Dewey begins his philosophy by criticising empiricists' reductive method as the investigation of philosophical inquiry and also points out the limitations of empiricism.

A notably favourite thesis of empiricism is that all ideas are derived from experience. Different accounts of how this derivation occurs, from the most simple to the most complicated, are but variations wrung from essentially the same empirical theory. In Locke and Hume, the thesis received more than usual emphasis when it turned into a practice of critical philosophical analysis.

Historically, the notion of derivation was flexible enough to suggest the complementing of one piece of theory with another; from thinking of ideas as casually derived from experience to thinking of ideas as reducible (or translatable) to events (terms) of immediate experience. Contemporary versions of reductionism are linguistically based, envisioning a reduction by means of logical

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construction of the descriptive science to terms referring to immediate sense-data. This term-for-term reduction has its parallel in the psychology of eighteenth century empiricists with its reduction of ideas to simple sensations.

For Hume, the reductive approach is clear. Beginning with an account of the origins of ideas as "derived" from impressions, the explanation is worked over into a critical test of the meaningfulness of those ideas or beliefs that purport to be about matter of fact. Examining the idea or belief in the self or casualty, Hume asks from what impressions those are derived. Finding none, he holds that the idea is meaningless or the belief is false. On the other hand, a "justified" belief in the self or casualty—namely, Hume's, as against unjustified rationalism—fits the reductive bill. So Hume has been read as maintaining that a reductive uncovering of the experiential causes of ideas and beliefs about the world is a test of meaning and validity.

Both Peirce and James took an alternative course in giving priority to the consequences of ideas and beliefs
when questions of truth and meaning were under consideration. This was not an alternative to empiricism but rather a fundamental shift and resulting a revision theory among the practices of empiricism. One could continue to affirm sense experience as the "original" of ideas and immediate experience as the cause of thought and stimulus to inquiry. Imagining, believing, thinking, having ideas, each and all, do have causes and perhaps "derived from experience." For the pragmatists the experiential causes of ideas and belief may be necessary conditions of their occurrence but not a sufficient condition in the analysis of what they are — viz what they mean or whether they are true or false.

But John Dewey's writings on pragmatism can be divided into parts; those of a technical and logical nature fall under the heading of instrumentalism,

a theory of a general forms of conception and reasoning

and those in which Dewey is concerned with questions of value in human conduct and experience, and in which the general pragmatic principle of consequences is developed as a method of social criticism and evaluation. Here it is the nature of the various consequences, in and for human life, of institutions, customs, social arrangements, and ideas that occupy Dewey's attention and from which critical suggestions are offered. This is one of the primary and always necessary critical functions of philosophy as Dewey viewed it - the task of critically evaluating experience as a part of the

Continuous reconstruction of experience, 2  
a task he also regarded as the -

articulation and revelation of the meanings of the current course of events. 3

For Peirce, James and Dewey, the weakest and most troublesome points in traditional empirical theory were

2. Reconstruction in Philosophy, P. 213  
3. Ibid, P. 213.
three: its interpretation of sensation (or sense-data); its interpretation of ideas (thinking and mind); its persistent attempt at a reductive analysis of mental phenomena. In short, empiricism, to the pragmatist, was suffering from a faulty philosophical physiology, psychology and method of analysis.

The origins of pragmatism are clear in broad outline though obscure in fine details. Pragmatism is a method of philosophizing, often identified as a theory of meaning that was first started by Charles Peirce in the 1870's, was revived primarily as a theory of truth; and was further developed, expanded by John Dewey and F.C.S. Schiller. Founders of pragmatism did not entirely agree about what pragmatism stood for as a philosophic position as a nucleus of ideas. Peirce and James took a Catholic view of the historical ancestor of pragmatism. But Dewey saw Francis Bacon as the Prophet of a pragmatic conception of knowledge. 4

4, Ibid - P. 38
Peirce also wrote to James in 1904,

Pragmatism solves no problem. It only shows that supposed problems are not real problems.\(^5\)

Peirce's statement of pragmatism is probably the least clear recommendation in the history of Philosophy. Peirce was concerned with "intellectual purport." Concepts are to be explained by concepts, not by images, or actions. Access to the meaning of concepts is gained only through concepts.

