



COGNITIO

Revista de Filosofia
Centro de Estudos de Pragmatismo

São Paulo, v. 26, n. 1, p. 1-12, jan.-dez. 2025
e-ISSN: 2316-5278

doi: <https://doi.org/10.23925/2316-5278.2025v26i1:e69989>

The role of conversation, inquiry, and deliberation in problem-solving: pragmatists in dialogue

O papel da conversação, da investigação e da deliberação na resolução de problemas: pragmatistas em diálogo

James Liszka*
liszka@plattsburgh.edu

Abstract: Problems are generally defined as barriers to goals. Consequently, it is a form of practical reasoning, understood as figuring out the means by which such barriers are to be removed. The general form of practical reasoning suggests three processes that would be involved in problem-solving. The first is coming to an understanding of the problem, which involves the process of conversation. The second is a matter of inquiry – figuring out the practical hypotheses, the means of solving the problem. Since problem-solving requires cooperation of others, it also requires deliberation among those affected by a problem as to which of the practical hypotheses will work best, ending in some agreement. Using the work of pragmatists, such as Peirce, James, Dewey, Addams, Wallace, Kitcher, among others, the aim of the article is to show a normative framework for each of these processes that can best lead to effective problem solving.

Keywords: Conversation. Deliberation. Inquiry. Pragmatism. Problem solving.

Resumo: Problemas são geralmente definidos como barreiras para objetivos. Consequentemente, é uma forma de raciocínio prático, entendida como descobrir os meios pelos quais tais barreiras devem ser removidas. A forma geral de raciocínio prático sugere três processos que estariam envolvidos na resolução de problemas. O primeiro é chegar a uma compreensão do problema, que envolve o processo de conversação. O segundo é uma questão de investigação – descobrir as hipóteses práticas, os meios de resolver o problema. Como a resolução de problemas requer cooperação de outros, também requer deliberação entre aqueles afetados por um problema sobre qual das hipóteses práticas funcionará melhor, terminando em algum acordo. Usando o trabalho de pragmatistas, como Peirce, James, Dewey, Addams, Wallace, Kitcher, entre outros, o objetivo do artigo é mostrar uma estrutura normativa para cada um desses processos que pode levar melhor à resolução eficaz de problemas.

Palavras-chave: Conversação. Deliberação. Investigação. Pragmatismo. Resolução de problemas.

Recebido em: 16/01/2025.

Aprovado em: 20/03/2025.

Publicado em: 07/07/2025.



Artigo está licenciado sob forma de uma licença
Creative Commons Atribuição 4.0 Internacional.

* State University of New York.

1 Introduction

There is no life that is problem-free, no country or community absent travail. The very order of things is designed for trouble. It would seem, then, that a study of problem-solving would be a useful enterprise.

The argument here is that pragmatist thinking can help in the design of an effective problem-solving *practice*. Afterall, the pragmatists argue for a melioristic ethic, that improvement, progress is not made through a march toward some utopian ideal of the good, but by correcting what is problematic and in error (Liszka, 2021a; Koopman, 2015; Kitcher, 2011; 2021). “Pragmatic progress”, writes Philip Kitcher, is progress *from* as

well as *to* (2011, p. 288), overcoming problems in the current state (2015, p. 478). The first step for such a project is proposing a normative framework – the task here.

Here's the case in a nutshell. If, as James Wallace argues (2009), practices have evolved to solve particular problems of how to attain certain ends, then an abduction can be built up from their failures as to what norms are most conducive to the end of problem-solving. At the same time, because practices employ forms of practical reasoning, the normative features of that reasoning process might provide a key to the better normative framework for a problem-solving practice. As Cheryl Misak writes, “[...] despite the fact that the pragmatist says that we must start our theory with ongoing practice, that theory can provide us with a guide for future practice” (2000, p. 105). This is the short version; the long version follows.

2 What is a problem?

The scholarly literature reveals a relatively consistent definition of a problem, understood as some difficulty in overcoming an obstacle to a goal (Chadwick, 1971, p. 124; Newell; Simon, 1972, p. 810; Davis, 1973, p. 12; Mayer, 1977, p. 4-5; Hayes, 1979; Nickles, 1981; Agre 1982, p. 122; Frensch; Funke, 1995, p. 6; D’Zurilla *et al.*, 2004, p. 12; Kitcher, 2011, p. 251; Seel, 2012, p. 2690-2691; Liszka, 2021, p. 58ff). Consequently, problem-solving typically involves finding a way to overcome that obstacle.

