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John R. Shook

Addison W. Moore's Pragmatic Approach to Religion and Immortality

Addison W. Moore was a member of the University of Chicago philosophy department from 1900 until 1929. Together with John Dewey, George H. Mead, James H. Tufts, and Edward S. Ames, Moore was an essential part of the pragmatic "Chicago School" of philosophy. Moore's essay "Pragmatism and Immortality", published here for the first time, is a model example of Moore's efforts to pragmatically contextualize long-standing philosophical issues. This essay provides a rare opportunity to study an application of Dewey's pragmatism to religion, supplementing Dewey's meager comments on specific religious doctrines.[1] Whether such reticence is justifiable depends on the interpreter's own philosophical commitments. Pointing out that for Dewey intelligence should serve the needs of life is only a half-way step; the deeper question considered by Moore is whether an intelligent use of immortality could serve life's needs. Beyond examining this extension of Dewey's pragmatism, we will also see how this analysis of immortality contrasts with some contemporary philosophical treatments.

Moore's manuscript is contained with the deposit of Moore's papers at Dartmouth College Library. No other deposit of Moore's papers is known. Moore's daughter Catherine married Maurice Picard, a professor at Dartmouth from 1929-58. Their daughter subsequently inherited possession of Moore's papers, which she gave to the Dartmouth library. The manuscript is an expansion of a paper read at the seventeenth annual meeting of the Western Philosophical Association, President George H. Mead presiding, at the University of Michigan, 6-7 April 1917. The Proceedings of this meeting, including abstracts of papers read, were published three months later. Moore's abstract is titled "Pragmatism and Immortality" and reads as follows:

> The beginning of the pragmatic movement witnessed the paradox of apologetics based on pragmatism, some of whose representatives had characterized other philosophies as disingenuous apologetics. The paradox was due, first, to the desperate situation of apologetics.

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> Kant had destroyed immortality as a logical postulate and the Hegelians had demolished it as an ethical postulate. But this destruction was not a matter of mere dialectic. The dialectic was an expression of the fact that the new demands of logical, i.e., scientific, and ethical, i.e., social problems could no longer tolerate the limitations which it was necessary to place on the formulation of the problems of science and society in order that they should require the postulate of immortality.
>
> In this situation apologists seized eagerly upon the rumor that pragmatism taught the subordination of truth and thought to desire. But this was based on a misconception of the pragmatic doctrine concerning both thought and desire. In relation to any particular form of desire it is the teaching of pragmatism that the business of thought is, in old-fashioned phrase, to "rationalize" it. This means the reformation and remolding of desire so that (1) intelligent steps for its realization may be taken; (2) that it shall be made to cooperate and not conflict with other forms of desire. On this basis the question is, Can the desire for immortality be "rationalized", or is it a dumb longing and hope which cannot be organized scientifically with other desires?
>
> Except by the psychical researchers, the problem of immortality is not taken as a genuine problem involving a definite future, i.e., a problem for whose solution we definitely set about, projecting hypotheses and attempting verifications. Speculations concerning the qualitative and quantitative limits of our bodies based on the maintenance of personal continuity through mutilations and transformations of the body do not operate as scientific hypotheses nor do they involve a disembodied existence. But this does not justify the dogma that immortality may never attain the status of a genuine problem. (Moore, 1917)

The full manuscript of "Pragmatism and Immortality" appears to be a later revision and expansion of Moore's 1917 paper. One of the manuscript pages is typewritten, with the number three at the top. This page's contents corresponds very closely to the latter portions of the published abstract, rather than to the mss. as a whole. This supports the idea that Moore read a 4-page paper and later

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(when is unknown) expanded it for possible publication. The first sheet of the manuscript has only the title at top right and beneath the title appears the handwritten word *unpublished*.

Addison Webster Moore was born on 30 July 1866, in Plainfield, Indiana. Moore graduated from DePauw, and after two years of graduate study in philosophy at Cornell, he transferred to Chicago in 1894 upon hearing of Dewey's arrival there. He took part in the ongoing psychological research as James Angell's assistant, and absorbed the developing philosophical speculation of Dewey, Mead and Tufts as they laid the foundations of functional psychology and instrumentalism. Moore joined the Chicago philosophy department soon after finishing his dissertation in 1898, and took over the Logic and Metaphysics courses after Dewey's departure for Columbia University in 1904. Among the many Chicago Ph.D.s who received Moore's tutelage were William K. Wright (professor at Dartmouth), Douglas C. Macintosh (professor at Yale), Jacob R. Kantor (professor at Indiana), and Charles W. Morris (professor at Chicago). Moore served as President of the Western Philosophical Association in 1911, and President of the American Philosophical Association in 1917. Moore retired in 1929, and died in London on 25 August 1930. The memorials prepared by his colleagues all praised his personal character and professional demeanor, as they admiringly recounted his central role in the department's success.

