

## PRAGMATISM, EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT

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**ABSTRACT:** John Ryder (2020) has recently provided an outline of a pragmatist account of experience and judgment as they are manifested in art and aesthetics, practice and politics, and the scientific enterprise. The main thrust of this project can be seen as an attempt to reduce the contrast modern philosophers have instituted between these human practices, their issue and their starting points, and realign them by drawing from broad notions of experience, judgment and inquiry. While this project is perfectly pragmatist in spirit, it also appears conflicted between two key lines of argument, resulting, in some cases, in conclusions that many pragmatists are inclined to avoid. Drawing from Charles S. Peirce's views of experience, semiotics, and judgment, and Dewey's views of politics and democracy, I attempt to shed further light on how these distinctions could be made without placing central pragmatist contentions in jeopardy.

**Keywords:** pragmatism, judgment, experience, semiotics, aesthetics

### Introduction

Pragmatists have long resisted received philosophical dichotomies between the practical and the theoretical, ethics and science, politics and inquiry, mind and body, objectivity and interpretation, and aesthetic and everyday experience. Mere resistance is, however, futile: as these dichotomies are deeply entrenched in contemporary philosophical views and our views of the world at large, the onus lies with the pragmatists to show how and why these views are mistaken, and how distinctions made in terms of such dichotomies may nevertheless find their place in their philosophical vision. John Ryder's recent book, *Knowledge, Art, and Power: An Outline of a Theory of Experience* (2020), provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on how these dichotomies may be overcome. Ryder provides both an account of experience inspired by his reading of John Dewey and an account of judgment, drawn largely from Justus Buchler's work. This combination serves as a source of rich reflections on how experience and judgment are manifested in three central human practices: arts, politics, and science. The thrust of Ryder's project could be encapsulated as the attempt to

reduce the contrasts modern philosophers have instituted among these practices, their issue and their starting points, and realign them by drawing from broad notions of experience, judgment and inquiry.

Ryder's discussion advances by triadic distinctions. The first is between the aesthetic, political, and cognitive dimensions that characterize experience, or, perhaps a bit more precisely, are such characters that any experience may acquire. What exactly constitutes these dimensions is largely left for the reader's imagination. However, these dimensions become more tangible in light of the second, if somewhat peculiar division between exhibitiv, active, and assertive judgments drawn from Buchler; each type of judgment is predominantly associated with a dimension of experience. Judgment, Ryder maintains, "is the mutually constitutive process that constitutes an individual's experience in so far as it issues in products" (Ryder 2020, 70). Exhibitiv judgments "show" or "reveal" something to us, as exemplified by works of art, manifesting the aesthetic dimension of experience. Active judgments are actions that select from alternatives and generate products; these judgments Ryder connects with power and the political dimension of experience. Finally, assertive judgments make claims with propositional content, and are associated with science and the cognitive dimension of experience. Ryder's discussions focus on examples drawn from the three human enterprises – art, politics, and science – which exemplify, manifest or are closely connected with these types of judgments and dimensions of experience. Each of these enterprises, judgments and dimensions are further associated with a distinctive form of "query" or methodical exploration. Exhibitiv query attempts to "make a point in some methodic way", active query "is the sustained and deliberative effort to produce an end in action", and, finally, inquiry "involves the drawing of rational inferences, experimentation, the creation of theories and hypotheses, and the gathering of empirical data in relation to a specific topic or question" (ibid., 108).