These definitions suggest three basic elements of a problem: (1) a desired or intended goal or end; (2) a barrier to achieving that end; (3) some difficulty on how to remove the barrier. Barriers block the attainment of ends. Barriers create two kinds of agents, *grievants*, on one side of the barrier and *blockers*, on the other. When a multitude of people seek similar ends, competition for those ends makes problems inevitable. When a multitude of people seek conflicting ends, problems are inevitable. At the same time, to overcome any barrier, one needs the cooperation of others – another problem. This pursuit of ends at scale creates what David Copp calls the fundamental problem of sociality – how to maximize cooperation in the pursuit of ends while minimizing conflict (2012, p.38).

3 What are practices?

To solve the fundamental problem of sociality, societies delimit which paths can be taken to which ends by which people in the network of possible ends (Copp, 2012, p. 38). Societies build paths toward certain ends and barriers to others. These tend to become *practices* (Wallace, 2009, p.1; MacIntyre, 1981, p. 175) – “habits” as the pragmatists called them (Dewey, 2008a, p. 31; Peirce, 1877, CP 5.371; James, 1992, I, p. 104) – ways of doing or not doing certain things to attain those ends. They result from the experience of living with others over time (Wallace, 2009, p. 3). They propose to solve particular problems – from how to get food, how to prepare and eat it, to how to build a home, to how to make a community safe, to how to treat other people, to how to govern a society (Wallace, 2009, p. 3; Liszka, 2021, p. 57-58). They become institutionalized, formalized, bureaucratized, even as they are subject to change. In doing so, they create a third type of agent, the *broker*, agents of the practice who have the authority, coercive power, wherewithal, skill or competence to effect the ends of the practice and mediate conflicts between grievants and blockers.

Practical life is lived through such practices. It is through practices that people learn what is desirable (Pettit, 2021, p. 259) and learn how to attain it. All societies have a set of endorsable ends and endorsable means to attain them (Kitcher, 2011, p. 223). Gainful employment is an endorsable path to wealth, theft is not. It is in the living experience of a family, for example, that people may, positively, come to desire to love and be loved, to acquire the tender sentiments related to children. The living experience

of a practice may, negatively, move people to desire something more, different or better, just as women of the 20th century wanted more than wifeliness, or the American colonists of the 18th century wanted something better than monarchy.

Any practice exists in a network of other practices and each practice is a system of practices. Universities involve teaching, research, administrative, finance, recruitment, promotion, political advocacy, certification, maintenance practices, each of which have subroutines – practices within practices. Teaching involves lecturing, discussion, testing, grading, classroom management, among others. Most institutionalized and bureaucratized practices have internal and external governing practices that, in principle, serve to correct it (Will, 1997). Universities monitor quality of instruction and research through periodic review and teaching evaluation. A board of trustees directs the institution that is evaluated externally through accreditation organizations.

Because practices direct people about how *best* to do something to attain some end, they are inherently normative (Wallace, 2009, p. 11; MacIntyre, 1981, p. 177; Pettit, 2021, p. 260). They say what is prudent, necessary, required, or forbidden in order to attain ends that are, in turn, socially endorsed. For this reason, not all barriers are problems but can prevent problems. Such norms can take the form of rules, standards, folkways, customs, sentiments, virtues, codes, duties, rights, conventions, mores, procedures, recipes, laws.

4 Practices as forms of practical reasoning

As Allan Gibbard writes, “the primary questions” people face “are ones of what to do, what to aim for and how” (Gibbard, 2008, p. 15). Jane Addams notes, “we slowly learn that life consists of processes as well as results, and that failure may come quite as easily from ignoring the adequacy of one’s method as from selfish or ignoble aims” (Addams, 2014, p. 3). Both the practices that are utilized and the people using the practices engage in some sort of collective means-end type of reasoning – practical reasoning as philosophers call it (Newell and Simon, 1972, p. 416; Bhaskar and Simon, 1977, p. 213; Wallace, 2009, p. 16, 18; Audi, 2006, p. 81). The same sort of reasoning that practices employ to solve their problems are also the sort of reasoning that’s needed to address problematic practices. Practical reasoning, therefore, may provide the key to the design of an effective problem-solving practice.