"Clarity of apprehension", to use Peirce expressions, is had by a replacing of concepts with concepts, a replacing of unclear concepts by clear concepts. To replace a concept means to replace our initial conception of an object by a conception of the conceivable practical bearings or effect of that object. But this advice to be effective, must await elucidation of "concept", its conceivable practical bearing or effect.

\(^5\) The collected paper of C.S. Peirce ed. C. Hartshorn, P. Weiss and A.W. Burks Vol.8 Para 259.

Contd...p/13.
Peirce's pragmatism, often said to be a 'theory of meaning', was regarded by Peirce himself as a maxim, rule and method for ascertaining the meaning of signs. But Pragmatism is not concerned with the meaning of all signs, it is concerned merely with a method of determining the meaning of intellectual concepts, that is, those upon which reasoning may turn. Concepts that are subjective, indeterminate, and practical effect of individual's feeling are to be excluded from pragmatic analysis along with non-descriptive logical components of sentences, such as "and" or "if - then" and the like. According to Peirce the concept of pragmatic meaning does not apply to hold all kinds of meanings. Secondly, pragmatic determination of meaning does not apply to words or word usage in general but more directly to "concepts" or what Peirce calls "the intellectual purport" of words. For Peirce the broadest category of instrument of communication is that of "signs". Words, concepts and certain standardized form of overt behaviour are each kind of signs. As a broad description, pragmatism is a theory or set of procedural rules for clarifying or determining the meaning of certain classes of signs.
In saying that our conception of an object turns upon conceiving its 'practical bearings' or 'effects', Peirce did not intend to expound a doctrine of crass utilitarianism. It was not the intention of Peirce to suggest that all thought issues in action or that the purport of concepts lies in acts. Thought, says Peirce, may ultimately apply to action but it will be 'to conceive action'. Peirce repeatedly emphasized that pragmatism was not a philosophy of action nor one in which meaning is somehow wedded to action.

Pragmatism is a method for achieving clarity of our ideas for determining the meaning of 'intellectual concepts'. But what are meanings?

For Peirce meanings are not objects, essential or otherwise; nor are they ideas, mental image or otherwise. What Peirce initially intended by 'pragmatic rule', is a proposed procedure for the analysis and definition of some signs or terms necessary for the communication of knowledge and the attainment of true belief (for Peirce sign stands for concept idea, belief, word).

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In sum, Peirce's rule turns out to a maxim to translate and explicate a sign by providing a conditional statement of an experimental situation in which a defined operation will produce a definite result.

It is the characteristic of Peirce and of his meaning theory, to maintain that the meaning of a sign has reference to an indefinite number of confirmable consequences. To say 'X is hard' means according to Peirce "to predict that no matter how often you try the experiment" "of scratching X, 'it will fail every time'". The limited number of experiments upon X that we may care to try are each singly or as a finite whole degrees of confirmation of the statement 'X is hard'. A limited number of such tests may make the meaning of the statement clear to those of us who can not reckon in any other way. But what the meaning is and how it is prompted or taught differ in this respect; the records of actual confirming instances are ordinarily merely a sub class of the meaning of the sign or term. For the statement asserts or means that it is 'always' the case whenever we try that X will not be scratched. Thus understanding the meaning of
a sign, we will know how to supply a confirming instance of a sign. But knowing how to confirm and knowing the meaning of a sign are not the same. Knowing the meaning involves understanding an assertion about an innumerable series of confirming instances.

James remaining closer to British empiricism than either Peirce or Dewey gave the principle of consequences a thoroughly nominalistic application. While Peirce desisted from James' "Will to Believe" and his account of truth, the chief underlying discord concerns the issue — realism vs nominalism. It divides Peirce's pragmatism from James' pragmatism. What counted as the 'consequences' of thought or belief for James was just that level of experience for Peirce, viz, practical effect, sensation, conduct, action. Peirce favoured keeping questions of meaning and truth distinct, and regarded pragmatism as a method of explicating meaning, not as a theory of truth. But James took pragmatism to be both a method for analysing problems for discerning meanings as well as a theory of truth. It is this view of truth that is developed by James, and that is regarded as typifying his "pragmatism".

