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Pragmatists do not believe that we have any means to know about the way how things really are out there. All that our knowledge is, is simply an aggregate of action-related linguistic constructions of language users within a social community. Therefore, we can have an infinite number of standpoints to the world. We acquire knowledge by doing, in transactions with our environment. Nobody can step out of her action. That is why we can only have knowledge from our own actor's point of view: thoughts are not claims about what is, but they are claims about the actions at hand. Concepts are tools of communication and coordination, and their adequacy can be tested in action and co-operation when people assess the results of their doings. Following Donald Davidson (1990a; 1990b, 303-5) and Richard Rorty (1979; 1991, 1-12), we understand knowledge in an antirepresentationalist vein, not in terms of the metaphor of seeing or mirroring, but as a linguistic tool human organisms use when coping with their environment. The only way how people can obtain knowledge about anything is by intentional descriptions, using the symbols of a specific language. (Cf. Kivinen & Piironen 2006a)

Charles Peirce's (1986/1878) insight that a belief is a habit of action can be complemented with a remark from William James that all anyone can have is one's actor's point of view on anything — a living, positioned, interested point of view, right here and now. Inquiry is no exception. Most notably, all causes are causes seen

from one or another actor's point of view. (James 1979/1880, 165-166.) In his treatise on scientific methodology, John Dewey's (LW12: 116) point is that all facts, including all scientific facts, are operational in the sense that they are always selected and described for some human purpose. No event comes to us labelled as a cause or effect. "An event has to be deliberately *taken* to be cause or effect. Such taking would be purely arbitrary if there were not a particular and differential problem to be solved." (Dewey LW12:453; Kivinen & Piirainen 2007.)

We follow Donald Davidson in abandoning the idea of reference relations. 'Words have no function save as they play a role in sentences: their semantic features are abstracted from the semantic features of sentences, just as the semantic features of sentences are abstracted from *their* part in helping people achieve goals or realize intentions' (Davidson 1984, 220). Concepts and sentences should be seen as tools for coordinating activities and coping with the world, not as representations (Rorty 1999, 64-5). When the idea of referents is given up along with the epistemological and ontological subject-object dichotomy, it will also be for the purpose of abandoning the idea that scientific inquiries should be founded on some philosophical ontologies, including realist and reductionist ones. (Kivinen & Piirainen 2006b.)

For pragmatists, both learning and knowing are always affairs of doing and doubt. This can be captured in a modified Deweyan slogan of 'knowing and learning by doing'. An organism does not wait passively and inertly for something from the outside to impress upon itself, but it acts upon its surroundings and undergoes the consequences of its own behaviour. (Dewey MW9:192; MW12:129.) From a Deweyan perspective, transaction between an organism and its environment is the

basis for understanding all kinds of action and learning, including thinking and knowing. Thinking is triggered in a doubtful situation when acquired habits do not work and it is time to find new ways of action. (Kivinen & Ristelä 2003.) Here we can particularly refer to Hans Joas (1996), who emphasizes constant alternation between creativity and habituality as a core idea of pragmatism.

From a pragmatist point of view, there is no need to make a fundamental distinction between everyday learning, inquiry or scientific research: they all are matters of acquiring new ways of action (habits) and controlling new kinds of connections. Scientific research proceeds within the scientific community and may be more disciplined, controlled and target-oriented than everyday inquiry, but both are experimental action where one gains experience, thus learns. (Dewey MW9:281; LW4:70.) Ever since C.S. Peirce, pragmatists have taken scientific experimentation to be the model on which all thinking and knowing is based. Perhaps it is worth to add that pragmatists see this capacity of experimentation as being a crucial evolutionary advantage to human beings (Cf. Gross 2007, 188-189.) Or course, in science, experimental action is crucial; one has to remember, however, that in contrast to the experimental action of everyday life, when engaged in scientific inquiry one works within the academic community and one has to manage both academic habits and the scientific language game of the field.

Referring to John Dewey and Gilbert Ryle, in this paper we lean on the distinction between 'knowledge that' and 'knowing how'. According to Dewey (MW14:124-125), we may be said to know how to do something on the strength of our habits. We walk and read, dress and undress, and do countless other things without thinking

about them. At any given moment most aspects of our action remain in the sphere of ‘knowing how’ — they remain tacit if we use Polanyi’s (1969) term. (Kivinen & Ristelä 2003.) Only the linguistic ‘knowledge that’ involves explicit conscious reflection. In a Rylean vein, we can say that people are able to do many things (like speak their own mother tongue), yet without being able to describe the rules and principles (such as the grammar) on which the activity is based. This is not (only) the result of an insufficient ability to express oneself — or one’s insufficient ability to ‘explicate’ the implicit rules that direct action — but it results from the fact that ‘knowing how’ does not originate in ‘knowledge that’ and cannot be reduced to it. According to Peirce’s pragmatic theory of meaning, the meaning of an idea is only its consequence for action: ideas that have no practical consequences are devoid of meaning. (Cf. Gross 2007, 190.) Strictly speaking, we can only have knowledge about the correct principles of an action after the action has occurred; this is why a part of this specific action has to be based on such ‘knowing how’ that cannot find its origins in ‘knowledge that’. By agreeing with Ryle (1984/1949, 49-50) we do not want to deny or revoke the value of such action that is said to be intelligent, but we want to reject the idea that the achievement of intellectual acts would require the launch of some specific intellectual (extra) measures. So, the whole idea of hierarchic (meta)levels of mind is futile. (Kivinen & Ristelä 2003; Kivinen & Piironen 2007.)

