

DOES THE PRAGMATIST REFLECTION ON THE ETHICAL AND AESTHETIC
VALUES NEED THE KANTIAN AXIOLOGY FOR ITS (PRAGMATIST) FUTURE
DEVELOPMENTS?
(A SHORTER VERSION: WORK IN PROGRESS)

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1. Introduction

The philosophy of values, or axiology, or value inquiry does not belong to the main fields of philosophical interest for American pragmatists. Yet the terms "value", "evaluation", "worth/y" and similar are important for many of them -- mostly perhaps for Nicholas Rescher, who equals the term "Homo sapiens" with "Homo valuens" (Rescher 1993, 246), for H. McDonald's "Radical Axiology" (McDonald 2004), and, to some extent, for J. Dewey in *Theory of Valuation*, in which he writes that "all deliberate, all planned human conduct, personal and collective, seems to be influenced, if not controlled, by estimates of value or worth of ends to be attained" (Dewey 1939, 2). In addition to that, some pragmatists see values the more important when related to normativity; for J. Margolis norms are exemplary values (cf. Margolis 1995, 265) and A. Locke ("Values and Imperatives") links values not only with norms of preference but also with imperatives of actions (cf. Locke 1968 [1935], 313-314).

For these and other reasons, it would be good to take a look at the term "value" as a key-word by means of which we could see the pragmatists' efforts to meet the practical, not merely theoretical, challenges that appear on the horizon. Let me just explain at the beginning that I do not share with some other, non-pragmatist and pragmatist authors, too much hope as to the role of axiology as such in the practice of social life. For example, John Laird, in *The Idea of Value* (1929) hoped that "Value *may* prove to be the key that will eventually release all the human sciences from their present position of pathetic, if not dignified, futility" (Laird 1929, xix). A. Locke wished to make the philosophy of values American philosophy's strong point, "an American forte" (Locke 1968 [1935], 317). I do not, let me repeat, share with these authors such hopes, although I do not deny some justification for their (and others') expectations. Nevertheless, I think that this category (value) is so widely used and sometimes in so important contexts of the public life, that I just want to employ it and see how much it is helpful in the recognition of new perspectives.

To be true, one can hardly talk about one pragmatist axiology understood as a more or less coherent set of assumptions, methods, and theories. C. S. Peirce's idea of valuations in the normative sciences (aesthetics, ethics, and logic) is different than Dewey's theory of valuation, and R. Shusterman's idea of "somaesthetics", although all three link, in different ways, the field of ethics (and ethical values) with the field of aesthetics (and aesthetic values). Thomas Alexander's idea of the "aesthetics of human existence" (*The Human Eros*) covers both ethics and aesthetics (and more) in the task of exploring meaning and value of our lives. C. I. Lewis (in "Values and Imperatives"), J. Margolis ("Values, Norms, and Agents") and N. Rescher (*Value Matters*) devoted their attention to the normative and imperative dimension of the moral values, which is in line with a more general tendency to see "value inquiry" predominantly in the area of ethics and ethical values, not aesthetics. R. Rorty ("Solidarity or Objectivity") shares with W. James, J. Dewey and G. H. Mead many inspirations on social dimension of the world of values, yet it would be more appropriate to talk about his reflections that are applicable to the discussion about values, rather than any theory that he

has put forward. Also J. Lachs ("Relativism and its Benefits") takes much from Dewey, although he predominantly develops G. Santayana's idea of relativism of values, and, having "learned to write without footnotes" (Lachs 2012,191), he uses the language that is more colloquial or popular rather than theoretical and scientific as if directed to wider audiences, not just to scholars.

But seeing the philosophical job as wider than theoretical inquiry does not, by any means, have to be a failure or a mistake. Much depends upon the particular audience that the philosophical message is directed at; actually, it is one of pragmatism's strengths to propose the criticism of culture along with the interpretations of various cultural phenomena that are interesting for more general audiences -- including irrational audiences, I mean those that ignore much part of the rational argumentation in many areas of living in favour of emotional, symbolic, visual, and others --, and touch more general and practical issues than strictly philosophical and theoretical.