A central aspiration of Ryder's outline is to de-emphasize the inflated (by modern philosophy) role of the cognitive dimension of experience and the correlated

type of judgment, assertive judgment, in order to highlight the relevance (including cognitive relevance) and role of art and politics. This effort is, it seems to me, utterly pragmatist in spirit. However, it also leads to numerous difficulties in tracking both the differences and the interconnections of these dimensions of experience, judgments and practices. The paramount reason for these difficulties is wavering between two lines that the main argument against contrast might take – enticing as they both are. Sometimes the dimensions of experience are connected with the relevant *practices* (art, politics, science); in each, all “dimensions” and judgments are involved as, for example, assertive judgments are made in politics and in art. Along these lines, Ryder argues that our cognitive engagement with the world should not be identified solely with assertive judgment (ibid., 71), but that knowledge is “available” in exhibitive and active judgment (ibid., 89) and that the cognitive dimension of experience is also present in politics and in works of art (ibid., 170). But when the dimensions of experience are identified by the related type of *judgment*, the distinctions become more restrictive. Ryder considers it a mistake to take all experience to involve a cognitive dimension. The forms of query typical of arts and politics do not aspire to produce knowledge that is at all inferential and argumentative. It is even proposed (albeit rather briefly) that truth comes in three shapes: “correspondence with independent facts, working, and deep meaning” (ibid., 105). This suggests that exhibitive and active judgments are “true” in a sense that is distinct from the truth of assertive judgments (cf. Ryder 2013, 156–159).

The blurring of these distinctions is intentional. It is motivated by the goal of deflating the overblown contrast between these human projects and practices, the associated dimensions of experience and forms of “query”. Indeed, objections to the details of such a broad outline, as the account is subtitled, might appear purely verbal, were it not for the fact that the melding of these various facets of judgments and experience has consequences that one easily finds objectionable. Some of these consequences – the ones I will largely focus on

here – are made explicit in the outline itself. To begin with, resisting the omnipresence of the cognitive dimension of experience, Ryder argues against Dewey’s contention that all conscious experience is “full of inference” (Ryder 2020, 84, 87, 108). This is related to another view of Dewey’s that Ryder rejects, the notion that the “manipulative dimension of experience”, that of action and power, is characterized by inquiry and inference (ibid., 84). To buttress this point, Ryder provides the example of “a driver or a chauffeur explor[ing] the best way to reach point B from point A” as an example of a query undertaken in the “active mode” that is fully separated from scientific inquiry (ibid., 75). The resulting view appears decidedly anti-pragmatist. For what is pragmatism if not the view that theoretical judgments are practical, as is the judgment over the best route from one point to another? Finally, the distinction between query in the active mode, reflected in the political and in power, and inference and argument typical of scientific inquiry, results in Ryder’s view of politics, including democratic politics, as the interplay and combination of various interests, those of the individual and of the community (e.g., Ryder 2020, 173–174). Such a view of politics and of democracy is far from outrageous, of course, but it seems equally far from commensurate with the promise of pragmatism as a political philosophy. That promise entails that our actions are connected to judgments that are the issue of science in such a way that inquiry may provide us with a revised, tested and articulated view of what we are to do and, indeed, of what we *should* be interested in.

These consequences are avoidable, in my view. Indeed, they should be avoided, in order to retain a clearer picture of the cognitive, practical, political, and the aesthetic, their connections with the human practices of arts, politics and science, and the proper role of various types of judgments in those practices. When contrast is diminished, brightness must sometimes be increased; otherwise, important detail is lost. Attempting to shed light on how these distinctions could operate in a pragmatist vision, it is my task to provide a slightly more refined outline, drawing from Charles S.

Peirce's views of experience, semiotics, and judgment, and Dewey's views of politics and democracy, as I have developed them in my previous work.<sup>1</sup> In the interest of brevity, the next section provides the backbones of this outline in a condensed and admittedly brief format. The following sections will then apply these ideas regarding the domains of art and aesthetics, and practice and politics, respectively, including their relations with the cognitive and the scientific enterprise. They will, I hope, prove the initial exercise worthwhile.