Although there are several variants of practical reasoning, a general pattern can be discerned (Audi, 2006, p. 82ff). Practical reasoning involves the relation among what ends people desire, intend, want or need, what they believe will attain those ends, and what can be concluded from that desire and belief (Audi, 2006, p. 86; Richardson, 1994, p. 33).

In later work, Peirce formulates the pragmatic maxim as a version of practical reasoning. He acknowledges that pragmatism is “scarce more than a corollary” to Alexander Bain’s account of belief, understood as “that upon which a man is prepared to act” (1906, CP 5.12). Bain’s original formulation follows the parameters of practical reasoning: “belief is preparedness to act, for a given end, in a given way” (1889, p. 508) and, so expresses the core features of practical reasoning

Peirce makes this clear in the Harvard Lecture of 1903. There he reformulates the pragmatic maxim in terms of what Kant called hypothetical or pragmatic imperatives, prudential rules for how to best attain ends (1959, p. 31-32n4) – that is, forms of practical reasoning. A theoretical claim, Peirce writes, is better clarified when it is transposed into a practical one (c. 1902, CP 5.539). A practical belief, in turn, engenders “a habit of deliberate behavior”, directed to some end or purpose (c. 1902, CP 5.538). Putting this altogether, if, for example, the theoretical hypothesis that diamonds are scratch-hard is true, then the practical hypothesis that diamonds will cut glass is also true. Consequently, if people desire to cut glass, use a diamond cutter (1903, CP 5.18; Liszka, 2021, p. 92ff; 2024, p. 500). A theoretical claim is true to the extent that its practical translation leads to success in attaining its end. As Kwame Appiah writes, “if

all our beliefs (pertaining to our end) were true then the actions we undertook on those beliefs would satisfy our desires” (Appiah, 1985, p. 103).

5 The problems with practices

Although practices are designed to solve problems, they can become problems. First, they may not be very well designed to solve their target problems. The League of Nations was poorly designed to meet its aim to prevent another world war (Hensley, 2010).

Second, even if practices do solve their target problems, they may cause more problems than they solve. The internet is an elegant solution to efficient communication, but it has caused well-known problems of misinformation, hacking, and the negative impacts of social media (Diomidous *et al.*, 2016).

Third, practices tend to become outmoded and need to be adapted to other practices in their network. Think of how educational practices are now affected by ChatGPT.

Fourth, even if practices are well-designed, they may become corrupt through the machinations of their practitioners. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners estimates that organizations lose about 5% of their revenue to some form of fraud annually (Warren, 2024).

Fifth, even if practices do not work, they may remain in place because they benefit those who have the power to retain them. Despite all the gun problems in the U.S., and the support of a majority of the U.S. population in favor of stricter gun laws (Gallup, 2023), the powerful gun lobbies have prevented any significant gun reform.

Sixth, even if practices do solve their target problems, people may not have the capability, opportunity or wherewithal to get what the practice affords. According to the World Health Organization, a third of the global population does not have access to safe drinking water (World Health Organization, 2019). Over 800 million people face global hunger (World Health Organization, 2023a). Half of the human population is not fully covered by essential health services (World Health Organization, 2023).

Seventh, the norms that govern practices may themselves be or become problematic. William James emphasized that “someone’s good gets butchered” in every system of rules (1992, p. 611). Norms that permitted slavery, prevented the enfranchisement of women, or the illegality of LGBTQ rights, all became barriers in a long struggle to overcome (McCammon *et al.*, 2014; Ratcliffe, 2014; Massey; Denton, 1993). Finally, practices might not only be ill-designed, but designed specifically for ill – to oppress, to persecute, to discriminate.

6 The three practices of problem-solving

Practices evolve over time to solve particular problems about how to attain means to ends. They employ practical reasoning in order to solve those problems. Consequently, practical reasoning and problem-solving are coincidental. Practical reasoning is a practice for both designing best practices and in solving problematic ones.

An analysis of practical reasoning shows easily enough that it has three critical subroutines – familiar practices within practices. These address three basic questions: What is the problem? What is a solution? And what’s to be done? The first involves *conversation*, the second *inquiry*, and the third *deliberation*. Each has specific aim. The aim of conversation is to come to an understanding of problematic situations. The aim of inquiry is to find workable solutions, practical hypotheses which, if implemented properly, are claimed to resolve the problem satisfactorily. The aim of deliberation is to come to an agreement about what to do, given the candidate solutions.

