

DEWEY'S PRAGMATISM AS EXPERIMENTALISM: A CRITIQUE OF TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

Pragmatism, as a philosophical doctrine, is so dominant today that James's claim that one can deny it and still be a pragmatist is playing out. Again, natural science is moving so fast that a rational mind may find it difficult to perform its duty of checking its limitations. This paper, therefore, discusses Dewey's pragmatism which has a nexus with the natural sciences through his theory of experimentalism or instrumentalism. The paper discusses Dewey's experimentalism and adopts it as a model for critiquing traditional philosophy which is speculative in nature. The study shows that Dewey's instrumentalism is a five-/six-way scientific procedure for the attainment of knowledge. In Dewey's instrumental pragmatism, "problem gets thinking started." Deweyan experimentalism is an onslaught on traditional philosophy which essentially is speculative, absolutist and foundational. It is both a rejection of the traditional methods of philosophizing and the traditional views of knowledge (spectator and correspondence theories of knowledge). It rejects absolutist and rationalist logic in favor of contextual logic. Adopting the textual-analytic method of investigation, the paper concludes that experimentalism is Dewey's mild way of saying that philosophy should close shop and open one for the natural sciences since Dewey's experimentalism knocks off traditional philosophy and solidifies the foundations of the experimental sciences.

KEYWORDS: *Pragmatism, Experimentalism, Instrumentalism And Traditional Philosophy.*

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