genuine reality. Apart from man's experience, there is no real world. The world is created by experience; science is only a description of experiential facts. Only when we have man's experience do we have the external objective world. Without man's experience means to be without the experiential objective world. This

is the fundamental point of the empiricism of subjective idealism. This viewpoint can be traced back to the British subjective idealist of the early 18th century, George Berkeley. He said, "a certain colour, taste, smell, figure and consistence having been observed to go together, are accounted as one distinct thing, signified by the name *apple*; other collections of ideas constitute a stone, a tree, a book, and the like sensible things..." [Lenin, *Mat. & Emp-Crit*, p. 12] As Berkeley saw it, things are the aggregates of ideas. Positivists inherited this viewpoint, but they changed the word *ideas* to *experience* or *knowledge*. Pragmatism is a continuation of positivism. It, together with logical positivism, semantics and Machism are all derived from positivism. Logical positivism advocates that the world was created by logical structures. Semantics advocates that the world was created by the meaning and grammar of language. Machism advocates that the world was created by senses and the complex of senses. Pragmatism advocates that the world was created by experience and by so-called practice.

There are many differences among the philosophic schools of the modern bourgeoisie, but in essence, they are the same. They all proceed from the basic viewpoint that ideas create the world and man's will creates the world. As soon as pragmatism gained currency, Lenin pointed out that the difference between Machism and pragmatism is as insignificant as the difference between empirio-criticism and empirio-monism.

The viewpoint and the purpose of pragmatism and the other schools of positivism do not differ all that much in substance. For example, they all emphasize experience and only experience. They are in opposition to materialism. They do not regard experience as a reflection of the objective world but rather that experience is the creator. They consider that the world and mankind are both created by it. Second, they all pretend to be neutral or detached. They pretend to be against both materialism and idealism. They call materialism and idealism metaphysics. In fact, under this cover of the signboard of positivist science, they are trying to harmonize the contradiction between science and religion. They propagate the doctrine of religious belief; this is out-and-out subjective idealism. Third, they all pretend to be scientific and advertise their theory as a scientific theory. They glibly emphasize science and maintain that science should rule the world. The essence of such a proposal is actually to use the name of science to safeguard and uphold capitalism. Who can have science? To the pragmatist and the positivist, only the bourgeoisie can have science. Fourth, they are all against class struggle. They stand for social balance and class collaboration. In reality, they all deny the existence of classes and use all sorts of fine words to lull the consciousness of the working class. Fifth, they all oppose Marxism, viciously attack the socialist system and do their best to justify capitalism. In their opposition to Marxism, they frequently use the method of confusing

materialism and idealism, obliterating the line of demarcation between materialism and idealism.

John Dewey was one of the main representatives of pragmatism in the U.S. In his main philosophic work, *Experience and Nature*, he tells the reader that his philosophy is “empirio-naturalism” or “naturalistic empiricism.” What is the experience so much emphasized by Dewey? He said experience possesses two meanings; in his words, “experience means the land that was tilled, the seeds that were sown, the fruits that were harvested, and changes like day and night, spring and autumn, dry and wet, cold and heat. All these things people have observed, have feared, have longed for. Experience also means the people who plant, harvest, work and rejoice, hope, fear, plan and resort to magic, chemistry, are downcast or joyful.” Dewey thought that “there is no difference between action and matter, the subjective and the objective,” that these two aspects are included “in an unanalysable whole.” The meaning of these words is that he considers the objective world, matter, man, and man’s thoughts, to be experiences. This is to use experience to obliterate the distinction between matter and consciousness, and the difference between things and thoughts. In fact, experience is the reflection of objective reality. Objective reality is the source of experience. Pragmatists consider objective reality the product of experience. They think that experience does not depend on objective reality for its existence, but rath-

er that objective reality relies on experience for its existence. This is the idealist line of naturalistic empiricism. Pragmatists stress experience as if they attached importance to objective things, but in fact, they use the word experience to confuse the materialist line and the idealist line. Lenin said, "Today professorial philosophy of all shades disguises its reactionary nature by declaiming on the subject of 'experience.'" (*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 170). Pragmatism is precisely a professorial philosophy which disguises its reactionary nature by declaiming on the subject of "experience." The German subjective idealist Johann Gottlieb Fichte said, "I openly declare that the inner sense, the soul of my philosophy consists in this that a human being possesses nothing save experience; a human being comes to everything to which he comes only through experience." Wilhelm Jerusalem, a professor of philosophy from Vienna, who was a follower of Kant, said, "The acceptance of a divine original being is not contradictory to experience." All immanentists, empirio-critics, empirio-monists and pragmatists like to use "experience," attempting to cover up their idealist line with the word "experience."

Pragmatism talks about practice, too, very frequently. Proceeding from the premise that what is effective in practice is true, pragmatists pay a lot of attention to action. Dewey actually called pragmatism "a kind of idealism of action." He considered action important, or rather, practice important, precisely because it has "cash-value." The so-called "cash-value"

in vulgar language means “rewards.” In the eyes of a pragmatist what is important is not to make one’s knowledge in conformity with the objective reality or to make one’s action conform to the law of social development, which they consider impossible. In fact, they start from the standpoint of the profit-seeking of the bourgeoisie. They declare that rewards are truth. Action that brings rewards is the practice pragmatists talk about. They stress practice because from practice they can get the rewards they hope for. Pragmatists particularly stress the effect, which follows from this view of practice.

Practice is for the purpose of effect, i.e., success. Everything effective is that which has cash-value. For pragmatists, religion has the effect of lulling people’s consciousness; therefore, god has cash-value. Aggressive wars have an effect for imperialism, therefore aggressive wars have cash-value. The reason that pragmatism is welcomed by the bosses of Wall Street is precisely that it has this characteristic effect. It produces for them cash-value. Pragmatists consider science a highly specialized mode of practice. Science is to discover techniques so as to effectively conduct business. In their eyes, science is not knowledge that deals with objective reality but rather a discovery of the method of doing business. The value of science lies also in this cash-value.

In their eyes, that which does not have cash-value, or that which cannot provide them with imminent benefits, is not science. The materialist epistemology of Marxism points out that

practice is the foundation of knowledge. Man gains perceptual knowledge through practice, and develops it into conceptual knowledge. Whether the knowledge is true or not depends on the degree to which it conforms to objective reality and whether it conforms at all. The incomplete truth of a theory or the error of a theory can be supplemented and corrected through checking with practice. Practice is the criterion of truth. Lenin said, "The standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge." (*Materialism & Empirio-Criticism*, p. 161.) In the eyes of materialists, practice and epistemology are indivisible. Only when it reflects the objective reality that is independent of man's will can knowledge guide man's practice to success. The success of man's practice comes from the fact that our knowledge conforms with the objective nature of the thing that we sense. However, pragmatists, just like Ernst Mach and his followers, think that practice is one thing and epistemology is another thing, that practice is to obtain cash-value. Value is all that I need in practice and it has nothing to do with epistemology; it has nothing to do with whether I correctly know the objective reality.

The distortion of the meaning of practice by pragmatists justifies the action of profit-seeking of the bourgeoisie and justifies the frenzied aggressive acts of imperialists. This is why the fascist chieftain, Mussolini, called himself a pragmatist. He said, "James' pragmatism is very useful in my political career. James has taught me that an action should be

judged by its result and not by the foundations of its theory. From James I learned to have confidence in action and the strong will for life and striving. A great part of the success of fascism depends on these. I think that what is most primary is action.”

Pragmatists consider that all the questions of philosophy are questions of method and questions of truth. They limit pragmatism to a discussion of these two questions. In his book *Pragmatism*, James said that the scope of pragmatism is first a method, and second the theory of the origin of truth. He limited pragmatism to these two spheres. James himself as well as Dewey later on both elaborated on their viewpoints in these two respects. The feature of subjective idealism can also be seen most easily in the discussion in these two respects.

What is truth? Is there objective truth? Is there absolute truth? These questions are the most important in epistemology. On these questions, the view of pragmatism is completely subjective idealist. It denies the objective nature of truth, denies absolute truth, and denies that experience, sensation and perception are reflections of the external world. The fundamental argument of pragmatism's view of truth is that truth is effect. In the eyes of pragmatists, truth is the same as effect. To be effective is to be true. Not to be effective is not to be true. Effect is the only criterion of truth. James said an idea is true because it can “smoothly lead us from one part of experience to another and tie up things in a

satisfactory manner and apply them properly, safely and painlessly.” That is to say, things that satisfy you and can be applied are truth. Starting from the viewpoint that effect is the only criterion of truth, Dewey put forward the viewpoint that truth is a tool. To express this viewpoint, he changed the name pragmatism to *instrumentalism*. In his eyes, *tool*, the word *tool* or *instrument*, can better express the essence of pragmatism. These people call truth an instrument. What they mean is that truth is not objective, it is like an instrument made by man. James resorted to sophistry, saying, take a figure like 27. It can be written in many ways: 33, 3×9 , $26 + 1$ or $100 - 73$. All these are true. Another example is the northern star, which you can call the Northern Star, the Great Bear, the Dipper or Charles Wain. All these words are true, and all applicable.

Which one is truer? This all depends on its use for people, according to James. The Chinese pragmatist Wu Shih also said, “A hundred coins, you can divide them into two piles of 50 each, or you can divide them into four piles of 25 each, or ten piles of 10 each.” They attempted to use this kind of sophistry to prove that truth can be manipulated by man at will, that it has no objectivity, and that objective truth and absolute truth do not exist. James holds that the space and time in the universe are man-made structures; in short, truth is made by man, therefore truth is not the reflection of the law of objective reality but rather is a product of subjective ideas that is controlled by man’s free will and can take

whatever form the heart desires. This is the fundamental view of pragmatists of truth.

A tool is used to make things. It is a means to an end. In the eyes of pragmatists, since truth is merely a tool or a means, truth varies, depending on man's will and varies depending on man's desires. In his book, *The Reform of Philosophy*, Dewey said, "The hypothesis that can work is true. The so-called truth is an abstract noun, applicable to the aggregate of proven real premeditated and desired things which came about as a result of its function and effect." Pragmatists consider that truth is not a law, an axiom or a principle; it is merely a hypothesis. Dewey said, "idea, theory, system, no matter how elaborate, refined they may be, no matter how solid they may be, must be considered hypotheses." They maintain that whether a hypothesis is true or not entirely depends on its effect. James said, "The only test for probable truth is whether it can guide us as to what can be best used, what can best coordinate the various parts of life with the demand of the totality of experience." The so-called effect of the pragmatists means the most proper arrangement of life. They hold that to have effect means to be able to arrange life well. A hypothesis that affects life is truth. This hypothesis meant by pragmatists is not scientific, but rather something that can satisfy the demands of the life of the bourgeoisie. James said, "If the hypothesis of god has the function to satisfy, then the hypothesis is true." Pragmatists openly and shamelessly declare that as long as we have the benefit of

being able to rest on Sunday, it doesn't hurt to consider god as truth. In his book *Pragmatism*, James said, "We can be happy because of god. If only we have god, then before all sorts of hard work we can have the joy given to us by god. The evidence of my own belief in god is fundamentally internal; it lies in my own personal experience. Your own personal experience gives you god; after that, the name 'god' at least gives you the benefit of a day off." He thought, "If theological ideas have value for concrete life, then for pragmatism they are true and true to this extent." He also said, "An ideal is true as long as our belief in it benefits our life." Pragmatists have said innumerable things like this. From these words, we can see the attitude of pragmatism toward truth. God is true because god is useful. Useful to whom? Useful to the life of the bourgeoisie. Everything useful to the life of the bourgeoisie is truth, and only to this extent does the question of truth or non-truth exist. This is pragmatism's view of truth, a thoroughly philistine philosophy. Starting from this view of truth, pragmatists conclude that philosophy is no more than a method with which one attains the goal of being valuable. It is precisely from this that pragmatists declare that their philosophy is merely a method. Pragmatists say that their philosophy is a method or it is a theory about the origin of truth. Actually, the two things are one. No matter which it is, it is the rule of thumb for the philistines to say that philosophy is a tool used to seek profit for the bourgeoisie. If everything that can satisfy the

needs of life is truth, then aggression, exploitation, oppression, slavery and all such evils are truth, because these things are needed by the life of the imperialists. Corresponding to this view of truth, that what is useful is true, in their view of morality, pragmatists think that what is useful is good. The pragmatists' view of morality can be summed up in one word, the word used by James, i.e., *expediency*. James said, "the so-called truth is only an expediency in our thinking, and the so-called justice is only an expediency in our action." Expediency in action then becomes the moral standard for the pragmatists. Fascism and aggressive wars, if they are convenient for the imperialists in enslaving the people of the world, then become just. Pragmatists say that they are opposed to having a pessimistic view of the world and are also opposed to having an optimistic view. They stand for meliorism. In their opinion, pragmatism is inclined toward meliorism — it believes that the world can be redeemed through a progressive method. The role of this so-called meliorism is of course that it can stave off revolution. Starting from meliorism, pragmatists consider that what is progressive is good. They claim that morality has no fixed aim, it is progressive forever. In other words, it is forever a process and has no final goal. Therefore, Dewey said that growth itself is the goal of morality. For example, take the words "improve health." To him, what is important is not the word "health" but the word "improve." Health is not the goal to be achieved. Improvement itself is the goal.

In his book, *The Reform of Philosophy*, Dewey said, "What is meaningful is not a static result or ending, but rather the process of growth, reform and progress. What is good is not what is considered the unchangeable goal, 'health,' but rather what health needs, i.e., improvement, which is a constant process. The goal is no longer the terminal or the limit to be achieved. It is rather the active process to change the status quo. Growth itself is the only goal of morality." Pragmatists propagate that the process is everything and the goal is nothing. This fully explains that what they represent is a reactionary, declining class which only considers immediate benefits, has no future and is struggling desperately. Dewey thought, "Meliorism believes that special conditions existing at a given time, no matter whether they are relatively good or relatively bad, can always be improved. It encourages intelligence to study the effective way of good and the obstacles to the realization of good, and to make efforts to improve conditions." What he means is, even if the present conditions of capitalism are bad, it is no more than a condition that is relatively bad and could be improved. He thus used meliorism to oppose revolution. What he meant by using intelligence or wisdom to improve the situation of the world means that one should not use violence to overthrow the order of the old world but rather should adopt reformist methods to improve relations in the world and that such improvement does not need far-reaching goals. This theory of growth that

pragmatists have in their view of morality is welcomed by all reformists, social-democrats and Fabian socialists. Reformists and opportunists like pragmatism precisely because this kind of meliorism suits them well. Imperialism uses pragmatism as an important ideological weapon. The spectacular celebration by the American philosophic circles of Dewey's 100th birthday in 1959 proves the importance imperialism attaches to pragmatism. Pragmatism is a concentrated expression of the vulgar and reactionary ideology of the modern bourgeoisie. Many people who are active in the political and philosophic circles of the modern bourgeoisie may not admit that they are pragmatists but, in reality, they are followers of this philosophy which uses effect and expediency as the criteria of action. Many pragmatists in the U.S. openly expressed that they were opposed to Marxist philosophy, but now others use the fact that pragmatism considers practice an important category to create confusion, saying that pragmatism is not different from Marxist theory in basic logical theory or philosophic stand. In saying this, these people are trying to use the pragmatist viewpoint of subjective idealism to distort Marxism. Revisionist or right-opportunist thinking that appears in the workers' movement is a direct product of the bourgeois world outlook and its influence. The thinking of revisionists and opportunists very often is strongly coloured by bourgeois pragmatism. The old revisionist Bernstein is an obvious example. These people may not go directly to

school to become bourgeois pragmatists. The revisionist viewpoint of Bernstein was formed at almost the same time as the pragmatist school in the U.S., but the opportunist thinking which lacks any firm or clear-cut principle, swims with the tide, considers only immediate benefits, and abandons the fundamental and long-range interests of the proletariat, would very naturally find common ground with this philistine philosophy of the bourgeoisie. In the following questions, you can see the common ground between revisionism and pragmatism.

First, the doctrine of effect. Success before everything, and effect before everything. This is a maxim of the pragmatists. For the sake of success and effect for the present, one can use any means in an unprincipled manner. If the means is effective, then it is good and true. Therefore, pragmatists think that immediate and concrete benefits are supreme. If immediate benefits can be obtained, this is the most effective and most valuable. As for the future, leave that alone. Some of the things that Bernstein said were very much in the tone of the pragmatists. For example, Bernstein said, "For me, the movement is everything. What people mean by the ultimate goal of socialism, in reality, is nothing much. At any time, my interest in the future never goes beyond general theory. All books about the future, no matter what, are unbearable to me. But the present task and the task for the near future are very important for my thinking and my efforts. As for the future beyond that, it

will only become an object of my study when it is most suited to be a criterion for the action related above.” To do propaganda among the working class for this kind of thinking that the goal is nothing, that the movement is everything, that the future is nothing, that the present is everything, is to entice the working class to abandon the goal that socialism and communism strive for. Revisionists tell people to attend to what is immediate and not to think about the future. This is singing the same tune as the pragmatists. Lenin refuted revisionism, saying, “A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. ‘The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing’ — this catchphrase of Bernstein’s expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment — such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less ‘new’ question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it changes the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will

always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another.” (*Marxism and Revisionism*, Collected Works, XV, p. 37)

Pragmatists advocate the doctrine of effect, telling the exploited and oppressed people to seek real or imaginary temporary benefits, and abandon their fundamental interests and the class struggle. In this respect, all forms of revisionism savour pragmatism.

Second, gradualism. The gradualism of pragmatists stems from the view that the process is everything. It advocates progress, opposes revolution, and denies the leaps and qualitative changes in the course of development. Hu Shih advocated “evolution little by little” and “reform little by little,” which is exactly this kind of gradualism. Pragmatists use the vulgar theory of evolution to replace the theory of revolution. Therefore pragmatism is welcomed by all those who are opposed to revolution and advocate reform, and welcomed by all reformists and revisionists. The so-called “peaceful transition of capitalism into socialism” propagated by old revisionists as well as modern revisionists is precisely this kind of pragmatist and gradualist nonsense. Bernstein once did propaganda for his revisionist viewpoint in this way: “What I consider is not what will happen in the distant future, but rather what may happen now and what should be brought to happen now. Therefore, the conclusion of this narrative of mine is a very commonplace thesis: that is, the striving for democracy, the improvement of the political organ and the economic organ

of the democratic system are the necessary precondition to the realization of socialism.” On the surface, this statement of his seems to imply that he still admitted the future of socialism. The only thing was that he is not considering it *now*. However, he continued to say, concerning the bourgeoisie, “under no circumstances should there be the general application of violent deprivation but we should carry out gradual takeover through organization and law.” Again, he praised the capitalist system, saying, “we should not undermine the system, but should rather make them progress. For this purpose, we need organized and effective activities.” In this manner, this old revisionist used gradualist thinking to cancel the future of socialism and went completely over to the ranks of bourgeois pragmatism.