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It was James who made the philosophical world aware of pragmatism and who gave pragmatism its mother tongue. Ideas and beliefs he portrayed as 'plans of action'; theories of 'instrument' or 'modes of adoption to reality'. His appeal to the "Pragmatic method" of solving problems contained the new familiar watchwords, "practical consequences", "practical differences" and the "useful" and "workable".

James was first and foremost a moralist concerned with working out an effective and reasonable philosophy of human thought and behaviour - not a philosophy of life but a live philosophy. Moral objectives guide James' account of philosophy.

The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me and definite instants of our life, if this world formulate or that world - formula be the true one.

6. Pragmatism P. 50.
Truth is that which is valuable, useful, expedient, workable, successful, profitable etc. The notion of truth is allied with and a part of James' view of the practical function of thought. The thought which includes believing is a means to the satisfactory organisation of experience. "Truth" then refers to such of those means that work efficiently and satisfactorily and "falsehood" to those that do not. Moreover, 'true' like 'good' and 'value' will admit of no absolute and universal application, since their reference to means is relative to those circumstances in which our differences of needs determine differences of satisfactions and differences accordingly in what means we regard as useful or useless, to a certain degree every thing is plastic.

The argument of 'The will to Believe' with modification reappears in James' Pragmatism. James continued to maintain that certain ideas might be justified, or true on grounds other than direct confirmation with fact or by the accustomed procedures of empirical reasoning.

7. Ibid. P. 61.
In connection with the view of truth as workableness, James reasoned that since the work or function of ideas and beliefs is to help us establish satisfactory relations with our environment, those who needed to believe in the Absolute, God, Freedom or Design had a right to do so, provided only that need was real and the working of belief beneficial. The belief was then to count as pragmatically true. Here we find that James appeared to be one of those philosophers willing to engage in a specious justification of religious beliefs.

According to James' ideas are true by virtue of their agreement with reality, failing to agree with reality, ideas are false. The relative character of truth and falsity in James' theory comes by way of identifying truth with usefulness of ideas. For James, the truth of ideas and beliefs is relative to the situation which will always include human agents and one or more of various human interests and purposes. In any situation, the truth or falsehood of an idea does not exist as a property peculiar to the idea itself, not in a relation between the idea and some fact; truth is a characteristic of the 'performance' of an idea in a situation.

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The emphasis upon the performance or workability of ideas as constituting their truth is an application of James' functional methods of analysis. In case of truth, we are directed to consider how ideas affect the situation in which they occur with respect of purpose and interest. Such is the process of getting meaning. Specifically, where our choices and purposes are clear ideas, beliefs, statements that operate effectively relative to those purposes are true; 'if ineffective or obstructive in operating to the same end, they false.'

An idea becomes true in the process of leading up its object, that is, in the process of verifying itself. In order to substantiate the truth of an idea, it is not necessary always that it should be actually verified, it is enough for all practical purposes that it should be verifiable. A mere coherence among ideas can not get beyond the stage of hypothesis, until the ideas have been experimentally verified.

For James pragmatism was more moral than a critical maxim for achieving clarity of meaning, it provided a method for resolving moral, religious and metaphysical problems; hence freeing us "from abstraction and insufficiency, from fixed principles, closed system, and pretended..."
When we turn to Dewey, we witness the coalescence of the critical and scientific motives of Peirce's pragmatism and the moral implications and ideals that James had found pragmatism capable of suggesting and inspiring. But those outlooks are not merely combined in Dewey; they are intensified and sustained in the course of a long life-time to an exploration and analysis of their respective consequences in a variety of philosophic contexts, and to their continuous expansion and supplementation under inquiry responsive to new currents of thought.

In the study of historical development of pragmatism, Dewey notes the points of difference between Peirce and James: Peirce wrote as a logician and James as a humanist.

James regarded concepts and theories not as solutions or answer to the philosophical enigmas but as instruments which are "mental modes of adaptation to reality". He never formulated a complete theory based

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on this functional or instrumental view of concepts and ideas, of which an attempt was made in Dewey's theory 'Instrumentalism'.