Among the many figures that surrounded and supported Dewey's instrumentalist version of pragmatism, none shone so brightly during those early decades as Moore. While Dewey did not shrink from controversy, Moore was universally recognized as the chief prosecutor on behalf of the instrumentalist version of pragmatism developed by Dewey and Mead at Chicago. Unlike Dewey and Mead, who were never eager to answer the numerous critics scorning pragmatism, Moore was always quick to engage idealist and realist challengers in the pages of any philosophy journal that would publish the latest news about pragmatism's struggles. His argumentative and polemical writings earned him the nickname "the bulldog of pragmatism". Like Huxley's relationship with Darwin, Moore was Dewey's most ardent public defender and professional ally. From his student days with Dewey at Chicago in the mid-1890s, until his death 35 years later, Moore faithfully expounded the Chicago school's variety of pragmatism and staunchly defended it against all rivals. Many of these polemical writings were gathered together in Moore's only book, *Pragmatism and Its Critics* (1910). Moore's writings offer an artful and persuasive elaboration of Dewey's philosophy, composed by a clearly original and creative intellect.[2]

Before discussing Moore's efforts to formulate a pragmatic approach to immortality, it is worth pointing out its significance within the wider context of pragmatism and religion. As a whole, the pragmatism movement can be understood as one prominent American endeavor to explore potential reconciliations between science and religion. Peirce, James, Schiller, Dewey, and most of their allies and students produced studies and interpretations of religion

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and religious doctrines. Furthermore, these pragmatists were willing and able to apply the pragmatic method to the subject of the afterlife and immortality. Prominent examples from the early years of classical pragmatism include Charles Peirce, "Immortality in the Light of Synechism" (1893); F.C.S. Schiller, "The Ethical Significance of the Idea of Immortality" (1897) and "Do Men Desire Immortality?" (1901); William James, "Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine" (1899); Arthur K. Rogers (a Chicago graduate who later joined the Critical Realists), "The Argument for Immortality" (1905); H. Heath Bawden (a Chicago graduate), "A New Scientific Argument for Immortality" (1908); Edward S. Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience* (1910); Irving King (a Chicago graduate), *The Development of Religion* (1910); and John E. Boodin (a Harvard graduate), "Social Immortality" (1915).[3] When Moore delivered an early version of his essay on immortality to the Western Philosophical Association meeting in 1917, he could retrospect upon over two decades of deliberation and debate.[4] He could not look to Dewey's writings for guidance on this particular subject, for Dewey had not yet published anything approaching a pragmatic treatment of religious belief. The landscape was instead dominated by the larger-than-life figure of William James.

James's pragmatic arguments for religious belief and his psychological studies into religious experience were undeniable achievements that shaped pragmatism's later developments. However, the wider philosophical and theological world almost exclusively focused on James's work as *the* pragmatic stance towards religion during the first three decades of the 20th Century. Peirce was in the shadows and Dewey had little to say about religion beyond his open antipathy towards church influence over society's institutions destined for secular control, such as the school. In the 1930s and 1940s Dewey, along with self-proclaimed religious humanists and naturalists, revitalized and reshaped the role of pragmatism in discussions of religion. But during the earlier period that Moore composed and revised his essay on immortality, from the mid-1910s through the 1920s, James's work captured the attention of both critics of pragmatism and friends who found a source of pragmatist apologetics.[5] This attention centered on what many interpreters viewed as James's endorsement of a separation of reason and faith so that faith might have an alternative source of justification. Moore's comments on the "spectacle" offered by pragmatism's apparent collapse into moral apologetics for religion have a regretful tone — although he avoids placing the blame squarely on James. It was the critics, Moore declares in the middle portion of his essay, who rashly assumed that pragmatism accepts a sharp division between desire and thought. Whether James's writings on the "will-to-believe" are partly responsible for this common assumption, Moore does not say. Moore is much more interested in diverting the spotlight of attention to the genuinely pragmatic theory that intelligence demands the reconstruction of objects of desire.