Third, they pretend to be scientific and scorn theory. Pragmatists pretend to uphold science, like all positivists; they mention science all the time and very often use deceptive words like “practice,” “experience,” “effect,” etc. They advertise their theory as a science; however, their science is phoney. In reality, they have contempt for both theory and science. They deny the existence of the objective world, deny objective truth, and therefore deny all possibilities of correctly knowing the world and foreseeing the future. What theory and science are left, then? In the eyes of the pragmatists, laws are made by man, objective things depend on man’s will, thus they fundamentally deny science, which reflects the law of objective things. Science respects objective

facts, respects laws and truths. Pragmatists are just the opposite. In their eyes, science is free will, science is belief. Many pragmatists openly declare that fundamental questions in philosophy like the interrelationship between matter and consciousness are questions without any meaning. In the eyes of bourgeois philistines, people can still make money and do business without paying attention to materialism and idealism. Starting from this viewpoint, Hu Shih, the Chinese pragmatist, advocated “talking less of doctrines, and more of problems,” considering that doctrines are no more than abstract terms. This is also true of all opportunists and revisionists. In reality, they deny objective facts and objective laws. They use distortion and sophistry to forge theory and try their very best to evade the theory and principles of proletarian revolution. The reason that Bernstein refused to acknowledge the ultimate aim of the proletarian movement is that he denied theory and principles. He said, “At whatever stage of revolution, any declaration of theory or doctrine that cannot make people expect the immediate interest of the working class should be discarded.” This kind of statement is obviously in line with bourgeois pragmatism. Therefore, analysing and criticizing pragmatism is a very meaningful thing. It not only helps us dissect the ideology of the modern bourgeoisie, but it can also help us dissect all forms of revisionist thinking that have been influenced by the bourgeoisie and have appeared in the working-class movement.

CHAPTER II. THE PRAGMATIST THEORY OF TRUTH: TRUTH AS A TOOL OF EXPEDIENCY

I. PRAGMATISTS DENY OBJECTIVE TRUTH

Admitting or not admitting the objectivity of truth is one of the important indicators distinguishing materialism from idealism. In the past as well as in the present, the two camps in philosophy have carried out fierce struggle over this question, being related to the most important fundamental question in philosophy, i.e., the relationship of thinking to existence. Therefore, every school of philosophy must answer this important question: does truth possess objectivity? However, pragmatists make their denial of objective truth the main content of their reactionary philosophy. The theory of truth in philosophy mainly answers the following two questions: first, is there objective truth? In other words, can there be any content in man's ideas that does not depend on the subject, does not depend on man and does not depend on mankind? Second, if there is objective truth, can man's ideas that express objective truth immediately, completely, unconditionally and absolutely express truth or can they just approximately and relatively express truth? This is the question of the relation between absolute truth and relative truth. In discussing the question of truth in his book *Materialism and*

Empirio-Criticism, Lenin refuted the Machist theory of truth from these two angles. Whoever admits that existence and nature are primary, that thinking is a reflection of existence, that consciousness is derived from matter and will affirm the existence of objective truth. On the contrary, whoever does not admit all these things will deny the objective filature of truth.

The other side of the question of the relationship of thinking to existence is: what is the relationship of our thinking about the surrounding world to the world itself? Can our thinking know the objective world? Can we correctly reflect reality in our views and concepts of the real world? These questions are questions about the relationship between absolute truth and relative truth. Depending on their different views on the highest question in philosophy, philosophers come to have opposite views of truth. Idealists deny the existence of the objective world independent of man's consciousness, therefore they do not admit the existence of objective truth. That is to say, they deny absolute truth independent of the individual's will or the will of mankind. They make the relativity of truth absolute, saying that since truth is relative, then it is no more than a product of man's subjective ideas. Dialectical materialists admit objective truth; they admit that objective truth is the correct reflection of the objective world and objective reality in man's consciousness and scientific theories. They admit that the principles, axioms and laws which have been examined by practice have the significance of

objective truth. Dialectical materialists admit the existence of the external, objective world; they admit that our knowledge reflects objective truth. Therefore, we admit the existence of absolute truth that is independent of the individual's will or the will of mankind. We admit that man's thinking, by nature, can provide and is providing us with absolute truth, which is composed of the sum of relative truths. Pragmatists deny objective truth; they also deny absolute truth independent of the individual's will or the will of mankind.

Now, let us first take a look at how the pragmatists deny objective truth, and then we will take a look at how they proceed from the relativity of truth to the denial of absolute truth. In their work, pragmatists have devoted a lot of space to the question of truth. They even consider pragmatism a theory of truth. According to James, the scope of pragmatism includes two parts: first, the theory of method, or methodology; second, the theory of truth. Through the discussion of their theory of truth, they propagated their subjective idealist viewpoint. In answering the question of truth, James quoted the views of two other pragmatists, F.C.S. Schiller and Dewey: "*ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true only in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relations with other parts of our experience, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual shortcuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak — any idea that*

will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, and simplifying, saving labour — is true for just so much, true in so far forth, as is true *instrumentally*. This is the ‘instrumental’ view of truth taught so successfully at Chicago, the view that truth in our ideas means their power to ‘work,’ promulgated so brilliantly at Oxford.” [*Pragmatism*, pp. 28-9].

From this statement, we can see that in the eyes of pragmatists, truth is a kind of idea which does not reflect objective things but is beyond things and transcends things. It is used to control things and to link things up satisfactorily, making them work securely and simplifying, saving labour. Therefore, truth is an instrument, a kind of power to work. Instruments are made by man and used by man. This is to say that instruments cannot be separated from man. Separated from man there will be no instruments, and even less the use of instruments. It is the same to consider truth as a power to work. The power to work derives from man the subject. It is dependent on this man. When truth exists depending on man the subject, the objectivity of truth is being denied. There is another important meaning in James’ statement: he considered truth the links among experiences; if one experience is linked up with another, and linked up satisfactorily — then it is truth. Who does the work of linking up? Naturally, it is man’s subjective ideas, man’s subjective will. Therefore, to advocate that truth is the satisfactory linking

of experience in substance means to consider truth something that depends on man's subjective ideas and subjective will for its existence. In the eyes of pragmatists, experience is not gained from objective things but is beyond things and above things. It is a force that can link things satisfactorily and make them work securely and simplifying, saving labour. They link truth with experience and do not consider truth the result of man's social practice, but rather the product of man's subjective experience. To consider truth a linking of experiences leads to the view that truth is a process of ideas verifying themselves. James said, "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its *verification*. Its validity is the process of its *validation*." [Pragmatism, p. 89]. Dewey also said that what is verified is true. Pragmatists often use the word *verification*, but their verification is not dependent on social practice, is not dependent on objective things, but rather on man's own ideas. Therefore, this kind of verification is in fact forejudging.

The pragmatist view of truth is built on forejudging. Pragmatists regard experience as something that does not depend on social practice but rather the product of subjective ideas. Therefore, the linking of this part of experience with another part is also a product of pure subjective ideas. James said, "The fundamental achievement of humanism in my

view lies in the understanding that although a part of our experience depends on another part, the entire experience is self-containing and does not depend on anything." We can see what pragmatists mean by experience from this statement and what they mean by the linking of experiences.

From the truth that stems from such experience and such linking of experiences, we can also see what kind of thing this kind of truth is. Pragmatists think that to answer the question, what is truth?, we have to see whether something originates in experience and whether it has been tested by the loss or gain, benefit or harm in experience. The reason that truth is truth is that it originates in experience and it has been judged to be so by using the criterion of gain or loss, benefit or harm. They use experience as the criterion of truth, and we have to look at how they treat experience. Pragmatists consider experience the experience of the subject; that is, experience that is controlled and dominated by one's own consciousness and belief. James said, "The objective part of experience is the sum total of what we think about at a given time and the objective part is our internal state. The objective entity of the universe viewed from the angle that it originates in experience is only an ideal image. We cannot know the existence of this image from inside; we can only see it from the outside. In fact, our internal state is our real experience. The reality of this state and the reality of our experience constitute an inseparable unity." This experience of the in-

ternal state gives rise to truth. Truth is a product of experience; in other words, truth is a product of subjectivity. As truth has no objectivity, pragmatists compare truth to a credit system: whoever believes in it, then it exists for him; whoever doesn't believe it, then it disappears. James said, "Truth lives, in fact, for the most part on a credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass' so long as nothing challenge them, just as banknotes pass so long as nobody refuses them." [*Pragmatism*, p. 91]

Therefore, James thought that although truth needs verification, it seldom needs complete verification. It will do as long as we have faith in it. Pragmatists think that truth comes into being to satisfy man's needs. Therefore, they think that whatever is valuable to man is truth. This view of truth as value is another way of denying the objectivity of truth. James said, "Our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural, of processes of leading, realized *in rebus*, and having only this quality in common, that they *pay*. They pay by guiding us into or towards some part of a system that dips at numerous points into sense-percepts, which we may copy mentally or not, but with which at any rate we are now in the kind of commerce vaguely designated as verification. Truth for us is simply a collective name for verification-processes, just as health, wealth, strength, etc., are names for other processes connected with life, and also pursued because it pays to pursue them. Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth and strength are made, in the course of experience." [*Pragmatism*, p. 96] To

look upon truth as being valuable to man's life, a value that can be cashed, is to write off the objectivity of truth. This is so because pragmatists regard truth as a kind of *cash* which relies on the reserve of human life for its existence. To say that truth relies on man's life for its existence or that truth is *made*, is to say that objective truth does not exist, that truth varies from man to man. To look upon truth as valuable leads to looking upon truth as good. Pragmatists consider truth a kind of good; that what is good is also true. This trick of confusing the category of epistemology with the category of the theory of morality aims precisely at denying the objectivity of truth. Different societies and different classes have different criteria of morality. If truth is a kind of good, then there are different kinds of truth. If truth comes into being depending on one's needs, and changes in accordance with man's needs, then is there such a thing as the existence of objective truth? In one word, truth is subjective and man-made; it does not possess any objectivity. This is the fundamental thinking of the pragmatists' view of truth.

II. PRAGMATISTS THINK WHAT IS MOST USEFUL AND SATISFYING IS MOST TRUE

To consider truth as something useful and satisfying is a naked manifestation of denying the objectivity of truth. If we use being useful and satisfying to man as the criterion of truth, then lies, deception, falsehood and irrationality can all become truth. For example, lies are

useful for the exploitative acts of the bourgeoisie. They can satisfy the bourgeoisie. If we use this kind of criterion for truth, to measure the aggressive acts of the imperialists, then even aggression is a kind of truth, because aggression is useful to imperialism and can satisfy the imperialists.

To use what is useful and satisfying as the criterion of truth is a characteristic of the pragmatist view of truth. It is also an expression of the bourgeois class instinct of this school of philosophers. Pragmatists, whether James or Dewey, have talked a lot about this. James said, "A new idea that can most properly play its role and can satisfy our double needs is most true." He thought, "you can either say that 'it is useful because it is true' or that 'it is true because it is useful.'" [*Pragmatism*, p. 90] He thought that these two phrases are the same. That is to say, between the two words "true" and "useful" you can draw an equal sign. He thought that *truth* is a term for the verification process of an idea at the beginning and *useful* is a term for the completed function in the course of experience.

In his view, a true idea is that which is useful from the very beginning. Dewey said, "if ideas, meanings, concepts, theories or systems are a tool with respect to the active transformation of an environment or the removal of a particular difficulty or disturbance, then their effect and value lie completely in the success of the work. If they succeed, then they are reliable, sound, effective, good and true. If they cannot remove disturbance, avoid errors, but

on the contrary, they cause increase in confusion, doubt and disaster, then they are false. Conviction, confirmation and verification lie in effect and result." In Dewey's opinion, effect and result are the indication of truth and the measure distinguishing truth. Dewey changed pragmatism into instrumentalism. This indicates how much importance he attached to this kind of effect and result.

Dewey held that this so-called truth is an abstract term. We have to wait and see whether it can be applied to things that people expect, hope for and obtain effect. Dewey once defended "satisfaction" and "effect" as the criteria for truth. He said, "for example, when truth is regarded as satisfaction, it is often misconstrued as emotional satisfaction, personal comfort or the provision for purely personal needs. However, the satisfaction meant here is the satisfaction of the requirements and conditions of problems that goals and methods of ideas and actions give rise to. This satisfaction includes public and objective conditions. It is not determined by whims or personal likes. Again, when truth is understood to mean *effect*, it is often considered an effect for purely personal goals or profit that a particular person has in mind. The idea of considering truth an instrument to satisfy personal ambition and lust for power is very abhorrent. However, critics actually attribute such an idea to sane people. This is very strange indeed. As a matter of fact, to say that truth is effect means to contribute what ideology or theory considers feasible to the transformation of experience,

and that is the effect. The use of roads is not determined or measured by the degree that they facilitate the plundering of bandits. The use of roads is determined by whether in fact they have performed the function of roads; whether they have been the convenient and effective means of public transportation and communication. This is also the reason why the effect of an idea or hypothesis has become the criterion for the truth contained in that idea or hypothesis.”

In this paragraph, Dewey made a statement about what pragmatists mean by satisfaction or effect. First, it is not emotional satisfaction, but rather the satisfaction of ideas. Second, it is not the satisfaction of personal likes or ambitions, but rather the satisfaction of public or objective conditions. Third, it is an effect that contributes to the transformation of experience. In short, he thought that what he meant by satisfaction and effect has an objective and public basis. However, the satisfaction and effect he meant has to have a profit criterion. Whatever meets this profit criterion is satisfaction, is effective. Whatever does not meet this criterion is lack of satisfaction, has little effect or no effect.

Now whose profit is Dewey using as his criterion? He changed personal satisfaction to public satisfaction. We have to see who this public is. As a class, the bourgeoisie is, of course, not an individual. Could it be that what is satisfaction and effect to the bourgeoisie is truth? Thus, using the word “public” to replace the word “individual” does not change

the class essence.

Next, Dewey thought that what he meant by satisfaction and effect does not refer to emotional satisfaction but rather the satisfaction of ideas. The word satisfaction is originally used to describe an emotional state. What he meant by the satisfaction of ideas is no more than compliance with ideas or subjective desires, ideals, hopes, etc. In short, this is using subjective intentions as the criterion for truth. Whatever conforms with subjective intentions is the satisfaction of ideas and the satisfaction of ideas means truth. This is the pragmatist subjectivist view of truth.

Pragmatists think that truth refers to things that are effective for the transformation of experience. Here we must first look at the true meaning of what the pragmatists mean by experience. And then we can judge the meaning of “that kind of effect of making a contribution to the transformation of experience.” The word experience in the mouth of pragmatists is a synonym for subjective ideas because what they call experience refers to the experience that can be separated from social practice, or experience that can be divorced from objective reality. Consequently, this kind of experience in substance is subjective ideas, speculation or wishes. Thus to say what is effective for the transformation of experience is true, in reality, is saying that what is effective for subjective ideas or speculation is truth. To make the criteria for truth dependent on subjective ideas — this is the truth about the pragmatist view of truth. Therefore,

everything that Dewey did, changing emotional satisfaction to the satisfaction of ideas, changing personal satisfaction to public satisfaction, and regarding effect as the result of contributing to the transformation of experience, does not change the essence of the pragmatic subjectivist view of truth. The master is more straightforward than the disciple. James was more concise and forthright than Dewey. James thought that usefulness and satisfaction refer to human life. He thought that true ideas are beneficial to human life; if true ideas were of no benefit to human life and false ideas were useful ideas, then truth would not be considered sacred and would therefore not be precious. In James' view, as long as you are allowed to rest on Sunday it won't hurt you to believe that god is real. From this, we can see the nature of the pragmatist view of truth.

Using "usefulness" and "satisfaction" as the criteria for truth is the highest development of the subjectivist view of truth. This endows the view of truth with the character of a philistine philosophy and makes it ready to serve imperialism.

III. PRAGMATISTS THINK RELIGION IS ALSO TRUTH

Starting from their theory of truth, that what is useful and gives satisfaction is truth, pragmatists come to their "truth" about god. Believing in god is useful to them and gives them satisfaction. As was mentioned above, at least it allows you to rest on Sunday. In the hands of pragmatists, truth is this cheap. In

James' view, if theology is useful to life, then theology is also truth. He said, "If theological ideas prove to have a value for concrete life, they will be true, for pragmatism, in the sense of being good for so much." [*Pragmatism*, p. 35] James not only thought that ideas that are useful to concrete life are true, but also thought that if believing in this idea is useful to man, then it is also true. From being useful to concrete life to believing that something is useful to life — this is the development of the pragmatist theory of truth, developing into a doctrine of belief. James said, "If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there be any idea which, if believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would be really *better for us* to believe in that idea, *unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other greater vital benefits.*" [*Pragmatism*, p. 36-7]. Believe that it is true, and then it is true. This makes the pragmatist theory of truth depart from mundane life and ascend to heaven. The final resting place of the pragmatist theory of truth is fideism.

Pragmatists think that the definition of truth is an idea that we should believe in. James said, "I am well aware how odd it must seem to some of you to hear me say that an idea is 'true' so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives." [*Pragmatism*, p. 36]. He paid such attention to "life" and attached such importance to "experience," and now he is saying that spirit can fill one's stomach. Of course, it would seem odd to people.

The subjective idealist, Berkeley, said

existence means to be sensed. Pragmatists say existence means to be believed. They thus have inherited the mantle of Berkeley and the disciple exceeds the master.

In the end, all idealism is fideism; the proof being the course of the development of pragmatism. A philosophy that pays so much attention to "life" actually escapes from "life" into the dark world of "belief." Using the criterion of the pragmatists, "useful" and "satisfactory," we can say that this is because "belief" is more useful than "life," and more satisfactory. Religion can benumb the will of the people; it can also set the mind of the exploiter at rest.

It can make the exploited resign themselves to fate and wait for death with folded arms. It surpasses the power of science and makes the world of the future into the world of god. Let us take a look at the description of the world of the future by Dewey: "Poetry, art and religion are valuable things. They cannot be retained and preserved by merely loitering in the past, vainly hoping to restore what was destroyed in the movement of scientific, industrial and political events. They are the result of thousands and tens of thousands of changes and encounters in daily life which are inadvertently formed into the flower of an imagined tendency of thought and desire. They are something that cannot be thought up or forced. Wherever the wind of the spirit blows, it is there. The paradise of these things does not come about through observation. The old sources of discredited religion and

art cannot be preserved or restored by scrutinized choice; however, the sources of future religion and art can be developed. Of course, not by actions that directly seek the generation of such sources, but rather by believing in the dynamic trend of the modern age and by not fearing or detesting that trend. And also, by the courage of the wisdom that dares to pursue the path pointed out to us by social and scientific changes. At present, we are impotent in terms of ideals because wisdom has been separated from desire. The environment forces us to advance in our daily belief and action. However, our deeper thoughts and desires are actually turning back. When science and things are harmonized and make clear the meaning of our daily life and concentrate this meaning, science and emotions will penetrate each other, reality and imagination will embrace each other. Then poetry and religious feelings will be flowers that bloom naturally without any urging in our lives. At this transitional period, the task and problem of philosophy are precisely to strengthen its explanation, analysis and revelation of the meaning indicated by the present trend of events." This is the final paragraph in Dewey's book, *The Reform of Philosophy*. As a matter of fact, his aim in reforming philosophy was to make religious feelings a flower in life. Who can make science and emotions penetrate each other? Who can make reality and imagination embrace each other? For the pragmatists, only god or divinity can do it. Therefore, Dewey said, "to use god or divinity in such terms to

express the combination of reality and ideal can prevent people from having disappointment or rebellion caused by the sense of isolation.”

Dewey thought that religion has two basic elements in experience. First, compliance; second, the unseen power. Pragmatists conclude that truth is the belief in religion. This is an attempt to lead the enslaved people to comply with the unseen power so that they will not rebel against their superiors. Therefore, considering religion to be truth is also in conformity with the pragmatist principle of truth, that it is whatever is useful and satisfactory.

