

Reorienting the Philosophy for Children Pedagogy on Hilary Putnam's Pragmatic Realism

Abstract

Pragmatism is not a coherent school of thought. In her recent historical narrative of pragmatist philosophies, Misak (2013 & 2016) shows that pragmatism is to be understood in two different, and to some extent incompatible, branches: Peircean and Jamesian. Discussing the notions of experience, inquiry, and truth implied by the philosophy for children (P4C) pedagogy, I shall argue the philosophical foundation of the P4C movement is Peircean in character. Having explicated the Peircean theme of the educational method advocated by the P4C movement, I shall put forward a more controversial claim: the Peircean foundation of P4C is to be refined by calling for Hilary Putnam's metaphysical notion. Putnam's notion of truth implied by his pragmatic realism welcomes a pluralistic account of explanation without falling into the epistemological relativism of Jamesian neo-pragmatist philosophies. Putnam's pragmatic realism as such is not only compatible with the pre-established Peircean philosophical foundation of the P4C pedagogy, but it can also improve upon it: contra Peirce's notion of truth that seeks for the right explanatory framework, it encourages the participants of a community of inquiry to have their own preferred conceptual scheme while being able to follow-up the discussions in a rational fashion. I surmise replacing Putnam's pragmatic realism with Peirce's metaphysical notion may enhance children's creative thinking and their respect for pluralistic account of explanation.

My Bio:

I am a second-year PhD student in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Toronto. My research area is pragmatism and the role of educational institutions in the production-process of the mathematical truths. In other words, I am highly interested in how social norms inspire personal mental habits, and how those habits take certain epistemological notions for granted. Not surprisingly, this is the very reason I got interested in C. S. Peirce's philosophy and Matthew Lipman's attempt to incorporate it in an educational movement. Finally, my objective is to become a COI facilitator in future, not a professional philosopher in a university.

Regards,

Soroush Marouzi,

University of Toronto

Email Address: soroush.marouzi@mail.utoronto.ca

Phone Number: +1 647 995 9234