The three practices of inquiry, deliberation and conversation are *interdependent*. Despite different ends, they work together to solve a problem. Clearly, if people don’t understand what the problem is,

or do not consider the grievances legitimate, then inquiry and deliberation are fruitless. No matter how much people might agree about a solution to a problem, if it doesn't work, the problem will not be solved. Even if a solution is touted by the best experts, unless those affected by the problem can agree to the solution, it will not work. Imposing a solution on an unwilling group can foil even the best solution.

The three processes are also *intradependent*. Each has aspects that mirror one another. Inquiry involves aspects of conversation and deliberation among fellow inquirers. Conversation involves elements of inquiry in terms of gathering information and establishing facts, and deliberation about the seriousness of the problem. Deliberators must assess the result of inquiry, come to an understanding of the interests and beliefs of others, before coming to an agreement on a solution.

7 The overarching normative features of problem-solving

As Bernard Williams argues, there is a central norm of practical reasoning – the “prudential” norm, that one ought to do what is likely to attain what one desires (Williams, 1993, p. 114). Although this might suggest that all practical reasoning is egoistic, this is not necessarily so, since the ends and means of practical reasoning are filtered through practices. Practices are the result of *collective* practical reasoning which often creates barriers to egoistic tendencies by filtering ends and means.

The primary moral sentiment of problem-solving is what might be called the *meliorist sentiment* – the simple desire to make things better, not just for oneself but as a whole. It is expressed by Peirce's notion of “evolutionary love”, to repair what is hateful and to pass on what is good (1893, CP 6.289). Without this sentiment, practitioners cannot be counted on in sincerely aiming at the ends of their practices. When the sentiment falters, it creates what Kitcher calls “altruism failures,” failures to attend to the misery of others and to attend to the endorsable ends of others (Kitcher, 2011, p. 222). James thinks to ignore “the cry of the wounded”, those suffering a problem, is a fatal mistake (James, 1992).

Based on the work of pragmatists and those friendly to its philosophy, there are five overarching norms of problem-solving. These should be familiar to those who know the scholars listed here (Apel, 1980; Cohen, 1989; 1997; Dewey, 2008b; Habermas, 1979; 1981; 1990; Hookway, 2002; Kitcher, 2001; 2021; Liszka, 2021; Misak, 2000; Shook, 2013; Talisse, 2005).

First, a principle of inclusion. Those who suffer a problem should be included in its resolution, but all those affected by it should be as well. When this fails, problems are not properly represented, local knowledge is lost, and the grievances of those who suffer the problem continue.

Second, a principle of non-coercion. Participants in problem-solving practices should feel free to defend their positions and criticize others without fear of coercion or force. Those in power can *end* a problem by force, but violence and coercion does not *solve* it.

Third, adherence to the norms of speech practices. Conversation, inquiry and deliberation are constituted by a variety of speech practices, such as asserting, representing, narrating, listening, asking and the like. In agreement, with Robert Brandom's concept of normative pragmatics, such speech practices involve certain commitments of the speaker and entitlements of the interlocutors that should be followed (2001, p. xiii-xiv). Deception, insincerity and strategic communication, as Habermas argues, foils the ends of good deliberation and makes inquiries unsuccessful (Habermas, 1979, p. 117).

Fourth, a principle of equality of participation. Although not all arguments or opinions are equal, whether it is conversation, inquiry or deliberation, all participants should have the same opportunities to engage in speech practices relevant to problem-solving. Failure to do so questions the results of deliberation, and foils proper inquiry.

Fifth, a principle of consensus. Some variety of consensus should be the primary determination of the principal aim in each of the practices of conversation, inquiry and deliberation. Evidence points

to egalitarian practices as more successful generally than autocratic ones is solving problems in their domain (Acemoglu; Robinson, 2012; Pinker, 2018; Deaton, 2013).

8 The normative features of conversation

There are three typical stages to conversation: the representation of the situation as problematic by grievants and blockers, clarification and establishment of factual claims, leading to a determination whether to count the situation as genuinely problematic. Kitcher calls the latter the “justified acceptance of a situation as problematic” (Kitcher, 2021, p. 30), ideally employing a “[...] diagnostic tool, one that would show where the problems lie and where they don’t” (Kitcher, 2021, p. 29). Juridical practices, such as the practice in the U.S. Supreme Court, model some of these features. Both sides of a problematic case represent their positions to the panel of justices, who ask questions and ask for clarifications with defenses of the litigants, ending in a ruling that resolves the issue.