IV. “REALITY” IN THE EYES OF THE PRAGMATISTS

On the one hand, pragmatists look upon god as truth, and on the other hand, say that truth conforms with reality. This cannot but make us doubt the “reality” meant by pragmatism. We have to analyse what pragmatists have said to determine whether their “reality” is god.

James held that truth is a property of our ideas, the significance of which is that it conforms to reality. “Truth is in conformity with reality.” This is what James has repeatedly said.

What is the so-called “reality” of the pragmatists? James thought that the first part of reality was our flow of sensations, that this flow of sensations was imposed on us and that we did not know where they came from. The

second part of reality was the relationship between sensations or images. This relationship was derived from direct sensory data. The third part of reality was old truths. Whether one considers reality a flow of sensations or the relationship between sensations, it all boils down to one thing, that is, there is no reality outside or independent of man's sensations, and reality depends on man's sensations for its existence. Old truths are also derived from the flow of sensations or the relationship between sensations, therefore, they also depend on man's sensations for their existence. To look upon reality as something that depends on man for its existence is to humanize reality. This so-called "humanized reality" is, as James said, a substitute which has been digested and cooked by man's thinking. He thought that no matter where we found reality, it was something that had been embellished and made up, i.e., embellished and made up by thinking. There is no objective reality that is independent of and external to thinking. There is only the reality that has been embellished and made up by thinking. Therefore, pragmatists think that reality is a soft piece of clay and can be moulded by people at will. The Chinese pragmatist Hu Shih also said, "To sum up: reality is the reality that has been changed by us. In this reality there are innumerable artificial elements. Reality is like an obedient doll; she lets us put make up on her and dress her up. Reality is like a piece of marble in our hands; it is up to us to make a statue out of it. The universe has undergone

our creation.” The reality that depends on man’s sensations for its existence and can be moulded by man at will is precisely the reality with which truth must conform. This kind of reality naturally cannot possess any objectivity or independence that is external to thinking. To say that truth conforms with this kind of reality is to consider truth subjective, to think that it has no objectivity. If truth is subjective, then it does not contradict religion. For religion is nothing other than a product of man’s subjective illusions.

James thought that true things are all of reality and that the reality we know of is only sensible reality. This “sensible reality” is a flow formed by man’s sensations and emotions. Reality is the flow of sensations. Pragmatists and Machists are actually singing the same tune here.

Since reality is a flow of sensations, it does not have to be sought in the external world. It can be obtained from one’s own meditations. Therefore it is not to *think* that reality exists but rather it is best to *believe* in its existence. Consequently, reality and god have the same character. Pragmatists believe in the existence of reality; they also believe in the existence of god.

To deny the objectivity of reality is to deny the material character of the objective world. All idealists deny the objective reality of matter. Pragmatists and Machists inherited the same tradition from Berkeley. They consider matter a complex of sensations and therefore deny the objective reality of matter. James

said, "Berkeley's criticism of 'matter' was consequently absolutely pragmatistic. Matter is known as our sensations of colour, figure, hardness and the like. They are the cash-value of the term. The difference matter makes to us by truly being is that we then get such sensations; by not being, the sensations are what we lack there. These sensations then are its sole meaning. Berkeley doesn't deny matter, then; he simply tells us what it consists of. It is a true name for so much in the way of sensations." [*Pragmatism*, p. 41] In this paragraph James openly acknowledged that he accepted Berkeley's view and considered matter an aggregate of sensations.

V. PRAGMATISTS DENY ABSOLUTE TRUTH

The denial of the existence of the external world and the denial that our knowledge reflects objective truth leads to the denial of absolute truth. Pragmatists deny absolute truth. They do not acknowledge absolute truth objective and independent of man's will. In this connection, pragmatists have said many things and given many examples to illustrate the non-existence of absolute truth. James thought that we cannot say that scientific things, the corpuscular and etheric world, are more true. We can only say that it is as if they existed. But in reality, they are like coordinates or logarithms, only artificial shortcuts for taking us from one part to another of experience's flux. (Parts of the above sentences are quotes from James; see *Pragmatism*, p. 84). To

deny the existence of things and to deny the corpuscular and etheric world means naturally that there is no objective truth or absolute truth.

James thought that it is very difficult to say what is absolutely true in our life. He thought that there are at least three different criteria for truth. First, common sense; second, science; and third, philosophy. "Common sense is *better* for one sphere of life, science for another, philosophic criticism for a third; but whether either be truer absolutely, Heaven only knows." [*Pragmatism*, p. 84]

James said, "In many familiar objects everyone will recognize the human element. We conceive a given reality in this way or in that, to suit our purpose, and the reality passively submits to the conception. You can take the number 27 as 3 squared, or as the product of 3 and 9, or as 26 *plus* 1, or 100 *minus* 73, or in countless other ways, of which one will be just as true as another. You can take a chess-board as black squares on a white ground, or as white squares on a black ground, and neither conception is a false one." [*Pragmatism*, p. 110]. This example says that there is no absolute reality and no absolute truth. Reality and the truth of reality are arranged by people at will. Everything is relative and regulated according to man's needs.

The Chinese Wu Shih also said, "A sky full of stars means different relationships to the poet and to the astronomer. With respect to the same two things, you mainly see the temporal sequence, but I may see the causal rela-

tionship. With respect to the same speech, you may think that the man's voice is well modulated, and I may think that his arguments are very cogent. As for a hundred coins, you can stack them in two piles of 50 each, or four piles of 25 each, or ten piles of ten each." This is a repetition of what James said. It denies the objectivity of truth and denies absolute truth. For him, truth is at the mercy of man.

Pragmatists think that Ptolemy's astronomy, Euclid's space, Aristotle's logic, and hairsplitting metaphysics, are all a kind of relative truth, or in other words, "truth in the sphere of experience." Absolutely speaking, they are all false. Pragmatists think that we can only live in the truth of today; when tomorrow comes, what is true becomes false and is then discarded. Pragmatists deny objective truth and consequently put forward a relativist view of truth, claiming that there is no absolute truth, that all truths are temporary, are truths of today, are in the sphere of experience, but that there is no eternal truth and no truth of tomorrow, or truth outside of the sphere of experience. This makes truth a tool for temporary use. Therefore, pragmatists can only believe that things are true but cannot consider things themselves true. In this way, pragmatism has paved the way for fideism.

Starting from relativism, pragmatists put forward a pluralistic cosmology. What is meant by this pluralistic cosmology is to deny the unity of matter in the world. Pragmatists think that the independence of an infinitesimal part of the unity will destroy this unity,

just as a caloric germ destroys the purity of a glass of water. Therefore, they think that absolute theories are just an article, an arbitrary article of faith. Logically, a monistic universe exists, but experientially it doesn't.

To deny absolute truth, which is the sum total of relative truth, is part of the main content of the pragmatist view of truth. Pragmatists and Machists are both relativists. When one considers relativism the basis of epistemology, one necessarily arrives at scepticism, agnosticism and sophistry. The fact that pragmatists regard all theories as hypotheses is derived from this kind of relativism.

Lenin said, "it is obvious that for dialectical materialism there is no impassable boundary between relative and absolute truth... From the standpoint of modern materialism, *i.e.*, Marxism, the *limits* of approximation of our knowledge to objective, absolute truth are historically conditional, but the existence of such truth is *unconditional*, and the fact that we are approaching nearer to it is also unconditional. The contours of the picture are historically conditional, but the fact that this picture depicts an objectively existing model is unconditional. When and under what circumstances we reached, in our knowledge of the essential nature of things, the discovery of alizarin in coal tar or the discovery of electrons in the atom is historically conditional; but that every such discovery is an advance of 'absolutely objective knowledge' is unconditional. In a word, every ideology is historically conditional, but it is unconditionally true

that to every scientific ideology (as distinct, for instance, from religious ideology), there corresponds an objective truth, absolute nature.” [*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, pp. 152-3.] The explanation by Lenin about the relationship between relative truth and absolute truth exposes the nature of the sophistry of relativism and enables us to recognize the reactionary nature of the Machist view of truth and also to expose the nature of the pragmatist view of truth very easily. Pragmatism and Machism are both of the same feather. They deny absolute truth and advocate relativism. This is to prepare a theoretical basis for the justification of the bourgeoisie. If there is no absolute truth, then there is no action that violates truth; thus one can exonerate the reactionary ruling class of its crimes. This is the real intention of the pragmatists in insisting on the relativist view of truth.

VI. THE PRAGMATISTS' CRITERION OF "PRACTICE"

What is the criterion of the truth of theories? What, after all, indicates the correctness of our ideas? This is a question that a theory about truth must ultimately solve. Looking at truth in the context of the pragmatists' relativist view of truth, truth does not have any criterion, and correctness is relative and uncertain. "A" says that he is right; "B" says that he is right. That truth on one side or the other is not absolute but only relative. Therefore, pragmatists do not have any choice between truth and falsehood; they only have confusion

and muddle. And they escape finally into faith. That is, as long as they believe something to be true, then it is true.

We dialectical materialists consider practice the criterion of truth. Lenin pointed out, "If what our practice confirms is the sole, ultimate and objective truth, then from this must follow the recognition that the only path to this truth is the path of science, which holds the materialist point of view." [*Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 161]. Comrade Mao Tsetung expanded the criterion of practice for truth in great detail in his "On Practice." He pointed out that only social practice gives rise to man's knowledge. He also pointed out that what is more important is, after gaining theoretical knowledge through practice, that this theoretical knowledge should go back to practice. Only by redirecting rational knowledge to social practice, and applying theory to practice, to see whether it can obtain the premeditated objective, can one know whether a theory conforms to objective truth or not. Comrade Mao Tsetung said, "Dialectical materialism is universally true because it is impossible for anyone to escape from its domain in his practice. The history of human knowledge tells us that the truth of many theories is incomplete and that this incompleteness is remedied through the test of practice. Many theories are erroneous and it is through the test of practice that their errors are corrected. That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why 'the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory

of knowledge.' Stalin has well said, 'Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, Just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory.'" [*On Practice, Selected Readings*, p. 77].

Pragmatists also use the word "practice" very frequently. Do pragmatists also use practice as a criterion of truth? No. The word "practice" in the dictionary of pragmatists has a different meaning. First, the practice of pragmatists is not social practice but a kind of biological practice: the instinct of "stimulus-response" of living beings. And experience is gained from this kind of instinctive action. Therefore, pragmatists think that the traditional concept of experience has changed. "Experience has changed into first and foremost doing. An organism does not merely stand without doing a thing, like Micawber, waiting for something to happen. It does not remain silent, relaxed and waiting for something external to happen to it. In accordance with the complexity or simplicity of its structure, it acts on the environment; as a result, the changes produced in the environment in turn react to this organism and its activities. This living being experiences and feels the result of its own actions. The close relationship between the action and the feeling or experience constitutes what we call 'experience.'" The practice meant by pragmatists is the practice which obtains the above-mentioned experience. It is not social practice but the act of adjustment on the part of a living

being to its environment. This kind of action Dewey considers the most important fact in philosophy and a fundamental category. Dewey said, "Several important meanings in philosophy are henceforth discovered. First, the interaction between an organism and the environment in the course of making use of the environment for adaptation is the most important fact and fundamental category. Knowledge, on the contrary, is relegated to a subordinate position; even if it is established and its position is important, its source is still secondary. Knowledge is not isolated or something self-sufficient, but rather something included in the method to maintain and develop life. Sensations have lost their position as the gates to knowledge but assumed the proper position of being a stimulus to action. The sensations of the eye or the ear for an animal are not just a kind of meaningless knowledge of insignificant things in the world, but rather a kind of invitation or enticement for action in response to needs. They are the fuse of action and a guiding element for the adaptation to the environment in life." To the pragmatists, practice is a kind of act of adaptation on the part of an organism to maintain life and stimulate action. Practice is a kind of action of adjustment. If we use this kind of practice as a criterion of truth, then truth becomes an instrument that can satisfy people's needs, is useful to people, and is dependent on people's interests. The instrumentalist view of truth is based on the pragmatist view of practice.

Second, the practice of the pragmatists

is not social practice but a kind of faith. This faith produces action and this action produces experience. James said, "Nouns and adjectives are man-made heritage. With them we constitute the inner order and arrangement of theories. These are all products of man's thinking. The non-contradiction of knowledge is also one of its products. Mathematics and logic are full of man-made arrangements. Physics, astronomy and biology on the whole show people's predilections. When we throw ourselves into the realm of new experiences, we carry with us the beliefs handed down by our ancestors and formed by ourselves. They determine what we pay attention to and our attention determines what we do. What we do determines what we experience." From belief, to attention, to doing, to experience: this is the process of the pragmatists' practice. The process of the pragmatists' practice is controlled by will or belief. Truth that is built on such practice is dependent on man's subjective will or belief. Comrade Mao Tsetung said, "The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge." [*On Practice, loc. cit.*, pp. 67-8] The pragmatist criterion of truth is the opposite of Comrade Mao Tsetung's viewpoint of practice. The practice they talk about is not social practice but an act of faith.

The practice of pragmatists is blind prac-

tice, a practice that looks down upon theory. Not only do they look down upon the function of theory, but they also look down upon the function of knowledge. "Trial and error" — this is the pragmatists' formula for the action of practice: constant trials, constant discovery of errors. From the continuous errors discovered in rectification one continues trying and proceeds indefinitely in this manner. This is the form of "practice" used by the pragmatists. In such a form of practice, pragmatists look at man's action as an emotional action lacking reason. Dewey once gave an example to illustrate that one's actions are determined by emotions. He said, "A notetaker, when he is writing smoothly, does not feel the pressure of the pencil on the paper or his hand. It is no more than a stimulus which makes the handling at the time adroit and effective. This felt activity, automatically and unintentionally, elicited the proper reaction of its motor organ. Thus, a result that is derived from habit and exists before the action becomes an inherent biological link in the nerve system. If the point of the pencil is broken or not very sharp, then the habit of writing cannot proceed so smoothly; then a person feels an impact, feels that there is something wrong. This change in emotion then becomes a stimulus to the necessary change in activity: the person looks at his pencil, either sharpens it or takes out another pencil from his pocket. This sensation is a pivot in arranging actions. It indicates the disruption of a definite process in writing and the beginning of another act." Impact arouses

a change in emotion, and a change in emotion arouses action: this is the pragmatic process of practice. Therefore Dewey advocates “sensations are rather emotive and practical than cognitive or related to knowledge.” Pragmatists think that actions are not determined by reason, therefore their philosophy is welcomed by all those people who have lost their reason.

VII. THE PRAGMATISTS’ VIEW OF “TRUTH-PROCESS”

Comrade Mao Tsetung said in his “On Practice”: “Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.” [pp. 81-2]. From the viewpoint of dialectical materialism, truth is a process, the process of practice. Therefore, Lenin said, “Truth is a process. From the subjective idea, man advances towards objective truth *through* “practice” (and technique).” [“Conspectus of Hegel’s *Science of Logic*,” *Collected Works*, XXXVIII, p. 201].

Hegel thought that in its development, truth passed through three stages: one, life; two, the process of knowledge, which includes human practice and technique; three, the stage of the absolute idea (i.e., of complete truth). Lenin critically assimilated the reasonable nucleus of the above, and pointed out, "Life gives rise to the brain. Nature is reflected in the human brain. By checking and applying the correctness of these reflections in his practice and technique, man arrives at objective truth." [*Ibid*]. Dialectical materialists look upon truth as a process. This is because we consider truth to be a process of social practice, that truth is a process of going from relative truth towards absolute truth; that truth is a process which our relative knowledge gradually approximates. Lenin said, "Cognition is the eternal, endless approximation of thought to the object. The *reflection* of nature in man's thought must be understood not 'lifelessly,' not 'abstractly,' *not devoid of movement, not without contradictions*, but in the eternal *process* of movement, the arising of contradictions and their solution." [*Ibid*, p. 195]. In short, dialectical materialists think of truth as a process for the following reasons:

First, practice is the criterion of truth; "man by his *practice* proves the objective correctness of his ideas, concepts, knowledge, science." [*Ibid*, p. 191]. Truth can only realize itself in the process of practice.

Two: we acknowledge the existence of absolute truth, and that to reach absolute truth is a process. The absolute truth that is com-

posed of the sum total of relative truth is gradually arrived at, is a process.

Three: That cognition is the eternal, endless, approximation of thought to the object, is eternal and endless movement, is a process of the movement of contradictions.

Pragmatists also consider truth a process. Is there anything in common between them and us? The meaning of the pragmatist's "truth-process" is in direct opposition to the meaning of our "truth is a process." Pragmatists always resort to one trick, that is, they pass off fisheyes for pearls. The books written by pragmatists are full of words like "experience," "reality," "practice" and "truth-process," pretending that they had some relationship with materialism by marriage. As a matter of fact, these words are all instruments used by pragmatists to achieve the goal of creating confusion, and pragmatists consider truth to be a process wholly to deny objective truth.

The "truth-process" meant by pragmatists considers truth a process of the verification of mental images. James once gave an example. A person went into a big forest and lost his way. He became hungry. Suddenly he discovered footprints of cattle on the ground, so it occurred to him that if he followed the footprints of the cattle he could find some houses. Therefore, "true ideas" are true because they have this practical value of guidance, and truth is a process of the verification of such "true ideas." James thought that truth is not a goal but a preliminary means of tending

towards other satisfactions in life. Truth is a tendency to satisfy life, a preliminary means. This is the essence of the pragmatist view of "truth-process." Pragmatists think that truth is a process of guiding, from guiding to complete verification. Therefore, James said, the true-ness of an idea lies in the fact that it has a valuable function of guiding. "Guidance" then gives rise to "truth-process." "Guidance" then becomes the "prototype" of "truth-process." Who gives "guidance"? It is an "idea," a "mental image." Pragmatists think that truth is a method, and this method guides the experience of a given time to another time and makes it valuable. In other words, "truth-process" is the linking between experiences, the linking between ideas, and the linking between mental images. This, then, completely denies that truth is a process of social practice and looks upon the process of truth as a process of pure ideas which is divorced from social practice.

The entire process of this pragmatic truth starts from assumptions and ends with success. Dewey thought that an assumption that can play a role is truth and whether a theory is reliable, sound, effective, good or true depends on whether it is like an instrument, and whether it can make one's work succeed. To say that truth is a process means the process from assumption to success. Truth should be discovered through practice; however, for pragmatists, it is through assumption that truth is discovered. Truth should be verified and developed through practice; but for the

pragmatist, truth is verified through success. Since "success" is the criterion of truth, the process of truth is also the process of success. Can we say that the "success" of the bourgeoisie in making a fortune is completing a process of truth? To look upon truth as a process of success is a view of truth that justifies the interest of the bourgeoisie, pure and simple.

The pragmatist view of "truth-process" puts the process itself above everything else. The goal is nothing, the process is everything. For example, Dewey said, "the process of growth, improvement and progress is more important than static result or accomplishment. The so-called 'good' lies not in 'health,' which is decided to be an unchangeable goal, but rather lies in the process of progress-continuation, which health demands. The goal is no longer the terminus or boundary to be reached. It is a process of activity to change the present situation. The goal in life lies not in the 'completeness' which is considered the final victory point, but lies in eternal process of completion, cultivation and improvement. Honesty, industry, restraint, fairness, like health, wealth and learning, if looked upon as fixed goals, seem to be things that we can possess. But in reality they are not things we can possess. They are the direction in which the character of experience changes. Only growth itself is the 'aim' of morality." This is the application of the view "truth-process" in the field of morality. In the eyes of the pragmatists, the aim of health is not important. The most important thing is the process to increase health.