Moore's sketch of intelligence's role in problem-solving is straightforward

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Deweyan pragmatism. The proper function of thought is to bring about a mutual adjustment between the objective of action and the present means available to reach that objective. Unlike the "instrumentalist" notion of reason, in which reason only seeks the means to a given fixed end, the instrumentalist pragmatism of the Chicago school emphasizes that the real power and efficacy of thought for solving problems lies in its capacity for modifying our valuations of *both* means and ends. Moore's portrayal of intelligence's dynamic role has two primary implications for examining a theological doctrine such as immortality. First, insofar as immortality is amenable to intelligence, it must be located in the human context as an object of desire, as an end valued by people in their own cultural environment. Second, because intelligence treats all ends as involved with real human problem-solving, anyone's actual conception of immortality is to be understood as either the product of past problem-solving, or as the material for future problem-solving.

Whether the retrospective or forward-looking approach to an idea like immortality is adopted depends on the context of inquiry. When Moore is interested in accounting for the past origins of popular Christian notions of immortality, he treats immortality as the product of past thought upon historical problems. On the other hand, when Moore attempts to answer the question of whether immortality is a valid belief today, he asks whether immortality is relevant to contemporary problems. This explains his complex three-part answer to the issue of immortality:

> 1. For long durations of Christianity's past, people's conception of immortality was distinctly shaped by past social conditions and problems. The relative lack of opportunity for individual participation in worldly society in late Roman and medieval centuries posed a social problem for which absolute faith in personal worth and immortality was an answer.
>
> 2. At the present time, the common Christian notion of immortality is a useless survival of tradition which lacks relevance to prevailing cultural conditions and social problems. In the wake of the empowering fields of empirical science, people have advantageously exchanged confidence in a priori certainty about afterlife details for the empirical control of worldly conditions. Immortality is now at best a non-intellectual vague hope for believers.
>
> 3. In the future, some conception of immortality may emerge which is relevant and valid for novel cultural

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conditions and problems.

We should take note of Moore's emphasis on treating the concept of immortality as a flexible and evolving concept, like any other concept. A concept's evolution is guided by the pressures of lived experience. True ideas are useful ideas for specific kinds of problematic situations and have no other validity beyond those situations, while false ideas fail to effectively deal with genuine problems. With regard to a concept of immortality, the pragmatist should first identify the object of desire to be achieved. Immortality is not, on this schema, the final object of desire, but rather a means of its attainment. The ultimate end desired, for which belief in immortality could serve as a means, is rather the guarantee of the permanent value of the individual. Belief in immortality was only one of the many manifestations of this guarantee in Christian theology. The uniqueness of each soul and God's love for each person are other manifestations.

How these doctrines have been understood by the faithful has not been a static matter. As Moore notes in various places in his paper, Christian depictions of the connection between body and soul, activities in the afterlife, and heaven's wonders have all gradually evolved, while increasing and decreasing in significance for the faith. According to Moore, the modern empowerment of individuals, and their corresponding enjoyment of personal advancement, explains why the vast majority of Christians today attach little doctrinal importance to arriving at a uniquely correct answer to such details concerning immortality, however vital this pursuit may seem to theologians. Do Moore's contentions have any resemblance to current religious scholarship? Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang (1988) survey the historical variety of Christian doctrines on heaven, contrasting them with present-day beliefs. McDannell and Lang describe how a three-fold division has separated Christians into those who (a) prefer the medieval "theocentric" heaven of beatific light and singing angels; (b) prefer the "modern" (18th-19th C.) heaven of continuing earthly pursuits such as learning and reuniting with family; and (c) profess ignorance about any details of the after-life, or even about whether it exists at all. Consistent with Moore's very rough outline, McDannell and Lang explain that medieval Christianity's heaven was completely different from earth; modern Christianity's heaven had many continuities and similarities with the mortal life; and that more recent skepticism emerged after scientific and philosophical critiques ridiculed heavenly speculations.

The fact that belief in immortality is presently a matter of individual preference, even if one prefers to have no confident opinion, leads Moore to categorize the question of immortality as a psuedo-problem in today's cultural context. This pragmatic stance of contextualism contrasts sharply with the typical philosophical approaches to immortality in the 20th century (and before). Immortality is not to be classified as a pseudo-problem because available evidence is contested or insufficient, though evidence is indeed problematic. Moore's

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pragmatic analysis seeks to understand why evidence is problematic, by locating the search for evidence in the context of problem-solving. Evidence for immortality is lacking because we do not know what we are looking for: the problem for which immortality is an answer is ill-defined, which is why it is a psuedo-problem. In order for belief in immortality to be an answer to a problem, it must be applied in formulating some plan of action that produces some experienceable consequences that might constitute the problem's solution.

