

THE THEORY OF GOOD

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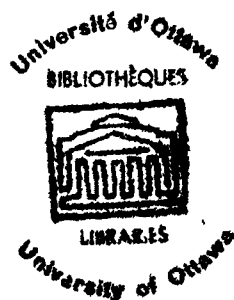
THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN DEWEY

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy of the
University of Ottawa in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy,

by

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F O R E W O R D

The purpose of the present thesis is to examine the validity of Dewey's concept of moral good. The determination of his system of valuation is not an easy task because in Dewey's philosophy we find an aversion to classification of the branches of knowledge. Therefore it is useless to study his ethical theory alone, or his metaphysics in conjunction with ethics. The problem is much more complicated.

Epistemology has engrossed Dewey's attention to such an extent that it finally absorbed his whole philosophy. He calls his theory Instrumentalism. It is not speculative. In fact it is closely connected with conduct. Consequently the study of Instrumentalism must precede the study of his ethics. Care should be taken to understand his notion of truth, as its practical character involves his theory of goodness. Instrumentalism and truth will help understand Instrumentalism and goodness.

Dewey's religious and social values help explain the broad application of his views. Then goodness in the individual as found in character will show what makes the good man.

Comparison with Thomistic actions will show an utter divergence of viewpoint and conclusions. Thomism has stood the test of seven centuries. On the basis of its theories along, Instrumentalism cannot last. It is hoped to prove this in convincing fashion.

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Any study must begin with a plan. The type of plan may vary depending on one's purpose and, to a degree, depending on the subject-matter. The involved subject-matter of John Dewey's philosophy presents a really difficult problem when it comes to analysis because, like Topsy, it "jest growed." There was no definite plan or direction in the beginning and after fifty years of growth, it is rather complicated.

Dewey has a definite philosophy as is evident in his numerous writings but the popular vocabulary used obliges one to be cautious indeed in any analysis. Although the words follow the dictionary spelling, very frequently they are used in a unique way; and to add to the confusion, Mr. Dewey is not always consistent. As a result he has been called "foggy, foggy Dewey", by so illustrious a writer as Paul Elmer More. Let the ordinary reader beware of an obvious interpretation of Mr. Dewey's writings.

Besides the difficulty of his writing style, Mr. Dewey possesses quite an involved philosophy. Time was when a man's philosophy could be neatly divided into his ethics, his theory of knowledge, his psychology, his metaphysic, etc. Such distinctions imply that these branches of philosophy have each a specific field for their consideration¹ and that all of them together explain

a man's total content of thought. This plan assumes that all human knowledge is capable of being divided and should be so divided to give us a systematic grasp of reality. It is felt that if such division is lacking, the whole of reality is too complex to grasp and the result is bound to be confusion and chaos.

In a cursory reading of the writings of John Dewey, the reader is soon aware of another attitude. It is claimed by Dewey that any such divisions or distinctions are unnatural, give us only a partial view of a series of segments of a man's thought, and the resulting estimate is necessarily a falsification. He claims that the unity of the whole is lost in the struggle to harmonize the parts. Above all he says that this practice of using convenient pigeonholes is the worst feature inherited from the "classical" tradition of Greece and Medieval Europe. (1).

In reaction against such classification, Mr. Dewey has sought to develop a philosophy which would have such an obvious unity that nobody would attempt to dismember it. The last technical book he wrote insists on this

(1) of Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909, p. 32-33 where he deplors the pigeonhole classification of learning. His habit of identifying Greek philosophy with the Christian philosophy of Medieval Europe is well-exemplified on p. 17 of Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, New York: Holt and Co., 1920; or The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought, by John Dewey, Holt and Co., 1910, p. 60: "...the so-called medieval period represents the petrification, under changed conditions, of Greek ideas."

3.

point. His preoccupation with the theory of knowledge led him to entitle the volume: Logic: The Theory of Inquiry. (2) It is not "Logic" in the ordinary sense; its scope is far wider than the categories of things or thoughts. It is not merely a science but THE all-embracing art.

His philosophy is far from being either formal or final. By the very principles he holds it is not completely evolved yet and can never become fixed, stable, finished. It is a philosophy of change, essentially fluid, evolving and developing toward a moving goal, moving always into the future. Such an elusive philosophy can be contained in no category, no fixed frame of reference. At the same time it would be false to pretend that his philosophy is so elusive that a new description must be provided every year, or every time Dr. Dewey writes a new book. This is not the case. It has definite attitudes, certain tendencies and views which are characteristic. That is to say it has a certain unity, but the precise nature of the unity has been the subject of much debate.

One might well begin with the fact that Dewey has been seeking a unity in reaction against a dualism. He has always deplored the split between what a man knows and what a man does. And when this is carried over into the field of philosophy, his scorn knows no bounds.

(2) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey. New York: Holt and Co., 1938, 546 pp.

"A second point is that as my study and thinking progressed, I became more and more troubled by the intellectual scandal that seemed to me involved in the current (and traditional) dualism in logical standpoint and method between something called "science" on the one hand and something called "morals" on the other. I have long felt that the construction of a logic, that is, a method of effective inquiry, which would apply without abrupt breach of continuity to the fields designated by both of these words, is at once our needed theoretical solvent and the supply of our greatest practical want. This belief has had much more to do with the development of what I termed, for lack of a better word, "instrumentalism", than have most of the reasons that have been assigned." (3).

Yet Dewey says his theory of knowledge implies a logic which is autonomous.

"It precludes resting logic upon metaphysical and epistemological assumptions and presuppositions."
(4).

Ethics cannot be treated alone in Dewey's philosophy, and neither could logic; this much is clear. Can any section or part of his philosophy be considered by itself? If it is anything as basic as The Notion of Good, it would seem not. His theory of knowledge is so closely bound to all his basic attitudes that first place must be given to it.

(3) FROM ABSOLUTION TO EXPERIMENTALISM, by John Dewey. In Contemporary American Philosophy. Edited by G.P. Adams and W.P. Montague. New York: Macmillan, 1930, vol. 11, p. 23.

(4) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 21.

His version of pragmatism now known as instrumentalism is usually thought of as an epistemology rather than a moral philosophy, i.e. a theory of knowledge rather than a code of ethics. It began as a method or attitude rather than a system of opinion or school of thought. As a theory of knowledge instrumentalism tends to confuse the true with the good (bonum utile) and it gives us an equation between truth on the one hand, and expediency, utility, the opportune, the convenient, the serviceable on the other. Dewey does not believe that some things are good or bad intrinsically but rather like Hamlet "thinking makes it so". His notion of the function of thought is a necessary prelude to any understanding of his notion of good.

"It was practically inevitable that modern thought should make the problem of knowledge its central problem...Is knowledge possible and if so, how? What are its limits and extent? The answer to the latter question which the actual pursuit of knowledge would have suggested is: Knowledge is possible as far as we can develop instrumentalities of inquiry, measurement, symbolization, calculations, and testing...This is perhaps the one answer which has not been given. (5).

Knowledge as a problem will be foremost in Dewey's thoughts. It is some sort of a problem for everyone but for Dewey its ramifications are endless. And this

(5) PHILOSOPHY by John Dewey. In Whither Mankind: A Panorama of Modern Civilization. Edited by Charles Austin Beard. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928, p. 320.

is so because his theory of knowledge takes in such a wide sweep of reality. It is all very well to say: "You cannot study Dewey's ethics before studying his epistemology", but you soon discover that a study of his epistemology must follow the study of his psychology. And again you cannot begin with psychology. It is not a self-contained unit because Dewey is primarily interested in social psychology, not individual psychology. It presupposes knowledge of Dewey's ethical attitude and you are right back where you started!

As a defensive-precaution, some have tried to affix a label on Dewey's philosophy and then they begin with that. "Dewey is a naturalist" they say and proceed to draw conclusions. "Their analyses have been very inconclusive and misleading. No single label is satisfactory, and that is Dewey's pride and joy. No category will suit because he aims at transcending all categories. What must one do?"

Dewey is glad to acknowledge his debt to biology as we shall see in the chapter on Darwinism and since all biologists glory in the genetic method, it seems that this method will be the only satisfactory one. An outline of his position as it evolved throughout his lengthy career will reveal his frame of mind.

"Its (i.e. recent philosophic thought, a philosophy of transition and reconstruction) various representatives agree in what they oppose--the orthodox British empiricism of two generations ago and the orthodox neo-Kantian idealism of the last generation--rather than in what they proffer...Now a recent German critic has described pragmatism as, "Epistemologically, nominalism; psychologically, voluntarism; cosmologically, energism; metaphysically, agnosticism; ethically, meliorism on the basis of the Bentham-Mill utilitarianism." (6).

These lines first appeared in 1910 and at that point Dewey was developing Instrumentalism, his version of Pragmatism. Although his instrumentalism is usually called an epistemology because of his preoccupation with the theory of knowledge, this judgment is inadequate. Instrumentalism, or Logic, as he would call his views by 1938, is concerned with much more than mere knowledge. The common distinction is that pragmatism was practical, and Dewey's views broke away in a more theoretical way labelled instrumentalism. Pragmatism had its most controversial applications in ethics with Dewey relegated to applying his instrumentalism in education. The first objection to this is that education as Dewey sees it is certainly concerned with ethics. It just will not do to say that instrumentalism is not concerned with ethics. His theory of knowledge treats knowing as eminently practical, not a spectator or reality but an efficient cause in changing the direction of things. His logic is active, affecting conduct, and has the least possible

(6) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought, by John Dewey, p. iii, preface.

8.

amount of theory. In fact Dewey would repudiate the use of the word "theory" in its old-fashioned sense. Henceforth "theory" must be thought of as an instrument, a means of altering reality, and to use an Irish bull, from now on "theory" is "very practical".

The answer is that Dewey denies the view which contrasts theory with practice. One involves the other and means nothing without the other. There is a distinction but not separation. All works together for a better control of reality. The old dualisms must be overthrown. They were like the famous Missouri mule "without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity". According to Dewey they came into being at the convenience of the ruling clique and as such their ancestry or origin is dubious. They are sterile in results and must be abandoned. The philosophy of the future must consider reality as a whole, as a unit, and use all elements to further its progress.

Pragmatism in general, and instrumentalism in particular, began as reactions. They first existed as methods or attitudes rather than systems. Gradually they evolved into settled opinions, or at least into definite trends. A study of them must therefore follow their origin, examine the different elements they acquired along the way, and show their general direction and aim. It is therefore our intention to consider the

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elements which make up the logic of John Dewey, with special attention to their origin as this decides their true place in his theory of value. As we see it, with this goal in view and such subject-manner, no method other than the genetic method is possible.

Chapter 2 - BACKGROUND: TEMPERAMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL

An understanding of Dewey is best begun by an examination of the development of his thought from Idealism to Instrumentalism. It seemed natural for him to favour idealism. By nature a shy retiring man, (1) there was an early tendency to avoid the more energetic views of the empiricists. In the quarrel between these and defenders of religion, Dewey was temperamentally opposed to the empiricists BUT still not on the side of religion.

"I have not been able to attach much importance to religion as a philosophic problem; for the effect of that attachment seems to be in the end a subornation of candid philosophic thinking to the alleged but factitious needs of some special set of convictions." (2).

He just preferred Hegel and German idealism to British empiricism. And evidence of this is given by Dewey himself.

- (1) BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, edited by Jane M. Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp, Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1939, p. 16. This section of the book is by John Dewey's daughter. She mentions an "excellent personal warning against his seclusive and bookish habits" which her father received the very day he obtained his doctorate.
- (2) FROM ABSOLUTISM TO EXPERIMENTALISM, by John Dewey. In Contemporary American Philosophy, edited by G.P. Adams and W.P. Montague. New York: Macmillan, 1930, Vol. 11, p. 20.

"Probably there is in the consciously articulated ideas of every thinker an over-weighting of just those things that are contrary to his natural tendencies, an emphasis upon those things that are contrary to his intrinsic bent, and which, therefore, he has to struggle to bring to expression, while the native bent, on the other hand, can take care of itself. Anyway a case might be made for the proposition that the emphasis upon the concrete, empirical, and 'practical' in my later writings is partly due to considerations of this nature. It was a reaction against what was more natural, and it served as a protest and protection against something in myself which, in the pressure and the weight of actual experience, I knew to be a weakness." (3).

This might be a Freudian version of his own sentiments or tendencies, so to bolster our case that Mr. Dewey would naturally prefer the shelter of Idealism to the squabbles of a more aggressive type of philosophy (which 19th. Century British empiricism certainly was), we quote one of his, Dewey's, students. There can hardly be a more "objective" description of a professor than one given by an actual student!

"It will do you no good to hear him lecture. His sentences, flowing and exact and lucid when read, you will find strung in long festoons of obscurity between pauses for the right word...The uncertainty of his silver-gray hair and drooping-mustache, of his voice, of his clothes, suggests that he has almost studied the technique of protective coloration." (4).