This is the manifestation of “the goal is nothing, the process is everything” in the field of morality. The aim of placing the process above everything else is to lead to the conclusion of “meliorism.” Dewey said, “Meliorism believes that the particular situation at a given time, no matter whether it be good or bad, can always be improved.” The world is always in a process of improvement, so there is no use for revolution. The aim of advocating that the process is everything is to oppose revolution and to persuade people to carry out constant improvement in the process of history. Therefore, the theory of “truth-process” is an anaesthetic that lulls the people’s will, with which pragmatists serve imperialists.

In using “process” to exclude “goal,” the theory “truth-process” tries to make people discard the goal of revolution. The goal is nothing — then people do not have to long for the future, and it is not necessary to struggle for the future. This is a deception deceiving the working class into detaching themselves from the goal of revolution.

VIII. PRAGMATISTS THINK THAT TRUTH IS A MEANS OF EXPEDIENCY

Pragmatism is the ideology of the reactionary bourgeoisie in the period of imperialism. It reflects the greed, brutality, aggression and unscrupulous intention of the monopoly capitalist class. The birth of pragmatist philosophy marks the desperate struggle of the reactionary bourgeoisie on the verge of extinction. On the one hand, they show that they

have only contempt for theory and repudiate theory in front of the people; but on the other hand, with great industry, they are trying to build their “theoretical” system, and they are endlessly doing propaganda for this theoretical system. When the reactionary bourgeoisie is actually engaged in the most heinous acts, and when their attitude is unrepentant, it is precisely at this time that they declare that there is no evil and no good in this world, by which means they try to cover up their crimes. When the reactionary bourgeoisie engages in cheating and using deceptive means to exploit and enslave the people, it is precisely then they declare that there is neither truth nor falsehood, so as to cover up their brutal acts. The aim of their denying the objectivity of truth and absolute truth is to cover up their crimes. The pragmatist view of truth precisely answers this need of the bourgeoisie. Those who fear the truth are precisely those who deny objective truth and ignore reality. Therefore, the pragmatist view of truth is welcomed by all the people who fear truth. People who fear truth welcome the pragmatist view of truth because they can use it to stand truth on its head and confound black and white. In the eyes of these people, “truth” has become an instrument that can be used at will. The pragmatist instrumentalist view of truth precisely turns the “truth” into this kind of instrument.

There is a saying of James that can best represent the spirit of the pragmatist view of truth. He said, “*The true, to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of our think-*

ing, just as 'the right' is only the expedient in the way of our behaving." [Pragmatism, p. 98]. From looking upon truth as a means of expediency, we can gather the character of this philosophy of pragmatism. The reason that this philosophy is welcomed by the imperialists is because it possesses this character and can justify all imperialist aggressive acts. The generalization of "truth" as "expedient" very pointedly expresses the characteristic of pragmatist philosophy. Pragmatists deny objective truth. They deny objective reality and absolute truth. They acknowledge that religion is truth and use "satisfaction" and "usefulness" as the criteria of truth. All this content of the pragmatist view of truth can be subsumed under the word "expedient." To look upon "truth" as a means of expediency is naturally most useful and most satisfying to the imperialists. If "truth" is looked upon as a means of expediency, then it is not necessary to discuss its objectivity, and it is not necessary to discuss whether it corresponds to reality. All reactionaries need a kind of "means of expediency" so that they can treat the people as brutally as they wish.

Therefore, it is an important task for theoretical circles to expose the reactionary essence of pragmatist philosophy to eradicate its influence and defend Marxism-Leninism and dialectical materialism.

CHAPTER III.

THE METHODOLOGY OF PRAGMATISM: REPLACEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC ARGUMENT BY SOPHISTRY

I. PRAGMATIST PHILOSOPHY BEGINS WITH SOPHISTRY

When people need to confuse black and white and use forced arguments, they resort to sophistry and use sophistry to replace scientific argumentation.

What is sophistry? Sophistry is views expressed on the basis of groundless hypotheses. Sophistry uses presuppositions to replace facts and the method of forced arguments to replace reasoning. In his *Conspectus of Hegel's Science of Logic*, Lenin quoted this passage from Hegel: "For sophistry is an argument proceeding from a baseless supposition which is allowed without criticism or reflection; while we term dialectic that higher movement of Reason where terms appearing absolutely distinct pass into one another through themselves through what they are, and the assumption of their separateness cancels itself." [Lenin, *Collected Works*, XXXVIII, 107]. Sophistry is in direct opposition to dialectics. Lenin thinks that dialectics is this kind of theory: "*Dialectics* is the teaching which shows how *opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical*, — under what conditions they are identical, becoming transformed into one another, — why the

human mind should grasp these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, becoming transformed into one another." [*Op. cit.*, p. 109]. In opposition to dialectics, pragmatists use quibbling and equivocal words, eclecticism, to carry their sophistry of forced arguments. Lenin pointed out that eclecticism and sophistry are the subjective application of the flexibility of concepts, whereas dialectics is the objective application of the flexibility of concepts. The pragmatists have reached an apex in their subjective application of the flexibility of concepts. This is an important feature of pragmatist philosophy.

According to James, pragmatist philosophy was presented for the purpose of harmonizing and reaching a compromise. Pragmatists attempt to reach a compromise between rationalism and empiricism and to harmonize idealism and materialism. In James' opinion, the appearance of pragmatism is to solve philosophical dilemmas. What are the philosophical dilemmas? Facts are good, of course, give us lots of facts. Principles are good, give us lots of principles. The world is one if you look at it in one way, but it is many if you look at it in another way. Everything is determined and yet man's will is free. The evil of the part does exist but the whole can't be evil. Therefore, pessimism can be combined with optimism. There is not enough religiousness in the empiricist philosophy but in the rationalistic philosophy, there is too little experience. Facts and principles, "one" and "many," fatalism and free will, pessimism and optimism,

empiricism and rationalism — all these in the eyes of the pragmatist cannot solve the problem. Therefore, the layman in philosophy does not adopt an extreme attitude and does not put forward a philosophical system. How to solve such dilemmas? Pragmatists think that the only way is to mix the two. James divided past philosophers into two kinds: one kind being the so-called “tender-minded”; these philosophers are rationalists who go by principles; they are intellectualistic, idealistic, optimistic, religious, free-willist, monistic and dogmatic. The other kind of philosopher is the so-called “tough-minded.” These philosophers are empiricist; they are sensationalistic, materialistic, pessimistic, irreligious, fatalistic, pluralistic and sceptical. In James’ view, the pragmatists are neither tender-minded nor tough-minded, but rather the harmony of the two. Therefore, in the first chapter of *Pragmatism*, James states his purpose very clearly, that pragmatism is the philosophy that guides people to look for a method of compromise in thinking.

James thought that pragmatism is a method; it is a method that can solve the controversies in metaphysics. It is a method that can harmonize tender-minded and tough-minded philosophers. Without this method, arguments will go on forever, confrontations will never be reconciled. Therefore, as soon as it appeared, pragmatism assumed the guise of being a “peace-maker.” Due to the need of being a “peace-maker,” the entire philosophy of pragmatism has to be looked upon as only

a method. With such a method, all confrontations can be reconciled. James tried to persuade people that on the one hand one must maintain a good relationship with facts, and on the other hand one should treat religion sincerely and not discard it. Pragmatists attempt to be a mediator between “facts” and “religion.” This then leads them willy-nilly onto the road of sophistry. Eclecticism can only rely on sophistry. The aim of adopting eclecticism in philosophy is to confuse right and wrong and to turn black and white upside down. And to achieve the aim of confusing right and wrong and turning black and white upside down, one has to rely on sophistry.

When James began to discuss the meaning of pragmatism, he used sophistry. In discussing the meaning of pragmatism in Chapter Two of his book *Pragmatism*, James used the following story to begin: some years ago he was with a camping party in the mountains and found everyone engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The question of the dispute was a squirrel. A squirrel is supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree trunk, while over against the opposite side of the tree, a man is imagined to stand. This man tries to get sight of the squirrel by walking around the tree, but the squirrel also runs around the tree to escape this man. The tree is always between the man and the squirrel and neither ever sees the other. The metaphysical problem now is this: does the man go around the squirrel or not? There are as many people who say “yes” as there are who say “no” and both sides in-

sist on their own opinions and will not give up. They all appeal to James, hoping that his agreement will make their side the majority. To solve this dispute, he said, "Which party is right depends on what you *practically mean* by 'going round' the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if, on the contrary, you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite obvious that the man fails to go around him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for any further dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other." [*Pragmatism*, pp. 22-3]. Beginning with this story, James then proceeded to discuss his pragmatist philosophy. He thought that pragmatism is a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. He thought that the pragmatist method is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. If we do not distinguish the truth or falsehood of a notion by its practical consequences, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. He thought that when a dispute is heated, we should not merely say

that this side is right or that side is right; we should be pointing out the practical differences between this being right and that side being right. *You* can say it is completely right, and *you* also can say it is completely wrong, but one cannot say that this side is right or that side is wrong. This is the pragmatist method of settling disputes. To determine which question is right depends, in the final analysis, on the practical consequences of this question. Practical consequences vary from person to person, from thing to thing, from time to time, and from place to place. If the truth or falsehood of a notion has its practical consequences as its criterion, this then implies that it has no objective criterion. Sophistry must have as its premise the denial of objective truth. Pragmatists indeed proceed from denying objective truth to sophistry.

In order to meet the needs of sophistry, pragmatists turn their own philosophy into a hodgepodge. James said, "Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one at work. Being nothing essentially new, it harmonizes with many ancient philosophic tendencies. It agrees with nominalism for instance, in always appealing to particulars; with utilitarianism in emphasizing practical aspects; with positivism in its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions." [*Pragmatism*, p. 26] Since pragmatism agrees with so many philosophic tendencies, people can get what they need at will from pragmatism. Pragmatism has this characteristic of harmonizing

various philosophic tendencies and meeting the needs of various quarters, which then makes it an important tool of sophistry.

James compares pragmatism to a corridor. He said, "As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, it lies in the midst of 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 if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms." [*Pragmatism*, p. 27]. Pragmatists look upon their philosophy as something atheists can use, and theists can also use; scientists can use, and metaphysicians can also use. They think that this way it can harmonize the opposition of various philosophies, but as a matter of fact the harmonization of opposition is only a pretence or a cover-up used for sophistry so as to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, which is their real intention. To describe pragmatism as a road that everybody must take reveals the character of sophistry of this philosophy. The characteristic of sophistry is confusing right and wrong and turning black and white upside down. The analogy of the corridor means not being clear about right and wrong and not distinguishing white from black. Do atheists, scientists and people who

are opposed to metaphysics have to take the corridor of pragmatism? No, they won't. Theists, idealists and metaphysicians do need this corridor so that they can have free access to the sanctuary of Jehovah.

To make their philosophy into a "corridor" so that different people can come and go at will, pragmatists must make this philosophy into eclecticism and sophistry. Only eclecticism and sophistry can endow pragmatism with the character of "corridor." Sophistry is the most important characteristic of pragmatist methodology. In the following sections, I will further prove this point.

II. PRAGMATISTS USE PRESUPPOSITION TO REPLACE SCIENTIFIC HYPOTHESIS

The characteristic of pragmatism in the sphere of methodology is sophistry, and sophistry must rely on groundless "hypotheses." Therefore, pragmatists always emphasize the meaning and the function of "hypothesis," and place "hypothesis" in a very important position in methodology. The "hypothesis" meant by the pragmatists is not a scientific hypothesis but rather a groundless "hypothesis." A groundless "hypothesis" is a presupposition, and the methodology of pragmatism is built on the foundation of presupposition.

A scientific hypothesis is a necessary step in the process of establishing laws. Engels said, "The form of development of natural science, in so far as it thinks, is the hypothesis. A new fact is observed which makes impos-

sible the previous mode of explanation of the facts belonging to the same group. From this moment onwards new modes of explanation are required — at first based on only a limited number of facts and observations. Further observational material weeds out these hypotheses, doing away with some and correcting others, until finally the law is established in a pure form. If one should wait until the material for a law was *in a pure form*, it would mean suspending the process of thought until then and, if only for this reason, the law would never come into being.” [*Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 158-9]. This passage by Engels tells us that hypothesis is a necessary phase in the course of the development of science. A law cannot be established without passing through this stage. The presentation of a hypothesis is because a new fact has been observed. Therefore, facts are the mother of the hypothesis. They engender hypotheses. Hypotheses usually exist in an unfinished form, before a pure law is established based on new material observed. Some hypotheses are done away with and others are corrected until the law is established. The hypothesis is a new mode of explanation. It is put forward when a new fact is observed.

Putting forward a hypothesis from the facts that have been newly observed is the first step in establishing a law. After a hypothesis is put forward, we still need to observe a large number of facts and study a large amount of material to prove the hypothesis. Only then will it make the transition from the stage of hy-

pothesis to a law. For example, Marx observed the capitalist social economic formation, and in the 1840s put forward the hypothesis of the materialist view of history. There is a hypothesis that, for the first time, enabled people to have the possibility to scientifically treat historical problems and social problems but at that time it was only a hypothesis, for the time being. After Marx put forward this hypothesis, how did he prove this hypothesis so as to make the hypothesis a law? Lenin wrote to this effect: “Then... Marx, who had expressed this hypothesis in the forties, set out to study the factual (nota bene) material. He took one of the social-economic formations — the system of commodity production — and on the basis of a vast mass of data (which he studied for not less than twenty-five years) gave a most detailed analysis of the laws governing the functioning of this formation and its development.” [*Collected Works*, I, p. 141] After such detailed analysis, Marx wrote his great classic, *Capital*. Since the publication of *Capital*, the materialist view of history was no longer a hypothesis but a scientific proposition. Lenin said, “Since the appearance of *Capital* — the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis, but a scientifically proven proposition. And until we get some other attempt to give a scientific explanation of the functioning and development of some formation of society — formation of society, mind you, and not the way of life of some country or people, or even class, etc. — another attempt just as capable of introducing order into the ‘pertinent facts’

as materialism is, that is just as capable of presenting a living picture of a definite formation — until then the materialist conception of history will be a synonym for social science.” [Collected Works, I, p. 142]. From what Lenin said about the process of the materialist conception of history, going from a hypothesis to a proposition, we can see that after a hypothesis is put forward, it is necessary to carry out a detailed analysis based on a vast amount of material to make the hypothesis into a proposition. This is the formation of a scientific hypothesis.

The history of the development of natural science also proves that the establishment of laws in natural science equally needs hypothesis. Copernicus’ theory of the sun being the centre of the universe was only a hypothesis in the beginning. Later on, how did it become a scientific theory? Engels discussed the process. He said, “For three hundred years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favour, but still always a hypothesis. But when Le Verrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved.” [Engels, “Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy,” Marx/Engels *Selected Works*, p. 606].

Darwin’s theory of evolution was also only

a hypothesis in the beginning. After Darwin proved the theory of the development of types of organisms in an all-round manner, with a large number of observed biological phenomena, the theory of evolution then became a proposition explaining the origin of species.

To interpret the structure of atoms at the beginning of the 20th century, physicists put forward the hypothesis of the planetary system of the structure of the atom. This hypothesis ran counter to Maxwell and Laurence's theory of electromagnetics. Later on, there were people who used quantum theory to interpret the mystery of the structure of the atom. Scientific hypotheses are in a constant process of purification. This means that some hypotheses are corrected and others are done away with.

From the above-mentioned examples of hypotheses in the spheres of social sciences and hypotheses in the sphere of natural science, we can see that hypotheses must proceed from facts. Hypotheses are put forward from the new facts observed and then they must be checked against by fact and the correctness of a hypothesis must be proven with a vast amount of material. This, then, is the history of the scientific hypothesis before the birth of scientific principles. Without scientific hypotheses, there will be no scientific theory; the history of science has proved this statement. Therefore, a Russian chemist, Mendelejev, said, "hypotheses are necessary to science and scientific research in particular. They can provide a kind of precision and

simplicity which would be very hard to attain without them. The entire history of science has proved this point. Thus we can boldly say that putting forward a hypothesis that may not prove dependable in the future is better than no hypothesis at all. The hypothesis makes it easier for scientific work — the seeking of truth — to be correct, just like the farmer's plough makes it easier to plant grains."

Pragmatists also talk about "hypothesis" frequently and they also frequently use "hypothesis" but the pragmatist "hypothesis" has nothing in common with the scientific hypothesis mentioned above. The "hypothesis" of the pragmatists is a presupposition, and sophistry relies on this kind of "hypothesis."

Dewey divides thinking into the following five stages: first, suggestion; second, problem; third, hypothesis; fourth, reasoning; fifth, testing. In explaining the stage of hypothesis in the entire process, he said the hypothesis is using suggestions to guide ideas in order to arouse man's mental activities. The stage of reasoning means to deduce the meaning from a hypothesis and the stage of testing means to test the hypothesis and seek proof. In the entire course of thinking, hypothesis occupies a very important position linking those before with what comes afterward. Where does this hypothesis come from which occupies such an important position? It originally comes from a suggestion. What are suggestions? Dewey said, "An idea is a kind of suggestion." A hypothesis originates from a suggestion; that means it originates from an idea. Dewey thought that

ideas take place naturally. To base a hypothesis on ideas that take place naturally makes it very difficult to draw a line of demarcation between hypothesis and presupposition.

Dewey distinguishes scientific thinking and ordinary "thinking." The former, he thought, is the best method of thinking, which he calls "reflective thinking." According to Dewey, "reflective thinking" has three characteristics. First, it has an orderly continuity of ideas; second, it has a controlled aim; third, it arises out of man's voluntary search. These three characteristics can be summed up in one sentence: reflective thinking is thinking dominated by man's subjective ideas, and hypothesis is a stage of the formation of this thinking.

In the course of thinking, Dewey pays a lot of attention to the role of "conviction" or "goal." Dewey thought that thinking is controlled by "goal." He thought that the flow of "ideas" must be towards a definite goal, and the conclusion of a hypothesis should be judged by this goal. Goal-centred thinking means that the subjective will controls thinking. When the subjective will controls thinking, then the hypothesis is also a product of the subjective will.

Dewey said, "Thinking arises out of the difficulties of being at a crossroads, and the choice of an alternative. If one's action is smooth without any difficulty, if thinking is just imagination to amuse oneself, then there is no need for reflection. Only when one encounters difficulties, obstacles, and only when

one half-believes and half-doubts, will one pause and think carefully. And only when one crosses in front of a difficulty will one look far ahead and reflect, trying to find a vantage point to observe new facts and from this vantage point decide the relationship of various facts.” “Thinking arises out of difficulties” — this is what Dewey said very frequently. Dewey thought that unless there are doubts, we can only have sensations of a situation and no judgement. If there is no judgement, there is no thinking. He thought that judgement is a unit that constitutes thinking. To say that thinking arises out of difficulty or that judgement arises out of doubt is to look upon ideas as a tool to seek materials in order to solve problems. Therefore, Dewey said, “unless we treat ideas as a tool to seek materials in order to solve problems, ideas cannot be real ideas.” Thinking does not reflect objective reality and is only a tool used to solve problems. This is the real meaning of “thinking arises out of difficulty.”

Pragmatists attach great importance to the role of hypotheses in the process of thinking. This is because they consider “hypothesis” to be a tool that can be used at will. To use a “hypothesis” that can be used at will as a tool in argumentation is the source of the quality of pragmatism’s sophistry.