2. New challenges and possible future developments

There are very many challenges ahead (of which I just mention without any intention to develop this plot in the present text) that pragmatism, understood predominantly as social philosophy and the critique of culture, is going to face. The role of the mass-media that cover nearly all aspects of life, including private and public, is one group of them. Yet, not about the mass-media as such I want to discuss in this place, but rather about the growing role of the aesthetic in various spheres of the public life, starting with communication (the pictorial dimension of the TV and Internet narratives), through the omnipresent images in omnipresent commercials, the promotion of different life-styles, ending with particular argumentations on vital issues that seem to dominate the public discussions. For example: do not the anti-abortion discourse (frequently referring to "evil" and "negative value/s") gain much more in many audiences when its proponents use X-ray images of the embryo as a part of their story? On the other hand, do not their pro-abortion opponents are not much more persuasive to many audiences when their narratives (frequently referring to "freedom", "non-suffering" and other positive values) use the images of the deformed new-borns with terribly looking physical birth defects? Do not the TV scenes play a role in the discussion about the refugees or immigrants and do not these scenes (dead baby boy on a beach for the one party and, for the other, terrorist attacks by Muslim immigrants), rather than arguments, matter in the public life political elections included? Are not the discourses on nationalisms and anti-nationalisms strengthened by symbols and well arranged visual images that appeal to the senses and imagination rather than to the reason? I mean, is it not the case that even when the disputants themselves avoid using the images, the growing number of the members of the public have them already in their minds, and very often react to these images no less than to the argumentation which they hear, if they hear it at all?

The challenge for philosophers that emerges out it, in my view, is the need of linking *the message on ethical values* with *the aesthetic values of the narratives and within them*. If philosophers want to have a say on important issues of the day, and this includes values, they should pay much more attention to the aesthetic dimension of their message to be directed to various audiences.

I can find strong support for my claim in both Kantians and pragmatists. On the one hand, Wilhelm Windelband, one hundred years ago, put strong emphasis on what he considered the truth, namely, that "it is not so much the difficulty of philosophy as the poor literary standard of philosophical writers which perplexes the student" (Windelband 1921 [1914]; 15), hence the philosophers ought to, among other things, pay more attention to "the finer quality of the artistic expression" (ibid., 16) of their works and ideas. On the other hand,

if we agree with Nicholas Rescher that the cardinal rule of pragmatic rationality is: "Proceed in a manner that is optimally efficient and effective in realizing the purposes at hand" (Rescher 2004, 95), my question is as follows: do not more *attractive* and *clearer* and more *inspirational* discourses make for more "efficient and effective" realization of "the purposes at hand"? Those contemporary pragmatists who want use the legacy of the greatest pragmatists, and look for the future challenges with the help of their ideas, should try to respond to this.

To be true, for the pragmatists' part (esp. neopragmatist), there are some reasons why a complete separation of ethical values from aesthetic values may not work. First, it is the imaginative origin of ethical ideals so that Dewey, in *Aesthetic Experience* could claim that "art is more moral than the moralities" (Dewey 1934, 348); second, the inevitably narrative character of the articulation of the ethical ideals (any narrative being at least partially aesthetic), third, the artificiality of the compartmentalization of ethics and aesthetics (and other spheres) as well as the conventionality of the borderlines between morality and arts; forth, the idea of the art of living, or "the ethical art of fashioning one's life" (Shusterman 1992, 59); fifth, the criticism of the classic separation of body and mind, resulting in the appreciation of the corporal sensitivity and bodily perception in shaping the mental and linguistic dimension of such notions as: duty, obligation, and normativity.

Let me add, that the present text does not examine Kant's claim (e.g. in *Judgment* #15) that the beautiful gives us no knowledge about the object (about the values in the present context) -- something that some neopragmatists would like to claim. Nor do I examine the ontological issues of the kalokagathia-type of approaches both in the Kantian tradition (e.g. H. R. Lotze, in *Microcosmus*, saying that if the attempts of our mind to explain the world of values correspond to creative imagination, "then *Practical Reason* stands on a line with the artistic production of beauty" (Lotze 1885 [1856-1864], 246). On the other hand, the pragmatist one (Dewey, when he writes that great moral deeds may have the grace or nobility that strike us (cf. 1991 [1938], 358). I cannot prejudge at this place whether the aesthetic components of the narratives as such *necessarily* modify the message on ethical values.