### Experience, interpretation, and judgment

Peirce distinguished between emotional, energetic, and logical interpretants. They are feelings, actions, and thoughts, respectively – reactions, or perhaps better, responses that may be elicited in us when faced with signs. Despite the “emotional” label, feeling is to be understood broadly as qualities of feeling, encompassing much or all of that which Dewey called the qualities of experience. Logical interpretants include questions, problems, creative ideas, and fancies, but also judgments, such thoughts that we assent to. The distinction between the three types of interpretants is not Peirce's phaneroscopic (phenomenological) nor his metaphysical account of the categories of experience, which I will not discuss here. One difference between the categories and these interpretants, arduous to overstate, is that interpretation occurs against some purpose or end. Such ends we may again divide into three broad types. Feelings, actions and thoughts are often sought for their own sake: we go to see a film to experience the feelings and emotions it conveys, and we engage in fantasy in our thinking.<sup>2</sup> Responses of all kinds may serve our various

practical ends. Finally, interpretants may be elicited for cognitive ends, including truth.

Interpretants may be more or less adequate to the purpose of interpretation. Whether they are depends, in addition to the purpose, on the object of the sign interpreted. An action or a thought may achieve the end sought for, or fall short of doing so. My running down the stairs of the building is an energetic interpretant actually formed that interprets the smoke as a sign of fire. It fails its purpose of saving my life, if the staircase is already engulfed in flames. My judgment, “There's a fire”, elicited for the cognitive purpose of truth, interprets the going of the fire alarm as a sign of fire. If there is no fire, it fails its purpose.<sup>3</sup> A feeling, too, can be more or less adequate as an interpretive response. Feelings of embarrassment upon listening to the finale of Sibelius's second symphony mistake its triumphant progression for pretentiousness in achievement. The *type* of adequacy of each type of interpretant is different. Thoughts may be formed for practical ends, such as when one calculates when one needs to go to bed to catch enough sleep before the next morning's engagements; in the end, however, it is only the action itself that may achieve the purpose. Many of the actions of scientists in their laboratories are designed to serve cognitive ends. Nevertheless, it is only thoughts that can be true or false. While feelings may serve various practical and cognitive ends (a point that will be presently discussed in more detail), the adequacy of emotional interpretants is a kind of fittingness that does not immediately serve any such purpose.

Within the realm of thought, a distinction can be drawn between three types of judgments: aesthetic, practical, and theoretical. The grounds of this distinction

<sup>1</sup> I will build upon my earlier work on feelings, emotional interpretants and their connection to the development of purposes and ethical inquiry (Rydenfelt 2015a; 2017), aesthetic, practical and theoretical judgments (Rydenfelt 2019a), the scientific method (Rydenfelt 2021a; 2015b) and democracy as social inquiry (Rydenfelt 2019b; 2019c; 2021b). Much of this work is deeply indebted to T. L. Short's (2007; 2000) rearticulation and refinement of Peirce's central notions, further developed and discussed especially in Rydenfelt (2015a; 2017; 2019b).

<sup>2</sup> To be more specific, we often take delight in engaging in such interpretation that is itself interpreted in a feeling.

<sup>3</sup> The “error” in these two cases is different. In the first, my running, the actually formed interpretant – in Peirce's terms, the dynamical interpretant – is not a *final* interpretant, “the interpretant ideally adequate to the purpose for which the sign is being interpreted” (Short 2007, 190). In the second, the dynamical interpretant that is the judgment takes the sign to be a sign that it is not (cf. Short 2007, 188–189). The dynamical interpretant fails to capture the immediate interpretant of the sign, the range of possible interpretations determined by its relation to its object. In doing so, it also falls short of the final interpretant.

is the role these judgments have in deliberative action. While theoretical judgments are typically expressible in the indicative mood, Peirce maintained that their meaning resides in practical maxims expressible as a conditional sentence concluding with an imperative. “If the glass is to be scratched, use a diamond” is a practical maxim enforced (among others) by the theoretical judgment, “Diamonds are hard”. This is due to the pragmatist contention that a theoretical judgment, when assented to, enforces a habit of action: in Peirce’s terms, the “ultimate” logical interpretants are habits. For this reason, we may test and revise those judgments in practice. This process, in its organized, deliberate form, is scientific experimentation.<sup>4</sup> By contrast, aesthetic judgments do not recommend courses of action based on ends already adopted. They occupy a different role in deliberative action. At least some of these judgments – in particular those that concern what is desirable, admirable, or undesirable or deplorable – provide deliberative actions with purposes.