Dewey does mention the role of facts in the process of thinking, but he emphasizes the role of ideas. He thought that ideas are suggestions and hypotheses, and that the various formations of thinking are produced by ideas.

He thought that judgement is a unit of thinking and that ideas are a unit of judgement. He used essays as a comparison and compares reflective thinking to an essay, then judgement is a sentence in this essay and ideas are a word in a sentence. He thought that, in reasoning, ideas guide us to make up observations and control our collection and examination of facts. He looks upon ideas as the elements of thinking. He thought that ideas occupy a critical position between definite understanding and mental perplexity. The meaning of things and the rational entity that facts can form rely on ideas. The pragmatists' "hypothesis" proceeds from ideas. When ideas lead to a hypothesis, this means the hypothesis is turned into a presupposition. The pragmatist "hypothesis" is a synonym for presupposition. The Chinese pragmatist Hu Shih summed up pragmatist methodology in two phrases: "Be bold in making hypotheses; be careful in seeking proof." One can boldly put forward a hypothesis; what does this mean? The ocean is vast, so the fish can dance and leap. The sky is high, so that the birds can fly wherever they want. "Bold" means that the thoughts can soar at will and are not restrained at all, not restricted by facts. "Thinking" of this nature is not thinking but imagination. "To be bold in making hypotheses" means "hypotheses" that proceed from imagination. This is the pragmatists' "hypothesis" which has nothing in common with the scientific hypothesis.

James thought that all thinking is but a hypothesis; that is to say, all thinking is no

more than presupposition. From all thinking being no more than a hypothesis, it follows that Dewey looks upon all theories and systems as hypotheses. He thought, "all ideas, theories, philosophical systems, no matter how elaborate and consistent they are, should be considered hypotheses." Using presupposition to replace hypothesis and then calling all theories "hypotheses" makes the "theory" of pragmatism simply out-and-out nonsense and raving.

III. PRAGMATISTS DISCARD PRINCIPLES AND SEEK "CONSEQUENCES"

The characteristic of pragmatist methodology, according to James, is that it does not pay attention to principles but pays attention only to consequences. He said, "No particular results then, so far, but only an attitude of orientation, is what the pragmatic method means. *The attitude of looking away from the first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards the last things, fruits, consequences, facts.*" [*Pragmatism*, p. 27] According to James, when we compare the pragmatic method and other methods, we see the following differences: the pragmatic method pays attention to the last things whereas the other methods do not pay attention to the last things. It pays attention to fruits and the other methods pay attention to principles. It pays attention to consequences and the other methods pay attention to "categories"; it pays attention to facts and the other methods pay

attention to supposed necessities. These differences can be summed up in one word: that is, “consequences” are more important than principles. In order to seek “consequences” pragmatists look upon all theories as tools. The “method” they talk about is a kind of tool. “Tools” are used by people in making articles. Therefore, “method” is also a thing that can be used by people at will. It is only to seek the “last things”; it is only needed to seek “consequences.” What is meant by looking away from the first things, principles, categories and supposed necessities is to discard theory, discard principles, discard logic and discard laws. What is meant by looking toward the last things, fruits, consequences and facts, means to seek only profits by hook or by crook, and that the subjective will is first overlooking objective things. The so-called “facts” of the pragmatists are merely details and minutiae — they don’t mean objective things. Their “facts” are “habits” that they often talk about and not objective things and social practice.

To separate the first things and last things, principles and consequences, necessities and facts, means that in the last things, consequences, facts, pragmatists mean products of presupposition.

Dewey said that thinking has two different types: logical thinking and “actual” thinking. The former transcends people’s attitudes and will, the latter depends on men’s habits. The former is unchanging, the latter is in a state of continual flux. The former is independent of

factual background, the latter takes place in an unstable situation and therefore the background has to be taken into account. To separate logical thinking from "actual" thinking and to exclude logical thinking from "actual" thinking means to turn thinking into "a habit derived from an unstable situation." Looking upon thinking as "habit" is the "theoretical source" of discarding all principles. To use "habit" to establish principles means that principles become uncertain things that depend on man's habits. This, in reality, means discarding principles.

Pragmatists say that thinking does not reflect objective reality and that it is only a means or a tool to adapt to the environment. Dewey, therefore, says that our two hands and our two feet and various adaptive organs, just like the changes in the train, are all part of thinking. When thinking is looked upon as a tool like hands and feet to adapt to life and the environment, thinking does not have to follow any principles; it is sufficient if it has the value of a tool and can produce the effect of the tool. Therefore, after Dewey looked upon thinking as a tool, he put forward so-called "experimental logic." This so-called "experimental logic" is a "logic" that discards logical principles and regards logic as a function that adapts to the environment. This finally leads to the denial of all logic and the denial of all principles of thinking.

Pragmatists deny general logical categories. They use "action" to replace them. For example, they think that the concept of "es-

sence” does not come into being as a result of the process of thinking and cognition, but is the result of the contact of the hand and the object, the result of the touching of the hand. They think that the combination and separation of things give rise to the categories “whole” and “parts.” The difference between being active and being passive gives rise to the category “cause” and “effect.” In short, they deny the principle that thinking is a reflection of objective reality, and thus they deny that categories are the innumerable local simplifications of external existences and activities, that they are things “which are small stages in the process of knowing the world and are knots in a net which help us know and grasp the net of natural phenomena.” In discarding categories, they are also discarding logic.

Pragmatists regard the form of thinking as only a means to be used, with which to seek “consequences.” This leads to placing logic below man’s will and interests, and from there leads to the final discarding of logic.

Lenin said, “Logic is the science not of external forms of thought, but of the laws of development ‘of all material, natural and spiritual things,’ i.e., of the development of the entire concrete content of the world and of its cognition, i.e., the sum-total, the conclusion of the *history* of knowledge of the world.” [*Collected Works*, XXXVIII, pp. 92-3]. Therefore, If one discards logic, one will be unable to profoundly know the laws of the world and will be unable to profoundly know the essence of things. In discarding logic, one necessar-

ily degenerates into agnosticism. Pragmatists did go down this path. Logic, forms of thought and categories of thought are not man's tools but are expressions of the laws of nature and the laws of man's thinking. If we discard them, then we will know nothing of laws. Categories are not "insignificant forms." If we regard them as insignificant forms, we will turn them into "tools of fallacy and sophistry."

IV. THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF PRAGMATIST METHODOLOGY IS THE "WILL TO BELIEVE"

The denial of the law of the causality and necessity of nature is the basic content of pragmatist methodology. Pragmatists use "probability" to replace necessity and "the will to believe" to replace laws. This kind of replacement is conducive to carrying out sophistry. If there do not exist laws and necessity, then there is no need to talk about principles or scientific argumentation and one can have any interpretation of objective phenomena at will.

James regards pragmatism as a pluralistic philosophy to indicate its opposition to the materialistic monistic philosophy. He wrote a book entitled *Pluralistic Universe*, which advocates the idealist, pluralistic view of the universe. What is meant by the pluralistic universe is that the universe is not a related, unified whole that is determined by a unified law. James thought that in the physical world, there cannot exist an "entire whole"; there only exists "each individual." Each "individual" is equal, independent and free. They do

not belong to one another, are not related and do not mutually restrict one another. In the universe there are no internal relations, there is no law and no necessity. The world is composed of particular and individual experiences of various kinds. Since there is no unity in the world and no necessity, you may have any interpretation of it; you can put forward different hypotheses about it and you are entitled to suppose any kind of belief. You can affirm the meaning of logic, you can also discard all logic; you can declare that in the field of physics, you are a determinist, and can also declare in the field of ethics you are a non-determinist. In short, do whatever you like. Sophistry precisely proceeds from the proposition of "do whatever you like."

James thought that all the things in the universe are not restrained by causality; they take place by accident; they are not stationary, they are full of changes. Therefore, causality is only "god's mysterious altar."

Dewey said that Marxism is already "outdated" because the 20th century is an age when probability and pluralism become the characteristics of science, but Marxism stresses law and science. Dewey proclaimed, "as for literature, in claiming that it is particularly scientific, Marxism is already 'outdated.' Just as necessity and the search for a single all-embracing law represent the intellectual climate of the 40s of the last century, probability and pluralism are the characteristics of the science at present." Dewey denies that Marxism is science because Marxism thinks that science

is the law of necessity, whereas pragmatism thinks that “science” is not a law of necessity but merely efficacious “hypothesis.” Pragmatists deny necessity, causality and laws, and thus they discard science, oppose reason and openly advocate obscurantism. In the view of pragmatism, nature and society are full of accidental events, and are all dark. This situation Dewey calls “probability” and James called it the “pluralistic universe.” In short, they deny the objective law of things; they deny science.

The “pluralistic universe” of pragmatism completely rejects reason. Pragmatists think that the universe cannot be understood by reason: that is why they discard logic. James openly acknowledges that he cannot but discard logic. If one denies the causality, necessity and laws of objective things, opposes reason and discards logic, then one’s knowledge of the world can only depend on “the will to believe.” James said, “we have the right to believe at our own risk any hypothesis that is live enough to tempt our will.” [“The Will to Believe” in *Pragmatism*, p. 212]. Knowing the world in the eyes of the pragmatists is to believe in “the hypothesis of the will.” Belief cannot only know “facts” but can create facts. In his essay “The Will to Believe,” James openly says that faith in facts can create facts. Therefore, one should place faith above scientific proof. When the foundation of cognition is faith, “god” then becomes “the reality” in the eyes of the pragmatists. Thus “god,” “free will,” “immortality,” “teleology” and other such terms fill the chapters of the

works by pragmatists on the question of methodology. In the last chapter of James' *Pragmatism*, titled "Pragmatism and Religion," he straightforwardly said that in the end it is our faith and not our logic that decides questions, and he denies the right of any pretended logic to veto faith. Pragmatist methodology, in the final sense, leads to the path of fideism. This is the final resting place of pragmatist methodology.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRAGMATIST VIEW OF MORALITY — “GOOD” MEANS SATISFACTION IN LIFE EXPERIENCES

I. PRAGMATISTS THINK THAT HAPPINESS IS “SUCCESS”

The theory of truth is the discussion concerning the question of truth and error. The theory of morality is the discussion concerning the question of good and evil. Bourgeois philosophers consider error “true” in its theory of truth, and in the theory of morality, they consider evil “good.” Bourgeois philosophers have to give clear and definite answers to moral questions like “what is good?” and “what is evil?” On the question of good and evil, they cannot equivocate or be ambiguous in their attitude because moral questions are not what one says but how to act. Morality and ethics are the norms and codes of conduct. The bourgeoisie must put forward these norms and conduct to bind people’s behaviour and delineate the relations between classes. It must put forward clear concepts with regard to good, happiness, obligation, justice, conscience, honour, and such moral categories. Only thus can it form public opinion, establish conviction and nurture habits. Public opinion, convictions and habits are a spiritual force and the rule of the bourgeoisie cannot let this force go even for a moment. Through the force of public opinion, convictions and hab-

its, the bourgeois viewpoint governs people's spiritual world. This plays a far greater role than mandatory law. Bourgeois philosophers are the "learned stewards" of the bourgeoisie, when their masters need them to express clear and definite concepts, they cannot equivocate in their words. Therefore, on all questions, it is easy to reveal the status of "stewards" of bourgeois philosophers.

Engels said, "The conceptions of good and bad have varied so much from nation to nation and from age to age that they have often been in direct contradiction to each other." [*Anti-Dühring*, p. 103]. Moral norms and ethical principles change in accordance with class relations. They reflect class interests and demands. For the sake of class interests, a given class or nation may praise some acts and condemn other acts, call certain acts good, and condemn certain acts as evil. When the system of primordial communities and gens made the transition to class society, the morality of the exploitative class is, as Engels said, "a degradation, a fall from the simple moral grandeur of the ancient gentile society. The lowest interests — base greed, brutal sensuality, sordid avarice, selfish plunder of common possessions — usher in the new, civilized society, class society; the most outrageous means — theft, rape, deceit and treachery — undermine and topple the old, classless, gentile society." ["The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," in Marx/Engels, *Selected Works*, pp. 529-530]. This kind of degradation reaches its apex in capitalist society. The

morality of the exploiting class in capitalist society is avarice, sexual passion, stinginess, plunder, theft, violence, cunning and betrayal. Profit determines the behaviour of the bourgeoisie. To seek profit, they will stop at no evil and call all sorts of crimes “good.” In his *Capital*, Marx quoted the words of an economist who commented on the primary motive force that determines the acts and viewpoint of the bourgeoisie. “Capital eschews no profit, or a very small profit, just as nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent, will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent, will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 percent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged.” [*Capital*, I, p. 760]. Profit-seeking is the code of conduct of the bourgeoisie. The moral content and the moral forms of the bourgeoisie are derived based on this sole code of conduct. Lenin described the moral characteristics of the bourgeoisie, saying, “The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed, work for another or he works for you, be a slaveowner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society imbibe with their mother’s milk, so to speak, the psychology, the habit, the concept: You are either a slaveowner or a slave, or else a small owner, a small employee, a small official, an intellectual — in short, a person who thinks only of himself, and doesn’t give a hang for

anybody else.” [*The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*, p. 14]. Benefiting one’s self at the expense of others, profit-seeking, and thinking only of one’s self without minding others — this is the moral code of the bourgeoisie, and all acts are based on this code. According to this code, in a capitalist society, hoarders of grains wish for drought and bad harvests; medical doctors think the more patients, the better; lawyers wish that crime will increase; architects wish that there would be more fires in the cities; priests wish that more people would die — all this conforms with the bourgeois “conscience.” Imperialists launch aggressive wars and enslave the peoples of the world and exploit the labourers. Such criminal acts are also “good” or “moral” acts. The bourgeoisie uses this code to distinguish “good” and “evil,” which makes “good” and “evil” change their positions. According to their own class interests, the bourgeoisie considers evil good, and on this basis establish their moral concepts and ethical code.

In a capitalist society, the primary criterion with which the bourgeoisie measures the worth of a person is how much money you have accumulated. There is no common norm of behaviour between the rich and the poor. The rich are dissolute and shameless, which they consider “honourable.” However, the demand of the poor for the right to live is considered “outrageous.” Money is the supreme good. Therefore, the owner of money is also good, despite all his evil deeds. In describing the fact that capitalist society uses money as the

criterion of “good,” Marx said, “the extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money’s properties are my — the possessor’s — properties and essential powers. Thus, what I am and *am capable of* is by no means determined by my individuality. I *am* ugly but I can buy for myself the *most beautiful* of women. Therefore I am not *ugly*, for the effect of *ugliness* — its deterrent power — is nullified by money. I, according to my individual characteristics, am *lame*, but money furnishes me with twenty-four feet. Therefore I am not lame. I am bad, dishonest, unscrupulous, stupid; but money is honoured, and hence its possessor. Money is the supreme good, therefore its possessor is good. Money, besides, saves me the trouble of being dishonest: I am therefore presumed honest. I am *brainless*, but money is the *real brain* of all things and how then should its possessor be brainless? Besides, he can buy clever people for himself, and is he who has power over the clever not more clever than the clever? Do not I, who thanks to money am capable of *all* that the human heart longs for, possess all human capacities? Does not my money, therefore, transform all my incapacities into their contrary?” [“Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, III, p. 524]. Capitalist society uses money as the highest criterion of “good.” Money can buy “conscience,” “reputation” and “brain.” It is the weight with which the bourgeoisie measures all moral concepts and ethical codes. Pragmatists are the learned stewards of the bourgeoisie. In stipulating the

criterion of “good” in their theory of morality, they, of course, cannot exceed this highest criterion. The bourgeoisie buys these clever people, the pragmatists, to do propaganda for the bourgeois theory of morality, which turns the bourgeois theory of morality into important “spiritual” products of the pragmatists.

The bourgeoisie considers money their highest “good.” Having money is “good.” Their theory of morality is built on the foundation of this view. Naturally, the pragmatist theory of morality cannot depart from this foundation. However, pragmatists do not directly sing the praises of money, but rather, “success.” They use the word “success” to replace the obtaining of money. They know that the so-called “success” in capitalist society means making a fortune. “Success” means gaining high profits. Pragmatists lay the foundations of morality on the so-called “success,” which is a reflection of the viewpoint that money is the supreme good in the field of the theory of morality. In the capitalist society of the U.S., those who are called “successful” people, such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford, are all “tycoons” that suck the blood of the working class. These people are respected and looked up to; they are moral people and the concrete embodiment of moral norms.

What is happiness? This is a question any theory about morality must answer. On this question, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have different answers. The proletariat thinks that liberation is happiness; to wholehearted-

ly serve the cause of human progress, to have utter devotion to others without any thought of self, is happiness. The bourgeoisie thinks that happiness is gaining profit (to use their own words, achieving “success”), benefiting the self at the expense of others and making a fortune. In their theory of morality, pragmatists propagate this bourgeois view of happiness.

Dewey divides happiness into two kinds: one kind is “hypocritical happiness” and the other kind is “real happiness.” “Hypocritical” happiness is “an expression of more or less isolated and superficial tendencies of the self,” whereas “real” happiness is good; it is “the proper fulfilment of a relevant ability which is fundamental and complete.” Therefore, he thought that the correct meaning of happiness is “the satisfaction realization or fulfilment of the wishes and power of the person who is acting.” In Dewey’s view, happiness is not merely self-expression but rather the fulfilment of one’s own ability, the satisfaction of one’s wishes and the realization of one’s power. The fulfilment of one’s ability, the satisfaction of one’s wishes and the realization of one’s power — these are what pragmatists mean by “success.” As long as my ability can be fulfilled, my wishes can be satisfied and my power can be realized, I do not hear the misfortune of the great majority. This is the pragmatist view of happiness.

Pragmatists think that happiness only lies in “success,” and happiness means beauty and enjoyment. Dewey said, “happiness only lies

in success and success means smooth sailing, going forward and moving upward. It is an active process, not a passive result. Therefore it includes overcoming obstacles and eliminating the sources of defects and shortcomings. Beauty and enjoyment are the principal parts of any worthwhile happiness.” To regard happiness as achieving beauty and enjoyment is the concrete content of the so-called “success.” Since happiness means to achieve beauty and enjoyment, this finds the basis in the theory of morality for the bourgeoisie’s hedonistic and decadent life. Pragmatists regard happiness as “success,” the true meaning of which is to place the basis of happiness on money. When Marx said that the bourgeoisie regarded money as the highest good, he was referring to this kind of view of happiness. The view of happiness that says it is “success” is a reflection of bourgeois ideology in the theory of morality. The pragmatist view of happiness expresses this ideology in a concentrated manner. Under the spell of this view of happiness, a high salary becomes the motive force of behaviour. The capitalists take a part of their high profits to give to these “learned stewards” as salary and the latter become content, doing their best to do propaganda for this kind of theory of morality.

When happiness is regarded to be “success,” then when the exploiting class has made a fortune it is considered “successful” and thus “happy.” This kind of “happiness” is built on the misfortune of the majority of people. In a capitalist society, any so-called “happiness”

of the exploiter is derived from the misfortune of the majority of people. The exploiter lives by exploiting the blood and sweat of the majority of people. To regard happiness as "success" is the exploiters' theory of morality and the imperialist principle of behaviour. The pragmatist's moral philosophy is representative of this kind of theory of morality.