Moore is well aware that many people regard dying, death, and oblivion as a problem, but fear and abhorrence of oblivion and non-existence are insufficient by themselves to establish a genuine problem in the pragmatic sense. Genuine problems involve some measure of creative cognitive activity during a process of problem-solving. The desire that death should not result in oblivion can, of course, be satisfied by tenaciously resolving to believe that death does not result in oblivion. But such resolution, however much the result of will-power and concentration, does not lend to belief in immortality any genuinely cognitive content. Only if a belief is established by learning, and not by wishing, can it earn any intellectual status. The obsession with death exemplified by existentialist and pessimist philosophers, who tell us that death gives meaning to life or that death/suicide is the greatest philosophical problem, might ground genuine problem-solving. If these views have value for increasing reflective control over the conditions of human happiness, then they satisfy the pragmatic criterion for intellectual significance. Interestingly, if death is necessary for life's meaning (doubted by all the pragmatists) then immortality must be rejected. For pragmatists, the enjoyment of chosen activities grounds life's meaning, and only a dogmatist could assert that an infinitely prolonged life must lack sufficiently interesting activities.[6] Neither Moore, nor Dewey, nor any of the pragmatists made a priori judgments against immortality, even while they questioned its capacity for improving worldly conditions.

Moore also recognizes that theologians and philosophers regard immortality as a problem, because various conceptions of immortality and the after-life can be more or less compatible with doctrines concerning divinity, salvation, and the soul. The reasonable effort to increase coherence among ideas is insufficient to establish a genuine problem in the pragmatic sense. The search for inconsistencies and the creative and imaginative work to reduce inconsistencies are only two of the several phases of genuine problem-solving. Moore's complaint against theological disputes over immortality does not rest on a generic protest against principles. Any problem-solving applies some set of principles that are not themselves questioned during inquiry, although those principles could become problematic in a separate inquiry. That is why empirical problem-solving cannot exist where some set of principles are taken to be necessities, permanently and dogmatically immune from any and all empirical consequences. The perennial attempts by dogmatic non-empirical theodicies to reconcile divinity with evil, for example, never could be legitimated from the

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pragmatic perspective.

Moore's disdain for rationalism, especially in the form of Hegelian idealism, cannot be overestimated, and so his scorn for philosophical proofs of immortality matches his conviction that only empirical inquiry deserves respect. However, a considerable number of philosophers in the late 1800s and early 1900s attempted to ground philosophical proofs for theism, the soul, and immortality upon experience (not psychical or mystical episodes but simply experience in general). Most notable among these efforts were those of the "personal idealists" who rejected the absorption of individuality into the Absolute. Personalism tried to satisfy the demands of Christian faith through a philosophical interpretation of the nature of human experience, contending that the fundamental modes and categories of human experience must be essential to reality as well. This contention can pave the way for demonstrating the permanence of the mind/soul, in the creative work of such figures as Josiah Royce (1900), Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison (1922), Edgar S. Brightman (1925), and William E. Hocking (1957). Moore does not acknowledge the existence of this kind of empirical philosophy in his essay on immortality. To argue against personalism, Moore would have had to appeal to the principles of functionalist and social psychology (see for example Moore 1910, pp. 220-244), but he never read the personalists carefully enough to take their views into account. A pragmatist must eventually turn to James or Dewey for a sufficiently sophisticated empiricism that could debate fundamental matters with the personalists.

Another kind of "empirical" approach to immortality appeals to peculiar episodes which purport to reveal the independence of the spirit from the body. Again, Moore has little to say about such mystical visions or psychical communications (and now we hear of paranormal phenomena and "near-death" experiences) beyond pointing to their disreputable status. To refute such allegedly empirical arguments for the after-life, Moore could easily point out how such episodes lack the characteristics required for genuine observations capable of testing a hypothesis. The pragmatic theory of problem-solving emphasizes that genuine observations are made under controlled and objective conditions, in which the evidence can be generated and inspected by multiple persons. Furthermore, scientific inquiry proceeds from the hypothesis stage to the observational testing stage, and does not proceed in the reverse direction. "Explaining" such strange experiences afterwards, and then waiting for more such events to show up in further "evidence" of the preferred hypothesis, is a mockery of the scientific method. As Moore argues, the widespread acceptance of science's results gradually brought with it an adoption of science's methodology, and a corresponding suspicion of non-scientific reasoning. Insofar as a conception of immortality can today claim any intellectual status, over and above the status of a fond wish, the belief in immortality must serve the reconstruction of human life for the living.

