

## Putnam, Pragmatism, and Dewey

Hilary Putnam's commitment to pragmatism is deepening. In his recent collection of essays, *Words and Life* (1994), he enumerates the pragmatist theses he finds compelling:

What I find attractive in pragmatism is not a systematic theory in the usual sense at all. It is rather a certain group of theses ... Cursorily summarized, those theses are

- (1) antisepticism: pragmatists hold that doubt requires justification just as much as belief ...
- (2) fallibilism: pragmatists hold that there is never a metaphysical guarantee to be had that such-and-such a belief will never need revision (that one can be both fallibilistic and antiseptical is perhaps the unique insight of American pragmatism.);
- (3) the thesis that there is no fundamental dichotomy between "facts" and "values"; and
- (4) the thesis that, in a certain sense, practice is primary in philosophy. (WL 152)<sup>1</sup>

Further, in *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (1995) Putnam vigorously defends the classical pragmatists' picture of inquiry by distancing it from Carnapian positivism:

The pragmatist picture is totally different [from Carnap's]. For Peirce and Dewey, inquiry is cooperative human interaction with an environment; and both aspects, the active intervention, the active manipulation of the environment, and the cooperation with other human beings, are vital. ...Ideas must be put under strain, if

they are to prove their worth; and Dewey and James both followed Peirce in this respect. (POQ 70-71)

Over the past two decades, significant attention has been paid to Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam. Of central interest has been their debate regarding realism and antirealism, as well as their doctrinal shifts away from analytic philosophy towards some version of pragmatism. However, up until now only Rorty's formulations of pragmatism (and his interpretations of figures in classical pragmatism) have been carefully examined by more than a handful of scholars of American philosophy.<sup>2</sup> Putnam's writings on pragmatism have yet to undergo a similar degree of scrutiny.<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that this essay encourages further critical evaluations of Putnam's work in American philosophy.

I proceed as follows: after describing some of Putnam's motives for moving toward classical pragmatism, I focus upon his interpretations of Dewey's epistemology and metaphilosophy. Though Putnam's general approach to Dewey is a promising one, several fundamental problems of interpretation merit discussion. Of central importance is Putnam's presentation of Dewey on the issues of knowledge and truth and his construal of the classical pragmatist thesis (4) "that, in a certain sense, practice is primary in philosophy." I assess Putnam's view of what counts as a "practical starting point" and argue that Dewey's characterization of it is significantly different and superior. General comments about the relation of Putnam's neopragmatism to Deweyan pragmatism conclude the paper.<sup>4</sup>

### *I. Putnam's Turn Towards Classical Pragmatism*

For many, Hilary Putnam's turn to pragmatism over the last two decades comes as no surprise. Over the years, Putnam has spilled a considerable amount of ink chronicling his evolution as a philosopher: his early beginnings in the philosophy of mind, language, and mathematics, later reworkings of metaphysics and epistemology, and most recently his focus upon ethical and political issues. His development as a realist — from "metaphysical" to "internal" to "pragmatic/natural/direct"— is a theme that recurs in these works and is a central preoccupation. Though Putnam's development as an individual philosopher is important, here the main concern is why Putnam has turned so enthusiastically to pragmatism and how he thinks the ideas of the classical pragmatists may help reorient philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

Which contemporary debates *outside* of philosophy does he believe call for the pragmatists' mediation? Two basic conflicts motivate Putnam to promote pragmatism as a palliative; one is cultural, the other is philosophical. The cultural controversies will be familiar to academics in almost any field. English departments quarrel over issues of content, such as which writers should be included in the literary canon, and whether such a thing should even exist; they argue over method, questioning whether texts are best interpreted by emphasizing intrinsic or extrinsic factors. History and Art History departments factionalize around

similar issues of legitimation while the natural sciences (e.g., Physics) debate whether their theories are ultimate accounts of nature's structure or simply useful tools for the amelioration of current and impending problems.<sup>6</sup> As Putnam notes, our current "culture wars" would not seem foreign to Dewey, who participated in similar debates in his own day.<sup>7</sup>

Philosophically, these cultural schisms are rooted in the long-standing debate over realism. Putnam sees that classical pragmatism addressed the fundamentals of this controversy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and he suggests that classical pragmatism may also provide a way out of the deadlocks of the late twentieth century:

Dewey, as I read him, was concerned to show that we can retain something of the spirit of Aristotle's defense of the common-sense world, against the excesses of both the metaphysicians and the sophists, without thereby committing ourselves to the metaphysical essentialism that Aristotle propounded. ...I am convinced that ... the search for a middle way between reactionary metaphysics and irresponsible relativism — was also one of Dewey's concerns throughout his exemplary philosophical career. (DL 1 447)

Indeed, Putnam finds in pragmatism a defensible and radically different form of realism that he believes can mediate the realism and antirealism debate in which he has been deeply involved.<sup>8</sup>

Central to the pragmatist's realist solution is the thesis that, as Putnam puts it, "practice is primary in philosophy." Dewey and other classical pragmatists emphasized this thesis by insisting that any adequate reconstruction of philosophy has to presuppose its own social relevance. Like Rorty, Putnam has expressed impatience with the continued disconnection of professional philosophy from social problems and has agreed that Dewey was correct to argue that the project of constructing systematic accounts of the world from an absolute or God's-eye perspective has not only been unsuccessful by philosophical standards, it has come to seem reprehensible because of its isolation from human beings and their problems. In *Renewing Philosophy* Putnam writes,

Dewey held that the idea of a single theory that explains everything has been a disaster in the history of philosophy. ...While we should not stop trying to make our theories consistent ... in philosophy we should abandon the dream of a single absolute conception of the world, he thought. Instead ... we should see philosophy as a reflection on how human beings can resolve the various

sorts of problematical situations that they encounter, whether in science, in ethics, in politics, in education, or wherever. My own philosophical evolution has been from a view like Bernard Williams' to a view much more like John Dewey's. (RP 2-3)

In short, contemporary social and philosophical problems motivate Putnam's call for renewed attention to classical pragmatism. He has paid that attention, along with his wife and collaborator, Ruth Anna Putnam, by writing a number of critical reappraisals of various classical pragmatists and also by incorporating some of their key insights into his own work. Both the extent of the Putnams' efforts and the scope of their influence call for more critical examination of their work. For the remainder of this essay, I focus on their interpretation of John Dewey's epistemology and metaphilosophy, as well as the degree to which Hilary Putnam's ideas have come to resemble Dewey's.

## *II. Truth, Verification, and Relativism*

Like many other analytic philosophers in the twentieth century, Putnam rejects the metaphysical realism (hereafter MR) so long a part of traditional epistemology. He argues that truth must not be represented "as simply a mystery mental act by which we relate ourselves to a relation called 'correspondence' that is totally independent of the practices by which we *decide* what is and what is not true" (POQ 11). Of course, once this extreme form of realism is rejected, there are many ways one can go. Putnam first devised his "internal" realism, and has lately replaced it with a "pragmatic" or "natural" realism. What is most interesting about these positions from the standpoint of this paper is how they reflect upon classical pragmatism.

According to Putnam, the classical pragmatists' response to MR was too extreme. Indeed, it was not as extreme as is Rortyan deconstruction (also called "relativism" by Putnam) but it offends in a similar way: it destroys an important aspect of the notion of "truth." It does this by identifying truth and verification. Putnam writes,

To be sure, rejection of that sort of metaphysical realism [correspondence] does not require us to follow the pragmatists in identifying the true with what is (or would be) "verified" in the long run. Unlike the pragmatists, I do not believe that truth can be *defined* in terms of verification. (POQ 11)

This is a familiar charge against pragmatism. To estimate its force, one might ask two questions: first, what does Putnam believe is being lost by such an identification? Second, in what sense does he think truth and verification are distinct?<sup>9</sup>

First, one of the things Putnam does not want to see lost is what he calls the “tenselessly true.” To see why pragmatism is destructive of this, it is necessary to quote Putnam at length.

What we have spoken of so far are what James called “half-truths,” these being the best anyone can hope to achieve, but always subject to correction by subsequent experience. James also appears to accept the Peircean idea of truth (he calls it “absolute truth”) as a coherent system of beliefs which will ultimately be accepted by the widest possible community of inquirers as the result of strenuous and attentive inquiry (what Peirce called the “final opinion”). However, James accepts this notion only as a regulative ideal...