II. PRAGMATISTS THINK THAT "GOOD" IS SATISFACTION IN LIFE EXPERIENCES

In his book, *The Reform of Philosophy*, when Dewey discussed the reform of moral concepts, he put forward an important concept: that is, "good" is not a goal, but a process. He said, "The process of growth, improvement and progress is more important than a static result or accomplishment. The so-called 'good' lies not in 'health,' which is an unchangeable goal, but rather lies in the process of progress, continuation, which health demands. The goal is no longer the terminus or boundary to be reached; it is a process of activity to change the present situation. The goal in life lies not in the 'completeness' which is considered the final victory point but in eternal process of completion, cultivation and improvement. Honesty, industry, restraint, fairness, like health, wealth and learning, if looked upon as fixed goals, seem to be things that we can possess, but in reality, they are not things we can possess. They are the direction in which the character of experience changes. Only growth itself is the aim of morality." To say that mor-

ality is a process, that morality is not a goal, that growth itself is the goal of morality, is to say that "good" is something immediate and not something that the eye cannot perceive or the hand cannot touch, is not something that belongs to the distant future, is not the terminus of a process. "Good" exists in each link of the process, "good" is at all times and "good" is in all places; it is not a goal.

This view links "good" with immediate things; that is, it links it with immediate bourgeois interests. Only what conforms to the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie is "good." What is not the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie is not "good." A "goal," whether near or distant, does not belong to immediate things; therefore it cannot be "good." That "good" is growth itself means exactly this: growing all the time, growing constantly: this is good, this is morality itself.

To regard "good" as something that the eyes can perceive and the hands can touch means to discard ideas and to be immersed in the present material life. This is another way of saying that immediate interests are the highest "good"; apart from immediate interests there is no "good."

There is another meaning to regard "good" as growth. Since "good" is growth, then everybody and everything grows, so "good" exists in everybody and everything. This view eliminates the class nature of morality. Engels said, "as society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms, morality was always a class morality; it has either justified the domination and

the interests of the ruling class, or, as soon as the oppressed class has become powerful enough, it has represented the revolt against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed.” [*Anti-Dühring*, p. 105]. To regard “good” as growth means to eliminate the class nature of morality, which is in direct opposition to the Marxist view of morality.

Regarding “good” as growth not only eliminates the class nature of morality, but also gives rise to the “morality” of beasts. Beasts also grow, then beasts also have “morals.” Imperialists are beasts; if beasts have “morals,” then imperialists also have “morals.” The final aim of the pragmatist theory of morality is to justify the bestial conduct of imperialism.

In another place, Dewey very clearly states that “good” exists in the immediate things in daily life, that it is not an ideal, not a goal. He said, “At any time, a person sits on a chair and not on a stove; when it rains he carries an umbrella; when he is sick he sends for the doctor. In short, in the innumerable acts that constitute daily life, he proves that a certain knowledge is directly manifest in his action. We have reason to assume that, similarly, knowledge concerning good has a similar manifestation. In fact, the so-called ‘good’ is an empty word if it does not include the satisfaction experienced in situations discussed above.” Regarding “good” as satisfaction in the experiences of daily life nakedly expresses the bourgeois view of morality that “good” is immediate interests.

The pragmatist view of morality — that

“good” is immediate interests — is the utilitarian view of the morality of the bourgeoisie eagerly seeking success and profit. A view of morality that abandons ideals and seeks only immediate interests is naked bourgeois “morality.” This view of morality is a reflection of the sentiments of the decline of the bourgeoisie in its moribund period. When death is near, it can only grab immediate interests and live out the day as it comes.

The pragmatist view of morality is the bourgeoisie’s utilitarian view of morality; however, Dewey said that his view of morality was different from the traditional bourgeois utilitarianism. He did not agree with Jeremy Bentham’s ideas about “good,” “happiness” and “utility.” Dewey thought that Bentham’s utilitarianism was correct in opposing morality that is not terrestrial or secular. However, he was opposed to Bentham’s praising “joy” and “happiness” in the position of fixed goals and establishing the concept of a fixed, ultimate and highest goal. He thought that “joy” and “happiness” exist in the process of activities; that they are not things that appear when the process of activities has reached its goal. In other words, “joy” and “happiness” are immediate things; therefore, immediate interests are the source of “joy” and “happiness.” Dewey opposes Bentham precisely because Bentham established a “teleological” good and ignored immediate interests. Dewey’s view of morality reflects the sentiments of the bourgeoisie in decline, that “get drunk today when you have the booze.” On the eve of the

1789 French bourgeois revolution, there was a saying that was prevalent among the French nobles: "Enjoy the present, never mind the future." The pragmatist view that "good" is immediate interests once again reflects this sentiment. That "good" is immediate interests is the motive force for the behaviour of the American bourgeoisie at present. They are dissolute, shameless, extravagant and self-indulgent. Their ill-gotten fortunes are made by exploiting the people in the U.S. and the people of other countries through aggressive wars and the blood of millions of people. All this is done for the sake of "immediate interests." They do not pay heed to imminent death. This state of frenzy of the American bourgeoisie on the verge of extinction is reflected in the pragmatist view of morality. The pragmatists regard "good" as immediate interests, as a process and not a goal, and as growth. All this reflects the sentiments of a declining moribund bourgeoisie that only wants to enjoy the present and forget the future. The pragmatist theory of morality reflects the moral decay of the U.S. bourgeoisie; it also reflects the ideological characteristics of the bourgeoisie in its period of decline. The U.S. bourgeoisie has surpassed all previous exploiting classes in its madness and killing of people, savagery, hatred for mankind and moral decay. The pragmatist theory of morality attempts to justify such behaviour that degrades human morality.

III. PRAGMATISTS THINK THAT MORALITY IS A TOOL

Dewey said, "the needs of morality are the needs for special methods of examination and planning. What is meant by a method of examination is to use it to ascertain difficulty and misfortune. A method of planning is used to draw up proposals as hypotheses in dealing with difficulties and misfortunes." To regard morality as a method in ascertaining difficulty and misfortune, and a hypothesis in dealing with difficulty and misfortune, is to regard morality as a kind of tool. The instrumentalist view of morality uses it precisely as a kind of tool and uses it to achieve the goal of "success" and gain "immediate interests."

That pragmatists treat the question of morality as a question of the brain is derived from the fact that they regard morality as a tool. In the eyes of the pragmatists, the brain is a means to achieve hoped-for goals and morality possesses the same quality. The introduction of the brain into morality is an attempt to use it to replace "reason." Pragmatists deny the element of reason in morality. Tools, naturally, do not possess any reason to speak of; since morality is a tool, it does not possess any reason.

Concerning truth, pragmatists regard it as a tool of expediency in thinking; concerning morality, they consider it a tool of expediency in behaviour. The instrumentalist view of morality uses morality as a tool of expediency in behaviour.

Dewey thought, "to change the content of moral life from the observance of rules or the pursuit of definite goals to the examination of,

and the method of dealing with, elements that need special treatment as well as the drawing up of plans, can eliminate the controversies in moral theories and can remove the various causes for these theories' inability to keep favourable contact with actual opportunities." In eliminating the content of the "pursuit of definite goals" from moral behaviour, Dewey causes morality to be pure "method of dealing" and "planning." Morality is thus a tool pure and simple.

Dewey carried out a transformation of moral concepts. An important item of this transformation was to thoroughly abolish the traditional distinction between "moral good" and "natural good." "Moral good" means things like justice, restraint, kindness, etc., while "natural good" means things like health, wealth, learning, etc. Dewey advocates the abolition of the distinction between these two kinds of "good," and the acknowledgement that the reason that "moral good" has value is that it promotes "natural good." He advocates the expansion of the moral significance of the natural sciences. He thought, "when physics, chemistry, biology and medicine are conducive to the development of the examination and planning of a cure for the concrete suffering of mankind, they are moral and a set of tools for ethical research and the science of ethics." To regard morality as something of the same category as the natural sciences stems from the instrumental view of morality. Physics, chemistry, biology and medicine are tools for the "examination and

planning of a cure for the concrete suffering of mankind." Morality is nothing other than such a tool. Instrumentalism abolishes the distinction between "moral good" and "natural good" and the distinction between natural sciences and ethical norms. In doing so, it is eliminating the class nature of morality and the entire moral content. Natural sciences and ethical norms have become mere tools.

In abolishing the distinction between natural sciences and ethical norms, pragmatists have an important purpose, which is revealed in the following passage of Dewey. He said, "when scientific consciousness and man's value consciousness are completely integrated, then the greatest realism that oppresses mankind, i.e., the gap between things materialistic, mechanical, scientific, and things moral, things ideal, will vanish. Due to this difference, wavering human energies will get united and get stronger. Morality will concentrate in the brain; at the same time, what belongs to the intellect will be moralized. The annoying and time-consuming and futile struggle between naturalism and humanism will also subside." In confusing the line of demarcation between natural sciences and ethical norms, Dewey is attempting to eliminate the struggle between materialism and idealism and extinguish the opposition between classes. When the gap between material things and moral things is bridged, when the conflict between "naturalism" and "humanism" ceases, then "human energy" will get united; there will no longer be struggles. This is the purpose

of pragmatists in intellectualizing morality. The aim of regarding morality as intellect, as something of the same kind as natural sciences, is very obvious — to turn morality into a tool, one that does away with class struggle, one for “success” and pursuing the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie.

Dewey called on people to carry out the “transformation of the traditional moral concepts.” The purpose of this kind of “transformation” is to turn an individual’s intelligence into a successful means of attaining immediate interests.

In the dictionary of the pragmatists, “intelligence” is a synonym for “means of expediency.” “Intelligence” means resourceful, manipulative, speculative acts and acts of marginal trading. Pragmatists oppose “intelligence” to “reason” and base morality on this kind of “intelligence.” This enables the pragmatist theory of morality to become a tool of the imperialists, speculators, arms dealers and finance oligarchs.

In his book, *The Reform of Philosophy*, Dewey openly stated the political significance of the pragmatist theory of morality. In the conclusion of the chapter titled “The Transformation of Moral Concepts,” he said, “democracy has many meanings, but if it has one moral meaning, then this meaning lies in ‘the highest criterion of all political systems and industrial organizations, to make contribution to the full growth of each member of society.’” Morality is a tool that contributes to the “full growth” of each member of society.

Therefore, it is a necessary ornament to “democracy” (i.e., bourgeois politics). Pragmatists vigorously disseminate their theory of morality. This is to add a kind of “moral meaning” to “democracy.” The “making contribution to the full growth” mentioned here means gaining immediate interests, achieving “success,” etc.

IV. RELATIVISM AND THE THEORY OF MORALITY

When “good” is regarded as something that satisfies experiences in daily life, and when “good” is regarded only as a tool to attain immediate interests, morality has no objective criterion to speak of. Pragmatists think that moral behaviour only exists within the confines of definite activities and that it is behaviour produced under concrete circumstances. Therefore, the concrete behaviour generated by the concrete circumstances is the source of ethical norms. This is to say morality cannot be measured by objective criteria. Concrete circumstances give rise to “concrete moral behaviour” and also provide for “concrete ethical criterion.” Each “moral circumstance” possesses its own moral criterion. This is the reflection of the “pluralistic” view of the universe in the theory of morality. “Pluralistic” is a synonym for “confusion,” a synonym for “lack of consensus” and “subjectivism.” If the moral criterion is determined by each “moral circumstance,” then morality has no objective criterion and morality becomes something however one may like it.

To base moral criterion on each “moral circumstance” is to say that the human behaviour which should be considered is not distant goals, but rather the immediate interests of the self. What human behaviour should consider is how to successfully pass through the present circumstance. When the circumstance at hand becomes a moral criterion, this really means the abolition of moral criterion and the denial of the objectivity of morality.

Pragmatists think that in each particular situation, there is a particular “good.” Therefore, “good” cannot be judged with the same measure. Dewey said, “as long as anything is a goal and good in a particular situation, then it has the same worth, status and dignity as all the other goods in other situations and thus merits the same kind of complete attention.” Different particular situations have many “goods.” The many “goods” have the same value; therefore, they should not be judged with the same moral criterion. This is denying the objective criterion of morality.

Dewey thought that in judging good and bad people, the only basis is the tendency of the person’s behaviour and activities and not some fixed criterion. Dewey said, “in judging an individual or a group, one must not use as a criterion whether they have achieved a definite result; one can only base one’s judgement on the direction pointed to by their activities. A so-called bad person, no matter how good he was originally, is a person that has begun to degenerate and is gradually changing into a bad person. The so-called good person, no matter

how good he was originally in his morals, is a person that has the tendency to improve.” In his view, the so-called good person is a person who has the tendency to become good, and the so-called bad person is a person who has the tendency to become bad. This is to say we cannot have definite good people and bad people; in other words, in judging good people and bad people we cannot lay down any definite criteria. A tendency towards good means a good person; a tendency toward bad means a bad person. The meaning of “tendency” is a lack of definiteness, whereas “criterion” tends to be certain, definite things. Therefore, in the view of pragmatists, morality should not and cannot have an objective criterion it is always a tendency in a particular circumstance.

Pragmatists think that the needs of a particular circumstance are the goals of moral behaviour, are “good.” Dewey said, “if the needs and wants of a particular circumstance say that the enhancement of health is its goal and good, then under this circumstance, health is the ultimate supreme good.” Health can become the supreme good; wealth, learning, bravery, industry, restraint, etc., can all become the supreme good; it all depends on whether they belong to the needs of a particular circumstance. If they are needed, then they are the supreme good; if they are not needed, then they are bad. When human needs are the criterion for judging good and evil, the concepts of good, evil, right, wrong, etc., can then be turned upside down and confounded. Imperialists need aggressive wars; they can say

that aggressive wars are the supreme good. They abhor the freedom and emancipation of mankind; then they can say that freedom and emancipation are evil. Pragmatists are not in favour of giving an objective criterion for morality; however, they do have a criterion, which is that whatever is convenient and favourable to imperialism is good and whatever impedes imperialist behaviour and is detrimental to the imperialists is bad. The pragmatists' relativism in the theory of morality facilitates the imperialists' justification of their criminal behaviour.

Is there an objective criterion of morality? Morality is class morality. Between the exploiter and the exploited, between the oppressor and the oppressed, there is never a common moral criterion. The morality of the proletariat and the so-called "morality" of the bourgeoisie are both subordinate to their class interests. This is the "common criterion." Lenin said, "for us, there is no such thing as morality apart from human society; it is a fraud. Morality for us is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat." [*The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*, p. 12]. Bourgeois morality is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the bourgeoisie. No matter how many tricks there are in the bourgeois philosophers' theory of morality, they are nothing other than a fraud to justify bourgeois interests. Proletarian morality is subordinated to proletarian struggles; it represents the noblest interests of the broad masses of people. The pragmatic relativist

theory of morality is a weapon to justify the U.S. bourgeoisie's interests and to justify the aggressive acts of U.S. imperialism.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRAGMATIST VIEW OF SOCIETY — A SOCIETY OF COMMON INTERESTS

I. THE SOURCE OF THE PRAGMATIST VIEW OF SOCIETY

Pragmatists claim that two trends of thinking gave rise to the birth of pragmatism: first, Darwinism; second, empiricism. Pragmatism inherited the line of idealist empiricism and agnosticism established by Berkeley and David Hume. In the 19th century, this line appeared under the name of positivism. The empiricism that pragmatism inherited was this trend of thought. As for Darwinism, pragmatists think that it is the main foundation of their philosophy. This source is particularly emphasized in the works of Dewey, who belonged to the Chicago school, which advertised itself as naturalistic empiricism.

Let us now analyse why pragmatists like Darwinism.

Darwin's theory of evolution made a great revolution in biology. He proved that the entire modern organic world was a product of the process of development and dealt a very forceful blow to the metaphysical view of nature. Lenin pointed out, "Darwin put an end to the view of animal and plant species being unconnected, fortuitous, 'created by God' and immutable, and was the first to put biology on an absolutely scientific basis by establishing the mutability and the succession of species"

[*Collected Works*, I, p. 142].

Engels pointed out that Darwin “dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years.” [“Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” Marx/Engels *Selected Works*, p. 413]. Engels listed Darwin’s theory of evolution, the law of the preservation and transformation of energy, and the discovery of the cell as the three discoveries of the natural sciences in the 19th century. The achievement of Darwin was that he dealt a fatal blow to “teleology” in natural sciences and exposed the deceptive trick of religion. Religious ideas are a pillar of Idealism. A blow to religious ideas demolished this pillar.

Darwin’s theory of the origin and the evolution of species was in opposition to metaphysics with a large number of facts. Darwin proved the theory of the evolution of organic species and reasonably explained the law of the evolution of the organic world. This put an end to the natural philosophy dominated by metaphysics. The influence of Darwinism on natural philosophy was similarly felt in the spheres of historical philosophy, legal philosophy, religious philosophy, etc. It would no longer do to use philosophical presuppositions to replace the relationship between objective things, as was done in the past. “One must discover real relationships to eradicate these presumed and artificial relationships.” This had become a trend of the times and was

irresistible, whether in the realm of nature or the realm of the history of society. Darwin performed an immortal service for materialism and dialectics.

If Darwinism has contributed to materialism and dialectics, why do pragmatists declare that their philosophy is based on Darwinism? This is because on the one hand Darwinism itself has some defects and errors, and on the other hand bourgeois philosophers make use of these defects and errors, distort them and enlarge them so as to justify their idealist philosophy.

Darwin denied the leaps in the evolution of the organic world and asserted that there were no such leaps in nature. This goes against dialectics.

Darwin decided that the struggle within a species was the decisive factor for the evolution of living beings. He exaggerated the role of the struggle for survival in the process of evolution of the organism. This made him believe in Thomas Robert Malthus' reactionary theory of population and use it to guide his study of the question of the struggle for survival.

The bourgeois philosophers welcomed the fact that Darwinism has the above-mentioned defects and errors. They used them to establish their "sociology." "Social Darwinism" — this reactionary bourgeois school of sociology was established by making use of the defects and errors of Darwinism. Among the people who belong to the school of social Darwinism and use Darwin's theory of the struggle

for survival and natural selection in the plant world and animal world to interpret the law of the development of society, we have to mention Herbert Spencer, a positivist. Spencer was one of the earliest people who tried to pin a label of “biological sociology” on phenomena such as prices, revolution, class struggle, and so forth. Spencer regarded society as “an organism which is dominated by the laws of biology.” He thought that both social organisms and biological organisms have a maintenance system — in the biological organism, it is the system of nutrition, and in the social organism, it is the system of production. Each also has a system of distribution — in the biological organism, it is the system of circulation, and in the social organism, it is the transport system. Each has a regulatory system — in the biological organism, it is the nervous system, and in the social organism, it is the government and the army. Since society has the same qualities as those of a biological organism, society itself is a kind of organism. For an organism to live soundly, all the systems and organs of this organism have to cooperate with one another and maintain a balance. Therefore, in order to achieve a “complete society” and “complete happiness,” we must maintain the complete balance of society. The basic conditions of the complete balance of society are none other than the “law of equal freedom.” A society that is constituted based on the “law of equal freedom” is a complete society. The “balance” and “law of equal freedom” that Spencer talked about deny and oppose class

struggle. Society must cooperate and be balanced like the various systems in a biological organism, and then it can reach a complete and happy state. Spencer said that a “complete society” depends on the interdependence of its members and so-called “civilization” means making two types of demands that “fight” each other and are in mutual conflict, but also cooperate with each other (and to make this cooperation ripen). He divided human society into two categories; one is a militant type of society, while the other is an industrial type of society. In the “militant” type of society, the relationship between members of society and society is like that of the soldier obeying the officer. The will of the members of society is completely dominated by society. Primitive society is this type of society. In the “industrial type of society,” society respects “individual freedom” and “individual will.” The relationship between the employee and the employer, business behaviour, are all built on “free will” and contracts. Spencer thought that human society has evolved from a militant type of society to an industrial type of society. What he really means by the “industrial type of society” is capitalist society. Spencer thought that capitalist society is the climax of human evolution. When we have reached this society, we have entered a state of “complete happiness.” Spencer’s “view of social evolution” justifies the capitalist social system and the interests of the capitalists. Spencer transferred biological laws to human society precisely to achieve this goal. Advocating social

balance, promoting class collaboration, issuing a call for interdependence and opposing class struggle — these are the goals of Spencer's sociology. These are also the contents of social Darwinism.