3. The main thesis of the present text: any ethical message needs aesthetic narratives

In order to more effectively face the challenges of the pictorial turn and visual culture today, it is very needed to refer to aesthetic values (e.g. clarity, simplicity, attractiveness, metaphors, stimulation, inspiration, and others) by means of the aesthetic modes of expression (textual, oral, pictorial, visual, cinematic, etc.) in the philosophical narratives that deal with ethical values, be it social or individual.

I am thinking here about ethical values and aesthetic values at the same time as, for example, in the case of the visual *attractiveness*, narrative *clearness*, and *inspirational* contents for a moral or ethical message in philosophy (if we agree that *attractiveness*, *clarity*, and *inspiration* belong predominantly to the aesthetic domain).

3.1. The auxiliary thesis of the present text: Kantian axiology can, at some points, be helpful

The pragmatist tradition is strong and rich enough to face new challenges; nevertheless, it would be interesting to see if it could use and profit from other philosophical traditions, and this includes the Kantian tradition, one that has, at some point, enormously developed axiology as a philosophical discipline.

4. Who is pragmatist and who is Kantian on values?

Neither is it easy to indicate the most representative authors of the "pragmatist axiology" (Peirce? Dewey and Mead? Lewis? Rorty?) on the one hand and of the 'Kantian axiology' on the other (Kant himself? Lotze? Münsterberg? Windelband and Rickert? Scheler and N. Hartmann?); nor is it easy to indicate the most representative assumptions. Nevertheless, I want to clarify what I mean by "pragmatist" and "Kantian" in this text. I assume, at least for the sake of the present project that "pragmatist" and "Kantian" mean at least the following ten features taken together.

Firstly, pragmatism is predominantly a *social philosophy*, and Kantianism is predominantly a *metaphysical* philosophy. The former means that pragmatism studies the social relations as the most constituent factors that shape the realm of values, the processes of evaluation, of setting norms, and generating discourses by means of which the axiological issues can be articulated. The latter means that Kantianism studies predominantly the ontological status of values, assumes the absolute and objective character of some of them, and examines their possibly normative character. Most pragmatists reject the absolute and unconditioned values; I say 'most' because the positions held by Peirce, Royce, and Rescher are, to some degree and at some points, closer (yet, not identical!) to the representatives of the Kantian tradition. Some others attempted to 'convert' or 'translate' Kantian thought into social terms, like G. H. Mead, who, In *Mind, Self and Society*, wrote openly that Kant's categorical imperative can be "given its social equivalent" (Mead 1934, 379).

Secondly, pragmatism, more often than not, *contextualizes* the assessments of the valuable deeds, actions or states of affairs. Pragmatism does not recognize, as Kantianism usually does, the "*unconditioned*" states of affairs, "things in themselves", "inner worth", and absolute values that are, so to say, "valid" despite having no reference to anybody's needs, preferences, interests, and hopes. The Kantian positions usually follow Kant's *Groundwork's* claim that the full worth of good will is like "jewel in itself" (Kant 2002 [1785], 10).

Thirdly, pragmatism is predominantly *consequentialist* in the sense of practical application into the social life and the consequences there, while Kantianism is predominantly intentionalist, which means that "The moral worth of the action thus lies not in the effect to be expected from it" (Kant 2002 [1785], 16). The consequentialist character of the pragmatist position can include preferences, not merely the effects of the action: "Value reactions guided by emotional preferences and affinities are as potent in the determination of attitudes as pragmatic consequences are in the determination of actions. In the generic and best sense of the term 'pragmatic', it is important to take stock of the one as the other (Locke 1968 [1935], 318). The intentional character of Kantianism includes the deontological dimension (the very intention to obey the duty) and the teleological one (the very intention to realize a given value or a valuable state of affairs), though the teleological approach may assume a consequentialist colouring when the result (i.e. the realization) is seen as the main or important aim of the action.