Hardly a man to whom controversy would appeal so much as the refuge of Idealism.

(3) Ibid., p. 16.

(4) Six Major Prophets, by E.E. Slosson. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1917. p. 267-268.

Another tendency, one which favoured monistic rather than pluralistic thinking, led him naturally to find refuge in Hegel. Dewey has never liked categories, classes, divisions of any kind. In the organicism of Hegel he found one answer. It was idealistic and as such lost favour eventually in his thought but in the early years the unity it provided was very attractive.

"There were, however, also "subjective" reasons for the appeal that Hegel's thought made to me; it supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger that only an intellectualized subject-matter could satisfy...Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however, no more intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction for me." (5).

The point we wish to make here is that Dewey 'naturally' favoured Hegel. And consequently through the years this 'natural' bent never lost favour completely. Today nobody would want to call Dewey a Hegelian yet he had his roots in that German's philosophy and there are still evidences of the influence. It is a definite constituent of his thought.

Another argument, and probably the best of all, is that the educational environment of John Dewey led him to favour idealism, and in particular German idealism.

(5) FROM ABSOLUTISM TO EXPERIMENTALISM, by John Dewey. In Contemporary American Philosophy, edited by G.P. Adams and W.P. Montague, vol. 11, p. 19.

Dewey's teacher at Johns Hopkins University was G.S. Morris, who had studied in Germany in 1866-68 where he had become steeped in the Hegelian tradition. Professor Morris led Dewey to Hegel. Morris opposed British empiricism in favour of German idealism, and also preferred Hegel to Kant.

"There was a half-year of lecturing and seminar work given by Professor George Sylvester Morris, of the University of Michigan;..while I have long since deviated from his philosophic faith, I should be happy to believe that the influence of the spirit of his teaching has been an enduring influence..this effect was far from being the only source of my own 'Hegelianism'. The 'eighties and 'nineties were a time of new ferment in English thought; the reaction against atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism was in full swing. It was the time of Thomas Hill Green, of the two Cairds, of Wallace, of the appearance of the Essays in Philosophical Criticism, co-operatively produced by a younger group under the leadership of the late Lord Haldane....Mr. Morris came to Kant through Hegel instead of to Hegel by way of Kant, so that his attitude toward Kant was the critical one expressed by Hegel himself." (6).

According to Morton G. White (7) Dewey defended the innate ideas (in the manner of Morris) in his Leibniz's Essays Concerning the Human Understanding but then White says:

"Dewey is not an idealist, he is what an idealist becomes when he incorporates the results of modern biology, psychology, and social science." (8).

(6) Ibid., p. 18.

(7) The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism, by Morton G. White, New York: Columbia University Press, 1933, p. 17.

(8) Ibid., p. 18.

All of this idealistic ^{14.}strain in Dewey comes directly from Morris. For the latter Kant was a critical point. He marks the beginning of German idealism but not the crowning point. This came later with Hegel. Nevertheless the "active mind" was to be a permanent feature in his thought and this was the origin of Dewey's activism. The opposition of 'mind' as a passive thing is still a strong feature of Dewey's thought. In Morris and in Dewey, it was a reaction against the British attitude which considered 'mind' as quite passive in the process of knowledge. In almost any work by Dewey one could find attacks on the "spectator-theory of knowledge" and all of them stem from his idealistic monism.

During his years of writing, Dr. Dewey has been misunderstood by many. And their difficulties have not always been blameworthy. To think that Dewey is capable of assimilating various truths and unifying them into some system of his own is a mistake. This is not said in a mere carping way but the point is one which stresses one of his own views. He feels that a systematic unity is impossible. One absorbs, one adapts, one invents, and the sum total may not be a consistent whole. This is not a sign of incompetence. It rather reveals a human trait which we should rather seek to understand than condemn.

"Although I have not the aversion to system as such which is sometimes attributed to me, I am dubious of my own ability to reach systematic unity, and in consequence, perhaps, of that fact also dubious about my contemporaries." (1).

And the passage continues to explain the basis for this. Change is continuous and inevitable. A man changes as he grows older, his views are formed by his contacts with other men, the changing circumstances of his own life and all of these together will be reflected in a constantly changing philosophy. It is dangerous to attempt to classify a thinker; it is better to study the process of formation of his thought. His interest in experimental

(1) FROM ABSOLUTISM TO EXPERIMENTALISM, By John Dewey. In Contemporary American Philosophy. Edited by G.P. Adams and W.P. Montague, New York: Macmillan, 1930, Vol. 11, p. 21.

psychology comes under this heading: he must not be classified as a psychologist or an experimental psychologist. However, his thought was influenced by it.

1. Knowledge and Psychology

We have seen that the early Dewey was profoundly interested in German Idealism both by instinct and by training. Seeking as he did for an all-inclusive unity (a goal he was later to abandon), his first writings are evidence of an organicism directly inherited from Hegel.

(2). And mention has also been made of his deep interest in the problem of knowledge. To Dewey this was the very essence of philosophy, gave it its value and determined its future.

"Dewey's interest as a philosopher centres, from first to last, upon knowledge and the knowing process. All that is vital in his ethical, social, and educational theories depends ultimately upon the special interpretation of the function of knowledge which constitutes his chief claim to philosophical distinction. Dewey's logical theory was the natural and inevitable outcome of his demand for an empirical and "psychological" description of thought as "transformatory" process working actual changes in reality." (3).

- (2) The Philosophy of John Dewey, by W.T. Feldman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1934, p. 3.
- (3) John Dewey's Logical Theory, by Delton Thomas Howard. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919, p. 120.

This attitude has not changed. Dewey is still convinced that knowledge is the core of philosophy. And over the years it absorbed what other philosophers would call the branches or divisions of philosophy. It has taken them over, in his thought, in such a way that Logic, is the sphere in which they all live and move and have their being. The first victim to be absorbed was experimental psychology.

The period dating between 1884 and 1890 shows Idealism to be the main preoccupation of the mind of Dewey. His writings follow the Morris line as well as that of the other idealists. (4). And then Dewey became interested in the new "psychology".

"In Dewey's major department Professor George S. Morris of the University of Michigan taught the first half of the year and Dr. G. Stanley Hall, who had recently returned from prolonged study in Germany, the second half." (5).

G. Stanley Hall's discursive lecture on psychological topics, had left him (Dewey) with the belief that the relation between psychology and philosophy was an intimate one, but one which must be worked out on the basis of the new experimental psychology. Experiment was overthrowing the older "rational" psychology traditionally associated with philosophy, and probably an ambition to help bring about an alliance of the new psychology with philosophy was directing Dewey's intellectual activity to a greater extent than he realized." (6).

- (4) The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism, by Morton G. White, p. 32.
- (5) BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, ed. by Jane M. Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp. p. 16.
- (6) Ibid., p. 23.

2. Immediate Empiricism

Dissatisfied with Hegel's idea of placing the theoretical supreme above the practical, and subordinating action to thought, he was intrigued with an Absolute of immanent activity. His version of it was an attempt to include object with subject, nature with experience to use later terminology, and the notion of immediacy laid a strong hold on him.

The classical source of Dewey's views on immediacy is chapter nine of The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, entitled: THE POSTULATE OF IMMEDIATE EMPIRICISM. Although Dewey denies it, we are here given a sample of phenomenalism. Interest in experimental psychology led him to write this:-

"Immediate empiricism postulates that things--anything, everything in the ordinary or non-technical sense of the term "thing--are what they are experienced as. Hence, if one wishes to describe anything truly, his task is to tell what it is experienced as being." (7).

If you wish to find out what subjective, objective, physical, mental, cosmic, psychic, cause, substance, purpose, activity, evil, being, quality--any philosophic term, in short--means, go to experience and see what the thing is experienced as." (8).

In his anxiety to overcome the bifurcation of dualisms Dewey now seeks to include subject and his experience.

In the past there has been a whole set of problems arising

(7) The Philosophy of John Dewey, by w.T. Feldman, p. 21.

(8) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 239.

out of this dualism. We are to hurdle the whole problem by joining or adding the immediately present to the subject. They must not be thought of as two different realities but as one unit. Their sum explains being. A thing's nature is revealed by its effect on and with a knowing subject. No longer would one think of objects being placed "over against" a knower, nor is there any ground for distinction between physical and mental, or psychic and somatic, but experience unites all of these dualisms and the necessary postulate is immediate empiricism. Dewey next gives us an example which shows just how far he is willing to go in this direction.

"I start and am flustered by a noise heard. Empirically, that noise is fearsome; it really is, not merely phenomenally or subjectively so. That is what it is experienced as being. But, when I experience the noise as a known thing, I find it to be innocent of harm. It is the tapping of a shade against the window, owing to movements of the wind. The experience has changed; that is, the thing experienced has changed--not that an unreality has given place to a reality, not that some transcendental (unexperienced) Reality has changed, not that truth has changed, but just and only the concrete reality has changed. (9).

There could hardly be a more drastic step than this. Knowledge has changed reality. In the first instance the noise was fearsome; then after knowledge it is no longer fearsome. Therefore knowledge has changed reality. This position taken by Dewey is necessitated by his postulate of immediacy. Experience includes what other thinkers

(9) Ibid., p. 230.

have called and still call: subject and object. The usual thing is to say that there is a relationship between these two elements of subject and object. Altogether, subject and object and relationship total experience, but the elements remain the same, or retain their identity. If there is a change in the relationship, then one or other term (subject or object) may change but we seldom say that mere knowledge can change all three. Dewey says that is because we think of knowledge as passive, in a spectator theory of knowledge.

The traditional view would say that the subject heard the noise; he could not feel anything except fear. Then investigation improved his knowledge of the noise. Now with more complete data the subject recognizes the object for what it is and the fear disappears. This view certainly does not say that the noise has altered; it is likewise certain that the relationship of noise and hearing continues; but investigation into the cause of the noise reveals that it is not harmful. Notice that the noise, the tapping of the shade on the window, continues. It has not altered. But after acquiring additional data the subject has altered. This view keeps the terms distinct: shade, subject, and noise uniting them.

Now Dewey cannot agree with this at all. It is his contention that the elements of the experience must not be separated. To do this is to destroy the unity of the experience. Every element: shade, noise and subject, all

must be considered together, not merely in one context but all immediately present in one organic unity. This unity, he says, has been destroyed without warrant by the traditionalists, in particular by all those who are followers of Aristotle. The latter's categories insist on a division of substance and accident, knower and known, and this prevents any logical explanation of immediacy. To say that the subject is afraid is unsatisfactory. Dewey says we thereby exclude the tapping window shade. To get all the elements in the experience you must say: the noise is fearsome. Then you have subject, shade and noise all present and accounted for. There is an organic unity in the experience and a description of a new quality in the subject is insufficient.

Attention should be drawn to the use of the word reality in his example. The whole experience at first was fearsome. That was really the case. Then when knowledge of the cause of the noise was added, the fearsomeness disappeared. Now we have a new reality. In ordinary speech one might say: "There is really no cause for fear; that was only the tapping of the shade." Dewey takes violent exception to this because as a matter of fact there was fear; and it must have had a cause. Perhaps it was not a very good cause, since subsequent knowledge was able to dislodge it; but there was some cause, and definite fear. Hence the existence of fear being undeniable, it was part

of the reality; later fear vanished, so we have a new reality.

Dewey's point appears to be that knowledge changed the total situation, and as such should not be referred to as an example of the knowledge changing the object alone. It changed the total situation, the concrete reality is new, since concrete reality means the condition of all the elements at any given moment. If any element is changed, the whole situation is altered... since there is an all-pervasive unity.

It has been said that Dewey claims that knowledge changes the object. Indeed his language is not unequivocal. And it leaves him open to criticism. To use our previous quotation as a case in point.

"Immediate empiricism postulates that things-- anything, everything in the ordinary or non-technical sense of the term "thing"--are what they are experienced as." (10).

Now let us take the window shade which has been tapping for us. It is a "thing", either in the technical or the non-technical sense of the term "thing". In the first place it must be denoted as a "fearsome thing". In the second case the same window shade must now be called a "non-fearsome thing". The inevitable conclusion is that as a known thing, i.e. after knowledge arising from investigation, the shade has changed. Therefore knowledge changed the object. This is the charge against Dewey.

(10) The Philosophy of John Dewey,
by W. T. Feldman, p. 21.

A more ridiculous example is given by Russell:

"The first science to be developed was astronomy, yet it can hardly be supposed that the sun and the planets are much altered by the observation of the astronomers" (11).

It should be said without further ado that Dewey repudiates this conclusion in absolute fashion. The obvious interpretation of his thought is not the correct one.

"I have not held, as is intimated in Mr. Russell's allusion to knowledge of sun and planets, that knowing modifies the object of knowledge." (12).