... This bifurcation of the notion of truth into a notion of available truth (half-truth) and unavailable but regulative “absolute truth” is obviously problematic. Dewey proposes to remove the difficulty: he jettisons the notion of “absolute truth” and settles for half-truth (renamed “warranted assertibility”). But the price of this seems too high in another way; it loses a desirable distinction (and one that James recognizes) between saying of a statement that it is warrantably assertible on the basis of all the evidence we have to date and saying that it is (“tenselessly”) true. (RHF 221-222)

Though Putnam has retracted his criticism that Dewey “settles for half-truth,”<sup>10</sup> he still rejects Dewey’s theory of truth. In a very recent article, the Putnams write “Hilary Putnam ... *rejects* James’, Dewey’s, and Peirce’s theories of truth on the ground that all three thinkers believe that a proposition cannot be true unless it is ‘fated’ to be verified in the long run.”<sup>11</sup> I will comment upon this issue in the next section; for the moment, let’s stay with the puzzle regarding what could Putnam intend by “tenselessly” true. A clue might be found in Putnam’s notion of truth as “idealized warrant” for rational beings. Putnam writes that

The picture I propose instead is not the picture of Kant’s transcendental idealism, but it is certainly related to it. It is the picture that truth comes to nothing more than idealized rational acceptability. ...All I ask is that what is supposed to be “true” be *warrantable* on the basis of experience and intelligence for creatures with “a rational and sensible nature.” (RHF 41)

By grounding “true” in “warrant” and “warrant” in “rational nature,” Putnam seems to be looking for a way to nip relativism in the bud. His fear is that by attending to the contexts of knowledge, which are perspectival and particular, we blur the line between “truth” and “inquiry” and too easily slip headlong into relativism.

His maneuvers to block relativism are rooted in ethical concerns, not in some dogmatic hope that epistemology and metaphysics can reveal the way things really are. Specifically, he tries to block the Rortyan relativist, whose clumsy attacks upon MR have led, Putnam believes, to ethical relativism. In *Realism with a Human Face*, Putnam sought to identify his common ground and his differences with Rorty.

[Like the Rortyan relativist, the Putnamian internal realist] is willing to think of reference as internal to “texts” (or theories), *provided* we recognize that there are better and worse “texts.” “Better” and “worse” may themselves depend on our historical situation and our purposes; there is no notion of a God’s-Eye View of Truth here. But the notion of a right (or at least a “better”) answer to a question is subject to two constraints:

- (1) *Rightness is not subjective.* What is better and worse to say about most questions of real human concern is not just a matter of *opinion*. ...
- (2) *Rightness goes beyond justification.* ...My own view is that truth is to be identified with idealized justification, rather than with justification-on-present-evidence. “Truth” in this sense is as context sensitive as *we* are. (RHF 114-115)

Here Putnam’s tool is “idealized justification,” and like “rational nature” it is meant to prevent the slide toward an unsophisticated (Rortyan) relativism. But why is this move necessary? After all, as long as inquiry is done with care, there is no reason that “present evidence” could not provide a satisfactory answer — which one we might even call “better” or “right.” Perhaps Putnam assumes that all “present evidence” is necessarily inadequate; that would be a very unpragmatic assumption indeed. If he has not assumed that, then his response (meant to counter Rorty’s slide from epistemological to ethical relativism) seems draconian.

To better understand his move to block the relativist, it helps to know that Putnam is inspired by a Kantian model of humanity. In *Realism and Reason* Putnam wrote,

Let us recognize that one of our fundamental self-conceptualizations ... is that we are *thinkers*, and that *as* thinkers we are committed to there being *some* kind of truth, some kind of correctness which is substantial and not merely “disquotational.” That means that there is no eliminating the normative. (RR 246)

Seeing rationality as something that is part of *us*, Putnam rejects deflationary and reductionist conceptions of truth. Believing that we are committed to some kind of truth “which is substantial and not merely ‘disquotational’” he will not accept that calling a sentence “true” is simply saying that speakers who share a language and possess the same evidence may substitute and assert an equivalent sentence with the same degree of warrant; as Putnam puts it, for a Tarskian “To say a sentence is true is just to make an equivalent statement” (WL 269). Recently, Putnam explained the sense in which truth is “substantial.” Truth is substantial because it is a kind of property:

In my view, however, we do have a notion of truth, even if we don't have an enlightening account of “the nature of truth” in the high metaphysical sense, and in my view truth is *a* property of many of the sentences we utter and write. ...If asked why I hold on to this idea, in the face of our lack of success with the high metaphysical enterprise, I would answer that we can recognize many clear cases of truth, as well as of falsity. (WL 265)

In sum, Putnam's beliefs about truth and verification present a picture which is ambiguously pragmatic. He has argued that the classical pragmatist responses to MR were too drastic because they identified truth too closely with verification (inquiry in the long run), and doing this damaged an important notion for Putnam, the “tenselessly” true. Tenseless truth shows that human nature is — if not ultimately, at least for this historical epoch — rational. If rationality is no longer taken to be our nature, objectivity in moral matters is compromised. To assess the weight of these charges, the next section will focus on the following questions. First, how valid is Putnam's charge that pragmatism, particularly Dewey's, identifies truth with verification too closely? Is it valid to reject Dewey's theory of truth because of its affinity to Peirce's? Second, can Putnam's notions of “truth as idealized justification” and “tenseless truth” be taken as updated versions of Deweyan ideas? In what sense are they pragmatic ideas?

### III. *Natural Realism, Old and New*

Before assessing Putnam's specific criticisms of Dewey, it is worth noting some historical precedents. As did many of this century's early realists, Putnam

hesitates about certain aspects of the early pragmatists' antirealism — particularly the supposed claim that truth cannot be isolated from verification. To be sure, Putnam does not argue, as neorealist W.P. Montague did,<sup>12</sup> that pragmatism's identification of truth with verification was *idealistic* (because verification was just part of the self's subjective experience). Nor does he propose (as Montague did) the realist counter-claim that verification leads to truth only because it discovers a preexisting relation (which would, of course, be MR). But Putnam does want to insist that there is *some* kind of agreement that obtains between our language and the world. The early realists argued that a distinction must be made between ideas that "correspond" to reality and ideas that "agree" with reality. In "Professor Dewey's View of Agreement," critical realist Roy Wood Sellars argued that knowledge is achieved when we fulfill a need by finding an idea that *agrees* with the world outside us.<sup>13</sup> When this agreement takes place, we say the idea *is* true, that the idea agrees with the physical world *as we conceive of it*. That last qualification is added by Sellars because given the epistemological problems of psychophysical dualism we cannot know what the real world is like. But because we are "natural realists," Sellars says, we believe that our amended vision of the world is the way *the world was all along*. If we are told that a stick in water is not bent and we verify this, we say that the judgment about the stick was true of the world; we do not say that our verification *made* it true.

In his recent "Dewey Lectures," Putnam also espouses a "natural realism" and he offers it as a moderate course between MR and deconstruction. This strategy, consciously or unconsciously, is deeply reminiscent of Sellars, who believed his natural realist version of "agreement" could provide a moderate course between pragmatism and rational idealism. To recall, Sellars wrote,

Extreme pragmatists emphasize too strenuously the fact of function, of reconstruction, of change, the personal side. Extreme intellectualists see only the formal, the structural, the timeless, and thus may fall into the copy view. As in most controversies, a middle position is more likely to be right.<sup>14</sup>

Sellars' statement expresses a critical bias that Putnam, along with many other analytic philosophers, have long used in their assessments of pragmatism. In their view, pragmatism rushes toward reconstructive action, lacking reflection. In their haste to combat the metaphysical realist's Truth — abstract and viewed from Nowhere — the pragmatists emphasize inquiry and justification to a degree that, in effect, eliminates truth altogether. This is why, despite Putnam's hearty approval of Dewey's theory of inquiry, he rejects the Dewey-Peirce definition of truth. Verification, even in an ideal and subjunctive "long run," still ignores Putnam's dicta that rightness "is not subjective," that it "goes beyond justification." Rather than give up on truth entirely, as do Rortyans and Deweyans, Putnam seeks a



way that “pure knowledge” might remain “tenselessly true.” His solution is to split the difference between pragmatists and metaphysical realists with “idealized justification.”