Perception is a source for judgments. But it is not the only one. We are taught that the earth is round; before a concert, our enlightened companions may convince us that the finale of Sibelius’s second symphony is triumphant in hesitant anticipation. In perception, however, we are directly acquainted or confronted with the subject-matters of our judgments. The three types of responses are all present: feelings are elicited, countering the object produces an effort of interpretation, and a perceptual judgment is produced.<sup>5</sup> While perceptual judgments are not infallible, they are imposed on us, and can only be criticized by further, subsequent judgments. Such judgments are informed by what we have learned:

<sup>4</sup> This is not the only conception of truth as the aim of revising and fixing belief available. I will return to this issue in section 4 below.

<sup>5</sup> For our purposes here, it suffices to consider the perceptual judgment as an interpretant of the object (“itself”) as perceived. This, however, is not entirely faithful to Peirce’s rich account of perception and perceptual judgment that developed gradually along with his other semiotic advances (Bergman 2007). In Peirce’s view, the perceptual judgment is an interpretation of the *percept*, something that appears to us or we are faced with in perception. The judgment, in its turn, is an indexical sign of the percept. This refinement, however, invites the question of the relation between the percept and object.

already aware of how light refracts, we will not mistake the stick in water for bent. *Aesthetic* judgments, when perceptual in this fashion, are the interpretations, in thought, of qualities of feeling, of which an exhaustive list can hardly be provided – in particular, qualities that we may describe as irritating, dull, elevating, fascinating, cheerful, sad, admirable, repugnant, and so on.<sup>6</sup>

The account of feelings as interpretants that may be more or less appropriate as responses to signs, depending on the sign’s object, opens up the possibility of truth and falsity of aesthetic judgments. Such judgments, interpreting these feelings further in thought, may be more or less adequate to their subject-matter. Peirce proposed that there is such a thing as normative science, an inquiry into what is right and what is wrong. He divided this inquiry into three branches: esthetics, ethics and logic. Esthetics, in Peirce’s vision, is the study of “objects considered simply in their presentation” (Peirce 1903a, 143).<sup>7</sup> Some of our aesthetic judgments suggest novel purposes: they pertain to what is admirable without reference to the ends we already have. For this reason, esthetics can inform ethics, the science of the review of the means and ends of deliberate conduct, by providing potential purposes and ideals of such conduct. Logic is the normative science of deliberate thought, or reasoning; truth is one (if not the only) end against which this science reviews reasoning and inference.

<sup>6</sup> Aesthetic judgments, when perceptual in this fashion, could be understood as a particular class of observations. Alternatively, we may wish to reserve the word “observation” for *theoretical* perceptual judgments.

<sup>7</sup> Despite its centrality to Peirce’s normative sciences, the role and scope of esthetics remains underdeveloped in his writings. Peirce advanced the view that there is no pure esthetic goodness and badness but innumerable varieties of esthetic quality: he was, as he wrote, “seriously inclined to doubt there being any distinction of pure esthetic betterness and worseness” (Peirce 1903b, 202). This appears to be for the reason that such assessment of esthetic qualities would require the introduction of an aim or end. However, esthetics is the line of inquiry that may provide us with a notion of what has the quality of being admirable in itself, suggesting an ultimate aim of conduct. Whether such an aim can indeed be adopted is a question that falls within the scope of ethics. Peirce’s realism in esthetics is, obviously, not something that all pragmatists are prepared to accept (for a discussion of various alternatives, see Kraut *forthcoming*). However, it is not presupposed by the account of the aesthetic “dimension” of experience and judgment presently explored.