Interestingly, Moore's approach to immortality does not resemble more

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recent efforts by naturalistic philosophers to cast doubt on the possibility of immortality. Although Moore's sympathies rested with naturalism broadly defined, like most of the pragmatists, he does not use naturalistic premises to discredit immortality. Naturalism takes our basic conception of a person to be inextricably linked to our bodily life, and thus finds no way to make sense of a disembodied person. A wide variety of naturalistic critiques have been explored in the recent literature on immortality, for example Penelhum (1970), Phillips (1970), Lamont (1990), Edwards (1996), and Flew (1976) and (2000). A common theme of these critiques is to question whether personal identity can be maintained in an afterlife. The anti-dualism of these naturalistic approaches is evident, since one of the primary functions of the "soul" was to ground personal identity independently of the body. It should be noted that not all Christian apologists are content to appeal to the soul — see Habermas and Moreland (1992) for a rejection of Platonic and Cartesian dualism; and some philosophers including Almeder (1992) who favor naturalism do find sufficient empirical evidence for belief in an afterlife. Moore recognizes the understandable requirement that there should be experienced continuity between our mortal life and the afterlife, commenting that resurrectionists might have an easier time providing for continuity than dualists who believe in a "completely sterilized soul". Naturalistic philosophers have not ignored the doctrine of resurrection and the many conceptual difficulties involved, but matters seem to presently be at a stalemate due to the ingenuity of apologists such as Hick (1997) and Van Inwagen (1998). Moore's evident reluctance to engage the issue of immortality on a naturalistic basis does not, I think, reflect a failure of confidence in naturalism. Moore's essay is securely focused on the available empirical consequences of belief in immortality, demonstrating how pragmatism's empiricism is more fundamental than any ontological partiality.

The most natural and sympathetic approach to immortality that remains consistent with Moore's pragmatic test is therefore to treat the conception of immortality as an ethical postulate that can transform a person's moral experience and conduct. As an ethical postulate in this sense, immortality is not required for its promise of the eventual fulfillment of the person's potential beyond this lifetime, which John Hick labels as the basic religious argument for immortality (1976, pp. 152-156). Nor is immortality to be conceived as a requirement for the ultimate rightings of wrongs and the guarantee of justice, which also fails to be an empirical matter. Rather, immortality as an ***ethical*** postulate could be constructed as an aid to the fulfillment of personal moral capacities in this lifetime. If belief in immortality could have verifiable consequences for the effectiveness of moral conduct, the pragmatic empirical criterion can be satisfied — but Moore nowhere recognizes this possibility. Moore does accurately point to Hegelianism's elimination of personal immortality, but critics from F.H. Bradley's day to the present have (with some justification) also argued that Hegelianism eliminates morality as well. Why could there not be a deep

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connection between belief in immortality and morality? The early pragmatists, coming of age in the late 19th century, were well aware of the dramatic power exerted by tales of heaven and hell upon the faithful and unbelievers alike. It is likely that Moore's omission of immortality as an ethical postulate was caused by his opinion, widespread among philosophers persuaded by humanism and naturalism, that the promise of immortality and heaven has been as much a cause of immoral behavior as moral. Dewey explicitly said as much, complaining that preoccupations with the next life can replace interest in this life. "Of belief in immortality more than of any other element of historic religions it holds good, I believe, that 'religion is the opiate of the peoples'." (Dewey 1935, p. xiii) Dewey was persuaded that the ordinary Christian notions of immortality were not necessary for a successful and happy life (Rockefeller 1991, pp. 488-489).

Nevertheless, the fact that belief in immortality can affect morality suffices to make it amenable to the pragmatic empirical method, as various kinds of conceptions (including newly created conceptions) might be evaluated for their effects on moral thinking and conduct. It is only necessary first to pragmatically locate a belief's meaning in human life, as James and Moore contended. Dewey's distinction, between religion (always doctrinal and institutional) and "the religious" (values affecting all of experience), agrees that God's reality must be located in human experience. In *A Common Faith* Dewey makes the suggestion that

> the word "God" means the ideal ends that at a given time and place one acknowledges as having authority over his volition and emotion, the values to which one is supremely devoted, as far as these ends, through imagination, take on unity. (Dewey 1934, p. 42)

James, Dewey and Moore are not completely alone in their empirical treatment of religious beliefs. For example, D.Z. Phillips offers a neo-Wittgensteinian rejection of supernaturalism, holding that our conception of all doctrines including immortality must have some significant role in our religious life to possess any meaning: all types of desired participations with God must happen in this life if anywhere. "In learning by contemplation, attention, renunciation, what forgiving, thanking, loving, etc. mean in these contexts, the believer is participating in the reality of God; this is what we mean by God's reality." (Phillips 1970, p. 55)

Unfortunately, this empirical and pragmatic approach is rarely appreciated as a legitimate analysis of religious belief. The far more typical attitude among philosophers today is that unless the possibility of an afterlife can be objectively established first, there is little point to exploring the beneficial or harmful consequences of believing in immortality. The pragmatic approach does not recommend that we should wait for any "objective" conclusion on immortality

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(how long a wait?), but instead that we should proceed to enjoy as best we may the effects of belief on the conduct of our lives.