The moral sentiments most associated with conversation are empathy, understood as a capacity for understanding another, and sympathy, compassion for the suffering of others (Kitcher, 2011, p. 25ff). The virtues most associated with conversation are those central to the ethic of care: attentiveness, responsiveness, respect (Tronto, 1994, p. 126ff).

The principle of inclusion demands that those who claim to suffer a problem have a right to express their grievances and have a voice in representing the case (Kitcher, 2021, p. 37). This also holds for blockers, and those in the public who have any standing. The other four principles apply as well. However, Kitcher argues that, in conversation, the determination of whether a situation counts as problematic in the third stage is if it is endorsed by the participants, so long as the endorsement follows from the normative conditions of conversation (Kitcher, 2021, p. 37). However, many practices restrict the consensus to a supposedly neutral set of brokers since conflicts between grievants and blockers often make consensus difficult.

Jane Addams comes to mind as a pragmatist most representative of the practice of conversation. Hull House was a model, guided by her concept of “associative ethics” (Addams, 2014) – ways of including the impoverished in dealing with the problem of poverty and other local issues (Antanavičiūtė, 2023, p. 8). Her masterful rhetorical strategies for representing conflicts between grievants and blockers comes out in her essay, “A Modern Lear”, an attempt to address the conflict between labor and management in the momentous Pullman strike of 1894 (Macmillan, 2002). Her goal in such rhetoric was to play back their representations of the situation to get away from factional thinking to a ‘we’ by means of co-creating the future, what Kenneth Burke called “dialogical identification” (MacMillan, 2002, p. 71). Even her diagnosis of conspiracy theories in “The Devil’s Baby,” illustrate the attitude of sympathy as a means of getting to the underlying problem of those who advocate such conspiracies (1916). Sympathy and understanding of the problems of others are core to her social ethics (2014, p. 3), and “an identification with the common lot” (2014, p. 4).

9 The normative features of inquiry

Once a situation has been counted as problematic, it becomes a matter of finding a solution which, typically, involves inquiry. The norms of inquiry have been well studied by Peirce and Peirce-inspired thinkers such as Karl-Otto Apel (1980), Jürgen Habermas (1990), Cheryl Misak (2000), Christopher Hookway (2002), Robert Talisse (2005), and are mostly expressed in the five overarching norms of problem-solving. Inquiry is unlikely to attain its goal of truth, if there are violations of these overarching norms. It’s hard to imagine that inquiry would be successful if the give and take of criticism were restricted, or those with opposing ideas were excluded from the inquiry, or people refused to justify their

positions. Peirce's arguments about speech practices, such as assertion, are similar to Brandom's (2001, p. 202), in that those who make claims are committed to provide reasons and justifications to others.

Peirce saw inquiry – as exemplified by science – not just a matter of good method, but as a practice, a community of inquiry (c.1902, CP 7.54; 1902, CP 7.87; Liszka, 1978; 2021b). Inquiry relied deeply on “moral factors” “vital” to the practice (1902, CP 7.87). They were essential for cooperation (1902, CP 2.166). In various work, he outlines these “moral factors” in terms of sentiments, virtues and norms.

Since the end of inquiry is truth (c.1902, CP 7.54), the most fundamental sentiment of inquirers is the “love of truth” (1903, CP 1.49). These included altruistic sentiments toward the community of inquiry itself (1878, CP 2.655). Inquirers share an intergenerational altruism, an understanding that one's work may not reap a benefit for oneself but for those that come later.

In addition to these moral sentiments, inquirers must exercise certain epistemic virtues. Peirce recognized the obvious – honesty (1902, CP 2.82), fair-mindedness (1903, CP 1.49), industry (1902, CP 1.576), humility (1901, CP 8.136). These are also well-articulated by Robert Talisse (2005, p. 112).

In the “The Fixation of Belief”, Peirce emphasizes that true beliefs are not likely if people hold onto beliefs tenaciously despite evidence, or if they believe something simply because it serves their interests (1877, CP5.378). True beliefs are unlikely if they are imposed by authority, coercion or force (1877, CP5.380). True beliefs are unlikely if people believe merely on the basis of what others believe (1877, CP5.383).