### Art and the aesthetic dimension of experience

In Ryder's view, experience has an aesthetic dimension. We are now, I think, better positioned to account for that dimension. Feelings, as we have seen, can serve various purposes, including practical and cognitive ones. We may resist identifying the aesthetic dimension with feelings. Instead, we may consider the various practices that build up this dimension, and their connection to qualities of feeling. We engage with signs in order to elicit qualities of feeling for their own sake. We engage in practices where it is our aim to produce signs that embody and accentuate such qualities of feeling by eliciting them in interpretation. Such qualities of feeling are interpreted in thought by way of actions and aesthetic judgments. Aside from their role in these practices, aesthetic judgments enable us to deploy qualities of feeling for various practical and cognitive ends. Moreover, they permit the articulation, revision and criticism of our feeling-laden responses. All of this belongs to the aesthetic "dimension" of experience and judgment.

Art, we are told, resists definition. None will be attempted here. However, artistic processes often, if not always, aim at producing a work or process that embodies certain qualities of feeling.<sup>8</sup> Ryder provides a helpful account of the aim of an artistic practice as productive of what he calls "exhibitive judgments", such judgments that organize material so as to show something about the world (Ryder 2020, 72). Moreover, he notes that such judgments are connected with the qualities of unity, harmony, and dissonance (*ibid.*, 72, 78). However, focusing on the *products* of artistic practice, identified with the relevant type of "judgment", obscures the manifold role of *interpretation* in that practice. This is the reason, it seems, why Ryder maintains that the artistic process is not one of inference and reasoning, but a form of "query"

distinct from the cognitive mode (e.g., Ryder 2020, 87). But it seems abundantly clear that artistic practice involves all kinds of judgments and inference.

Consider a dancer who lifts her arm. A feeling ensues. That feeling is interpreted in action by the next movement. The aim of the course of action is to produce, or perform, a work of art that embodies certain qualities. In the span of the rehearsals, the process is guided by judgments. Some of these judgments are theoretical and practical. (The dancer hits her hand: "Keep farther from the wall there!".) Some of them are aesthetic judgments. The feelings resulting from the action are interpreted in thoughts. ("This is exciting but irritating!") Once a pattern of action – a choreography, or its interpretation in a context – has been decided upon, actions follow one another closely, often without the mediation of judgments. By way of repetition and reiteration, the sequence of actions may become a routine, losing the interposition of feelings and judgments, while retaining its general aim. This artistic practice is laden with inference and reasoning; it distinguishes itself from our other practical and cognitive endeavours by its aim rather than by a lack of judgments and inferences.

Engagement with, or the consumption of, works of art is similarly laden with judgments. We often engage with art to experience the feelings they convey. It is likely for this reason that we think of art as being something for its own sake. However, these practices also involve aesthetic judgments that are deployed to discuss, review, criticize, and refine such responses. These judgments are often informed by theoretical judgments that help us to identify novel aspects and features of works of art. Aesthetic judgments apprise our views of art and artists that go beyond the purely aesthetic assessment of them. We may evaluate artists and their works with respect to different aesthetically assessable aims of action presupposed or expected.

Aesthetic judgments may also serve a variety of practical ends, and their deployment is not limited to practices that we conventionally consider artistic. Perhaps one's purpose is to appear attractive on a date, or come across as compelling in a business meeting. One's image in the

<sup>8</sup> This view is reflected in Peirce's account of the esthetic "goodness" of objects: "In the light of the doctrine of categories I should say that an object, to be esthetically good, must have a multitude of parts so related to one another as to impart a positive simple immediate quality to their totality; and whatever does this is, in so far, esthetically good, no matter what the particular quality of the total may be" (Peirce 1903b, 201).

mirror is interpreted in feeling, leading to judgments concerning the qualities of one's appearance, further interpreted in subsequent actions – changing garments, applying makeup, and so on – in light of the ends pursued. (It can be debated whether or not dressing up should be considered art, and whether that would require the removal of the presence of the kind of ulterior practical ends that these examples involve.) Finally, aesthetic judgments may serve cognitive purposes. When deploying such judgments in conversation and criticism of art, it is often our aim to find out the true aesthetic quality of artistic works. This amounts to an aesthetic inquiry, one that we may further refine and that may go on to inform and influence our feeling-laden responses themselves.