But this solution is neither called for nor tenable. Dewey would agree with Putnam that *truth is not the product of a correspondence with reality*; he would also agree that *truth is constrained by evidence and context*, and is not simply the product of subjective opinion. Yet Dewey would question why Putnam goes ahead to define truth as “idealized” justification. If, historically, Putnam is right to say that the project of formulating a definition of truth-free-from-all-contexts was futile, then why would he think it could be any easier to determine what “idealized justification” comes to? This latter question seems no less unanswerable. One might defend Putnam here by saying “No — it is not *justification* that is idealized, rather the future *community* of scientific inquirers presenting it.” But this move makes the problem no less intractable. For even if one idealizes “community” rather than “justification” there is still the basic problem of how “idealized” can be substantially spelled out, as well as the related (and thorny) problem of which community best exemplifies the paradigm: “we” wet liberals (Rorty’s “we”), “we” recent immigrants, “we” Christian Scientists. In short, who are “we”?

It’s worth asking if there is a significant difference between Putnam’s truth-as-idealized-justification and Dewey’s own, basically Peircean, definition of truth. Perhaps the most palpable difference is the attitude behind their proposals. Putnam’s construal of “true” means to make truth “substantial,” a bulwark against relativism. Dewey’s definition of truth, according to Putnam, can’t provide that because it runs truth and verification together, tending toward relativism — for him, it is simply Peirce all over again. However, if Putnam had supplemented *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* by attending to Dewey’s “Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder” (1941), he might have avoided making too much of Dewey’s *definition of truth* and would have focused upon Dewey’s *theory of inquiry*. In that article, defending his theories against Bertrand Russell’s misconstruals, Dewey clarified his motives for even defining truth at all.

There is a distinction made in my theory between validity and truth. The latter is defined, following Peirce, as the ideal limit of indefinitely continued inquiry. This definition is, of course, a definition of truth *as an abstract idea*. This definition gives Mr. Russell a surprising amount of trouble, due I think to the fact that he omits all reference to the part played in the theory of Peirce — which I follow — by the principle of the continuity of inquiry. ...

The “truth” of any present proposition is, by the definition subject to the outcome of continued inquiries; *its*

“truth” if the word must be used, is provisional; as *near* the truth as inquiry has *as yet* come, a matter determined not by a guess at some future belief but by the care and pains with which inquiry has been conducted up to the present time. (LW 14: 56- 57)<sup>15</sup>

What is important here is how Dewey’s definition of truth consciously places the focus back upon inquiry. If we must define truth, Dewey is saying, then Peirce’s formulation will do. Just remember that this definition (a) merely defines truth *as an abstract idea*<sup>16</sup> and, (b) is, in virtue of the principle of the continuity of inquiry, conceptually inseparable from the process of inquiry.<sup>17</sup>

The difference between Putnam’s “truth as idealized justification” and Dewey’s “truth as the ideal limit of inquiry” may seem slight, but I believe it is rooted in different attitudes about what philosophy should try to achieve. For some reason, Putnam finds something valuable in the project of defining truth. Dewey made an effort to define truth mostly because his interlocutors could not (or would not) understand his theory of inquiry without first requiring that he take a stand on truth. (For contemporary pragmatists, not much has changed.) In the *Logic* Dewey writes,

The attainment of settled beliefs is a progressive matter; *there is no belief so settled as not to be exposed to further inquiry*. ... In scientific inquiry, the criterion of what is taken to be settled, or to be knowledge, is being *so* settled that it is available as a resource in further inquiry; not being settled in such a way as not to be subject to revision in further inquiry. (LW 12: 16, my emphasis)

Had he been considering the issue currently under discussion, Dewey could just as easily have said that *there is no belief so true as not to be exposed to further inquiry*. A set of statements are taken as true, that is, as knowledge, because we can use them to answer further questions, i.e., because they are now functioning as a resource within inquiry. Formulating definitions of what “really true” might mean seems pointless, for it is a project that is bound either to look for a God’s eye point of view (which Putnam has repudiated) or for some assurance that what is now a resource for further inquiry will *always* be a resource. Dewey’s reply — or Rorty’s, for that matter — would be “Who knows? We change, the universe changes, our problems change. Why do you need such assurance, anyway?” Ultimately, Dewey and Putnam’s different attitudes about truth stem from their rather different views about how “practice is primary in philosophy.”<sup>18</sup> I will return to this difference in the last section of this essay.

#### IV. *Pure and Practical Knowledge, Commonsense and Scientific Value*

Other remarks by Putnam highlight his epistemological differences with pragmatism, and particularly with Dewey. As we saw earlier, pragmatism has the unfortunate tendency to undermine the tenselessly true. Unless it is construed properly, it will also fail to provide a basis for “pure knowledge,” which has traditionally been an objective for philosophers, theoretical scientists, and theologians, and is something which Putnam would also like to preserve, albeit in an attenuated form. The question is, can Dewey be read in a way that makes room for “pure knowledge” of any kind?