What then does he mean? How have we misinterpreted him? Our error arises from our practice of separating object from subject in the experimental situation. Previous to investigation or inquiry there was the immediately had material in a non-cognitional situation. Then there was the material of cognition as revealed in the acquired knowledge. The situation differs: and there are therefore two realities. The knower as such is part of a situation; reality includes all the elements present, not merely the knower, and with any change in any element there is a change in the whole, and a new reality exists. Immediate empiricism requires this view. Henceforth Dewey will speak of a knower in conjunction with a whole situation, never

(11) DEWEY'S NEW LOGIC, by Bertrand Russell. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), p. 154.

(12) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND VALUE: A REJOINDER, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), p. 547.

isolated. For purposes of discourse one may use the word "knower" or "subject" but to get away from a nominal to a real definition, one must include all the elements immediately present and experienced.

3. The Active Mind

The net result of this interest in the experiential situation is a further distaste for the older rational psychology. The previous theory had held firmly to an opposition between knower and known; then a union in knowledge. The emphasis was on a passive type of knowledge. The mind being capable of acquiring a knowledge of the object and retaining its own status, it seemed to be a mere spectator of reality, not an active sharer in the making of that reality. The knower is essentially passive, or so Dewey interpreted the older view.

Now along comes experimental psychology. It led Dewey to favour a more active role for mind. Immediate empiricism was his postulate. And although mind does not change the object, it does change the situation, and in something more than a mere passive alteration. It is not the function of mind to interpret reality, to reflect its nature, but rather to enter into the situation and alter it.

"Neither logical reasoning nor the passive accumulation of any number of observations--which the ancients called experience--suffices to lay hold of them. Active experimentation must force the apparent facts of nature into forms different to those in which they familiarly present themselves; and thus make them tell the truth about themselves; as torture may compel an unwilling witness to reveal what he has been concealing. Pure reasoning as a means of arriving at truth is like the spider who spins a web out of himself. The web is orderly and elaborate, but it is only a trap." (13).

This passage is typical of his lifelong crusade against what he has labelled the "spectator theory" of knowledge. He opposes any theory which supports using categories as a frame of reference, or any attempt to pigeonhole reality. If it is merely classificatory, it is not knowledge. The activity of mind was first illustrated by experimental psychology. But the idea really came from Bacon.

The villain in the piece is Aristotle. True he favoured experience; but it was passive experience, observation. Any change is thought of as taking place in the mind, not the total situation. Mind is independent, undisturbed, a rather disinterested spectator. It is perhaps not uninterested because it really does observe the phenomena but inasmuch as it does not seek to alter things, then it should be called disinterested. Dewey's favourite illustration is the contrast between the ant and the bee. The ant piles up material, as the passive mind accumulates instances. On the other hand the busy bee not only collects but organizes, and modifies

(13) Reconstruction in Philosophy, By John Dewey, p. 32.

the collected stuff to make it serviceable, this busy bee illustrates the active mind, the really experimental mind, the mind making the best use of true induction. Bacon is given the credit for this improvement over Aristotle.

Although the idea was Bacon's, he had not the instruments to make the most effective use of it. This came later, in the late 19th. century when science had made such strides. And Dewey implies that as time goes on there is bound to be a continued progress, as methods continue to improve. So Dewey is anxious to get on the bandwagon of this new science. Strange as it may be, Dewey has seldom actually performed any experiments in a scientific laboratory. He prefers to use the method of science on a more extensive subject-matter. In fact he can see no limit to its application and it finds its way into the new logic, the new way of thinking, the development of an active mind. "Mind is not a kind of being but a kind of doing". (14). And here Dewey expresses his utter aversion for both rationalism and the older empiricism. Rationalism because it insisted on a passive mind, that is, a spectator theory of knowledge; and the older empiricism because it continued the real distinction and separation between knower and known, subject and object.

(14) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, Chicago, London: Open Court Publishing Co, 1925, p. 40.

"Rationalism thus accepted the account of experience given by traditional empiricism, and introduced reason as extra-empirical. Rationalism never explained, however, how a reason extraneous to experience could enter into helpful relation with concrete experiences. By definition reason and experience were antithetical." (15).

Here we have his dislike for rationalism: its separation of reason and experience. It is not a mere distinction he objects to but in his view the terms are opposed by the older rationalism. There can never be any organic unity if we persist in holding for the existence of a reason which retains its nature throughout an experience. Before the experience reason has its nature; after the experience reason preserves its nature. Dewey says this cannot be. We are wrong because we hold that reason is the same yesterday, today and the same forever. To hold this is to deny any meaning to experience, Dewey believes.

One interpretation of Dewey's views is that reason acts as a catalyst. It has a share, an active share, in the experiment, but emerges itself unchanged as a chemical might be used in an experiment to speed up the process and yet remain unchanged itself. This view is not Dewey's. He holds for an active mind, yes, but not an unchanging mind. As an element of the total situation, mind alters and is altered. And logically he denies to mind a lasting nature. More will be said on this in the chapter to follow on Darwinism.

- (15) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, by John Dewey, Addison W. Moore, H.C. Brown, George H. Mead, etc. New York: Holt, 1917, p. 23-24.

Right now we wish to insist on the active mind, capable of altering a situation and being altered in experience. It is not antithetical to experience; it is an element of the total situation. Hence his opposition to the rationalism which preceded experimental psychology. The new science shows mind at work. And since the word mind implies a continuing thing, henceforth Dewey prefers the word intelligence. There is something "active" implied by intelligence. It speaks of an "act" rather than a "power or habit" in scholastic terminology, hence his preference. And experimental psychology has freed us from the bonds of rationalism.

4. Efficacy of Intelligence

Immediate Empiricism having established that mind or intelligence enters into every experience as a constitutive element, and this view having been confirmed by the new Experimental Psychology, we find Dewey convinced for a lifetime that the efficacy of intelligence is undeniable. Henceforth he will defend this against all opponents, and if there be no opposition, he will manufacture it! He will glory in the label of "anti-intellectualist" and his enemy will be the man who maintains that the function of intellect is to interpret reality. According to Dewey, intelligence is not to interpret but to transform reality. It is an active element of experience; it is altered and it alters in the total situation. When he says that it is altered,

he refers to its changing character, its dependence on antecedents which have helped to make it the intelligence that it is. Intelligence here is thought of as a result of emergent evolution, a notion we shall discuss later. Our immediate concern is that intelligence is not static, not passive, it enters into every situation, and it effectively alters that situation. It adjusts capacities, it organizes, transforms, alters, use whatever term you will but insist on the efficacy of intelligence as against a passive, inert, helpless, spectator intelligence or mind.

The laboratory gives us the supreme illustration of intelligence at work. There are certain materials, data, instruments, conditions, circumstances generally. In mere passive observation, the mind or intelligence must simply stop, look and listen. It can observe, reflect, possibly predict future events but it does not alter anything. In the experiment made possible by modern scientific progress and using scientific method the situation is entirely different. Intelligence first decides on material to be used. Date is chosen or selected; it does not have to accept helplessly. A certain amount of chemical may be used; its temperature can be controlled; its pressure determined; all of the circumstances need not be accepted but thanks to the progress of science all can be determined. Now intelligence proceeds in its active way to make the elements of the experiment act and react in the manner,

for the length of time, and in any other circumstances that it chooses to do. Thus to study earthquakes, ancients like Aristotle could only observe. But modern scientists can build a model, bring about wave motions, study the effects of their manmade earthquake on different kinds of soil or rock and now it is no longer mere observation; it is intelligence because it has an active share in the process or experiment.

This sort of argument intrigues Dewey because there was nothing cut and dried about experiment. He believed that previously anybody who conducted experiments did so merely to demonstrate a truth already known. There was nothing constructive, nothing novel about them. Now experimental psychology seemed to be unearthing truths hidden since the beginning of the world. There was no passive mind here; it was an active intelligence; nay a creative intelligence. And this second idea has become a cornerstone in Dewey's thought: intelligence is creative.

5. Creative Intelligence

The attitude which began with Dewey's interest in experimental psychology blossomed as the years went on. By 1917 his thoughts had crystallized and they were expressed in his essay: THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY IN PHILOSOPHY. (16). Herein we find all his attitudes towards

(16) Ibid.,

a spectator-theory of knowledge. The knower enters into the experimental situation and transforms it whilst being transformed himself.

"In the orthodox view, experience is regarded primarily as a knowledge-affair. But to eyes not looking through ancient spectacles, it assuredly appears as an affair of the intercourse of a living being with its physical and social environment." (17).

Down with passive theories! Henceforth philosophy will recover its pristine position only if it throws off these dead beliefs and affirms that intelligence enters into every experience as an active element, a living element, acting and reacting to the other elements in that same situation.

"..experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connexion with the future is a salient trait." (18).

The contribution of intelligence to every experiential situation is that it brings absolute novelties into the world. The result of the experience is something utterly different, utterly new and original. Philosophy must recognize this as due to active, to creative intelligence. The laboratory reproduces real life on a small scale. It teaches us to transform the world just as the scientist transforms a particular situation in his experiment. Scientific method is the new god; and

(17) Ibid., p. 7.

(18) Ibid., p. 7.

its creative power is in the hand of man.

"The recognition that reflection is a genuine factor within experience and an indispensable factor in that control of the world which secures a prosperous and significant expansion of experience undermines historic rationalism as assuredly as it abolished the foundations of historic empiricism." (19).

"The popular impression that pragmatic philosophy means that philosophy shall develop ideas relevant to the actual crises of life, ideas influential in dealing with them and testing by the assistance they afford, is correct." (20).

6. Behaviorism

The more Dewey became interested in experimental psychology, the more was he influenced by contemporary psychologists who ignored introspection and consciousness and explained all human activities exclusively as mechanical reactions to sensitive stimuli. His personal development paralleled conclusions which he either absorbed unconsciously or used to bolster his case. As an individual, his trend was away from absolute Hegelian idealism. He had tried it and found it wanting. It gave him no satisfactory explanation of experience hence he abandoned it. His primary objection was that it taught the existence of a universal consciousness, an objective mind upon which individuals were dependent for the formation of their mental life. An absolute mind manifested in social institutions was denied; the influence of cultural environment on the development of an individual was

retained. Environment fitted in well with the postulate of immediate empiricism; an absolute mind did not.

As a true Hegelian, G.S. Morris of John Hopkins University had taught Dewey that universal consciousness is that third thing which embraces empirical consciousness and the objects of knowledge. In common parlance, objects and subjects are embedded within a larger, a living whole, a common spirit or life. This living unity bridged the gap between knower and known and indeed between all knowers. It provided a basis for attacking dualists. The attitude was retained by Dewey but the universal consciousness or objective mind was dropped.

Later Dewey was simply to convert the universal consciousness into nature, the individual into organism and the object of knowing into environment. His naturalism then taught that organism and environment are parts of nature. And whatever holds true of nature in general should hold true of human organisms in particular, so knowledge in man is simply an organic development. Without teaching behaviorism, Dewey had prepared the way of it. By 1892, Dewey recognized that the universal self is superfluous and the individual self can be described in behavioristic fashion. (21).

To be able to say that knowledge is an organic development in man one must bridge the gap between physical and psychic activities; either bridge it or deny its existence.

(21) The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism,
by Morton G. White, p. 47.

Behaviorism avoided the problem by pointing out that knowing is something which we do. It is a response to a stimulus the same as any other mechanical response. And here we have the root of Dewey's naturalism.

"The psychological tendencies which have exerted an influence on instrumentalism are...more or less, closely related to the important movement whose promoter in psychology has been Dr. John Watson and to which he has given the name of Behaviorism. Briefly the point of departure of this theory is the conception of the brain as an organ for the co-ordination of sense stimuli (to which one should add modifications caused by habit, unconscious memory, or what are called today "conditioned reflexes") for the purpose of effecting appropriate motor responses." (22).

Hence frequent expressions to the effect that thought is "an organic response" and others of that ilk have their roots in behaviorism. It provided Dewey with his escape from absolute idealism into the realm of experience and nature. He will scarcely admit being a monist, but he will quickly denounce any dualism, since behaviorism has overcome the latter. Even such traditional notions as animate and inanimate need no longer be held and Dewey explains that the difference between them

"lies in the way in which physico-chemical energies are interconnected and operate... respectively." (23).

(22) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey. New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1931, p. 27.

(23) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 254.

To the end Dewey has upheld the glories of science. Most of the old dualisms were taught by imperfect science, inadequately equipped and overshadowed by state or religious institutions. Experimental psychology has freed intelligence of these defects hence its great importance. The step forward has a solid scientific basis, an empirical basis, not an authoritarian basis. We need no longer hold for a subordinate but a free science, with new means of investigation or inquiry, and thought must create novelties, free energies and advance bravely. Experimental psychology has given us the tools and the method; philosophy must finish the job.