Pragmatists declare that their philosophy is based on Darwinism. As a matter of fact, to say that pragmatism has inherited Spencer comes much closer to the truth than to say that it has inherited Darwin. The pragmatists' view of society comes directly from Spencer. Pragmatism is a mutation of positivism, and whether it be in epistemology, the theory of morality or their view of society, it has inherited the positivist views and has created very little of its own. The source of the pragmatist view of society is positivism. Positivist sociology is the theoretical source of the pragmatist view of society. In the following sections, we will do further analysis and exposure.

II. THE PRAGMATISTS' CRITERION OF THE "GOOD SOCIETY"

Pragmatists think that "society" has two different meanings: the "de jure" meaning and the "de facto" meaning. What is a "de jure" society? Dewey said, "A 'de jure' 'society' refers to desirable and valuable things. It expresses what we wish for and what should exist. For example, the following qualities: loyalty to the common goal, mutual affection, pursuit of common happiness, etc. This is the 'normative' meaning of society." A "de facto" society is different from this; it includes both the good society and the bad society. For instance, ban-

mits and thieves are all included in "society." Therefore, it is the "descriptive" meaning of "society." Dewey thought that "the 'de facto' meaning of society describes the state of society as it exists; whereas the 'de jure' 'society' is an ideal 'society' that we picture." What does Dewey's ideal good society like? He thought that there are two criteria for a good society. First, numerous common interests; second, the members of one society and another society are to have various mutual relations and cooperate with one another. A bad society is just the opposite of this, which first has only a few common interests, and second, the relationship between men and between societies is indifferent, or even mutual hostility. Dewey's ideal society is the "democratic society" that he advertised. He thought that the "democratic society" is the good society. Such a society abandons the usual "power" and uses common interests to maintain the relationship between people, and the relationship between societies. Dewey thought that the common interests of society can replace organs of power like the government. He said, "we must do our utmost to increase the common interests among members of society so that people feel that there is an intimate relationship between individuals and between the individual and society, just like an organism. When an individual develops the whole benefits from it, and the development of the whole is also the development of the individual." This is Dewey's theory of social organism. Society is like an organism; there is an intimate relationship

among its members. Therefore, “common interests” are the ties that bind society. Without such ties, society will disintegrate. Dewey thought that cooperation among the members of society can exchange experiences, can mutually stimulate and lead to mutual common progress. He said, “when one society is isolated from other societies, its experience will not improve with life and it cannot constantly reorganize and progress, and will end up being good at preserving its own customs, the result of which will be to trap society in the rut of old customs and an inability to extricate itself. From this, we can see the necessity for mutual contact and communication between various societies. Only by doing this can they exchange experiences and provide one another with stimulus, and then social progress will not be limited by old customs.” We can see now very clearly the criteria of the good society are the promotion of class cooperation and class harmony. The working class and the capitalists should have common interests and should cooperate with one another. This can turn society into the good society. Dewey was living in a capitalist society where class struggle was fierce. He attempted to use the trick of promoting class collaboration to eliminate class struggle and consolidate the rule of the bourgeoisie. It is a society where the rule of the bourgeoisie is solid and without “the disturbance of revolts.” Dewey’s ideal “democratic society” is this kind of society. Such a society “makes the various groups in society have frequent mutual contact, cooperate together,

eliminate all barriers and advance towards the same goal." Can the exploiter and the exploited have "the same goal"? Can the ruler and the ruled "cooperate together"? Dewey knows the answer very well. Dewey promotes "cooperation" and "common interests" of the exploited and the exploiters — this is to benumb the consciousness of the working class so that under the exploitation and oppression of the capitalists, they will obediently lead the life of a slave and "live in harmony without incidents" with the capitalists. When the working class and the capitalists "live in harmony without incidents," this is the ideal society of the pragmatists — Dewey's "democratic society."

Dewey thought that the rise of social classes is due to a lack of common life. Because there is no common life, "the relationship of master and servant" takes place. In politics, the relationship between the ruler and the subjects; in industry, the relationship between the employer and employee, etc., all are the relationships of master and servant. Dewey reverses the result and the cause and attributes the division of society into classes to the lack of common life and not that the lack of common life is due to the division into classes. Ever since society has been divided into classes, the ruling class and the ruled class, the slave-owners and the slaves, the landowners and the peasants, the capitalists and the workers, cannot possibly have any common life. Since there are classes, the ruling class leads the life of the oppressor and the exploiter,

while the ruled class leads the life of the oppressed and the exploited. Ever since classes emerged, the oppressor and the exploiter lead extravagant and dissolute lives, and the oppressed and exploited lead a life of flogging and hunger. Ever since there have been classes, those different classes have led different lives. And as long as the exploitative system exists, there cannot be any kind of common life in society. Dewey attributes the division of society into classes to the lack of common life, which means that, first, there must be common life, and only then can class oppression be eliminated. The purpose of reversing cause and effect like this is very clear: if capitalists and workers have a common life, and if capitalists and workers coexist peacefully, then the relationship of master and servant can be eliminated; class oppression can be eliminated too. This is Dewey's call. To promote a common life means to promote class collaboration and eliminate class struggle.

Dewey thought that a society that is without common life must have force as its foundation. He was opposed to dictatorial politics, because "dictatorial politics indisputably do not have common life and definitely cannot make the emotions and interests of various parts influence one another." Dewey's ideal government is the so-called "democracy." Democracy "tries to have mutual communication and mutual influences in society; it does not rely on force at all but only on interest for its maintenance. All members of society have the opportunity to express interests and

all quarters help one another to make society consolidated.” Dewey opposes dictatorial government; this is because he thought that maintaining rule by establishing “common interests” is more economical, more effective and can better preserve social “tranquillity” than to maintain the rule by force. Dewey’s “democracy” is very similar to the dictatorial government in essence. Both are a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The signboard of “democracy” is merely there to deceive the people.

We know that when the private ownership of the means of production replaced the public ownership of the means of production, classes came into being and the exploitation of one class by another class also came into being. The private ownership of the means of production gave rise to the exploitation of one portion of the members of society by another portion of the members of society and gave rise to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled economically. At the same time, it gave rise to the relationship between the ruler and the ruled politically. Since private ownership has come into being, there has not been any common life between the classes. Private ownership is the foundation and motive force that destroyed common life. Dewey did not dare to face this destructive role of private ownership squarely, but only used the call “common life” to defend private ownership. This is the point of departure of the pragmatist philosophy of society.

III. PRAGMATISTS THINK THAT

SOCIETY IS A PRODUCT OF “HUMAN NATURE”

How did society come into being? Dewey thought that society is a product of human nature. He said, “when there is a need or interest naturally a group of people will come into being; for example, there is the sexual desire, which is a natural desire. Once there is such a need, then a man a woman come together to form a family. There are also the desire for food and drinks and the desire for self-defence and self-preservation, which are also desires in human nature. Once there are such natural desires, than we have common industry and communications. Mankind also has the human nature of power. Therefore, there are disputes; once there are disputes, then we have government, laws and thus the state. Mankind also has the human nature of belief; therefore there is religion. These are the causes for the birth of groups. In short, mankind has human nature, passions, interests and needs. Each human nature, passion, interest and need can give rise to a group of people.” To portray society’s foundation as mankind’s human nature, passions, interests and needs is pure historical idealist nonsense. This historical idealist viewpoint denies the objective laws of social development. The psychological school and the voluntarists of the bourgeois schools of sociology also have this view that the birth of society is a product of human psychology.

According to historical materialism, the law of social development exists objectively; its existence does not depend on people’s

psychology, consciousness or will. Society is a product of the relationship between men and the relations of production between men and not a product of “human nature.” Social existence determines man’s psychological state — man’s psychological state does not determine social existence.

Dewey based society on man’s nature and interests. From here he deduced four reasons for the existence of society: first, the “mustering of forces”; second, “sympathy”; third, “trust” and “loyalty”; fourth, a “sameness of purpose.” As man has the human nature of gaining “power,” he heeds a group to muster the forces and increase their strength. Dewey thought that it is due to this kind of “human nature” that the people in primitive society united themselves to resist ferocious animals, the enemy, together. As for “sympathy,” Dewey said, “A society is like the different parts of the human body. There is mutual influence among all parts and there is a common emotion. For example, when one finger is injured, I not only feel the pain in this finger but also feel that my whole body is influenced by the pain I am feeling. Another example is when many people are together in a family; when one member suffers, the rest also feel unhappy, and when one member is happy, the rest also feel happy. Similarly, society on a large scale is also like this.” As for “trust” and “loyalty,” Dewey said, “As people respond to one another and have common interests, they have to be able to have mutual ‘trust’ and ‘loyalty’ — even despicable bandits

and political parties that only seek their own interests, if they want to function effectively they have to have mutual trust, but they do not trust an outsider. If members of a society do not have mutual trust, then this society will definitely disintegrate.” As for a “sameness of purpose,” Dewey said “all social organizations need a common purpose, be it profit, learning or social intercourse. Only then can they appeal to the masses, because when there is a definite purpose then the people know the orientation and their attention can have a focus.” To gain power, sympathy, trust, loyalty, the same orientation and the focussing of attention — all these originate from mankind’s human nature, passions, interests and needs. They become the reasons for the existence of society, repeatedly explaining nothing other than the following point: that various social classes must cooperate; class collaboration is caused by human nature and human needs; class struggle goes against human nature and human needs. Capitalists must “sympathize” with the working class; the working class must be “loyal” and “trust” the capitalists. Capitalists and the working class must have a “sameness of purpose” so as to “muster forces,” have the same orientation and focus their attention. In short, here Dewey repeatedly explained such a point. There must be class collaboration; the proletariat should not oppose the bourgeoisie. The pragmatists’ ideal “democratic society” is a society of class collaboration. Such a society is “harmonious” and “tranquil.”

Dewey is opposed to the existence of political parties. He said, "we often see a political party doing its utmost to exclude people of another party from the sphere of political power so as to achieve its own selfish aims. In reality, it cannot maintain this for very long and the reasons are the following: 1. narrow or few common interests, 2. in isolation from other social groups or in an antagonistic position to these groups." He thought that the trend of "democracy" "increases common interests and mutual relations, opposes the separation of various groups and the restriction on the participation in common activity." The existence of political parties is contrary to the trend of "democracy." Therefore political parties are an ill of the bad society. Furthermore, various countries, due to a lack of objective or subjective common interests, suspect one another, do not trust one another or even fight one another. This is also a vestige of the bad society. Dewey's endless talk has only one purpose — to "instruct" people to cooperate and not struggle. He based society on "human nature" because it can facilitate the expounding of the "theory" of class collaboration. If all men have the same heart, and if all hearts are the same, then there is no need for any "dispute." In covering up the fact of class struggle and propagating class collaboration, the idealists aim to benumb the working class' consciousness of struggle.

Pragmatists think that considerations of "human nature" will make it easier to restrict man's behaviour and maintain social "tran-

quillity” and law. Dewey said, “because no matter how human nature changes, there is inevitably some limit. This is the natural organization of the human body and the natural trend of human nature. Even if it were overthrown, other limits would replace it. For example, to give way to somebody; even though there is no law, people do naturally give way to one another.” In his eyes, human nature is harmonious and cooperative. People can give in to each other. If society can be built on this foundation, then a lot of disturbances can be avoided. Dewey thought by using “human nature” to replace class nature, class struggle could be done away with. This is only a fantasy of his and all other historical idealists. The history of social development proves that society is not a product of “human nature,” but a product of the relations of production. Man’s relations of production are a material relationship; its exigence does not depend on “human nature” and is independent of it. This relation gives rise to different human natures, that is, class nature. Social structure is determined by the mode of production of material things and is not determined by “human nature.” Pragmatists consider society a product of “human nature” in direct opposition to the materialist view of society.

IV. THE CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

In the eyes of pragmatists, social progress depends completely on the “constant contact” and “mutual supply of stimulus” among the

various members of groups sharing common interests. Dewey said, "when there is not much relationship among the various groups composed of members of society, such as scholars and the illiterates, the ruler and the ruled, the strong and the weak, capitalists and labourers, and these groups are separated into isolated communities and have no opportunities for contact and cannot exchange their experiences and emotions, then society will definitely reach a static state." In order to change this static state and change society into one that is dynamic and moves forward, it is necessary to have close contact between the ruler and the ruled and to have mutual stimulus between the capitalists and the labourers. Dewey said, "to give another concrete example, the progress of government and society is due to a close contact between the ruler and the ruled and the resultant stimulus. Under democracy, the rulers must take into account the people's likes, dislikes and desires, and attach importance to their habits and customs. They cannot just pay attention to their own rights and selfish interests. That which forces them to pay attention to the people's interests is the pressure exerted through elections, because when there is an election, the people lean toward those who can satisfy their expectations. Some people think that the capitalists today in various countries have great power and can manipulate all, whereas the rights of the labourers are weak, and cannot compete with the former. Therefore, the capitalists monopolize power in society. Under such cir-

cumstances, it seems very difficult to preserve a democratic society. Granted the facts are so, the capitalists cannot create an outright dictatorship without taking into account the labourers' desires, for if the labourers' interests are looked down upon, they themselves can organize 'trade unions' to strive for their position in political circles. This interaction between the two sides can keep a democratic society moving forward and becoming a moving, dynamic society." All these words of Dewey explain one point: social progress depends on class collaboration. In his eyes, when the ruler and the ruled, capitalists and labourers, have close contact, then they will be able to stimulate each other and advance together. Here, Dewey endlessly and indefatigably says to the ruled labourer — don't oppose the ruler, the capitalist, but maintain close contact, provide mutual stimulus, cooperate with one heart and exchange emotions and experiences with him. He also explains this contract to the capitalists, saying that they will take into account the wishes of the labourers, because on the one hand, the labourers have their own labour organizations, and on the other hand, the labourers can exert pressure on the capitalists through elections, so it is impossible to create a dictatorial government. Dewey uses the system of election in capitalist society to carry out this deception. In fact, the elections in capitalist society, as we all know, are a form of sham democracy. All these elections produce agents of the capitalists in accordance with the capitalists' will. If the ruling class

cannot achieve the goal of electing their own agents by deceptive means, they will openly use such means as the police, military police and force to achieve their goals. The “stimulus” that the capitalists get from the labourers is surplus-value and the commodity of labour-power. The “stimulus” that the labourers get from the capitalists is oppression, exploitation and hatred for the class enemy. Such mutual “stimulus” is class struggle and not class collaboration. Capitalists and labourers are not “separated into isolated communities” but rather the condition of the existence of capitalists is the existence of labourers. There have been “opportunities for contact” between them long ago, but this “contact” is the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, and the relationship between the exploiter and the exploited. They can never possibly exchange emotions and experiences. Dewey said, “when the emotional force or the mysterious force of exchanging opinions, common life and common experiences is felt naturally, the brutality and vulgarity in modern life will be immersed in a love that has never shone on this world before.” Dewey pins the hope for eliminating the brutality of capitalists on the exchange of opinions, common life and common experiences between the labourers and the capitalists. This is a deception. By doing this he attempts to make the labourers relax their will to struggle and no longer oppose the capitalists’ oppression and exploitation.

It is not class collaboration that makes

society advance, but class struggle that propels the development of social history. Class struggle is the motive force for the development of class society. The replacement of one social system by a more advanced social system is caused by the conflict between the new productive forces and the decadent relations of production. The expression of this kind of conflict is class struggle. Revolutionary class struggle is the sole means to destroy all decadent things and old institutions that hinder social development. Class struggle has existed throughout the entire history of class society and is carried out in all realms of social life. Economic struggle, political struggle and ideological struggle are different forms of struggle serving class interests. The result of class struggle is that the revolutionary class must necessarily overthrow the oppression and rule of the decadent and reactionary class. The relations of production then change and the productive forces are liberated, so society advances. Revolution is the locomotive of history. Because of revolution, the historical development of society advances in great strides. The aim of things that oppose and cover up class struggle is to prevent revolution and preserve reactionary rule.

Since the capitalist social system replaced the feudal social system, class struggle has been going on fiercely between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat embodies the new and socialized mode of production. The new socialized mode of production will replace the old capitalist mode of production

in all countries. The proletariat will certainly win victory in every country. The victory of the proletarian revolution will finally destroy all forms by which man exploits man. The result of the proletarian revolution is the realization of a socialist and then communist society. Therefore, the class struggle of the proletariat is the motive force for the historical development of modern society.

In order to preserve their reactionary rule, the reactionary decadent bourgeoisie has mobilized all the forces they can mobilize and used all the means that they can use to prevent revolution. In opposing revolution, the bourgeoisie stops at nothing — it is brutal and ruthless. The bourgeoisie has mobilized their “learned stewards,” having the latter “create” many “theories,” the purpose of which is to oppose revolution. The bourgeois philosophers are a reactionary contingent on the ideological front with the following task: to carry out various activities in the realm of ideology so as to benumb the working class’ consciousness of struggle. With this knowledge, we can well understand that the appearance of pragmatists, the pragmatist philosophy and the pragmatist view of society is not accidental, but an historical product which emerged in bourgeois ideology to oppose revolution.

CHAPTER VI. THE PRAGMATIST VIEW OF RELIGION — THE THEORY OF GOD BEING USEFUL

I. WHY DO PRAGMATISTS TELL PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN GOD?

In the book, *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels pointed out, “all idealists, whether philosophical or religious, whether old or new, all believe in inspiration, revelation, the saviour and the creator of miracles. As for the form this belief adopts, whether it be a crude religious form or a civilized philosophical form, this only depends on their degree of education. Just as whether they passively or actively treat the belief in miracles, in other words, whether they are the priests who create miracles or whether they are the followers of these priests and whether they are pursuing theoretical goals or practical goals, depends only on their perseverance, character and social status, etc.” As far back as 1845, Marx and Engels pointed out that all idealists are fideists; they all believe in inspiration, revelation, the saviour and the creator of miracles. As a philosophical school of modern subjective idealism, pragmatism is naturally no exception. Professionally, pragmatists are not priests, but professors. However, they are all followers of priests who are “creating miracles.” Concerning fideism, pragmatists on the one hand adopt a crude form and on the other hand adopt the philosophic form, com-

binning both. In the book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, published in 1902, James devoted a lot of space to the revelation of god and the miracles of the appearance of the saviour. This means that concerning fideism, although he generally uses the civilized philosophical form, he did not abandon the crude form either. In this book, James gave many examples of "feeling that there is something beside him" to explain the existence of inspiration.