According to Putnam, he can. How? First, Dewey correctly saw that pure and applied science were interdependent and interpenetrating activities; he also saw that instrumental and terminal values were interdependent and interpenetrating. Crucially, and more controversially, Putnam interprets Dewey to support a difference in kind between scientific and ethical values. And it is this which directly supports the pure knowledge/practical knowledge distinction his pragmatism would preserve. For example, about Dewey’s *Logic* Putnam writes:

What Dewey’s argument [in the *Logic*] does show is that there is a certain overlap between scientific values and ethical values; but even where they overlap, these values remain different. Scientific values are not simply instrumental ... but they are relativized to a context — the context of knowledge acquisition — and knowledge acquisition itself is something that can be criticized ethically. (WL 174)

In reply, I’d comment that Putnam is right to say that Dewey would insist upon not exempting scientific institutions from ethical scrutiny; it also makes sense to suggest that scientists *qua* scientists take *as central to practice* a different set of values. (For example, scientists particularly favor values such as thoroughness, corroboration, experimental innovation, abstractive imagination, consistency, adequacy, honesty, and so forth.) But it is less plausible for Putnam to infer that since there are certain sets of values whose function is particularly important to scientific practices, Dewey would have considered those values to be “scientific,” if by that it is meant that they stand in a *categorical* contrast to, say, ethical or aesthetic values.

Let me be careful here. I am not implying that Putnam is a positivist — he clearly rejects absolute demarcations between science and ethics as human enterprises. But his claim that scientific values are different from ethical values makes it hard to reconcile his view with Dewey’s. But he needs this distinction, and wants to find it in Dewey, because he thinks that the distinction between “pure” and “practical” knowledge is also worth saving.

[W]e are not — nor were we ever — interested in knowledge only for its practical benefits; curiosity is coeval with the species itself, and pure knowledge is always, to some extent, and in some areas, a terminal value even for the least curious among us. (WL 173)

I suspect that Putnam downplays Dewey's emphasis upon the continuity between ethical and scientific inquiry because it threatens not only the "tenselessly true", but "pure knowledge" as well. And while Putnam doesn't absolutely separate pure and practical knowledge, he is unwilling to drop this distinction since skepticism and relativism still pose a threat.<sup>19</sup> But Putnam's distinction between pure and practical knowledge would have troubled Dewey. In the *Logic* Dewey notes that "knowledge" may be taken in two ways, as the closing phase of inquiry *or* as the product of inquiry. The sense of "knowledge" intended by Putnam's phrase "pure knowledge" is the more substantive connotation, knowledge as the end *product* of inquiry. Formulating such definitions is not troublesome, *per se*. In fact, Dewey defines knowledge qua product in the *Logic*: "It is the convergent and cumulative effect of continued inquiry that defines knowledge in its general meaning" (LW 12:16). But what is noteworthy here is the *utter* lack of transcendent undertones and the pointed stress upon the continuity of knowledge with inquiry mentioned above.

Can one find anything like "pure knowledge" in Dewey's mature works? The closest I have come is the passage (quoted above) in the *Logic* stating that the mark of knowledge is "being *so* settled that it is available as a resource in further inquiry" (LW 12: 16). But this is not very close to "pure knowledge" at all. If "pure knowledge" is taken to mean what "knowledge" meant in traditional epistemology, it is likely to be just another source of confusion which Dewey would recommend we avoid. He writes:

Knowledge is then supposed to have a meaning of its own apart from connection with and reference to inquiry. The theory of inquiry is then necessarily subordinated to this meaning as a fixed external end. ...The idea that any knowledge in particular can be instituted apart from its being the consummation of inquiry, and that knowledge in general can be defined apart from this connection is, moreover, one of the sources of confusion in logical theory. (LW 12: 15-16)<sup>20</sup>

In short, the pure knowledge/practical knowledge distinction is a dangerous one which should not be imputed to Dewey. Moreover, if Putnam wants his theory to reflect Dewey's insights, he, too, should avoid it. It is dangerous for two reasons. First, because it tends to encourage shallow and piecemeal understandings