During that first year as a professor at Michigan University, Dewey lived in a boarding house in which an undergraduate of the same school had a room. Her name was Alice Chipman and she was to marry the young professor two years later, in July 1886. Her influence lasted until her death in 1927. It was especially noteworthy in the field of education and their life with their growing children was so bound up with his work that she deserves a special mention in the formation of his thought. Almost everyone agrees that his residence in the Middle West affected his outlook and it would seem that Alice Chipman contributed not a little herself.

She and her sister were brought up by their grandparents, early settlers in the State of New York. The grandfather was a very independent-minded man and his traits were inherited by his grandchild. Although a freethinker, he contributed money towards the erection of every church in his village! Very interested in the social life of his time, he led a very colorful life and this background, not a wealthy one though, gave young Alice an intellectual independence and self-reliance which she was later to communicate to her husband. She had a brilliant mind, and was very much aware of social injustice. A school teacher for several years before her marriage, she

knew human nature. This strong feeling for the problems of the common man she communicated to John Dewey. A sensitive personality, she belonged to no church but believed that a religious attitude was an integral part of human nature, and that theology and ecclesiastical institutions had benumbed rather than developed true religion. (1). In his own home as a boy Dewey had not been given such a view but this he absorbed over the years and his book A Common Faith (2). expresses an identical position. One sees here the basis for some of his later values, hence her place in this list of factors in his formation.

In due course marriage brought with it six children, so that Dewey's interest in schools and their power to form character was not an abstract one but a problem which affected him vitally. A bachelor might well have remained in the field of logic for a lifetime but one might well expect the father of a family to branch out into ethics, as was his case. It was an influence in his life and it is reflected very strongly in his thought to this day.

- (1) BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, ed. by Jane M. Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp. p. 21.
- (2) A Common Faith, by John Dewey. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, 87 pp.

Much has been made of the fact that Dewey moved from Vermont, the state which produced Calvin Coolidge, to Michigan, which Henry Ford was to make famous. It has been a definite factor. Santayana has said that William James was a psychologist of the individual, whilst Dewey tended to dissolve the individual into his social functions. There is much truth in the assertion. During the years that Dewey lived in the Middle West, that section passed through a severe depression and economic recovery. Fortunes came and went quickly. Men took chances and their way of thought made enterprise the supreme virtue. Life was a risk but frequent success encouraged everyone. Security was not an ideal despite the wretched conditions of so many in the large cities like Chicago. Dewey was soon interested in the plight of the poor, and the numbers of uneducated immigrants who quickly made good gave him confidence in the human mind which more staid New Englanders would never feel. In the East, tradition counted for a lot. In the Middle West, it counted for less than nothing. Many of these people left all the traditions they cared to know about far behind in Europe. Every man could make a living in this land of promise, if only he worked hard enough, and used sufficient intelligence. The hope of progress became a dogma.

Such views were bound to have their effect on Dewey's thinking and with such a lack of class distinction, he became a complete equalitarian. Every man was as good as the

next, and perhaps a little better! Much of Dewey's adulation of democracy sprang from what he saw and lived through in Michigan and Illinois. The role of education had a very prominent place in the society of that area, and the success attributed to this made it assume great value in the philosopher's mind. It became a means to the great end, the development of democracy.

The rapid changes brought about in such a growing way of life gave Dewey the idea that change is reality. This fitted in very well with his technical views and contributed much in the formation of his pragmatic theses. He began to distrust all traditions, social, cultural and religious especially....even scientific dogmas. Everything can and should be altered if it will benefit society. He became socialistic, but not in the political sense of class war, dictatorship of the proletariat or submergence of the individual. After all, nobody from Vermont ever became a Communist!

During these years 1882-1890, his reading and studies continued, and his writing ability developed. This is not to say that his writing necessarily improved, but simply that he wrote more often hence more easily. At first the most evident trait was German idealism. Then his preoccupation with the new psychology, i.e. experimental rather than rationalistic, drew his attention to a more objective approach. We have already mentioned his attempt, in his textbook Psychology, to amalgamate both attitudes. Following this, the next victim to be absorbed was ethics.

It was likely his Hegelian streak which demanded a unity of all branches of knowledge. It was mere circumstance which decided that ethics would become an element in his thought at this stage. At the University of Michigan he was assigned some courses in ethics. To equip himself to teach these properly, Dewey was obliged to study this field very carefully. For the use of his students he published two works: Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, in 1891, (1) and then in 1894: The Study of Ethics (2) when the first was out of print.

(1) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey; Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Co., 1891, viii, 253 pp.

(2) The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus, by John Dewey; Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Co., 1894, iv, 151 pp.

Although James' Psychology appeared in 1891, and has been given credit for being the greatest single influence in changing the direction of Dewey's thought, as we shall see in our next chapter, it would be a mistake to say that its influence appears in the Outline of a Critical Theory of Ethics. Although Dewey makes many acknowledgments in it of his debt to English idealistic and naturalistic writers, (3) there is no reference to William James. Yet in this book we find the essential positions of his later teaching. He denounces the fallacy that moral action means something more than action itself, and here we find the analysis of individuality into function including capacity and environment. The psychological approach followed his own trend. It is quite a step from the former idealistic position which holds that the individual finds the source of all his activity in the Universal Will. Now all is within the act: will, consequences, and idea. The act itself is included in the larger activity of the individual in society.

The development has come about with the analysis from the psychologist's viewpoint. There is no pre-existent ideal reality. There is no concern with a separate moral category and consequently no dualism between scientific knowing and moral knowing. This was an essentially Kantian notion, that some "knowing" was isolated from moral values. Now in the analysis

(3) The preface indicates his debt to Green's Prolegomena to Ethics, Bradley's Ethical Studies, Caird's Social Philosophy to Comte, and especially Caird's Critical Philosophy of Kant, and finally Alexander's Moral Order and Progress.

of the act Dewey finds that there is a situation in which organism and environment are functionally united. And in every act of choice we pass into definitely moral valuations, because every act has an effect on the formation of habit and character. Ethics and psychology are then closely related; one explains the other; in fact one implies the other.

In Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, we see the shadow of the later role assigned to intelligence. There is a concrete concern with the planning and organization of individual and social life. There is nothing of the remoteness of rationalistic idealism here.

"An end to serve as standard must be (1) a comprehensive end for all the acts of an individual, and (2) an end comprehending the activities of various individuals--a common good." (4).

And on this same page Dewey goes on to explain that a common good is one which in satisfying one, satisfies others. One sees here the interest in society as having a most important role, a role he was later to assign to it when using the word democracy. And as for the favourite phrase of later years concerning "freeing energies" of the individual, in this same first chapter Dewey wrote:

"The end of action" or the good, is the realized will, the developed or satisfied self....It is found in satisfactions of desires according to law. This law, however, is not something external to desires, but is their own law. Each desire is only one striving of character for larger action, and the only way in which it can really find satisfaction (that is, pass from inward striving into outward action) is as a manifestation of character." (5).

(4) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey; pp. 31-32.

(5) Ibid., p. 95.

Now we have a law contained within desires! It is usually thought of as quite different yet if one wishes to avoid any dualism, it must be absorbed.

Notice the phrase "striving of character for larger action", a thought which would become a cornerstone. It reflects the independence of individualism yet it too must be contained within the larger, the social sphere.

"The Moral End or the Good is the Realization by a Person and as a Person of Individuality". (6).

And he explains that "Individuality" means specific capacity and specific environment.

"environment enters into individuality as a constituent factor, helping make it what it is.

On the other hand, it is capacity which makes the environment really an environment to the individual." (7).

The role assigned to the individual was fairly clear in his mind as early as 1891. And we see also the switch from an abstract Will to the Will of the Community. It should also be pointed out that he rejected a single end at this stage.

"We have no "The Good", but an aggregate of fragmentary ends." (8).

(6) Ibid., p. 97.

(7) Ibid., p. 99.

(8) Ibid., p. 119.

"That performance of function which is "the good", is now seen to consist in vital union with, and reproduction of the practical institutions (family, school, society, etc) of which one is a member. The maintenance of such by the free participation therein of individual wills, is, of itself, the common good." (9).

Part 3 of this book is entitled: The Moral Life of the Individual. Let it be mentioned in passing that the psychological element is highly developed. Both an intellectual and volitional element is thus assigned to conscience. Reason alone does not explain choice in man; there are also emotional factors such as the approval or disapproval of public opinion, etc.

Within this psychological treatment of the moral life of the individual, Dewey assigns several pages to the concept of duty. He has here the usual humanistic thesis that knowledge will cure most of our moral problems. Duty will triumph when within our knowledge we possess adequate convictions of the necessity of conforming conscience to law. With sufficient understanding the individual becomes morally mature and will act properly. Taken in isolation one must admit a certain amount of truth in this. Knowledge will usually lead to firm conviction, but it need not. If mere knowledge was the answer to the moral problem, it would be a synonym for holiness. However, it is well known that the wisest people are not always the holiest, nor does there seem to be any constant way of correlating these two qualities.

(9) Ibid., p. 173.

"The formation of this general idea of duty, and the growth of feeling of duty as such, is helped through the fact that children (and adults so far as their moral life is immature) need to have their moral judgments constantly reinforced by recurrence to the thought of law." (10).

The language as such is misleading, because nowhere does Dewey tell us then what he means by law. The impression is the standard one of contrasting law with conscience, an outer with an inner guide. Yet this is far from Dewey's position. In the next few lines he speaks of the advantages of explaining to children the why and wherefore of duty in individual cases. But how this can be done without recourse to a positive law he does not explain. It is true that previously he had said:

"The law, in other words, of actions, is the law of actual social forces in their onward movement, in so far as these demand some response in the way of conduct from the individual." (11).

However, I should like to hear Mr. Dewey or anyone else explain this to a naughty child. Obviously what he is stressing is the thesis that children should not be punished without explanation, nor forced to do the will of their elders unless they are told (as much as their mental maturity can grasp) the why of conduct. To this there can be no objection. But once again, his reaction is so strong against the error that he is in danger of the opposite excess. The proof is that many later interpreted the Dewey system as meaning a complete lack of discipline for school

(10) Ibid., p. 195.

(11) Ibid., p. 178.

children; their knowledge would develop the notion of duty, discipline or punishment would not.

His first book in this field, the Outline of a Critical Theory of Ethics, thus had a hint of the later role to be assigned to intelligence. Ethics did not mean assimilation of a catechism of rules nor a set of commandments, but one was rather to think of the Golden Rule as "a tool of analysis." (12). Dewey also had, at this early stage, ruled out the permanent idea of law and virtue. Ideals change and must necessarily change. The same words may be used by moralists but their content has varied and will vary.

"It is of the very nature of moral conduct to be progressive. Permanence of specific ideals means moral death. We say that truth-telling, charity, loyalty, temperance, have always been moral ends and while this is true...what is meant by temperance, etc. has been constantly changing, and this of necessity." (13).

One is tempted to wonder aloud if Dewey thinks that man's capacity for alcoholic beverages is bound to increase! From his personal reputation as an opponent of teetotalism we must conclude that his meaning is more general. In Puritan days temperance would mean total abstinence; in other times it would indicate some limitation but allowing indulgence to some degree. As time went it would have no reference to drinking whatsoever. At any rate, moral ideals mean different things in different ages.

(12) Ibid., p. 204.

(13) Ibid., p. 206.

The last chapter of this book deals with virtues. The list is hardly orthodox. Thus "conscientiousness, for example, is a cardinal virtue". (14). No systematic effort is made to classify the virtues. No denial is made of standard treatments by other authors of this section of ethics. In his own roundabout way Dewey mentions several and uses his own terminology (thus fortitude becomes bravery; then he mentions the virtues of "earnestness and compassion". There is an emotional overtone which reveals a psychological preoccupation.

His second book written at Michigan University, The Study of Ethics: a Syllabus, (15) was written after his Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics was exhausted. The Syllabus was not a new edition. As Dewey stresses himself in the prefatory note, it is a distinct advance in his thought. Intelligence is thought of as a medium between impulses and consequences. The causality thus attributed to intelligence anticipates his later teaching on the theory of inquiry. And when he speaks of such a role, he abandons the idealistic position of a universe not subject to the controlled activity of human agents.

One sees roots of his later instrumentalism. The language of experiment, instruments, practice, and conflict is already here. Henceforth old idealistic contentions are either dropped or if retained, are stripped of Hegelian form, and revised and bolstered by the new naturalistic arguments.

(14) Ibid., p. 230.

(15) The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus, by John Dewey.