Fourthly, pragmatism is basically *naturalistic* and Kantianism is basically *idealistic*; the pragmatists assume that the knowledge about the world of values can be had by such disciplines as physics, chemistry, biology, anthropology, ethics, and social sciences. The Kantians assume, to use Münsterberg's words, that "the pragmatists [are] wrong" and the Kantians "may stand firmly with both feet on the rock of facts, and may yet hold to the absolute values as eternally belonging to the structure of the world" (Münsterberg 1909, 2).

Fifthly, although ontologically monistic (all values have a naturalistic character), pragmatism had a tendency towards axiological *pluralism* by stressing the variety of values. Kantianism is ontologically *dualistic* (absolute and objective values are different in status and character than relative and subjective values) and typologically dualistic in the sense of

cultivating the classic division into basic values: good vs. evil; the beautiful vs. ugly, etc. in the first place.

Sixthly, pragmatism is more *evolutionary* in its understanding of values and the amelioration of the social world by working on still better relations amongst people, and Kantianism has a rather *static*, eternal, and fixed idea of the absolute and objective values as the main groundwork for dignity and justice.

Seventhly, pragmatism does not necessarily link values with duties and obligations to realize given values. This link is clearly visible and the idea of *Seinsollen* that was strong in the Kantian tradition (and later on, in the phenomenology of Scheler, N. Hartmann, and others). For the Baden Kantians, the idea of obligation was a strong point against axiological relativism, and in at least in this service "the conception of obligation is excellent" (Münsterberg 1909, 57).

Eighthly, pragmatism is *anthropocentric* whereas Kantianism, especially Baden neo-Kantianism (and some part of phenomenology later on) are *axiocentric*. The difference was tersely articulated by Josiah Royce, one of the founding fathers of pragmatism yet himself claiming to belong to "the wide realm of Post-Kantian Idealism" (Royce 1885, ix). He wrote that the cause "does not get its value merely from your being pleased with it. You believe, on the contrary, that you love it just because of its own value, which it has by itself, even if you die. That is just why one may be ready to die for his cause" (Royce 1995, 11). At this very place, Royce's message is close to the neo-Kantians' (cf. Münsterberg 1909, 64).

Ninthly, pragmatism's main explanatory powers lie in *empirical* methodologies of the social sciences that are experimentally verifiable rather than in *aprioristic* groundwork for knowledge. W. Windelband tersely articulated the Kantian methodology in the following way: "No knowledge of duty can be put into action without a knowledge of being" (Windelband 1921 [1914], 30).

Tenthly, pragmatism, especially neopragmatism is aware of the contingency of *discourses* about values and valuations. Rorty's descriptive relativism is the view according to which "the truth (or falsity) of a belief (or set of beliefs) is dependent on the relation of the belief(s) to some discourse (whatever else it is dependent on). Truth (or falsity) of belief(s) holds only with respect to, or in relation to some discourse, and need not hold with respect to other discourses" (Cahoone 1991, 239). Kantianism does not seem to stress that our understanding of the realm of values is much dependent upon the discourses of this realm; rather, it stresses the need to get to the *right* and *reliable* discourse out of many false and unreliable discourses at hand. So, when a Kantian might say that the progress in the explanation of the world (of values) "is therefore at the same time a progress in the description" (Münsterberg 1909, 131), by no means does it mean the plurality of alternative descriptions taken legitimately from various, more or less, equally valid standpoints.

5. Why the pragmatists should look to the Kantians at all?

Despite sometimes a harsh criticism of the pragmatists against Kant (and the Kantians), for example, for ignoring the social dimension of their ideas, and no less harsh criticism of the Kantians against pragmatism, for example, for promoting relativism, studying these relationships in the context of the idea of value can be interesting and fruitful. Below, I propose a few issues that could be taken into consideration - if not have already been taken into consideration - in the pragmatists' reflection on values. All these points can, I claim, be instrumental in answering the question that was put in the title of this text.