10 The Normative Features of Deliberation

Once solutions have been proposed to solve a problem, there needs to be a deliberation about which to implement. John Dewey is the pragmatist most associated with deliberation. John Shook argues that Dewey sees the two processes of inquiry and deliberation working together. A problem arises. There is a conflict of interests. A “public” is formed around people affected by the same social problem. The aim of deliberation is “[...] to bring [...] conflicts out into the open where [...] they can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests than are represented by either of them separately” (Shook, 2008c, p. 56). As Shook notes, “Dewey held that the proper function of politics is to manage social conflict for the benefit of all involved” (Shook, 2013, p. 3). This public enlists the aid of relevant expertise. Experts formulate hypotheses to suggest a course of action most likely to solve the problem. With the aid of expert inquirers, the public agrees about what modifications to social structures or norms are needed to alleviate the problem. The consequences are observed. Either the problem is ameliorated, or the process returns to consider another solution (Shook, 2013, p. 12).

Dewey characterizes public deliberation as one that involves practices of consultation, conference, persuasion, and discussion, all of which require the overarching norms of problem solving – “guarantees of free inquiry, free assembly and free communication”. If engaged in properly it is “self-corrective in the long run” (Dewey, 2008d, p. 226-227).

Many of the same norms tied to inquiry apply to deliberation, with some important differences. For one, the aims of deliberation and inquiry are different. For inquiry, the aim is truth. The aim of deliberation, as Dewey notes, is to come to an agreement. Although inquiry involves an agreement – a convergence of beliefs among inquirers as Peirce would say – the consensus is constrained by evidence and defining events independent of what the inquirers might happen to believe. On the other hand, in deliberation, the coin of the realm are the deliberators' beliefs as tied to their interests.

The effort to get another to believe as one does imply a number of normative attitudes as Misak (2000) and Habermas (1990) point out. If people truly believe what they believe and aim to get others to believe as they do, they must be open to opportunities for others to ask questions, to criticize, to challenge those beliefs. Clearly, people are unlikely to be persuaded if they are refused these opportunities.

Importantly, interests cannot be solely based on self-interest. As Joshua Cohen argues, “while I may take my preferences as a sufficient reason for advancing a proposal, deliberation under conditions of pluralism requires that I find reasons that make the proposal acceptable to others who cannot be expected to regard my preferences as sufficient reasons for agreeing” (1989, p. 24). Cohen argues that the practice of deliberation makes it more likely that there will be sincere representation of beliefs (1989, p. 24). Precisely because there is a goal of agreement, then a proposal that looks to a more common good will prevail over one that benefits a few (Cohen, 1989, p. 23-24).

If there is a sentiment most associated with deliberation it is a desire for solidarity. Solidarity implies an agreement about ends and means to those ends. Solidarity fosters group unity and fellow-feeling, a lessening of polarization.

11 Conclusion

For Dewey, Misak writes, “the pragmatist must see morality and politics as problem-driven...” (2000, p. 156). Kitcher agrees:

To advance the Deweyan goal of making our moral progress more sure-footed [...] proposals about how morally problematic situations might be identified, about how efforts to cope with what has been judged as problematic might be directed, and... the conditions under which those efforts should bring about moral change” are needed. (Kitcher, 2021, p. 32).

What has been offered here is an outline of a normative architecture for an effective problem-solving practice. At the same time, the proposal here begs the question of its justification. What is presented is more of an abduction than a proof – an abduction like all good abductions – based on what is wrong with previous hypotheses or, in this case, failed practices. The ultimate test of the validity of these norms, however, must be their test in lived experience. If implemented properly – conjoined with proper organization, methods and techniques – will they conducive to the end of solving problems?

Pragmatists, as Kitcher argues, claim that:

There is no ethical justification for following a rule unless one has grounds for viewing that rule as authoritative, and those grounds can come [...] only from recognizing the rules as well adapted to producing good outcomes. Following rules not well adapted to producing good outcomes is a capricious and irresponsible thing to do [...].” (Kitcher, 2011, p. 289).