There is continuity with the Outlines; it would be misleading to pretend that everything had been overthrown. Thus the theory of the norm in the Outlines is very much like the norm theory of the Syllabus. In Outlines, Dewey says:

"Three of the branches of philosophy may be called normative, implying that they deal with some norm, standard, or end, estimating the value of their respective subject matters as tested by this end. These are Logic, dealing with the end Truth, and the value of the intellectual processes with respect to it; Aesthetics, dealing with Beauty and the value of the emotional conditions as referred to it; and Ethics...but this norm in no case comes from outside the subject matter; it is the subject matter considered in its totality". (16).

And on this same subject in his later book, the Syllabus:

"The completest possible interaction of an impulse with all other experiences, or the completest possible relation of an impulse to the whole self constitutes...the moral value of an act..This has important bearings upon the subject of the criterion... the criterion always lies within, not without, the act. The criterion is nothing but the completest possible view of the act". (17).

The slight changes in vocabulary have left the thought content intact.

(16) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, pp. 1-2.

(17) The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus, by John Dewey, p. 22.

Later at Chicago, his interest in ethics was further stimulated by courses he taught listed as "Psychological Ethics," "The Logic of Ethics," and "Social Ethics". The first of these was simply a development of his "The Study of Ethics: moral theory was expressed in terms of impulses, habits, desires, emotions and ideas. This would become Human Nature and Conduct. (18). One can see the trend away from Hegelian idealism to a more pragmatic viewpoint. Dewey left idealistic categories and "a priori" reasoning but he retained the idea of a whole, of organicism. Part of Hegel was abandoned and part was retained. This desire to see everything in one whole as opposed to a segmented universe has led critics to label Dewey as a monist. He prefers to be called contextualist. All this however was a later development. By 1894 he was no longer an absolute idealist though anti-intellectualist; he had accepted "consequences" of intelligence and some of the elements of experimentalism.

(18) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey.
New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1922, vii, 336 pp.

1. Peirce, Father of Pragmatism

The three celebrated names in American Pragmatism are Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. Peirce was a logician, interested in Aristotle, and has been given credit for developing the logic of relations which were brought to a culmination by Whitehead and Russell in their Principia Mathematica. (1).

The son of Benjamin Peirce, who was leading mathematician of his day, it has been said that Charles was brought up in a laboratory. (2). His interests alternated between science and philosophy. Dissatisfied with the theories of truth taught by deductive thinkers such as Spinoza, Kant and Hegel, he turned towards empiricism. He disliked the pursuit of an absolute truth which was independent of experience. The correspondence or common sense theory of Aristotle and the Scholastics he found inadequate and he was led by his scientific background to examine the findings of the empiricists.

(1) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by William Savery. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) p. 484.

(2) The Development of American Philosophy, W. Mueelder and L. Sears. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940, p. 330.

Peirce and James both acknowledged their debt to Hume whose starting point is that of empiricism and who ended with phenomenalism.

"Thus did Hume complete the work of empiricism. Locke reasoned away everything except the primary qualities of bodies and the unknown substratum (substance) in which they adhere; Berkeley showed that even the substance and primary qualities of bodies might be reasoned away, and now Hume applies the same solvent to the substance of mind itself, and leaves nothing but phenomena." (3).

Peirce's central thesis was that inductive inference is the same as probable inference. An inductive conclusion is never certain but a high degree of probability is the best we can hope for. Fundamentally it is a method of enumeration and the sample chosen to build up the statistics may well lead us astray. Substance is something unproven, beyond our grasp so our certitude concerns statistics on phenomena.

British Empiricism of the 19th. century left Peirce unhappy since he found its attitude retrospective, concerned with antecedent phenomena. To grasp the meaning of an idea, he thought we should rather be prospective, looking ahead to consequence of the idea in action. The modification of existence by applying ideas or concepts to solve the problems and change the situations presented to us in experience is the real meaning of his theory. The consequences he referred to are the general consequences.

(3) History of Philosophy, by William Turner, S.T.D., Boston: Ginn & Country, 1929, p. 520.

Action is not the supreme good, but through action concepts can be applied to existence and it is only through such application that they have any meaning. They are not reflections of reality but instruments for active exploration of the world about us.

In 1878 there was published in the Popular Science Monthly, an essay by Peirce entitled: HOW TO MAKE OUR IDEAS CLEAR. The essay lay unnoticed for 20 years until, in an address of 1898, James gave Peirce credit for starting him on the right direction. As a label for his views, Peirce used the word "Pragmatism." He got the term from Kant who distinguished it from "Practical." The latter referred to moral laws which Kant said were "a priori"; the former applies to rules of art and technique which are based on experience and are applicable to experience.

The reference to the future became the cornerstone for James' new theory of truth. He would develop the thought and it would be brought to maturity by Dewey. A readily available and complete definition of truth as Peirce saw it may be found quoted approvingly by Dewey:

"Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of the confession of its inaccuracy and one-sidedness, and this confession is an essential ingredient of truth." (4).

(4) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 345n.

The preoccupation with the future as an element of truth has been the distinctive feature of the three philosophers: Peirce, James, Dewey. Their view implies that knowledge when thought of as a mirror of reality should not and indeed cannot be called true. We should start with a hypothesis in our search for scientific belief; if it brings about desirable "results" it is a "true" hypothesis. But "truth", as an absolute, cannot be obtained. It must remain in the future forever.

2. William James, American

The obscurity of Peirce was matched by the popularity of James. His brother Henry wrote novels like psychology whilst William wrote psychology which was as readable as novels. Peirce was a logician and wrote like one, hence he had few followers. William James caught the spirit of the common people, using phrases one heard in the streets, and his books reflect the eager, adventuresome, dashing and business-like ideals of the day. He liked to speak of "cash-value" and "results", and other such phrases to express the place of consequences in his theory. Such practices tended to popularize his views and also tended to leave the author open to misinterpretation. However, this last was inevitable on another score: James was not

altogether consistent in his thought. We are more concerned though, in showing his position between Peirce and Dewey as Dewey has repeatedly told of his debt to William James.

Dewey's daughter Jane, who wrote the biography of her famous parent for the Library of Living Philosophers, has this to say:

"William James' Principles of Psychology was much the greatest single influence in changing the direction of Dewey's philosophical thinking. The marked increase in the prominence of the psychological approach in the second ethical syllabus may be attributed to the appearance of this book shortly after the first one was written." (5).

Dewey was not only one to be influenced by the Principles of Psychology. James taught at Harvard from 1872 until his death in 1910 and was the first American philosopher whose name was known outside of the trade. As an individual he was very colorful and one might well say that he came by it honestly. His father was a mystic of sorts and their homelife was dominated by his personality. Inheritor of great wealth, he found it unnecessary to work and it pleased him to send his sons to Europe for their education. In France they fell in with Charcot and from him they acquired an interest in psychology. This remained a dominant interest for a lifetime. Back in

(5) BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN DEWEY, ed. by Jane M. Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) p. 23.

American William James took a M.D. at Harvard in 1870, later teaching anatomy, physiology, psychology and philosophy.

With this background it is not surprising that William James made a shining reputation at Harvard during his 58 years there. His urbanity, wit, general culture made a strong impression on Dewey but these all followed Dewey's reading of The Principles of Psychology. The impact of this book can scarcely be overestimated and its date (1890) is significant of an early influence. The Pragmatism by William James, (1907) was much later and Dewey's thought was then fairly well formed, as definitely as trend will allow anyway. It is generally taken for granted that the Pragmatism, by James, was the chief influence but this brief biography in Schilpp's volume had the approval of the philosopher himself, and the more objective psychological theory is outlined in Principles of Psychology rather than Pragmatism. There was a strong biological basis and though not clearly grasped by Dewey at first, it was later to become the reason for his being called behavioristic. Our point here is that James was the source, one important source anyway, of the trend towards a biological standpoint, a further step away from absolute idealism and more closely approaching the later instrumentalism. The new step favoured a more earthly functionalism. (6).

(6) DEWEY'S INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by Gordon W. Allport. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) p. 267.

Gordon W. Allport has this to say:-

"So whole-hearted is his conversion to the functional position that Dewey accuses James of faint-heartedness. In particular it is the self, with which Dewey had such deep concern in 1886, that he is now bent on ruling out of court. With James' Fiat he will have nothing to do; not even the mildest endorsement of indeterminism is allowable. The individual and his actions are one, says Dewey. There are concrete attitudes, habits, desires, ideas and ignorance; but there is no ego behind these states. There is no call to recede into the ego to explain will, any more than to explain consciousness. If James can dispense with the Pure Ego in Thought, he should dispense likewise with the Pure Mover in conduct... (7).

By 1894, then, we see that Dewey has repudiated completely both the substance and the shadow of souls psychology. He will have nothing more to do with an active self, as knower or as effective agent in will. Dewey insists upon the seamless character of experience. (8).

And we have the testimony of Dewey himself that James was the first to question the disconnected elements of the empirically given. That is to say that the data of experience come in wholes, not separate and independent units. Reality is what Dewey would later call "contextual" and not a number of monads.

"Not till the time of William James was the common premises of both sensationalistic empiricism and rationalism..openly challenged by denial that the empirically given consists of disconnected elements." (9).

(7) Ibid., p. 268.

(8) Ibid., p. 269.

(9) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 518n.

His indebtedness to James is undeniable in his transition from idealism to a species of empiricism; there is however another interesting point to notice and that is the Hegelian idea of "whole" which is now being applied by Dewey to "experience". His preoccupation with the contextual element of experience shows that everything of Hegel had not been thrown overboard. And this preoccupation came through Peirce and James.

"In 1890, in his famous chapter on "The Stream of Thought" in his Principles of Psychology, James had laid great stress upon the conjunctive relations of experience which Hume had left out, and later he called his philosophy Radical Empiricism in order to emphasize his difference from Hume. Charles Peirce coined the word Synechism in 1892 as a term for the continuity of experience. But it was James who developed the notion that experience consists of real units that overlap successively and simultaneously. The world is a chain of interpenetrating links. Entities are not exclusive as in the old pluralism. In the new pluralism they overlap.

Concatenism is, then, a *via media* between monism. It is the only form of pluralism that is intellectually tenable. Hereafter, a philosopher must be either a monist or a concatenist. In my opinion, with the exception of pragmatism or instrumentalism, this hypothesis of a concatenated world is the most important invention of philosophy since the middle of the 19th. century." (10).

- (10) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by William Savery. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) p.489. This judgment has the explicit approval of Dewey himself as given in Part III of the same volume THE PHILOSOPHER REPLIES p. 545.

Before 1900, then, Dewey had acquired the elements of his future theory of knowledge: an "A posteriori" approach to the problem of experience; a denial of the self; a pluralism; a notion of the continuum of experience. The last element was a left-over Hegelian idea, but now applied to a new realism, rather than an idealism.

The history of psychology through these same years reveals that Dewey followed the general trend outside of neoscholastic circles. Woodworth has expressed the tendency pithily:

"First psychology lost its soul, then it lost its mind, then it lost consciousness; it still has behavior of a kind." (11).

It would seem then that outside of Catholic circles during this period materialism was gaining rapidly and decisively. William James was doing his bit yet here we have an example of his inconsistency which must be mentioned. Dewey was more logical; James more sentimental. The question was religion.

To understand James' attitude in defending religion on a basis other than reason one should first know of his division of thinkers by reason of their temperament. He was firmly convinced that a man's philosophy reflects his temperament. To a certain extent this might well be true;

(11) Psychology, A Study of the Mental Life by Robert S. Woodworth. New York: Holt, 1928, p. 2n.

in fact Dewey illustrates the point, first perfectly and then reacting against his natural bent. James added environment to the strictly physical element to take care of such examples. His dichotomy divided them into tender-minded and tough-minded.

Tender-minded philosophers are usually rationalistic, favouring first principles, order and unity; as a corollary they might also be intellectualistic, idealistic, optimistic, believers in freewill and monism and probably dogmatical. Apparently he had people like his friend Royce in mind.

Tough-minded philosophers favoured empiricism, materialism, pessimism, atheism, determinism or possibly skepticism, naturalism, positivism. It is clear that James did not think any one man every qualified for all of the labels in either group, but the categories, he felt, gave a rough indication of an outlook.

The division was one which claimed a basis in reason yet James was still dissatisfied. Neither group could explain the most human of our convictions, if conduct is any criterion. And surely any philosopher who looked at consequences for meanings had to admit that all men, whether learned philosophers or the men in the street, do act against both of these attitudes. Hence, James took upon himself the role of mediator. Each group has a contribution to make, yet either group does not explain everything. On the one hand, we have scientific values;

on the other one must admit human values of the religion and romantic types. In 1897, The Will To Believe outlined these views. Later James said that a better title would have been: The Right to Believe. At any rate this was his thesis: in fields where scientific knowledge is unavailable, a man has a right to believe what he likes, if, for him, there is some advantage in it. Thus if belief in God will give a man hope and confidence, then he has a right to believe in God. A sick man has a right to believe that he will recover, and since almost everyone thinks there are such cases, the element of belief was a necessary one, an advantageous one in his cure. Were the patient in the example not allowed to believe there was any hope, he would certainly die; his belief made the difference, so from such consequences, James argued for a right to believe, on his own risk that he might be mistaken.

