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XV\*-PRAGMATISM  
by Hilary Putnam  
pragmatism is a very large subject. My aim in this essay is not a survey, and certainly not an over-all evaluation of the movement's insights and errors. Instead, I want to examine those insights and errors with respect to just one issue-an issue which was of central importance to the pragmatists, but by no means only to the pragmatists: verificationism.  
The pragmatist form of verificationism and how it differed from the positivist form. Although textbooks tend to treat pragmatism primarily as a theory of truth (and to identify it with the theory that the true is what is satisfying in the long-run to believe, a theory that not one of the classical pragmatist actually held), it is important to remember that the principle that the classical pragmatists actually regarded as basic was Peirce's so-called 'pragmatic maxim' and that the theories of truth that Peirce and James advanced were regarded by them simply as applications of this maxim. Here is the maxim as stated by Peirce himself:  
Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearing, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.  
\*Meeting of the Aristotelian Society, held in the Senior Common Room, Birkbeck College, London, on Monday, 19th June, 1995 at 8.15 p.m.  
| The pragmatist who is supposed to have held this theory most explicitly is, of course, William James. For an account of the extremely complicated view that James actually had, see my 'James's Theory of Truth' forthcoming in The Cambridge Companion to William James, ed. Ruth Anna Putnam.  
2 ?402 of 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear', in Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vol. 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960). Further references to this edition will have the by-now-standard form [volume number: paragraph number].

