5. 1. The Kantians can help the pragmatists better define their philosophy of values

I have an impression that the Kantians have already given service to at least some pragmatists in their (pragmatists) better setting their own philosophical and axiological identity. Directly or indirectly rejecting some Kantian views and fortifying others, a more or less definite character of pragmatist axiology has been proposed sometimes as if against the Kantian background. What background? Münsterberg presented tersely the dilemma that has faced a major part of the Kantian axiology. Namely, "we have a world with over-personal unconditional values or we have no real world at all, but merely a worthless chance dream, in which to strive for truth and morality can have no meaning whatsoever" (Münsterberg 1909, 46). As if in response to that, John Dewey's *Theory of Valuation*, one of the most representative texts for pragmatist axiology, clearly states that the problem of values and valuation refers to exclusively "human activities and human relations," to "the behavioral relations of persons to one another," and that values have a "social or interpersonal" character (Dewey 1939; 3, 11, 12). This can be seen as an obvious statement that situates pragmatism within the realm of social relations as opposed to a relation to some over-human reality. Exactly the same statement was put forward by Rorty, in "Solidarity or Objectivity"; as if responding to the Kantian divide, he juxtaposed those who "describe themselves as standing in immediate relation to a non-human reality" vs. those "telling the story of their contribution to a community" (Rorty 1991, 21). Of course, I am not claiming that these authors directly replied to the Kantians; I just claim that their replies can be used in the pragmatists' replies to the Kantian divide.

How can it be helpful in answering the question that is put forward in the title of the present text? In confronting the Kantian axiology at most vital points (ontological, epistemological, and others), the pragmatists better articulate their views on the social origin and the communal character of the world of values.

5. 2. The Kantians can, by *via negativa*, help the pragmatists better define target audiences

What is the connection with between this better defining the philosophy of values and its possible application in the face of the challenges I mentioned above? The suggested answer to this question is as follows. In response to the question: "What should be done?", some Kantians followed the idea that "We are not forced to act in accordance with a value, but we ought to act in accordance with it. The value is thus an obligation (Münsterberg 1909, 51). Contrary to this, the pragmatists proposed, among other things, meliorism as a way of the improvement of the quality of social life, of the cooperation of the members of the public and of the self-creation of these members. Here, the Kantians can be helpful and inspirational in a negative way, as a sort of warning for the pragmatists not to ignore the social dimension of talking about values as well as about norms and obligations. In the pragmatist interpretation, both Kant and the Kantians failed to refer to the social reality. To use R. Shusterman's strong words "the social and class-hierarchical foundation of aesthetic judgment" (Shusterman 1989, 211) has been scandalously neglected in Kant, and it seems that this scandalous neglect has been transmitted to the major part of the Kantian tradition. However, this neglect can be seen as a potential for the pragmatists in various ways. In the first instance, in their dealing with the social aspects of values, valuations, and the narratives that are used in social communication. My claim is that the pragmatists should be aware of something that Kant himself and the Kantians were not aware, that is of the different social, political, cultural, and economic statuses of the audiences and its consequences. One of them is the contextualization of the messages AND the modes of transmitting these messages. In order to be persuasively able to

talk to many audiences, not just the academic one (as is usually the case) -- or, to use Kant's language (in *Judgment*), "the more cultured section of the community" -- the recognition of these modes with the values (including aesthetic values that are present in the narratives) should be a priority. Pragmatist pluralism and tolerance make it possible to reach and persuade also various segments of (to use Kant's language again) "the ruder section of the community", whatever this may mean nowadays.

So the answer to the title question, at this point, should go to the direction of the recognition of various modes of communication, modes that include, for example, different sensitivities of audiences to the ways in which given communication is transmitted. The pragmatists' recognition of the language and values of the mass-culture (e.g. Shusterman studies of the culture of rap and hip-hop) is an example.