The tests for truth are thus not entirely intellectual; there is an emotional nature in man which must be allowed its share. And James was sufficiently optimistic to reject the skepticism of so many scientists. In this, Dewey did not follow James. He will develop a naturalism which never weakens in its crusades against emotionalism and any religion which makes use of it in any degree. Consequences provide meanings, but this is so as a principle, for the vast majority of cases, and sick people who recover by "faith" are exceptions. Some unknown factor was present which cured them; but unknown as it was, it was not faith. They

would have recovered anyway. Temperamentally, Dewey would have preferred to write a book entitled: *The Right to Disbelieve!*

Perhaps the explanation of these divergent attitudes may be found in the fact that James was a psychologist of the individual, whereas Dewey was more interested in social psychology. James felt the need to justify the individual's attitude; Dewey is not interested in justifying but rather examining and understanding. Motives are important for James; and if they help the individual, he has a right to them. Dewey wants to know if they will work out in the long run, socially. Does it pay society to deceive sick people? An individual may possibly benefit; generally speaking, no. The long view, especially the social view, will decide value.

It is interesting to note the increasing influence of Darwin during the period 1884-1894. The influence of James which was in accord with Darwinian views prevailed; anything James had to offer which was in conflict with biological evolution was dropped. (12). And we have seen above that by 1894 Dewey had repudiated completely both the substance and the shadow of soul psychology. Experience has a seamless character; it must not be divided into a peripheral body sensation and then a soul reaction; it is all of a

(12) DEWEY'S INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by Gordon W. Allport. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers) p. 268.

piece. And an idea is an organic response to environment. (13)
But this growth of Darwinian influence must receive its own
treatment. Its importance can scarcely be overrated in
Dewey's philosophy. Its effect paralleled his interest in
psychology hence its mention here in the development of his
theory of knowledge. It was more than just another element;
it was a vital thing, an essential, something which coloured
all his views and some even think it to be the all-important
thing in the understanding of Dewey's philosophy.

(13) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey. p. 109.
Dewey had then (1938) progressed to the point where
he could say: "Ideas are anticipated consequences."

Chapter 7 - DARWINISM

Even a cursory reading of John Dewey's books leaves one with the strong impression that change is the essence of reality. He seems to worship change. And with this worship there is the corresponding hatred of permanence, stability, eternal essences, and everything which smacks of the absolute. In fact it is said that Dewey is absolutely against absolutes; he is eternally opposed to permanence and essentially fixed against established order of any kind.

This type of thought is chaotic, and Dewey would quickly repudiate such a charge. It must always be kept in mind that he is reacting against various doctrines, that he is taking an attitude which may be expressed in a negative way. He favours certain things and views, yes, but in his anxiety to denounce the opposition, his expressions leave what one must call unfortunate and sometimes disastrous implications. From an origin in the stability of "a priori" thinking, Dewey has swung to the other limit of the pendulum, hence his never failing glorification of change.

Darwin gave him a basis for this attitude, but the development and the application is his own. It is not a legitimate application as he stretches the analogy far beyond what is tenable (actually he jumps from the biological principle into politics!) For the moment however,

we must try to appreciate the effect Darwin had on his early thought. It is significant that one of Dewey's best known early books bore the title: "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy" (1). It is an important book because the biological basis of change in his thought is explained therein.

"In laying hands upon the sacred ark of absolute permanency, in treating the forms that had been regarded as types of fixity and perfection as originating and passing away, the Origin of Species introduced a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics, and religion." (2).

This statement gives one a good idea of the method whereby Dewey jumps from biology to epistemology, then to ethics, politics and religion! No giant with seven league boots ever made a more daring leap. And all of these disparate subjects are indiscriminently lumped together without any hesitation whatsoever. In biology "species" are not fixed; atqui the permanency of "species" has given backbone to logic, morals, politics and religion. Therefore Darwin's book eventually transformed practically every branch of knowledge. One must first notice Dewey's conviction that

(1) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought, by John Dewey, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1910, vi, 309 pp.

(2) Ibid., pp. 1, 2.

biology is of basic importance; as a corrolary, the branches of knowledge are interdependent and there can be no distinction between the speculative and practical. Such an influence attributed to Darwin is certainly a landmark in the history of learning. Previously there was a reliance upon what Dewey calls a Medieval assumption that "species" were immutable. Now Darwin revolutionized all learning with his scientific discovery. Nothing is henceforth to be considered as permanent. The scientific basis has been removed, and the truth has been uncovered that development, change, natural selection are watchwords. This is henceforth the new dogma; it is unquestioned and must be accepted by anyone who hopes to progress. It is applicable in every field of knowledge. No wonder that Dewey believes that ethics, politics, religion must accept new standards. Their basic principle has changed, or rather the previous basis was no better than shifting sand. The new bible must be Darwin's Origin of Species. And Dewey's views on this are explained at some length in the first chapter of The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy.

This volume was published in 1910. Its evaluation of Darwin is one thing which has not changed in Dewey's philosophy. The same thought is repeated in 1939 in his book Logic, The Theory of Inquiry wherein after

disparaging Aristotelian logic for its categories of changeless essences, he says:-

"In concluding this phase of the discussion I shall refer to the foundation of all the differences that have been mentioned--the reversed attitude of science toward change. Completion of the cycle of scientific reversal may be conveniently dated from the appearance of Darwin's Origin of Species. The very title of the book expresses a revolution in science, for the conception of biological species had been a conspicuous manifestation of the assumption of complete immutability. This conception had been banished before Darwin from every scientific subject save botony and zoology. But the latter had remained the bulwark of the old logic in scientific subject-matter." (3).

Of this, Dewey is certain: Darwin was right and there is no limit to the extension of the idea of change. This is one of the strongest elements Dewey uses in favour of the necessity of experiment. Since circumstances (he prefers to call them conditions) are always varying, then new procedures must be invented and there is not, nor can there be, any one definite goal or end for development and progress. This is true of ethics, of politics, of science, of logic. The instrument of adaptation is intelligence, itself a changing power as the men endowed with it vary in their heredity and environment. Dewey is tireless in pointing out the erroneous basis for stability.

(3) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 92.

"The conception of eidos, species, a fixed form and final cause was the central principle of knowledge as well as of nature. Upon it rested the logic of science." (4).

And developing this thought in the same book he explains the notion of "design" in biology, botany, zoology, paleontology and embryology, as held by the scientists who had been influenced by Aristotelian logic.

"Together they added such prestige to the design argument that by the late eighteenth century it was, as approved by the sciences of organic life, the central point of theistic and idealistic philosophy.

The Darwinian principle of natural selection cut straight under this philosophy. If all organic adaptations are due simply to constant variation and the elimination of those variations which are harmful in the struggle for existence that is brought about by excessive reproduction, there is no call for a prior intelligent causal force to plan and preordain them. Hostile critics charged Darwin with materialism and with making chance the cause of the universe. (5).

It would seem then, that "theistic and idealistic philosophy" was out of date after Darwin. Its basic principle having been disproved, there is nothing left to do except abandon the whole structure. There is no such a thing as "species", therefore sciences of organic life, and Dewey includes psychology and ethics here, must begin anew. It is curious to note that such a situation does not fill Dewey with dismay. He simply

(4) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, ect, by John Dewey, p. 6.

(5) Ibid., p. 11, 12.

assumes that the sciences of organic life have only to adapt themselves to the new conditions and proceed. If their defenders object, it is not on really scientific grounds at all but religion rears its ugly head! This latter villain is to be construed as the enemy of progressive science, the opponent of Darwin, and the dragon which must henceforth be fought by every enlightened scientist and philosopher.

This may be strong language, but it is no stronger than is Dewey's attitude vis-a-vis ecclesiastical institutions.

"Although the ideas that rose up like armed men against Darwinism owed their intensity to religious associations, their origin and meaning are to be sought in science and philosophy, not in religion." (6).

Religious institutions and associations are not guilty of having ideas! All of these come from poor science, but their "intensity" derives from religion because religion sees the handwriting on the wall. The concept of "species" has been the basis of religion; the concept came from science; it is now repudiated by science; so religion must seek some other support. These views require a more elaborate treatment but just now we are interested in the extension of Darwin's biological idea to such an apparently remote field as religion! It

(6) Ibid., p. 3.

provides another example of Dewey's contempt for categories of knowledge. It also shows a source for his later theory of values. In the formation of his thought, its importance is undeniable.

"The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life. When he said of species what Galileo had said of the earth, *e pur se muove*, he emancipated once for all, genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking questions and looking for information." (7).

There is one institution of religion in particular which Dewey regards as the arch-enemy of science, and it is the one which had a "difference" with Galileo. Sometimes he mentions it by name but more often he refers to it indirectly. Whatever is Aristotelian, or Medieval, or authoritarian, or a defender of Greek and classical views, is suspect.

"Intellectually speaking, the centuries since the fourteenth are the true middle ages. They mark the transitional period of mental habit, as the so-called medieval period represents the petrification under changed outward conditions, of Greek ideas." (8).

It would be interesting to know what amount of history Dr. Dewey has read. One wonders what he would say were he to discover that Galileo did not say "*e pur se muove*"; that religion and philosophy do not stand or fall with the scientific concept of "species" and in particular

(7) Ibid., p. 8, 9.

(8) Ibid., p. 60.

that the notion of final causality, or any kind of causality, is not upset nor even disturbed by Darwin's views. However this is not the place to debate these questions but one does get a good idea of which way the wind blows as far as Dewey is concerned and consequently we learn another element in the formation of his philosophy; and his philosophy is convertible with epistemology.

"For modern philosophy is, as every college senior recites, epistemology; and epistemology, as perhaps our books and lectures sometimes forget to tell the senior, has absorbed Stoic dogma. Passionless imperturbability, absolute detachment, complete subjection to a ready-made and finished reality...is its professed ideal." (9)

His theory of knowledge, or logic as inquiry to use his terminology, embraces a wide field and its principles have repercussions in religion. In fact they have repercussions in politics as well. Darwin's insistence on change and adaptability must be applied not only in biology, not only in logic, not only in religion and ethics but in politics.

"A belief in organic evolution which does not extend unreservedly to the way in which the subject of experience is thought of, and which does not strive to bring the entire theory of experience and knowing into line with biological and social facts, is hardly more than Pickwickian." (10).

(9) Ibid., p. 172.

(10) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey, in Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, by John Dewey, A.W. Moore, H.C. Brown, George Herbert Mead, etc., New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1917, p. 35.

Dewey applies his principles of change to what he loosely refers to as Democracy. I say loosely because it need not be democracy as we know it. In fact as the future changes, the concept of state must change as well. He will have no part of an ideal, a static goal, towards which government should evolve. Rather does he think that the formation of the state must be a series of experiments, probably endless experiments, a constant adaptation to current needs. The state must be flexible of its very essence, and must be subject to constant scrutiny, revision and alterations. As biology after Darwin taught that there is a natural selection, so political science must recognize an unceasing development and this necessarily. (11). The importance of this trait in his thought will be brought out again. It is an integral part of his reasoning and is also an illustration of the inclusion of politics as affected by Darwin's theory.

There is some disagreement here as to the actual extent of Darwin's influence. It seems to me that it is correct to say that Dewey's interpretation of Darwin is an element of his thought. It concerns us less whether Dewey was right or not in his interpretation. It must at least be admitted that Dewey believed the doctrine of change, (he prefers to call it growth),

(11) This idea is developed in The Public and Its Problems, by John Dewey, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1927, via 224. pp., Ch. 11.

was given a scientific basis by Darwin and cannot be denied by an open-minded thinker. The quotations certainly show he thought Darwin ranked in importance with Aristotle in the history of mankind; the difference is just that Aristotle happened to be wrong and Darwin right!

"What does our touchstone indicate as to the bearing of Darwinian ideas upon philosophy? In the first place, the new logic outlaws, flanks, dismisses--what you will--one type of problems and substitutes for it another type. Philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them." (12).

Feldman, author of a book (13) carrying the subtitle: A Critical Analysis, feels that Dewey was not so dependent on Darwin as we have made him out to be. On strictly biological and scientific grounds it might be difficult to sustain our contention. BUT, the argument is rather that Dewey's interpretation of Darwin, viz., that Darwin provided a deathblow to final causality when he "explained" the process of organic adaptation, was the cardinal principle for Dewey. Right or wrong, and we are inclined to suspect the validity of Darwin's argument on scientific grounds, Dewey believed the principle of natural selection could and should have unlimited application. Hence we cannot agree with Feldman

(12) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, etc. by John Dewey, p. 13.