The miracles of the revelation of god concocted by James in this book far exceed what a priest does in the church. One very seldom sees philosophers act the way James did, who preached a crude religious form using a "cultured" philosophical form. As for Dewey, he justifies fideism by adopting a more civilized form. He deduced religion from life experiences and expressed that he was opposed to the supernatural. The master turned nature into god and the disciple turned god into nature. No matter what the change was, they were both deducing god from everything to serve the purpose of the "practice" of imperialism. As far back as 1908, Lenin pointed out this characteristic of pragmatism. He said, "Perhaps the 'latest fashion' in the latest American philosophy is 'pragmatism' (from the Greek word 'pragma' — action; that is, a philosophy of action). The philosophical journals perhaps speak more of pragmatism than of anything else. Pragmatism ridicules the metaphysics both of idealism and materialism, acclaims experience and only experience, recogniz-

es practice as the only criterion, refers to the positivist movement in general, *especially turns for support to Ostwald, Mach, Pearson, Poincaré and Duhem* for the belief that science is not an ‘absolute copy of reality’ and... successfully deduces from all this a God for practical purposes, and only for practical purposes, without any metaphysics, and without transcending the bounds of experience.” [*Materialism & Empirio-Criticism*, pp. 414-5]

For what “practical purposes” did the pragmatists deduce god? To help the imperialists enslave the people. Pragmatists needed an opium to lull the people’s consciousness; therefore, they deduced god from acclaiming experience.

In order to perpetuate capitalist slavery, the bourgeoisie deceives and torments the working class spiritually by all means, namely by imposing spiritual oppression. Spiritual oppression is connected with political oppression and economic oppression, which constitute a whole set of means of oppression by the reactionary ruling class. The bourgeoisie and its “learned stewards” regard religion as an important means of carrying out spiritual oppression. Religion is a spiritual booze. The bourgeoisie forces the working class to drink this booze so that the latter will forget the past and present. In his article “Socialism and Religion,” Lenin once pointed out this quality of religion. He said, “Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression which everywhere weighs down heavily upon the masses of the people, overburdened by their perpetual work

for others, by want and isolation. The impotence of the exploited classes in their struggle against the exploiters just as inevitably gives rise to the belief in a better life after death as impotence of the savage in his battle with nature gives rise to belief in gods, devils, miracles and the like. Those who toil and live in want all their lives are taught by religion to be submissive and patient while here on earth, and to take comfort in the hope of a heavenly reward. But those who live by the labour of others are taught by religion to practise charity while on earth, thus offering them a very cheap way of justifying their entire exigence as exploiters and selling them at a moderate price tickets to well-being in heaven. Religion is opium for the people. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, in which the slaves of capital drown their human image, their demand for a life more or less worthy of man." [*Collected Works*, X, pp. 83-4]. In this passage by Lenin, the origin, nature and function of religion are very clearly explained. The reactionary ruling classes in history have never neglected religion, and the "stewards" and "salesmen" of the ruling class have never looked down upon religion either. In substance, all schools of idealism possess the function of religion, the function of deceiving the people and of lulling the working class' consciousness. The "practical purposes" for which the pragmatists deduced god are for this kind of deception.

In the 20th century, with the awakening of the working class, the development of scientific socialism and the progress of natural

sciences, religion is facing the fate of death. Lenin pointed out, "The modern class-conscious worker, reared by large-scale factory industry and enlightened by urban life, contemptuously casts aside religious prejudices, leaves heaven to the priests and bourgeois bigots, and tries to win a better life for himself here on earth. The proletariat of today takes the side of socialism, which enlists science in the battle against the fog of religion, and frees the workers from their belief in life after death by welding them together to fight in the present for a better life on earth." [*loc. cit.*] Confronted with such conditions as described by Lenin, the bourgeoisie and their "stewards" began to "reform" religion. This kind of "reform" has the same character as Martin Luther's "religious reformation," that is, to "reform" religion so that it better suits the demands of the modern bourgeoisie. Luther replaced the slavery of believing in god with the slavery of faith. When the slavery of faith was on the brink of collapse, the pragmatists' experiential religion replaced religion that transcends experience. Natural religion replaced supernatural religion. This was all to justify bourgeois interests.

II. THE "EXPERIENTIAL" RELIGION OF PRAGMATISM

The new conditions of the 20th century forced pragmatists to adopt an even "newer" religious form than Luther. This new form of religion did not appear in a crude form but rather in a "cultured" philosophic form. What

are the new conditions of the 20th century? First, class struggle has become even more acute. The rule of the bourgeoisie is like the setting sun with its days numbered. At the same time, Marxism-Leninism has become a world trend. The working class, grasping Marxism-Leninism, has become an irresistible force and a conscious movement of the working class has sprung up everywhere. Finally, with the development of natural sciences, the secrets of the universe are now revealed, so god has no place to hide. In these new conditions, it becomes very difficult for religion to deceive people and to lull the consciousness of the working class in its crude, antiquated forms. To suit this new historical condition, pragmatists began to create a new religion. This new religion is called “experiential” religion.

Dewey, the pragmatist, is opposed to traditional religion. He advocates the abandonment of belief in supernatural things, and that religion be changed from something supernatural into something natural, from something impalpable to something experiential, to invite god to come from heaven to earth, so that god will be adapted to the conditions of the time. This way it can avoid being destroyed by science. The purpose of Dewey “reforming” religion is to avoid attacks by science.

Dewey thought that the world of experience can also nurture faith. He thought that experience can be the source of religious belief. How can experience give rise to religious

belief? Dewey said, "we only have to pay attention to one remarkable fact. The world of experienced things contains things that are unstable, unpredictable, uncontrollable and dangerous." The world of experience contains dangerous things. This fact then provides conditions for religion. "Divinity originates in fear." Religion originates in fear. Dewey said, "man is afraid because he lives in a fearsome and terrifying world; this world is tumultuous and untranquil." He thought that in being tumultuous and untranquil, the modern civilized world is not better than primitive society; therefore, religion has not lost its real foundation today.

Dewey thought that people live in an unknowable world, where luck is everything, where human life is a gamble. He said, "man has discovered that he lives in a world where luck is everything, that his existence, to put it crudely, includes a gamble. This world is a risky place; it is insecure, unstable, inconceivably unstable; its dangers are irregular, inconstant; you cannot tell their time and season. Though the dangers are continual, they are scattered and unexpected. It is the darkest period before dawn. Pride is followed by defeat; the heydays are precisely when bad omens are most numerous, and in the evil eye, that is the best period. Disaster, famine, bad harvest, disease, death and defeat in war, can come at any time. The same is also true of good harvest, strength, victory, festivals, songs and dances. Fortune in its distribution, according to folk sayings, is both good and

bad. Sacred things and execrable things are potentials of the same situation, whether it be people, words, faces, time, spatial directions, rocks, wind, animals, stars, etc. There is not a single category of thing that has not embodied sacred things as well as execrable things.” In this unstable, dangerous world, which is dominated by luck, concerning the unseeable world, man cannot but form expectations and belief, or be on guard, pray or curse. Therefore, religion is unavoidable. Dewey thought that the things that can be seen exist in the things that cannot be seen, which is a characteristic of experience. Therefore, to believe in things that cannot be seen does not come into conflict with experience. Actually, it is a basic datum of experience. He said, “Things that can be seen exist in things that cannot be seen; as a result, things that have not been seen determine what happens in things that have been seen. Palpable things float above impalpable things and things that have not been grasped. Between the direct, obvious and central aspects of things and those indirect and covert factors that determine the source and development of existing things, there exists an opposition and a latent unharmonious condition. This is an indelible characteristic of all experiences. We can call our ancestors’ method of dealing with this kind of opposition superstitious, but this condition of opposition itself is not superstition; it is the basic datum in any experience.” Superstition is a reflection of the opposing condition between seeable things and unseeable things. Therefore, it has

the same quality as experience. Superstition and experience can coexist, therefore religion can be “experiential.” This is how “experiential” religion came into being.

Dewey intimidates people with uncertain, unpredictable and uncontrollable dangers, telling people to rely on heaven’s favour to avoid such dangers and to believe in religion. The pragmatists’ view of religion proceeds precisely from this point Pragmatists use the “experience” of the capitalists oppressing the workers in modern capitalist society to re-establish a religious system. This is the source of “experiential” religion.

In content and substance, “experiential” religion and traditional religion do not differ. The difference is only in some forms. Pragmatists advocate moving god from the church to human life experiences, to be worshipped there, and want god to “permeate all customs and activities in community life.” Pragmatists think that anything that can correctly be said to have value in terms of religious quality “grows outside of organized religion.” Therefore, they do not attach much importance to traditional religious organizations. This is an important difference between “experiential” religion and traditional religion.

Pragmatists think that religion should become a universal thing, mankind’s universal need. They think that religion should not be used as a noun but rather as an adjective. One should not say “religion,” “a religion,” but should say “religious.” The difference between “religion” and “religious” is that the former

limits religion in a narrow sphere, whereas the latter can expand the sphere of religion infinitely, can make religion permeate mankind's entire life. "Religious" is not a particular experience but a property that belongs to all experiences — aesthetic, scientific, moral and political. Now that religion is a property that belongs to universal experiences, god is omnipresent. Dewey said, "to put it even more clearly, a religion (and I have already said there is no such thing as a general religion) always refers to a particular set of beliefs and practice with either loose or strict institution and organization. On the contrary, the adjective 'religious' does not refer to anything that is special and like an entity, whether it belongs to institutional or systematic beliefs. It refers to the attitude that can be adopted towards each object and each supposed goal and ideal." To make all things possess the quality of religion is why pragmatists advocate "religious" replace "religion."

"Experiential" religion is what James called, in his book *Pragmatism*, "pluralistic, moralistic religion." The reason that this religion is pluralistic is that it believes not in one god, but many gods. Not a god that transcends living conditions, but a god of living conditions. Any belief that is useful to life is a belief in god. God exists everywhere and permeates all kinds of life. The reason that this religion is moralistic is that it can be a norm for human life and make people behave themselves, daring not to take one wrong step and be at the tender mercies of the oppressors. "Pluralistic

religion,” “moralistic theism” and “pluralistic, moralistic religion” — all these terms explain one thing only; god exists in experiences and permeates life.

The pragmatist view of religion is the “new” view of religion in the 20th century. As a matter of fact, it is also the most ancient view of religion — it is like fetishism, worshipping all the things in life. This view of religion is used to cover up the crimes of the capitalists and to place everywhere in life a fearsome god to intimidate people so that the suffering masses will forever groan in the sea of the misery of life.

After the pragmatists’ “reform,” religion can even better play its fundamental role, that is, benumb the consciousness of struggle of the working class and consolidate the capitalist social order.

III. HOW DID DEWEY OPPOSE THE SUPERNATURAL?

In his book, *A Common Faith*, Dewey criticized the various schools of idealism, claiming that they turned ideals about action into a set of tenets about an antecedent reality. Thus he thought the intellectual system of idealism had always been connected with supernatural ideas. It is very correct that all idealism, whether in the form of philosophy or religion, whether ancient or modern, believes in a supernatural god. Pragmatism is a school of idealism and, of course, without exception believes in a supernatural god. Pragmatists do their utmost to cover up the partisan nature

of their philosophy, pretending to be a “transcendental school” that is against both materialism and idealism. However, pragmatists believe in god and advocate fideism, which exposes their foxes’ tails. To believe in god and to advocate fideism — these are the important characteristics of idealism and pragmatism does possess these characteristics.

Now, let us take a look at how pragmatist philosophy smoothly ushers in god amidst the cries against the supernatural.

In his book, *A Common Faith*, Dewey thought, “when artists, scientists, citizens and parents are loyal to their posts, they are all controlled by an unseeable thing.” What Dewey meant by the unseeable thing is faith. He thought that faith determines people’s attitudes and actions and can win people’s obedience and respect. He thought the reason that faith could have this kind of effect is due to the nature of the ideal itself. In his view, religion can turn an unseeable ability that controls our fate into the ability of an ideal.

Dewey thought that using the scientific method to enter the mystery of the world is a religious action that shows faith in the intellect. However, using this method to enter the mysterious world has been discriminated against by certain religious people. Still, he thought this was a road to “truth.” To rely on the combination of science and faith in pursuing truth no matter how many different methods one uses in the pursuit of truth and how large the scope is — is just as absurd as relying on supernatural revelations in the pursuit

of truth. Dewey thought that relying on faith in the pursuit of "truth" is no different from relying on supernatural revelation, except that it is "more religious than the supernatural revelation." Dewey sought after truth that is rich in "religiosity." Can one thus say that he is against the supernatural?

Dewey very clearly put forward the thing "god." He thought that there were two views with regard to "god," one of which considers "god" a special kind of existence, a non-ideal existence. The other view considers "god" a unity of all ideals and purposes that excite our will and action, a unity of various ideal values, an ideal existence. Dewey did not agree with the first kind, the traditional view, but was in favour of the second view. He thought that the second view belonged to the "experiential." In fact, whether to consider "god" "experiential" or "non-experiential," "ideal" or "non-ideal," is fideism just the same.

Dewey opposed traditional religion and the worship of the supernatural. He advocated that religion should become secular, mundane and experiential. He led god from the supernatural to "nature," whereby the will of god can permeate all the aspects of man's life.

In his book *A Common Faith*, Dewey put forward such an absurd point: there is something in common between militant atheism and traditional supernaturalism. They both consider man isolated and both lack devoutness towards nature. He thus put forward the view that in opposing supernaturalism, one must at the same time oppose atheism. And

in fact, this is what Dewey did; he opposed supernaturalism but god; on the contrary, he affirms god and believes in god. The difference between Dewey's "god" and the "god" of traditional religion is that Dewey made "god" an experience and made "god" something that people can feel in their experience. "The sense that there is something beside one," which James talked about, is the sense of god of pragmatism.

In opposing supernaturalism, Dewey is not opposing the supernatural god but rather he thought that supernaturalists lack devoutness towards nature. Dewey wants people to be devout towards nature and not devout towards the supernatural. He thought that only this is in conformity with the pragmatist spirit and can make god into something useful.

Dewey thought that if religion is based on the belief in the supernatural, then religion is separated from the secular and this separation is detrimental to the development of religion. He advocated that there should be no distinction between what is religious and what is secular; that religion should have nothing to do with the supernatural, thus religious values will not be confined to a special realm which will "liberate" it from that certain special realm, becoming society's religion — to use his own words, it will become "experiential" religion. In opposing the belief in the supernatural, Dewey is worried that the traditional scope of religion is too narrow and its function too small. He wants to enlarge the scope of religion and bring into fuller play the role

of religion. This is the real intent of his opposition to the belief in the supernatural.

In making “god” come to earth from heaven, Dewey was attempting to make “god” directly into being in the life of human society on earth. He thought that if the church in some special sense represents the supernatural, then this will make the church’s endeavours in economic and political problems illegitimate actions. Therefore the church will not be able to take part in the cause of social “improvement” in the realm of nature and human affairs. In opposing supernatural religion, Dewey wants to have religion intervene in broader social life and intervene in human life. What kind of life does Dewey want religion to intervene in? He clearly stated that religion should intervene in the life of class struggle. Dewey thought that religion must not remain as a belief in the supernatural; we should make it come down to earth and make it into a tool to eliminate class struggle. To use Dewey’s words, that is to enable religion to bring forth impulses like charity, pity, justice, equality, freedom, etc.

From the proofs mentioned above, one can see that in opposing belief in the supernatural, Dewey was not opposing fideism but was rather more firmly upholding fideism. It is not that Dewey did not believe in god, but rather that he believed in god more devoutly.

As for the ‘nature’ mentioned by Dewey, it also has a different meaning. The “nature” that Dewey mentioned is something that has the same meaning as the word “experience.”

In his book, *Experience and Nature*, Dewey said that “experience” referred to land that has been tilled, changes such as day and night, spring and autumn, dryness and humidity, cold and heat, referred to people who harvest and plant; at the same time, it also referred to love, faith, enjoyment, work and encounters. In this way “nature” is moving towards “the supernatural.” There is no difference between “things” and “thoughts.” On the one hand, opposing worship of the supernatural, on the other hand, equating nature with things like faith and turning nature into an object of faith — thus “experiential” religion is not really opposing worship of the supernatural but rather leading people to believe in the unseeable force. Be it “experiential” religion or “natural” religion, it is fideism just the same, and fideism is exactly what the pragmatists advocate.

IV. THE PRAGMATIST THEORY OF GOD BEING USEFUL

The difference in form between the pragmatist view of religion and the traditional view of religion is that the former advocates that “god is useful” and the latter advocates that “god is manifest” and dares not directly talk about “using” god. God is useful and what is useful is god — this is the main characteristic of the pragmatist view of religion.

In the last chapter of *Pragmatism*, James said the following: “On pragmatistic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily... it is true.” [*Pragmatism*, p. 131] Prag-

matists consider god a hypothesis, but because this hypothesis is useful, it is true. This tells us the substance of the pragmatist view of religion.

The same author, in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, said the following: "As long as men can use their God, they are not much concerned about questions like who god is or whether there is God at all." James agrees with a passage by James H. Leuba and quoted it in the same book. He said, "God is not recognized or understood; he is made use of, sometimes as someone who provides meat, sometimes used as spiritual support, sometimes as a friend, sometimes as an object of love. If god proves that he is useful, then there is nothing else that religious consciousness seeks. Is there really a god? In what form does god exist? What are the properties of god? These are all irrelevant questions. In the final analysis, not god but life, more life, broader, richer and more satisfactory life is the goal of religion. In all classes that are evolving, love for life is the impulse for religion." This passage by Leuba represents the pragmatist view of religion. The pragmatists say all the time "lord, Jehovah," however, they turn their "lord" into a "servant" into a servant that provides meat. As long as there is satisfactory life and the function to satisfy, there is "the respectable" god. This is the fundamental thinking of the pragmatist view of religion. Pragmatists invited god from heaven to earth, from the supernatural to society, and turned god beyond the world into a god that is omni-

present. The pragmatic religious “reform” is no more than making religion suited to the demands of monopoly capitalism.

The pragmatist view of religion appears as a kind of pantheism — it does not make god permeate the world of nature, but makes god permeate man’s life and thus denies the supernatural source of god. This kind of pantheism is in opposition to the pantheism of Giordano Bruno and Baruch Spinoza. The pragmatist “pantheism” is a means the pragmatists adopt in order to gain their reactionary political goals. Engels said: “All religion, however, is nothing other than the phantastic reflection in men’s minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.” [*Anti-Dühring*, p. 344] The pragmatist god is the form of supernatural forces assumed by monopoly capital. This form, used as a tool in the rule of the modern bourgeoisie, can supplement what the force of the courts, the execution grounds, the police and the military cannot do.

Pragmatists turn god into a necessity of life; they call on people to believe in god. Believe in god, at least this will allow you to rest on Sunday — this is the way pragmatists propagate the advantages of god. One benefits from one’s belief in god. If one suffers, then the only thing to do is to believe in god; there is no need for struggle. In introducing god into man’s life, the purpose of the pragmatists is nothing other than to lull the consciousness of the working class, to ease and eliminate

class struggle.

Pragmatists introduced god into man's world and harmonized god with science. Dewey thought that once philosophy accepts this kind of theory about science — that concepts do not describe things that now exist or have existed, but describe actions to be performed — then a genuine idealism, idealism that is compatible with science, will emerge. When science becomes something that describes actions to be performed, then science becomes hopes, yearnings and faith. Thus science can be harmonized with religion. The “genuine idealism” that harmonizes science and religion is naturally pragmatism.

From the pragmatist view of religion, we can gather the following point: the final resting place of the idealist philosophy is religion and the pillar of religion is idealist philosophy.



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