5.3. Kantians' meaningful life vs. pragmatists' satisfying life?

N. Rescher elaborates the relationship between pragmatism and the Kantian type of idealism in terms of 'satisfaction' and 'meaning'. In the chapter "The Pragmatic Aspect of Values and the Idealistic Dimensions of Values," he says that "The pragmatic aspect of values lies in the fact that they provide a thought tool that we require in order to achieve a *satisfying life*. By contrast, the idealistic aspect of values lies in the fact that they alone enable us to achieve a *meaningful life*" (Rescher 1993, 248), and adds that "It is our dedication to values that ultimately gives meaning to our lives" (ibid., 249). But what is a meaningful life? Aren't the pragmatists able to provide it with their social philosophy? I am looking for the answer to this question in Münsterberg, who, one hundred years before, accused the pragmatists he knew from Harvard of being unable to philosophically provide us with a meaningful life. He wrote that although the efficiency of settling life problems has grown thanks to, among other things, the pragmatist approach in life and philosophy, the meaning of life is in danger (cf. Münsterberg 1909, 4-5, 77). Surprisingly (to me), Münsterberg has said exactly the same what Rescher wrote about. He expressed his hope that if a new philosophy should appear and give "meaning to life and reality, and liberate us from the pseudo-philosophic doubt of our ideals (...) the problem of values must stand in the centre of the inquiry" (Münsterberg 1909, 4-5), and Kantian philosophy can provide us with it. What they both wanted to say, I think, is to pay attention to the difficulty of having a good life with the reference to merely individual preferences and even to the dedication to the communal affairs, and this because both lead to axiological subjectivism and relativism. In the Kantian tradition (as in the Platonic, Scholastic, and others) subjectivism and relativism are definitely not enough to make life meaningful.

Without getting into much details about possibly rhetoric effects of the Kantians' one-sided criticism of the social pragmatism, one can say that, perhaps, the pragmatists need Kantians at least to rethink the formulations of the good life within pragmatism. Rescher says that "Being human involves a commitment to ideality--a striving toward something larger and better than life. *Homo sapiens* is a creature that yearns for transcendence, for achieving value and meaning above and beyond the buzzing confusion of the world's realities" (Rescher 1993, 249).

I think, the pragmatists should much more evoke this theme in their philosophical message, especially for those who, as Rescher says, yearn for some form of transcendence and some kind of getting over the relativity of values. John Lachs' idea of "stoic pragmatism" along with its strong Santayananian-type of spirituality or "transcendence of everyday life" can meet much part of the expectation.

5.4. Münsterberg and Dewey on aesthetic experience

The relevance of these two, I mean "meaning" and "satisfaction" can be further discussed on the occasion of what Dewey called "aesthetic experience". This latter notion can be interesting for us because it shows in what ways the representatives of both traditions, that is Dewey and Münsterberg, understand it and refer to both ethical and aesthetical values at the same time. We can also take a look at Shusterman's aesthetics, to some degree a continuation of Dewey's ideas and see that the pragmatist concept of "aesthetic satisfaction" or "aesthetic pleasure" has something more to offer. Namely, to use Salverria's words: "it not only opens the horizon to a more refined attention toward the somatic processes of our body, but also opens the horizon to a more refined attention on our own problematic positioning in the world" (Salverria 2012, 249).

5.5. Kantians helpful in seeing the possible relations between values and norms

The Baden neo-Kantian Wilhelm Windelband was among the first and most influential who understood values as objective norms that should be realized. The basic idea was that the norms indicate that valuable state of affairs ought to be realized when possible. In this way, the phrase that is uttered before the act of the realization, namely: "something should take place", corresponds to the phrase that is uttered after the act of the realization, namely: "it is good/valuable that something has taken place". With or without any direct reference to the Kantian ideas, at least some pragmatists wrestled with the problem whether a valuable state of affairs should be seen as a standard or a norm that ought to be materialized if/when possible. Some of these efforts resemble the Kantians' struggle. For example, Dewey (*Theory of Valuation*) states that "Value in the sense of *good* is inherently connected with that which promotes, furthers, assists, a course of activity, and value in the sense of *right* is inherently connected with that which is needed, required, in the maintenance of a course of activity" (Dewey 1939, 57). Margolis also links values with norms: "**norms** are exemplary values in a hierarchy of values, or principles or rules or regulative procedures for "grading" and "ranking" things—preeminently, choices, judgments, commitments, actions—pertinent to realizing such values (Margolis 1995, 265). Also, Lachs does it frequently on various occasions, although he does it by means of practical and colloquial terms. For example, Lachs sees philosophers as those who have obligations to live exemplary lives (cf. Lachs 2014, 394), which means, among other things, that they ought to give their students as well the other members of the public living pictures of a good life in practice. The philosophers should be able to experience in practice the ideas of the good life, and be read to share it with the people around: "Philosophers ought to know better, speak better, and act better" (Lachs 2015, 7).