Knowing how equals doing something skilfully: when necessary, skills can be measured by performance. In this pragmatist sense, there is nothing suspect about discussing unconscious action. People mainly do whatever they do without describing their acts to themselves through articulated thinking. Conduct can be intelligent and deliberate even if it is not all the time accompanied by clearly articulated inner

comments. We can drive along in busy streets without articulating a single thought about driving, and we may type several pages without sparing one thought to the use of the computer's keyboard. It is only when our action becomes interrupted and discontinued that we might have to begin to think about what we are actually doing. (Kivinen & Ristelä 2002.)

As Dewey says, something is a tool when it is used as a means for a consequence; the consequences give the action and tools their meaning. Correspondingly, the meanings of language arise in its use. Dewey emphasises that linguistic meanings are not purely mental but something action-related between the speaker, the hearer and the object that the speech concerns. As tools of the communication and coordination of human action, meanings are linked to natural transaction between organisms and their environment: originating in the use of things, they indicate interaction, not a property of a thing in itself. (Cf. Dewey LW1: 146-149.)

Language, a tool of communicating and coordinating actions — 'the tool of tools' — makes the difference between us and other animals by turning us into thinking and knowing creatures (Dewey LW1:132-134, 146). We use language to inform others (and ourselves) about our actions: what we have done, what we are about to do or want to do, and how. This involves knowing how to use a concept in relation to other concepts so that, for example, understanding the concept of *chair*, to know what a chair is, involves knowing how the concept is related to other concepts like *sitting*, *legs*, or *furniture* in different contexts (Coulter 1979, 2; Dewey LW1:240-241; Rorty 1999, 52-66); the concept of chair also becomes intertwined with our embodied 'knowing how' to use chairs, not to mention with our shared cultural practices

involving chairs. Thus, concepts gain meanings relationally within networks of words, i.e. in language-using practices, with respect to the ways in which they are used and for what purposes. As Dewey (LW1:145) noted: A sound or written mark by itself “is not a *word*, and it does not become a word by declaring a mental existence; it becomes a word by gaining meaning . . . when its use establishes a genuine community of action.” We then come to the key idea of what we (see Kivinen & Piironen 2004, 2006b) call *methodological relationalism*: In the world of science, since meanings are determined through their relations as meanings to one another, “... *relations* become the objects of inquiry.” (Dewey LW12:119.) In the field of sociology, also Pierre Bourdieu has dealt with methodological relationalism. In a nutshell, Bourdieusian methodological relationalism differs from pragmatist methodological relationalism insofar as, being a realist, Bourdieu says that real is relational, while we as pragmatists say that all we can know is relational because something non-relational is not comprehensible. We have no way to know how reality really is because there is an endless number of standpoints from where we can look at the world.

We learn by trying out the possibilities opened up by various situations on the one hand, and the various ways and contexts of using tools on the other. By testing how different people react, we learn how others are likely to react to our acts. We learn how things we come across can affect us, how they can prevent our acts, or how we can use them to promote our interests. We learn to manage the connections between various things and hence also to influence the consequences of our own action. (Dewey MW9:280-281)

As Dewey (LW4:111) says, “ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed”; beliefs are instruments for coping, just like, say, hands are (see Menand 2001, 361). Pragmatists understand language as a tool of action, of coordinating actions and coping with the environment, thus enabling people to predict the behavior of their fellow actors through communicating who is doing what. (Kivinen & Piironen 2007.)

In our everyday life and work, learning to evaluate sources of information is usually more important than actual subject knowledge: in most cases we are simply not able to judge whether the available knowledge is correct and truthful, for we cannot be experts in very many fields, especially as comes to detailed knowledge. Still, it is crucial to know where to obtain correct knowledge.

As Herbert Simon (2005) emphasizes, “by far the greatest part of what we come to know and believe has been transmitted to us by social sources that we regard as trustworthy”. Learners are usually in no position to test and, thus, to confirm or disconfirm the information received through social channels. Very little of our knowledge has, in fact, been personally verified. In fact, the language that we have adopted is already in itself an enormous storage of knowledge.

Simon uses term ‘docility’ to refer to the human propensity for accepting information and advice that comes through appropriate social channels. The docile are not passive; they are simply receptive to social influence. According to Simon (2005), what we call ‘intelligence’ is overwhelmingly a product of the learning produced by docility. And what is most important is to know how to act upon the most credible social

source, to know how to pick out the most trustworthy sources of information, i.e. to choose the ‘best teachers’ for oneself. In doing this, the pragmatist tradition can be of great help. Even the best of experts is a layman in other areas of expertise and, hence, forced to find reliable sources of information.

Such concepts as ‘society’, ‘social structure’ or ‘globalization’ are all thoroughly problematic because they create an illusion that we have a deep, ever-expanding understanding about something that they really mean even though they, in fact, cover more than reveal. Following for instance Bourdieu’s or Dewey’s example, the concept ‘society’, be it the knowledge or information society, is best to be replaced by the concepts of ‘field’ and ‘social space’. ‘Society’ and the social world consist of different games that do not obey any universal logic such as capitalism, modernism, postmodernism or globalization. The best that a social scientist can do is to conduct problem-driven case studies on different fields and their internal games, preferably with statistical data.

Every time that a social scientist takes the role of an expert outside of his own field he cannot have anything better to say than any other layman who claims to be in the know. Social sciences, especially sociology, too often generate fleeting trends that offer esoteric conceptual fog as a solution to a wide range of current problems.

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