and to enjoy it, and also to keep it in store in society so that individuals of the future may also enjoy it, one generation doing the same for the next and so on unto infinity.

[From Chen, "Rensheng zhenyi," pp. 90–93 —WTC]

HU SHI: "PRAGMATISM"

There are two fundamental changes in basic scientific concepts that have had the most important bearings on pragmatism. The first is the change of the scientific attitude toward scientific laws. Hitherto, worshipers of science generally had a superstition that scientific laws were unalterable universal principles. They thought that there was an eternal, unchanging "natural law" immanent in all things in the universe and that when this law was discovered, it became scientific law. However, this attitude toward the universal principle has gradually changed in the last several decades. Scientists have come to feel that such a superstitious attitude toward a universal principle could hinder scientific progress. Furthermore, in studying the history of science they have learned that many discoveries in science are the results of hypotheses. Consequently, they have gradually realized that the scientific laws of today are no more than the hypotheses that are the most applicable, most convenient, and most generally accepted as explanations of natural phenomena. . . . Such changes of attitude involve three ideas: (1) Scientific laws are formulated by men. (2) They are hypotheses — whether they can be determined to be applicable or not entirely depends on whether they can satisfactorily explain facts. (3) They are not the eternal, unchanging natural law. There may be such a natural law in the universe, but we cannot say that our hypothecated principles are this law. They are no more than a shorthand to record the natural changes known to us. [pp. 291–294]

Besides this, there was in the nineteenth century another important change that also had an extremely important bearing on pragmatism. This is Darwin's theory of evolution. . . . When it came to Darwin, he boldly declared that the species were not immutable but all had their origins and developed into the present species only after many changes. From the present onward, there can still be changes in species, such as the grafting of trees and crossing of fowls, whereby special species can be obtained. Not only do the species change, but truth also changes. The change of species is the result of adaptation to environment, and truth is but an instrument with which to deal with environment. As the environment changes, so does truth accordingly. . . . The knowledge that mankind needs is not the way or principle that has an absolute existence but the particular truths for here and now and for particular individuals. Absolute truth is imaginary, abstract, vague, without evidence, and cannot be demonstrated. [pp. 294–295]

The Pragmatism of James

What we call truth is actually no more than an instrument, comparable to this piece of paper in my hand, this chalk, this blackboard, or this teapot. They are all our instruments. Because this concept produced results, people in the past therefore called it truth, and because its utility still remains, we therefore still call it truth. If by any chance some event takes place for which the old concept is not applicable, it will no longer be truth. We will search for a new truth to take its place. . . . [pp. 309–310]

The Fundamental Concepts of Dewey's Philosophy

Dewey is a great revolutionist in the history of philosophy. . . . He said that the basic error of modern philosophy is that modern philosophers do not understand what experience really is. All quarrels between rationalists and empiricists and between idealists and realists are due to their ignorance of what experience is. [p. 316]

Dewey was greatly influenced by the modern theory of biological evolution. Consequently, his philosophy is completely colored by bio-evolutionism. He said that "experiencing means living; and that living goes on in and because of an environing medium, not in a vacuum. . . . The human being has upon his hands the problem of responding to what is going on around him so that these changes will take one turn rather than another, namely, that required by his own further functioning. . . . He is obliged to struggle — that is to say, to employ the direct support given by the environment in order indirectly to effect changes that would not otherwise occur. In this sense, life goes on by means of controlling the environment. Its activities must change the changes going on around it; they must neutralize hostile occurrences; they must transform neutral events into cooperative factors or into an efflorescence of new features."[23]

This is what Dewey explained as experience. [p. 318]

The foregoing are the basic concepts of Dewey's philosophy. Summarized, they are (1) Experience is life and life is dealing with environment; (2) In the act of dealing with environment, the function of thought is the most important. All conscious actions involve the function of thought. Thought is an instrument to deal with environment; (3) True philosophy must throw overboard the previous toying with "philosophers' problems" and turn itself into a method for solving human problems.

[Hu, "Shiyan zhuyi," *Hu Shi wencun*, collection 1, ch. 2, pp. 291–320; originally published in *Xin qingnian* 6, no. 4 (April 1919): 342–358 — WTC]

23. John Dewey, *Creative Intelligence* (New York: Henry Holt, 1917), pp. 8–9.