Instrumentalism is an attempt to constitute a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgements and inferences in their forms, by considering primarily how thought functions in the experimental determinations of future consequences. 8.

The theoretical core of Dewey's instrumentalism is found in his theory of inquiry. This theory comprises two objectives:

(i) The first objective is that of presenting a "natural history of thinking" as faithfully as the empirical facts will permit. This is a description of how thought occurs and how intelligence "works" in a situation.

(ii) The second objective has to do with the distinctive traits of situation within which the function of thought begins and eventually ends.

8. The Development of American Pragmatism, P - 367.
Contd.....P/23.
The two key concepts of Dewey's logical theory are situation and inquiry. The concepts of the situation is the most fundamental logically and by means of which inquiry is defined. It will be discussed in detail in chapters III and IV. Dewey's own recommended reconstruction of the problem of pragmatism was worked out within that he called instrumentalism.

For Dewey, the separation of science and ethics into distinct kinds of experience and intellectual attitudes is the greatest misfortune and serious intellectual error of the present century.

We have seen earlier that James' exposition of truth comes to this: the truth of an idea is:

(1) its agreement with reality;

(2) its workableness, or that concrete difference that its being true makes in anyone's actual life and

(3) process of verification.


Contd.......

Exp24.
It is true that Dewey had once tended to define truth as the 'working' or 'Satisfactory' product of thought, 'the verified' idea or hypothesis, but he later preferred to speak of "warranted assertibility." The assertion warranted by inquiry is to be thought of as related to indeterminate situation in much the same way that a solution is related to a problem. The conditions imposed by a problem must be met by an answer; the problem determines the conditions of an answer, but the answer resolves the problem. To have met the conditions of a problem precludes chance and sheer guesswork and immediate knowledge as well; inquiry or interpretation and analysis of problem will have intervened to produce an answer, a warranted assertion.

For Dewey, truth is found in the relation between the first stage of inquiry (the problematic situation) and the final stage (that of judgements, resolution and transformation). Truth characterises the relation that these two particular phases of inquiries bear to one another; the relation of problem (or question) and solution (or answer). The relation obtains in a situation between that initial state of conditions whose pervasive quality is designated as

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problematic and that later state of conditions whose quality is designated as determinate, complete, closed and solved. If we call the first state of conditions $C_1$, and the later state $C_2$, then truth may be defined as the relation between any occurrence of the kind $C_1$ and $C_2$ such that $C_2$ resolves or answers $C_1$. Here $C_2$ is formulated by a warranted assertion. The warranted assertion represents a case of knowledge or true belief. Dewey said, analysis of warranted assertibility is offered as a definition of the nature of knowledge in the honorific sense according to which only true beliefs are knowledge. 10.

Dewey concludes in this regard,

In the sense of correspondence as operation and behavioural, I hold that my type of theory is the only one entitled to be called a correspondence theory of truth. 11.

Concerning this part of his theory, Dewey has sometimes been compared with Marx who wrote:

The truth, i.e. reality and power of thought, must be demonstrated in practice. Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the real task to alter it, 12.

But it is not at all clear what exactly this comparison is supposed to indicate. For Dewey philosophic interpretations have altered the world, but acted as obstacles to intellectual progress. And for Dewey, as for any some thinkers, the real problem is how to alter the world for the better. But the method Dewey proposes for this purpose is to be found in the writings of Dewey, not in Marx. Dewey like Peirce, once invoked a Biblical phrase in expressing his instrumentalist view of truth:

By their fruits shall ye know them. 13.

However, in the present climate of western opinion, critics of Dewey have found it convenient to classify him as a disciple of Marx rather than Christ.

12. by Russell in Schilpp opcit P. 143
13. Reconstruction in Philosophy P. 156
So far Dewey, truth seems to refer in general to those conditions that make the difference between what is a problem and what is a solution. Truth refers to that set of conditions and operations that render a problematic situation unproblematic.

Now we shall see how Dewey’s conception of morality and religion differs from his contemporaries.