(13) The Philosophy of John Dewey, by W.T. Feldman, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934, 127 pp.

when he says:

"It may be concluded then, that Darwinism in its strict sense, seldom had more than a limited application in Dewey's philosophy." (14).

It may not have been Darwinism, but at least it was Dewey's idea of what he thought Darwinism was. And in proof of our position we refer to an article by Dewey in The Monist entitled "Evolution and Ethics":

"The belief that natural selection has ceased to operate (in the human sphere) rests upon the assumption that there is only one form of such selection: that where improvement is indirectly effected by the failure of the species of a certain type to continue to reproduce; carrying with it as its correlative that certain variations continue to multiply, and finally come to possess the land. This ordeal by death is an extremely important phases of natural selection, so called...However to identify this procedure absolutely with selection, seems to me to indicate a somewhat gross and narrow vision. Not only is one form of life as a whole selected at the expense of other forms, but one mode of action in the same individual is constantly selected at the expense of others. There is not only trial by death, but there is the trial by the success or failure of special acts--the counterpart, I suppose of physiological selection so called." (15).

We believe that this quotation shows the use of biological terminology, is evolutionary in character, and Darwinian in origin, although an analogous and unwarranted application of Darwinism.

(14) Ibid., p. 43.

(15) EVOLUTION AND ETHICS, by John Dewey, in The Monist, 1898, vol. viii, p. 337.

Chapter 8 - EXISTENTIAL MATRIX

The biological term "matrix" meaning womb or mould, is a favourite with John Dewey. In his last important book: Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, he entitles chapter 2: THE EXISTENTIAL MATRIX OF INQUIRY: BIOLOGICAL and the following, chapter 3: THE EXISTENTIAL MATRIX OF INQUIRY: CULTURAL. It is his way of saying that all reality is contained within a mould of the here-and-now. There are various forces, some biological and others cultural which play important roles, but they are all contained within this living mould of existence; the present.

As one might expect by now, his view is neither clear-cut nor unqualified. It is his method of expressing his reaction against other views. Dewey is not an Existentialist such as Jean Paul Sartre. He seems more interested in the future than the present, hence he will reject the views of absolute hedonism in ethics. At the same time he despises anyone who attempts to live in the past. In fact, according to Dewey, that is probably the greatest crime a philosopher could commit; hence Dewey never loses an opportunity to disparage medievalism. As an epithet of opprobrium, it ranks high on his list.

To explain his concern with time as opposed to eternity, the word "temporalism" is a common one in his works. Sometimes critics will use "futurism" as a more

apt descriptive. In either case it is agreed that time is his fourth and favourite dimension. To express this element of his philosophy, a very important one in the determination of his values, we have chosen as the title of this chapter: EXISTENTIAL MATRIX. Dewey, who supplanted William James as The American Philosopher, is the champion of the so-called democratic way of life. "Life begins at Forty" and "You're as old as you feel" are popular phrases which he has embodied in his personal life. The emphasis is always on living now, using everything at hand, but with an eye to the future, not an eternal future but a future for the democratic way of life.

Dewey's preoccupation with time and the present is not a late development in his thought. From the beginning, his "individualism" led him to place an emphasis or premium on the concept of time. Perhaps this also helped popularize him as The Philosopher of America. In his early psychological writings it was a frequent thought and even when he was an absolute idealist he wrote:-

"the universe except as realized in an individual has no existence." (1).

Certainly the most obvious and characteristic trait of individual existence is its timeliness. And this view is reflected in the typical American attitude. The energy displayed every moment, the national fear of loss of time,

(1) PSYCHOLOGY AS PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD, by John Dewey, in Mind, XI, 1886, p. 167.

the contempt they heap on foreigners because the latter "have no sense of time", all are well known. And now to have a technical philosopher give some quasi-metaphysical defence for the attitude would meet with popular approval, even though the man in the street never in his life read a book by John Dewey. Nevertheless it must be conceded that the temporalist strain in Dewey exists, is strong and is a vital factor in his thought. And this is so whether it be true that he absorbed it from his fellow Americans or simply reflected their views deliberately. It was probably ingrained and then became stronger as the years went on due to his associations in Michigan, Chicago, and later with the men at Columbia. It certainly did his reputation no harm.

"Since we live forward; since we live in a world where changes are going on whose issue means our weal or woe; since every act of ours modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise or charged with hostile energies--what should experience be but a future implicated in a present." (2).

Here we have the views of the common man of the twentieth century expressed away back in 1917. No talk of tradition, or custom, or the ideals and ways of yesteryear, but rather, all is prospective. Authority has its roots in the past; it has not had too much success with running the world hence we must now think in new terms. The answer to our problem will be found when responsibility for actual

(2) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, by John Dewey, A.W. Moore, H.C. Brown, George Mead, etc., New York: Holt, 1917, p. 12.

conditions is shouldered by people living now; that is, every man must become a real citizen, conscious of his importance as an agent in determining the conditions of our society and willing to be responsible for them.

The underlying reason for present-day conditions, and the reason for requiring our attention concerning the problem, is that our world is like nothing before. History can show us no pattern because conditions have altered unutterably. Contemporary civilization is unique, demanding new attitudes and techniques for its control.

"What is taken for granted in the present inquiry is that men live in a world that is undergoing extensive and accelerated change, and that physical science and technological industry are the causes of this change." (3).

Since the accelerated change has come to be, things have speeded up from every viewpoint hence we must speed-up thinking. There is no time to sit back and observe in a detached way. Every man must contribute his bit and recognize his responsibility in the result. If this be the case for the average man, what must the philosopher do?

"The discussion may be summarized in saying that industrial civilization presents philosophers with a double challenge. One of its tasks is to discover the full meaning of the experimental methods by which the advances of natural sciences have been made secure." (4).

(3) PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Whither Mankind: a panorama of Modern Civilization, edited by Charles Austin Beard. New York: Longmans, 1928, p. 313.

(4) Ibid., p. 327.

The philosopher's first task then is to realize the success of the experimental methods which were able to emancipate the sciences after the 17th. century. so that a similar understanding of the future advance in experimental methods may help us emancipate civilization in our own century. Our world needs emancipation in social affairs as well as the legal, the economic, the political and religious realms.

After realizing what was done in the past, the philosopher of today must understand contemporary methods and techniques provided by industry. A thoroughly sympathetic approach by the philosopher towards industry and technological progress will enable him to make a contribution now and for the future.

"Such observation and reflection as discern its meaning--that is its possibilities--is philosophy, no matter by what name the discernment is called." (5).

From the past we can learn a little, but from the present we can learn the secret of immediate improvement with bright hopes of indefinite progress in the future. Dewey always seeks in such statements to emphasize the point of past aloofness on the part of philosophers; he chides them for it and strongly advocates immediate participation in the affairs of men by every man whether he be a philosopher, scientist or anything else. Only thus can the future be certain of inheriting the elements of infallible progress.

(5) Ibid., p. 330.

"In the history of the race, change has been feared. It has been looked upon as the source of decay and degeneration. It has been opposed as the cause of disorder, chaos, and anarchy..." (6).

"A philosophy of experience will accept at its full value the fact that social and moral existences, are, like physical existence, in a state of continuous if obscure change. It will not try to cover up the fact of inevitable modification, and will make no attempt to set fixed limits to the extent of changes that are to occur. For the futile effort to achieve security and anchorage in something fixed, it will substitute the effort to determine the character of changes that are going on and to give them in the affairs that concern us most some measure of intelligent direction." (7).

We are living then in a mould or matrix which is constantly changing because time is the measure of change. The direction of living is forward, prospective, hence an eye to the future is worth both eyes on the past. Modification is inevitable in our lives, indeed in our whole world. No cause for alarm though; just adapt ourselves to reality as it is.

In the past there has been error on the part of philosophers who were preoccupied with eternal values. If we allow ourselves to use their standards we shall fall into the same error. As reality is changing with time, so must standards change with time. They must adapt themselves as readily as anything else, or we shall never attain wisdom. A large part of the mistake is to

(6) WHAT I BELIEVE, by John Dewey, in THE FORUM, LXXXIII, March 1930, p. 178.

(7) Ibid., p. 179.

think of anything extra-empirical by way of rules. If these eternal standards are allowed to prevail in our thought, how can we hope to live in time. The past was real; the future will be real; but only the present is real.

"To one who is professionally preoccupied with philosophy there is much in its history which is profoundly depressing. He sees ideas which were not only natural but useful in their native time and place, figuring in foreign contexts so as to formulate defects as virtues and to give rational sanction to brute facts, and to oppose alleged eternal truths to progress...The Witness of history is that to think in general and abstract terms is dangerous; it elevates ideas beyond the situations in which they were born and charges them with we know not what menace for the future... And in the past the danger was greater because philosophers..were..concerned with essential Truth and Reality viewed under the form of eternity." (8).

The reader will not miss the force of the adjective "alleged" in connection with the word "eternal." Dewey very frequently uses them together as though they were cousins-german. For him eternity is as "alleged", as the present is real. To understand Dewey's values we must never forget this. Today, right now, is real; the future participates in reality only inasmuch as it is implicated in the present. But time is of the essence of reality; eternity is delusion. It is extra-empirical as timeless, hence unreal. If one asks Dewey whether the rejection of eternity affects our conduct he will

(8) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, New York: Holt, 1915, p. 12.

say that such a rejection helps every man to realize his responsibility for the present condition of things and prevents any escape into an indeterminate future. But whereas the past is unalterable, and the future not here yet, we must live in the present, by present changing standards, and do our work now, with immediate improvement and progress in view.

In the above quotation Dewey stresses the restriction we must place on ideas. They are dangerous if too general because their original value lay in their immediate context. When first elaborated the ideas were applicable for a certain context, and at that particular moment. As time passes, they lose their value since the context changes. The more general they are, the less intense was their value because the less timely. To appreciate their value at the maximum, consider the exact time of their existence. To paraphrase the scholastic formula; the greater the extension (in time) the less the comprehension, and vice versa.

Ideas work better as hypotheses. If they are considered as beliefs we are easily deceived. The idea has its value at one particular moment. As the moment alters, the idea decreases in value. Nothing remains settled because time marches on.

"The "settlement" of a particular situation by a particular inquiry is no guarantee that that settled conclusion will always remain settled. The attainment of settled beliefs is a progressive matter; there is no belief so settled as not to be exposed to further inquiry." (9).

Perhaps no better illustration could be wanted than this quotation to show Dewey's utter aversion to anything independent of the existential matrix. We live and move and have our being in the here-and-now. Any other view is impractical, theoretical, speculative, ideal and borders on being medieval.

It is a characteristic of Dewey's philosophy that the older religious beliefs must be abandoned. In this chapter we are concerned only with his objection that the type of thinking such religious beliefs have engendered is more concerned with eternity than time. Consequently religious beliefs not being subject to the empirical test, they are, logically speaking, only probable. In fact Dewey believes in nothing supernatural since it is non-empirical, outside of time. And he says further that modern man feels this way too.

"Faith in the divine author and authority in which western civilization confided, inherited ideas of the soul and its destiny, of fixed revelation, of completely stable institutions, of automatic progress, have been made impossible for the cultivated mind of the Western world. It is psychologically natural that the outcome should be a collapse of faith in all fundamental organizing and directive ideas." (10).

(9) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 8.

(10) WHAT I BELIEVE, by John Dewey, p. 182.

Since religion has lost its pristine influence for the educated modern man, Dewey explains that here philosophy is given a golden opportunity. It will be its duty to provide a faith to replace religion. Faith in what? Faith in the future of mankind, faith in man's ability to carry on without any religious institution based on eternal "truths" or other such shifting sand. We need faith in man's ability to control experience so as to develop art, industry, politics, human relations in general all towards a future which will become ever brighter. This faith will be some sort of vision of the possibilities of man, since so far little result can be shown of man's achievements without the drawback of religion. This is something novel, hence philosophy must first persuade man that it is possible.

"We are not accustomed to it even as an idea. But faith in it is neither a dream nor a demonstrated failure. It is a faith. Realization of the faith, so that we may work in larger measure by sight of things achieved, is in the future. But the conception of it as a possibility when it is worked out in a coherent body of ideas, critical and constructive, forms a philosophy, an organized attitude of outlook, interpretation and construction. A philosophic faith, being a tendency to action, can be tried and tested only in action." (11).

Once again, religion has failed because it neglected the time element. Religion took refuge in the realm of eternity, impregnable because not real. Once the latter characteristic, its unreality was diagnosed, it lost its

(11) Ibid., p. 182.

hold. Now philosophy can replace it; if the time element is conserved. And since it is just beginning, no victories can be pointed to in the present. The thing for it to do then is to use the present to bring about results in the near future. It must also use the present to show cause why such encouraging results can be expected. The argument will not be based on the past but on an understanding of techniques and modes of action we now possess in our daily lives. The proper application of these will guarantee results and provide a basis for the new philosophic faith.