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NOTES

1. Sidney Hook (1974), Raymond Boisvert (1999), Stephen Rockefeller (1991, p. 534), Richard Shusterman (1997, pp. 48-50), and others have struggled to account for the deficit of death and tragic sensibility in Dewey's philosophy.

2. Moore's work has been assembled for publication as *The Collected Writings of Addison W. Moore*, John R. Shook (ed.), (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 2003).

3. While this long list tells against any misperception that pragmatists ignored immortality, in fairness it should be noted that few of these pragmatists felt that the question of immortality was of great concern to them personally. Peirce seemed immune from any paralyzing fear of death or the afterlife. James confessed that "my own personal feeling about immortality has never been of the keenest order." (1899, p. 3) Dewey's few comments on immortality indicate that he was not troubled by death's erasure of personality, having rejected the notion of a substantial personal soul.

4. Although Moore does not mention the work of James Leuba, his years of surveying the religious beliefs in God, the soul, and immortality among students and professors would doubtless have been known to Moore. Leuba (1916) collects his previous publications and conclusions.

5. Not all of James's writings on religion received the same degree of attention — interestingly, his writings on immortality were largely ignored. Neither his "transmission" theory of thought, inspired by his psychological and psychical research, nor his notion that every organism (including leaves) goes to heaven, made any discernable impact on Christian apologetics. For a discussion of James's efforts on immortality see Westra (1986).

6. On the discussion of whether immortality would devalue existence see Perrett (1986) and Williams (1993).

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Pragmatism and Immortality

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When Pragmatism — some of whose representatives had genially referred to referred to other philosophies as "disingenuous apologetics", was itself hailed as a new defender of the faith once delivered to the saints, the spectacle added greatly to the gaiety of our supposedly somber philosophical world.

The paradox is not difficult to understand, however, when we recall on the one hand, the desperate situation of apologetics, and the other hand, the popular conceptions of pragmatism at the beginning of the movement.

It was no other than Kant, himself a frank apologist and the greatest of them all, who had destroyed apologetics based upon the logical postulate which had been a rock of defense since the day of Plato. Kant no more than Laplace needed either God or immortality in his *science.*

Having been thoroughly terrified by this exhibition of teutonic ruthlessness and *gelenkigkeit*, the souls of the rationalistic apologists were properly prepared for the joys of salvation through the *ethical* postulate.

But this joy was short-lived. Scarcely were they comfortably settled in the new defenses, when they were mercilessly *enfiladed* by the Hegelians who had no difficulty in showing that the very arguments by which Kant reduced science to appearances, consigned morality to the same fate. (Bradley)

However, this attack of the Hegelians had the possible merit of cleverly linking science and morality if only by the fellowship of appearances (of postulation proper).

But the reduction of both science and morality to appearances by the Hegelians did not mean that they renounced the method of postulating for the world of appearances — *not* any particular Reality — but just the postulation of *Reality*, Reality when thought and Absolute.

But as for God, freedom, and immortality, apologists were soon going to find that the absolute must not be confused with God — nor did it guarantee immortality. If either God or the human individual were to have any abiding place in the universe they must first make their peace with the absolute. Whether this could be done was not certain, for there was nothing absolutely certain but the absolute. But some hints as to the method by which it might be done in the case of the human being was given by Bradley-Bosanquet and others. It consists of stripping off associationist logics of portion and finitude until the individual is

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reduced to the point where the apologists throw up their hands and exclaim, what doth it profit a man to save his soul and lose the whole world!

In anticipation of this protest Mr. Bradley characteristically observed that of course some people would not be happy in heaven if the dog were not there. And the apologists who understood their business answered, "in principle — yes verily when one talks seriously of immortality he means no pickwickian rat-souls *aufgehoben* affair." But the continuation of an existence after the death of the body shall have at least as much continuity of memory and perception and affection with the life in the body as any period of that life has with another. As versus the immortality of a completely sterilized soul the resurrectionists certainly have the best of it.