The Chief characteristics and innovation of James’ pragmatism has already been pointed out. This is the moral and psychological focus in which he attempted to assimilate meaning and truth to see them each clearly but through a single glass. James was first and foremost a moralist in the pragmatic school. Moral interests dominate his popular writings and are observable as motivating even his most technical philosophic paper.

Regarding morality, James says,

truth is one species of good and not - a category of distinct from good and co-ordinate with it. The true is whatever proves itself to be good in the way of beliefs.

Contd...P/28.
The true ............... is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the 'right' is only expedient in the way of behaving. ............. Expedient in the long run and and on the whole. 14.

James' casting of truth in a like would seemed to strike most contemporary philosophers as queer. James was alert to this saying,

I am well aware how odd it must seem to some of you to hear me say an idea is 'true' so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives. That it is 'good' for as much as it profits. You will gladly admit. 15.

James does not seem to have been fully aware of how he had departed from traditional doctrine in issuing his new version of truth.

James appeared to be one of those philosophers willing to engage in a specious justification of religious beliefs.

14. Pragmatism, P. 222
15. Pragmatism, P. 75.

Contd.....P/29.
For James was thought to have argued that where the evidence is equally indecisive for each of two contradictory opinions (for example, God exists or God does not exist).

The argument of "The will to Believe", with some modification and amplification, reappears in James' pragmatism. James continued to maintain that certain ideas might be justified or 'true', on grounds other than direct confrontation with fact. James reasoned that since the 'work' or function of ideas and beliefs is to help us to establish satisfactory relations with our environment, those who needed to believe in the absolute, God, Freedom or Design had a right to do so, provided only that the need was real and the working of belief beneficial. The belief was then to count as pragmatically true. "On pragmatic principle" of the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the world, it is true. For almost any belief could be passed off as true; one had only to believe that the results of believing were beneficial.

James regarded truth as an aspect of good. Dewey agreed to this but the qualification that establishing warranted conclusions of inquiry is an act of evaluation. In this respect inquiry is a continuous activity of transforming existant situation in which moral
perplexities are felt. Discovery of the right course of action requires an evaluation of inquiry itself. For Dewey, judgement with which inquiry closes involves an appraisal of the adequacy and value of the intermediate course of inquiry and of the propositions that are being prepared for final settlement. The warranted assertion of inquiry is the result of judgement; it is evaluated solution that terminates inquiry. In this sense inquiry concludes with what "Ought to be" or is the 'right' solution to the problem. In that sense all inquiry is evaluative and aims at establishing of a 'good'. The 'good' aimed for is the 'meaning experienced'. It is a unified whole release in action. Not all situations are of an obvious 'moral' character, but all inquiries are evaluations of situations and of the bearing of future consequences in the attainment of goods. For Dewey, inquiry is not only essential to the moral reconstruction of experience, it is a paradigm of moral activity itself.

Inquiry is a sign and condition of human growth. It was not surprising that Dewey should find in inquiry the possibilities for a genuine religious outlook. One wanting only an imaginative projection of the essential communal function of inquiry and its premium on socially shared experience. It was not for Dewey a resuscitation of the

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eighteenth-century religion of Reason but a reasonable faith in intelligence. In place of the divisive forces in modern society effecting and preserving intellectual and social class differences in the dry husks of orthodoxy, inquiry as interpreted by Dewey is a radical agent of unification and social cohesion. In inquiry men achieve communion.

Dewey would not be happy with the comparison, but in his ability to find moral, metaphysical and religious significance in the fact of science, in inquiry and intelligence. For Dewey, religion has its vital source and spreading roots in the life and shared experience of the community. Inquiry, since it is the compelling resource of human growth and renewal of values, is thus a fit object of religious reverence.

James' pragmatic truth of reality was left in a rough and unfinished state of development. The theory was taken up by Dewey and underwent a patient and thorough reformation.

There is ........ a first rate test of value of any philosophy which is offered us; Does it end in conclusions which, when they are referred back to ordinary life experience and their predicaments,
render them more significant, more luminous to us and make our dealings with them more fruitful. 16.

The history of pragmatism begins with Peirce who wrote as a logician, and James who wrote as a humanist and educator; and Dewey who makes the synthesis of both and turns into both a logician and a humanist.