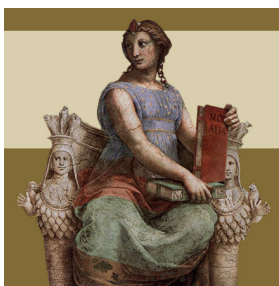
In explaining the pragmatist doctrine, William James claims that the true and the good should be understood as that which “will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part [...]” (James, 1907, p. 58) and leads us away from “clash and contradiction” (James, 1907, p. 215). As Peirce would say, the norms are justified if they are conducive toward their ends. This is the prudential norm writ large. The measure of the correctness of a claim is the success of the actions it guides. Problem-solving also encapsulates Peirce’s notion of “reasonableness”, understood not as a static end to be achieved, but an ongoing process of self-correction toward something better (1902, CP 5.4; 1905, CP 5.433; 1903, CP 1.615; Liszka, 2021b, p. 208-209).

References

- ACEMOGLU, D.; ROBINSON, J. *Why nations fail*. New York: Currency Books, 2012.
- ADDAMS, J. A modern Lear. Archives of Women's Political Communication. Iowa State University, 1895.
- ADDAMS, J. The devil baby at Hull House. *The Atlantic*, October, 1916.
- ADDAMS, J. *Democracy and social ethics*. Creative Space, 2014.
- AGRE, G. The concept of problem. *Educational Studies*, v. 13, p. 121-42, 1982. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326993es1302_1
- ANTANAVIČIŪTĖ, M. Jane Addams's feminist pragmatism and international political thought. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, v. 15, n. 1, p. 1-16, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.3234>
- APEL, K. O. *Towards a transformation of philosophy*. ADEY, G.; FRISBY, D. (Trans.). New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.
- APPIAH, K. *Assertion and conditionals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- AUDI, R. *Practical reasoning and ethical decision*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- BAIN, A. *Logic; Deductive and inductive*. London: Appleton, 1889.
- BHASKAR, R.; SIMON, H. Problem solving in semantically rich domains: an example from thermodynamics. *Cognitive Science*, v. 1, p. 193-215, 1977. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0364-0213\(77\)80009-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0364-0213(77)80009-8)
- BRANDON, R. *Making it explicit: Reasoning, representing, and discursive commitment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- CHADWICK, G. *Systems View of Planning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1971.
- COHEN, J. Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In: HAMLIN, A.; PETTIT, P. (Org.). *The good polity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
- COHEN, J. Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In: BOHMAN, J.; REHG, W. (Org.). *Deliberative democracy: Essays on reason and politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997.
- COPP, D. Normativity and reasons: Five arguments from Parfit against normative naturalism. In: NUCCESELLI, S.; SEAY, G. (Org.). *Ethical naturalism: Current debates*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. p. 24-57.
- DAVIS, G. *Psychology of problem solving: theory and practice*. New York: Basic, 1973.
- DEATON, A. *The great escape: Health, wealth and the origins of inequality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- DEWEY, J. Human nature and conduct. In: BOYDSTON, J. A. (Org.). *The middle works of John Dewey*. (v. 14). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008a.
- DEWEY, J. *The public and its problems*. In: BOYDSTON, J. A. (Org.). *The later works of John Dewey*. (v. 2). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 2008b. p. 235-372.
- DEWEY, J. *Liberalism and social action*. In: BOYDSTON, J. A. (Org.). *The later works of John Dewey*. (v. 13). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008c. p. 1-66.
- DEWEY, J. Creative democracy – the task before us. In: BOYDSTON, J. A. (Org.). *The later works of John Dewey*. (v. 14). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008d. p. 224-234.
- DIOMIDOUS, M. et al. Social and psychological effects of the internet use. *Acta Informatica Medica*, v. 24, n.1, p. 66-68, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.5455/aim.2016.24.66-69>