In this way, the artistic process and our engagement with art are at once more and less “cognitive” than in Ryder's picture. If we consider the practices of producing art as a separate form of “query”, as Ryder does, that query is shot through with judgments and inferences. However, from this fact it does not follow that producing art or engaging with it need to have particularly cognitive aims. (Conversely, the pursuit of truth may be rather oblivious to aesthetic aspirations; we unfortunately seldom have the opportunity to read scientific articles just for the sake of the feelings that they elicit.) The aesthetic judgments formed as part of those practices enable aesthetic inquiry in the form of revision and reflective self-control of such judgments. Moreover, aesthetic judgments may inform other branches of science, including ethical inquiry, as in Peirce's view, by providing a view of what is admirable without any ulterior ends. However, aesthetic inquiry is by no means limited to this question but retains a broad variety of qualities of feeling in its scope.

### The practical and the political

In Ryder's outline, the political dimension of experience is identified with action and manipulation of our environment, as well as with problem-solving, all connected with the notion of power. Broadly speaking, this accords

nically with a Deweyan pragmatist vision. However, again, Ryder's outline appears conflicted between two alternative ways of making these connections more specific. According to the first, power and the exercise of power is at “the heart of the cognitive process”, and ideas, inquiry and knowledge are understood “as elements not so much in describing the world as in solving the problems that our engagement with it engenders” (Ryder 2020, 197). Truth and knowledge are integral to the pursuit of power. By contrast, according to the second alternative, it is active judgments that are identified with such a pursuit, a query that produces a kind of knowledge that is “not a matter of propositions or beliefs, it is not expressed in propositions, and it is not acquired through propositions or beliefs” (ibid., 198).<sup>9</sup> The query is not a cognitive pursuit, or is one of a particular kind, separated from inquiry and science that appear to have little bearing on it. Ryder maintains that knowledge is power – but in which way?

The answer, again, might be both. But the problem remains, for neither alternative seems particularly attractive. The first veers dangerously close to the crude interpretation of pragmatism as the view that seeking truth and knowledge is the quest for whatever it is that helps us to achieve our practical ends or serves our interests. Applied in the sphere of the “political”, arguments of this kind have given credibility to the even more questionable view that all claims to truth are, at bottom, claims to power, and the notion of truth indicates little more than power over opinion. The second alternative, by contrast, provides us with a view of power and manipulation as a project quite distinct from the pursuit of truth and knowledge involved in scientific

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<sup>9</sup> As examples of such knowledge, Ryder (2020, 198) presents cases of what we might call “know-how”, such as being able to swim, or to play an instrument. Such cases involve habits that are not easily expressible in terms of theoretical judgments. However, this should not be counted as a counter-example to Peirce's pragmatist contention that beliefs are habits of action; it was never implied that the converse holds, as not all habits of action are beliefs. (The beating of a heart is such a habit.) Moreover, such habits (or routines) develop in practices of rehearsal that are, contrary to Ryder's claim, informed by theoretical and aesthetic judgments, such as the dancer's artistic practice.

inquiry. Such a view, however, is an uneasy fit with the pragmatist contention that there is an intimate connection between practice and inquiry, practical maxims and theoretical judgments, belief and action.

A Peircean view of judgments as interpretants provides a way out of this conundrum. Firstly, it provides us with a distinction between the *type* of judgment and the *aim* of interpretation. Theoretical judgments and practical maxims are elicited in us for both cognitive purposes and various practical ends of other sorts. Many judgments are formed without any particularly cognitive ends, while some are. Accordingly, the pursuit of truth and other cognitive ends is not subsumed under the quest for influence or power, while acknowledging the fact that not all problem-solving counts as inquiry, if by inquiry we mean the seeking of truth.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, the Peircean view yields a compelling view of how truth and knowledge are connected to our practical pursuits, and belief to action, in terms of the central pragmatist contention that theoretical judgments find their meaning in practical maxims. It is in this way that scientific inquiry, revising our beliefs with the aim of truth, can inform us concerning what to do.