Can Lachs' view be an example for us to answer, at this point, the title question? If the pragmatists narrow down the world of values to the social sphere rather than the human exemplars, with their successful realizations of a good life, can serve us as models of the good life to be discussed and promoted by means of attractive narratives.

5.6. Kant, Putnam, and Rorty on stimulating an "interminable discussion"

One of main aims of contemporary aesthetics is to evoke discussion; provoking interpretations and showing, sometimes shockingly, new angles of view and new ways of seeing things. Aesthetics and aesthetic values are needed in philosophical narrative because they can be more instrumental in evoking reflection in various audiences, not to mention evoking discussion amongst philosophers themselves. In this context, it would be interesting to take a closer look at Hilary Putnam's reading of a fragment of Kant's *Critique of the Power*

of *Judgment* in the following way: "it is part of the *value* of art that it provokes interminable discussion." (Putnam, 2015, 679). The paragraph 49 of *Judgment* fragment to which Putnam refers and, as he claims, is "remarkably little discussed by Kant scholars! (ibid.), reads:

we add to a concept a representation of the imagination that belongs to its presentation, but which by itself stimulates so much thinking that it can never be grasped in a determinate concept, hence which aesthetically enlarges the concept itself in an unbounded way [...] in this case the imagination is creative, and sets the faculty of intellectual ideas (reason) into motion." (Kant (2001 [1790]) 5:315)

Although without a clear reference to Kant as in Putnam, I detect similar tone Rorty's "The Inspirational Value of Great Works of Literature" (*Achieving Our Country*). Apart from the "recontextualization", "self-transformation", and "evoking social hope", he sees the "stimulating inspiration" as the values that constitute a "great work of literature" (we should not forget that in Rortyan vocabulary this might also refer to what commonly is called "great philosophical books"). This "stimulating inspiration" refers to the audience and to other authors. A great work, or a great text in general, loses its capacity to be "great" when does not have any impact upon the receivers (and commentators) and leaves them unmoved in their view of the depicted life, and they have no will to see things from a new and different angle of view. the great work ought to be able to inspire people to various types of pro-social actions, be it in the further development of the idea of the work (promoting it as important), doing something more for the sake of the message of the great work, and others.

5.7. Kant and Rescher on aesthetic parameters in scientific explanations

Rescher talks about "aesthetic parameters" in scientific explanations, and to these he includes: "*simplicity, uniformity, symmetry, economy, elegance, and the like*" (Rescher 1990, 1). He adds that "The approach agrees with Kant in viewing all the parameters of scientific systematicity -- simplicity, uniformity, coherence, and the rest -- as methodological and procedural guidelines ("regulative principles")" (Rescher 1990, 2). He also explains that "while our commitment to the 'aesthetic' parameters of inductive procedure should be viewed in the first instance as a matter of methodological convenience within the overall economy of rational inquiry, nevertheless, our reliance on them is not *totally* devoid of ontological commitments regarding the world's nature (Rescher 1990, 9).

Rescher's views, although controversial, can be interesting in the context of the title question. If we wanted to follow Rescher, it would mean that not only the aesthetic factors should be central in the narratives about ethical messages, but also that they should be seen as hardly separable from the scientific explanation of some ethical and axiological phenomena. Here, as Rescher suggests, the pragmatists and the Kantians would not necessarily be in disagreement.

(to be developed)

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