- D’ZURILLA, T., *et al.* Social problem solving: Theory and assessment. In: CHANG, E., *et al.* (Org.). *Social problem solving*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2004.
- FRENSCH, P.; FUNKE, J. *Complex problem solving: The European Perspective*. Hillsdale: Larence Erlbaum, 1995.
- GALLUP. Guns, 2023. Available at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1645/guns.aspx>
- GIBBARD, A. *Reconciling our aims*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- HABERMAS, J. *Communication and the evolution of society*. Trans. McCarthy, T. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.
- HABERMAS, J. *The theory of communicative action: Reason and the rationalization of society*. Trans. McCarthy, T. v. 1. Boston: Beacon Press, 1981.
- HABERMAS, J. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Trans. Lenhardt, C.; NicholSEN, S. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990.
- HAYES, J. *The complete problem solver*. Philadelphia: Franklin Institute, 1979.
- HENSLEY, F.H. *Power and the pursuit of peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- HOOKWAY, C. *Truth, rationality and pragmatism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002.
- JAMES, W. The moral philosopher and the moral life. In: MYERS, G. (Org.). *Writings 1878-1899* (v.1). Library of America, 1992. p. 595-617.
- JAMES, W. *Pragmatism*. Longmans, Green and Co, 1907.
- KANT, I. *Foundations of the metaphysics of morals*. Trans. BECK, L. W. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Press, 1959.
- KITCHER, P. *The ethical project*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- KITCHER, P. Pragmatism and progress. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, v. 51, n. 4, p. 475-494, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.51.4.06>
- KITCHER, P. *Moral progress*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- KOOPMAN, C. *Pragmatism as transition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- LISZKA, J. *Pragmatist ethics: A problem-based approach to what matters*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021.
- LISZKA, J. Pragmatism and the ethics of meliorism. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, v. 13, n. 2, 2021a. <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.2442>
- LISZKA, J. *Charles Peirce on ethics, esthetics and the normative sciences*. New York: Routledge, 2021b.
- MACMILLAN, G. Keeping the conversation going: Jane Addams’ rhetorical strategies in “A Modern Lear”. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, v. 32, n. 3, p. 61-75, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02773940209391234>
- MACINTYRE, A. *After virtue*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1981.
- MASSEY, D.; DENTON, N. *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- MAYER, R. *Thinking and problem Solving: An Introduction to human cognition and learning*. New York: Scott, Foresman, 1977.
- MCCAMMON, H. *et al.* A radical demand effect: Early US feminists and the Married Women’s Property Acts. *Social Science History*, v. 38, n. 1-2, p. 221-250, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2015.17>
- MISAK, C. *Truth, politics, morality: Pragmatism and deliberation*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

- NEWELL, A.; SIMON, H. *Human problem solving*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- NICKLES, T. What is a problem that we may solve it? *Synthese*, v. 47, n.1, p. 85-118, 1981. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01064267>
- PEIRCE, C. *The Collected Papers of Charles S. Peirce*. In: HARTSHORNE, C., et al. (Orgs.). (8 vols.). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. [Cited as original date, CP, volume, paragraph].
- PETTIT, P. *The birth of ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- PINKER, S. *Enlightenment now: the case for reason, science, humanism and progress*. New York: Viking Press, 2018.
- RADCLIFFE, D. The right to vote and the rise of democracy, 1787-1828. *Journal of the Early Republic*, v. 33, n. 2, p. 219-254, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jer.2013.0033>
- RICHARDSON, H. *Practical reasoning about final ends*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- SHOOK, J. Dewey's ethical justification for public deliberation democracy. *Education and Culture*, v. 29, n. 1, p. 3-26, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1353/eac.2013.0006>
- TALISSE, R. *Democracy after liberalism: Pragmatism and deliberative politics*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- TRONTO, J. *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- WALLACE, J. *Norms and practices*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- WARREN, J. *Occupational fraud 2023: A report to the nations. (13th ed.)*. Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, 2024. Available at: <https://legacy.acfe.com/report-to-the-nations/2024/>
- WILL, F. The rational governance of practice. In: WESTPHAL, K. (Org.). *Pragmatism and realism*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997. p. 63-84.
- WILLIAMS, B. *Moral luck*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. 1 in 3 people globally do not have access to safe drinking water, 2019. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-06-2019-1-in-3-people-globally-do-not-have-access-to-safe-drinking-water-unicef-who>
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. The top 10 causes of death, 2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/the-top-10-causes-of-death>
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. Billions left behind on the path to universal health coverage, September 18, 2023. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-09-2023-billions-left-behind-on-the-path-to-universal-health-coverage>
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. The state of food security and nutrition in the world, July 12, 2023a. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/the-state-of-food-security-and-nutrition-in-the-world-2023>



COGNITIO

Revista de Filosofia
Centro de Estudos de Pragmatismo

São Paulo, v. 26, n. 1, p. 1-12, jan.-dez. 2025
e-ISSN: 2316-5278

 <https://doi.org/10.23925/2316-5278.2025v26i1:e69989>