In Ryder's view, the practical is connected with the political, including the interaction of the individual and community in the pursuit of different interests, as well as public and state power and authority. Ryder identifies democracy with the pursuit of common interests, or "interests in common", as opposed to pursuing interests "at each other's expense" (Ryder 2020, 173). Perceptively, Ryder argues that the pragmatist view of democracy is to be distinguished from consensus-oriented views of deliberative democracy (*ibid.*, 182).<sup>11</sup> However, the view of democracy offered downplays the potential of pragmatism as a social and political philosophy. As opposed

to the attempt to figure out how common interests could be pursued, or how we might reach a "deliberative" consensus over what those interests are, pragmatists have an alternative vision to offer: that of a scientific pursuit, an inquiry that strives to provide us with a revised, tested and articulated view of what we are to do. From the pragmatist perspective, democracy could be viewed as an experimental process of revision of social and societal policies viewed as hypotheses put into social practice along the lines of what Dewey called *social inquiry*. Such inquiry is not just the search for efficacy in reaching antecedent ends, or the revision of our *theoretical* judgments that, via practical maxims, inform us how to reach the ends that we already have as a public or as individuals. Experimental revision extends to those ends themselves, linking social inquiry with Peirce's notion of normative science – including the role of aesthetic judgments in such inquiry.

Ryder distinguishes different societal arrangements based on whose interests those arrangements (are expected to) advance. The pragmatist idea of social inquiry provides us with another, more fine-grained notion of the differences between the shapes and forms that a society and its public may take. It was previously noted that the fact that theoretical judgments can be spelled out as practical maxims enables the revision of such judgments as hypotheses tested and experimented on based on their consequences in practice. However, that we *should* revise, test and experiment, in this fashion, in order to discover the truth, is by no means evident. Rather, the notion of such experimentation has developed only gradually in the course of modern science, and still continues to develop in parallel with its advances. At present, the scientific method informs, even covers, many of our individual and shared enterprises. However, this is not the case with all social and societal issues and political arrangements, where the notion of social inquiry is not yet sufficiently articulated. Accordingly, the differences between various political arrangements can be put in terms not only of interests but of differing visions of how those interests, or pur-

<sup>10</sup> Peirce's view also steers clear of the intellectualist assumption that actions always emerge from thoughts and thinking. Energetic interpretants, in Peirce's account, do not always flow from logical interpretants. In many cases the action interprets signs directly and without reflection, as in Peirce's example of a soldier trained to follow a military command (Short 2007, 204).

<sup>11</sup> I have argued for a similar distinction at length elsewhere (Rydenfelt 2019b; 2019c; 2021b).

poses, are revised. The basis of a society may be the realization, by individuals, that cooperation and collaboration is conducive to the attainment of their particular interests. Alternatively, we may attempt to align our views – our purposes and ends, in particular – to conform with the dictates of an authority, as in many totalitarian regimes and theocracies. In other societies, we expect a free, public debate to yield a rational consensus that secures acceptability and epistemic validity of the resulting policies. The notion of democracy as a kind of social inquiry into policy differs from each of these alternatives: it is the experimental revision of our social and societal arrangements in light of the issues we face as individuals, groups, and societies.

### Conclusion

Another outline, it could fairly be countered. But we are in need of one – or several. Although Peirce’s writings include extensive discussions on art, politics and normative science, his central concern was with the scientific project, and he offered no extended political philosophy or a full-blown account of aesthetics. Dewey’s vision is protractedly scattered over his verbose corpus. John Ryder has done pragmatists a great favor by providing an encompassing outline of various dimensions within experience, judgment, inquiry, and so on. As I hope to have shown, some central pieces of this overall pragmatist view may still be pulled apart in order to piece them back together in a productive fashion.<sup>12</sup>

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