But we must not think of the breakdown of the postulating type of apologetics as due merely to bad dialectics. For, assuming an elementary knowledge of formal logic, dialectics as such never breaks down. Formally any object of desire may be made a postulate of anything else provided proper care is taken in formulating the latter (that so that the former is required as a postulate). The only thing that ever overthrows a postulate is that new conditions of life render the limitations on the problems necessary to require the postulate so unsatisfactory that we are gradually forced by these new conditions to exchange theory for more empirical effectiveness.

At a time when neither modern science nor the modern individualism of society was yet mature enough to be aware of its own nature and method, the limits on the problems of logic and ethics necessary to the requirements of the postulate of immortality could be imposed, with relatively little embarrassment — indeed with positive value. Immortality was a *general* and *formal* assertion of the individual at a time and under conditions when he had relatively little capacity and opportunity for substantial and concrete assertion. It was a measure of self-promotion. Thence also the demand for apodictic certainty. The individual *must* be preserved at all hazards. The demand for a priori certainty is always in inverse ratio to the amount of empirical control. Hence also the favorite thesis of a priorism that the only thing that is apodictically certain is the existence of God or later, of the absolute.

But as modern science grew apace, and with it the problems of modern society, the limitations on the theory of logic and ethics necessary to the postulate of immortality were more and more a handicap in scientific and social operations. This increased to the point when the individual at last felt required to exchange the comforts of the a priori system of postulation for more empirical freedom. In its early stages this exchange began in a surrender of the *details* of the future world and details of the elaborate scheme of salvation. In the last stage there is left the absolute of which we can say only *that* it is not *what* it is. Here no postulated detail is left to embarrass either science or social experiment. Perhaps after all too much of a logic has been made of the absolute. He is but the empty shell — the ghost of Scholasticism. But even as such it has nobly served its day

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and generation. It removed from the scholastic system all details embarrassing to the programs of science and society — and broke the shock of the transition from the scholastic to modern scientific method.

Such was the situation at the beginning of the pragmatic movement. Little wonder apologists were ready to grasp at any straw, and they thought they had found one in the *alleged* doctrine of pragmatism that thought is subordinate to desire and practice and that the satisfaction of any existing ready-made desire is the criterion of truth.

As I remarked at the outset this pragmatic apologetics was an easy mark for the critics who lost no time in pointing out that if absolutism was a "disingenuous apologetics", this was guilty of a far deeper philosophical crime — it was disingenuous immortality as trickier simplicity. The elaborated apologetics of [*illeg*] logic and ethics postulation could not compete with a doctrine that blandly avows that the wish is father not only to the *thought* but to the truth.

And so far as my understanding of pragmatism goes, all that has been said and more if possible about this type of pragmatic apologetics is fully justified. But it is indeed true that pragmatism did and does teach that the nature and criterion of thinking, and of truth, can not be defined apart from desire, and conduct. That there is no such thing as a purely intellectual problem. But this thesis involves not only a theory of knowledge and truth but what is equally important — though it generally has been overlooked — a theory of *desire*. Had the pragmatist in the early days of the movement been at as much pains to expound his views of desire along with his exposition of the nature of thought and truth, we might have been spared a vast amount of misunderstanding and plaintive charges of obscurity on both sides.

As it was, nearly everybody was trying to hitch up the pragmatists' account of thought and truth to an unpragmatic notion of desire — the latter being usually his conception of a set of ready-made physical, social, aesthetic-intellectual, religious desires each with its definite object, — thought being called in according to the supposed pragmatic doctrine to assist in the satisfaction. On this showing thought becomes indeed, as was so often charged, a mere handmaid of desire. However, *even* on this interpretation, the desire must be such that intelligence *can* assist it, *can* plan some steps towards its fulfillment, *can* project hypotheses, and make some attempt at verification.

But the relation between desire and intelligence is much more intimate and organic than this. Thus in its ethical form the problem of desire is never that of simply satisfying an existing form of desire. It is always the problem of *getting* and *constructing* some definite desire out of a number of conflicting desires *as material* (realizing of course the reconstruction of the object of desire). This calls for the highest possible exercise of intelligence. In [an] old fashioned phrase the problem is the rationalization of desire. This does not mean, however, as it was often taken, of old, to mean, that pure reason is to be *substituted* for desire. It means that the work of intelligence *is* precisely the reconstructing, the pruning,

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the chastening and remolding of desires so that the particular modes of it may constitute a mutually cooperating, instead of a conflicting, mutually inhibiting, system. Intelligent thinking is thinking that effects this.

