

Truth without Correspondence to Reality

Richard Rorty

Abstract

Pragmatism's acceptance of spiritual experience is often said to be a distinctively American philosophy. The classical pragmatists Dewey and James frequently refer to the relationship between pragmatism and American democracy. This link is most accurately revealed in a Whitmanesque Americanism which holds that America is a country which counts almost entirely upon the future. Dewey attacks the attempts by European metaphysicians, such as Kant and Plato, to canonize the cultural values of the past, instead, he holds up Hegel and Darwin as recognizing that philosophy should transform and serve progress rather than exist as an eternal truth. Current neo-pragmatists (like Davidson) very rarely discuss the relationship between Americanism and pragmatism. Instead, after the important contribution of the "linguistic turn" they constructed the pragmatist theory of truth. Their efforts have been towards de-Kantianizing and re-Hegelianizing American philosophy, which aids our rejection of the view that knowledge is a representation of reality. From Dewey's perspective, these unpragmatic ideas about knowledge can be dismissed, as he expects the creation of a better future to replace Plato's attempts to evade the temporal world.