But this is anything but a subordination of intelligence and truth to desire. It is more nearly a subordination of desire to intelligence, though this again would not be correct. Intelligence is the reflective reconstruction of the objects of desire. This implies that there are true and false forms of desire as well as true and false ideas. As false thinking is that which fails to so reform and remold the objects of desire that a cooperating satisfaction is possible, so a false desire is one which cannot be so remolded *or* is one for whose fulfillment intelligence can inaugurate no definite procedure — no plan.

In terms of problems – this implies that as there are true or false ideas and desires, so there are genuine and psuedo problems. In a genuine problem we can take steps towards a solution, we can propose hypotheses, and attempt verification. A genuine problem is one which involves a *real* future, *i.e.* a future expounded in a more or less definite experimental program of solution. A psuedo problem is one for the solution of which we can devise no specific procedure, for which we can propose no hypothesis which we can take steps to verify. Its future is simply algebraic — we cannot translate it into terms of our present materials and technique.

But we must beware of construing these definitions too narrowly. *First*, in the beginning of the pragmatic movement there were many who believed — and there are still a few *e.g.* Prof. Fite — who held that the only sort of problem a pragmatist can recognize is of the type of finding something to eat or climbing a fence. But the rumor has gradually gained credence that by a problem a pragmatist means what any undebauched mind means — anything *from* climbing a fence to — shall we say immortality — if the latter *be* indeed a genuine problem as above defined.

Second, when insisting on a problem with a genuine as opposed to a merely algebraic future we must remember that the future may still be very dimly attained. Progress in most great problems — of [the] source and maintenance of social justice, of [the] art of world peace — begins in dreams. But these dreams however dimly lived, are not of a Bergsonian future in general, nor on the other hand, of a future questioning of *e.g.* logicians in Barbara or of *haus* and *intraus*, symbol and argument-relations. These dreams brood over the waters, they clear the air — they conquer dialectics and infinities. They dip into the fountain far as human eyes can see. Still it is a future which is seen and seen as a development of the materials and techniques of the present.

This brings us to close quarters with the question — which is how far does the existence of the human person independent of his organism and environment represent, *at present*, a rational desire, a genuine problem, and a real future. Is it a desire for the attainment of which we can *at present* plan any definite procedure? The psychical researchers of course have no difficulty with this question. But the

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smallness of their numbers and the fact that they are taken seriously by so few except themselves shows how very formal *at present* the problem is for most of us. So far it seems to be only an unconditionalized desire and hope.

To be sure when we observe how continuity of personality may be maintained through astonishing mutilations and transformations of the immediate bodily organism, when we recall the marvels of radiant energy, when we are reminded of the extent to which, in James' phrase, our empirical self becomes knit up with and dependent upon a wide range of objects in addition to the mere body, with all of these before us we may easily indulge in fancies over the qualitative and quantitative limits of the body of the human person. And taking flight with the good Bishop of Cloyne, we may extend the limits of the body to the "whole furniture of earth and choir of heaven." But is this more than fancy? Is it an image that, at present, has the status either of fact or a genuine hypothesis whose verification we can set about. Moreover, even in this fancy, the person would not be without a physical body. Indeed, he has so much body that the difficulty is even to fancy him as human. I very much doubt if any one ever succeeded in envisaging a disembodied person. Even for Paul, who was ever urging the antithesis of the natural and the spiritual, there is a *material* body and a spiritual *body*.

Here some modern Cartesian may suggest that while we cannot *envisage* a disembodied person — we can think it — and he will propose imageless thought, *i.e.* disembodied thought, as the proper means of thinking disembodied persons. This may be a pleasing rhetorical conceit but I doubt if it has any more force than the proposal of blonde and brunette ideas with which to think of light and dark persons.

For the summary, the net result are these:

1) That immortality as a postulate of logic and ethics depends on so formulating the logical and ethical problem as to demand the postulate.

2) When this is done the limitations placed on logic and ethics so handicaps them in meeting the growing demands of science and society that modern logic and ethics have been forced to give up the limitations and with them the postulate.

3) The pragmatic apologetics was conceived in innocence of the real import of the pragmatic teaching conceiving the relation between thought and truth, and desire and conduct.

4) *At present*, immortality for most of us does not

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> possess the status of a real problem. It does not figure either as itself an hypothesis for the control of specific immediate experiences or as an end for the realization of which we can take definite steps. *At present*, it remains an unrationalized object of desire and hope.

But,

> 5) This does not warrant the dogma that it never can attain the status of a genuine hypothesis or even of *verification.*

Meanwhile we cultivate our garden, in the belief that if in the course of this cultivation immortality should be brought to light — devoted and intelligent labor in the garden, for results that we can foresee and pursue, guarantees the best possible preparedness for any immortality which could have any ***meaning*** or value for us.

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