The same argument is used to show that logic, science and morals are equally dependent on the existential matrix. Every type of thought or reasoning develops in its own cultural matrix and at a certain moment in history. To try to transplant, in time, such ideas is to strip them of their value.

"Here is it enough to call attention to a point which will later receive detailed examination namely, the very fitness of the Aristotelian organon in respect to the culture and common sense of a certain group in the period in which it was formulated unfits it to be a logical formulation of not only the science but even of the common sense of the present cultural epoch." (12).

Aristotle's logic is now unfit simply because he lived almost four centuries before Christ. And notice that this logic is unfit not only in a technical way but equally unfit for common sense. Neither the professional

(12) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 65 (italics mine).

philosopher nor the man in the street may hope to benefit from Aristotle today. In Dewey's philosophy, to become "dated" is to die. A biological organism does not live forever. Neither can an idea since it exists in a biological and cultural and existential matrix. Remove it from its proper mould and death must follow. One detects a Hegelian streak in all this.

There is a principle involved here of which the above is an example. Dewey opposes any and every absolute notion claiming validity for every age and under all conditions. A notion of this type he ridicules as being an "eternal truth". These are found in every branch of knowledge and must be ferreted out and destroyed. The ancients were victims of "eternal truths" to a horrible degree. His views are simply expressed in a popular article for Fortune magazine:-

"Astronomical and biological sciences were once as firmly based upon eternal uniformity as moral science and philosophy are now asserted to be. In astronomy, it was held that the higher heavens have always had and always will have, with everything in them, an unswerving circular movement---In biology, the complete fixity and uniformity of species of plants and animals were taken to be the rational and necessary foundational truths for all scientific knowledge.

In short, the view now so confidently put forth about morals once prevailed in natural science... Belief in the eternal uniformity of human nature is thus the surviving remnant of a belief once universally held about the heavens and about all living creatures." (13).

(13) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, in Fortune, August 1944, p. 180.

Dewey's view is that error in human thought will continue so long as men persist in neglecting time as the vital element in the value of ideas. Recourse to eternity is the sure road to sterility of thought. Conversely, a realization that we live here and now, that our thinking is part of our very lives, that inquiry must be considered in biological terms as a viable product, all this will guarantee success.

"When eternal essences and species are banished from scientific subject-matter, the forms that are appropriate to them have nothing left to which they apply; of necessity they are merely formal. They remain in historic fact as monuments of a culture and science that have disappeared, while in logic they remain as barren formalities to be formally manipulated." (14).

Dewey's contempt for anything but the present is hinted in the latter part of the quotation. He has been consistent here in his own studies, never bothering very much with the study of history. His lapse in this department is disappointingly evident in all references to medieval christianity. However even this reflects the importance of the existential matrix of his thought. In fact there is even a note of optimism in Dewey. Optimism expressed in his faith in the future. Hope in the future of democracy; or at least in the future.

Running true to form, Dewey mentions the difficulties provided by famous paradoxes when the element of time is

(14) Logic; The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 92.

neglected. An amusing instance is given in the chapter
 on Terms or Meanings in the same volume.

"There is also the alleged paradox in the case of the soldier barber who is ordered by his superior officer to shave all the men and only the men in his company who do not shave themselves. It is then asked, is the barber himself comprised in the collection of men to be shaved? If he is one who does belong in the collection of those who do not shave themselves, he disobeys the order if he does not shave himself. In case, however, he obeys the order and does shave himself, he is one who shaves himself, and hence equally disobeys the order... The appearance of contradiction vanishes the moment reference to time and date is introduced, and since the act of shaving a given person is existential, such a reference must be introduced implicitly in the context or else explicitly. When the act of shaving is interpreted existentially and temporally, the command is unambiguous and there is no difficulty in determining how it is to be obeyed. If the barber is one who has not in the past shaved himself, then he obeys the order by now shaving himself; if he has shaved in the past, he obeys the order by now abstaining from shaving himself." (15).

One might well say that in Dewey's view, every problem becomes a paradox unless one has reference to time to give it meaning. Exception need only be made for mathematics.

(it must be) "intrinsically free from the necessity of existential reference while at the same time it provides the possibility of indefinitely extensive existential reference--such as is exemplified in mathematical physics." (16).

Philosophy differs from mathematics. The latter may and intrinsically should escape the limitations in time but

(15) Ibid., p. 364.

(16) Ibid., p. 394.

the former only has meaning with reference to the here-and-now. For it to carry out its function it must use the present with reference to a future implicated in the present.

"Their (refers to previous statements on this point) net purport is that the directive presence of the future possibilities in dealing with existent conditions is what is meant by knowing; that the self becomes a knower or mind when anticipation of future consequences operates as its stimulus." (17).

"The change made in things by the self in knowing is not immediate, and, so to say, cross-sectional. It is longitudinal--in the redirection given to changes already going on. Its analogue is found in the changes which take place in the development of, say, iron ore into a watchspring." (18).

This element of Dewey's thought had an early origin and has persisted. In the analysis by Savery, we find an explanation of futurity and at the end of the same volume, Dewey gives his blessing to this interpretation.

"We are spectators of the present and retrospectors of the past; on this basis alone we become prospectors of the future. When we verify we are again spectators, this time of new date, and retrospectors of the process of verification. Dewey, like a true American, is interested mainly in the future." (19).

(17) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence, p. 59.

(18) Ibid., p. 60-61.

(19) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JOHN DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by William Savery. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 504. And Dewey's approval of this section is on p. 577.

The error with older views, says Dewey, was an over-emphasis with the past. At worst the ancient thinkers were mixed up with the eternal. At any rate the past influenced them too much. It will be our role to watch the future and working with the present, make that future a good one.

"So far as anything beyond a bare present is recognized by the established doctrine, the past exclusively counts. Registration of what has taken place, reference to precedent, is believed to be the essence of experience. Empiricism is conceived of as tied up to what has been, or is, "given". But experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connexion with a future is its salient trait." (20).

In accordance with this attitude, Dewey has never written anything very much on the history of philosophy. His references are usually disparaging; at best they are tolerant. And his objection is that too often such philosophies were written to defend the established order, rather than to be concerned with the development of a new order in the future.

(20) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey, In Creative Intelligence, p. 7-8.

As a philosopher who began his studies with Hegelians, John Dewey might well have been an idealist. Circumstances of education and environment decided in favour of something else. For a time by way of reaction he was an empiricist, repudiating any spiritual element but finally Dewey evolved a view of the universe which he denies being monistic, although it has many of the characteristic traits. Some have called it Organicism, whereby they seek to show its Hegelian origin. Others label it Monism and insist on this whether Dewey likes it or not. -Dewey's philosophy might be called Naturalism with his concern for nature and experience and a denial of anything outside of these. Parodi has called it "a totalitarianism of experience". (1) Dewey himself, in distinguishing it from Organicism called it Concatenism. (2) Phenomenalism is an unsatisfactory name since the philosophy in question includes pluralism with a continuity of experience. For reasons which will appear in

- (1) KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION IN DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by Dominique Parodi. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 239.
- (2) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE: A REJOINDER, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 545n. Although it is Dr. Savery's expression, approval is given by Dewey.

this chapter the term CONTEXTUALISM will be used, a name given by Dr. Arthur E. Murphy. (3).

1. Dualisms

A premise of mankind, reflected by all thinkers according to Dewey, is that there are two worlds: one tangible and the other suprasensible. The Greeks had the notion well established in their thought and it had its political advantages. We see it illustrated in their system of education whereby some studies are practical and menial, others are liberal or for gentlemen. The corresponding civil division was that menial or practical knowledge was for slaves, and liberal education for freemen. This situation was considered to be "natural" and any other view would have been termed unrealistic. Some men were destined to be workers for the benefit of others called "their betters"; owned and owners, servants and masters.

In accordance with this state of things, there gradually evolved a view that work was undignified, leisure was noble. Works of the mind assumed an exaggerated importance and material operations went down the corresponding scale. The ideal was spiritual whilst the material was degrading and despised. There is a trace of this in our own day when people assume that wealth should be an object of worship since it means leisure, and poverty means work. When two

(3) DEWEY'S EPISTEMOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS, by Arthur E. Murphy. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 199.

men meet on a narrow sidewalk, the one wearing overalls automatically steps into the gutter to allow the man with the top-hat the right of way. All such economic and social attitudes are very old in the history of man, and philosophy has reflected them.

"Separation of mind and matter, the elevation of what was called the ideal and spiritual to the very summit of Being and the degradation of everything called material and worldly to the lowest position, developed in philosophy as a reflection of economic and political division of classes." (4)

Dewey continues in this vein and points out that artisans were no better than slaves politically and only freemen were really citizens. The establishment and development of this division prepared the way for the split between the ideal and the material, of mind and matter.

Readers of Dewey have sometimes quickly dismissed him under the label of pantheist or monist when he makes such statements. This solution is too simple as Dewey himself points out:-

"Pantheism is a philosophic nickname which should be sparingly employed; so also should the term Monism." (5).

His views are so complicated that they deserve more careful study than there need be to airily dismiss him so easily.

- (4) Problems of Men, by John Dewey,
New York: Philosophical Library, 1946, p. 14.
- (5) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey.
New York: Henry Holt, 1915, p. 77.

One must be on guard against taking him at his word when he makes an isolated statement; there is usually more to it than meets the eye. We are safe in concluding that Dewey objects to a division of reality by any dualism. One must not conclude though that that automatically makes him a monist.

In the Middle Ages there was a bifurcation used by all the thinkers because it suited their philosophical and theological purposes, says Dewey. In Greek civilization it was expedient to divide men into freemen and slaves or artisans. In Medieval times the division was cleric versus layman. The former was educated to read and write and rule, either behind the scenes or out on stage. The layman was educated to till the land, fight as a soldier, buy and sell commercially. It suited those in power to promise a future reward for every man who followed his vocation. The good worker, the one who never went on strike against his employer, would some day, in another world, receive his due reward. So also, the good employer and the wealthy man, if good and generous to the Church would be happy in heaven. The soldier who was obedient, all who respected authority, everyone accepting rules of conduct handed down by tradition and authority, all became eligible for reward in eternity. The point is obvious; two worlds, one here below where those in authority enjoy themselves, and another in eternity where the workers of this world will be rewarded if they have obeyed here below.

As Dewey understands it, this dualism of reality was taught by those in civil positions of authority as well as those in high ecclesiastical places. It was to their immediate advantage. It kept the people quiet and submissive. Everybody liked the arrangement since those in authority received their happiness now and the rest would get theirs later. It was a philosophy of life with religious overtones, with the rewards and punishments provided by the latter. For lapses, there was always the confessional. For renewed subservience there was a special reward.

"One of the most instructive things in all human history is the system of concessions, tolerances, mitigations and reprieves which the Catholic Church with its official supernatural morality has devised for the multitude. Elevation of the spirit above everything natural is tempered by organized leniency for the frailties of flesh." (6).

The system was organized to maintain the status quo; and the latter involves a dualism. The individual might suffer a lapse, in fact it was taught that this would always be the case; consequently there was need of the elaborate apparatus outlined above by Dewey. The dualism whereby men were members of a certain set or class, was taught by Greeks and modified by the Church later on.

(6) Human Nature and Conduct; by John Dewey.
New York: The Modern Library, 1930, p. 5.

"The important institution was the church, not the city-state. Consequently in medieval thought the difference between the priest and the layman took the place occupied in Greek philosophical writings by the difference between freeman and artisan. The word cleric strikes the keynote of medieval culture in very much the same way that the word citizen sounds the keynote of Athenian life." (7).

One understands the importance of Dewey's dislike for dualisms when one examines the index of Democracy and Education. (8) There are forty-eight entries; (9). The volume edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp has eleven; Logic; The Theory of Inquiry has seven; Human Nature and Conduct has nine. The principle used is always the same: such bifurcation of reality was introduced by men and is not warranted.

The origin of dualisms must be traced through history to the divisions of society, classes, castes, or groups. There was then a corresponding dualism in thought.

"These social ruptures of continuity were seen to have their intellectual formulation in various dualisms and antitheses--such as that of labour and leisure, practical and intellectual activity, man and nature, individuality and association, culture and vocation...(They had) their counterparts...(in)..philosophy--such as mind and matter, body and mind, the mind and the world, the individual and his relationships to others. (10).

- (7) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, in Fortune, August 1944, p. 156.
- (8) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey. New York: Macmillan, 1923, 434 pp.
- (9) The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp.
- (10) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 377.

We have here a short list of the dualisms of thought which reflect dualisms in society. The index of that same volume Democracy and Education, mentions education and morals, activity and knowledge, activity and mind, authority and freedom, body and mind, capital and labour, character and conduct, ends and means, experience and knowledge, nature and nurture, objective and subjective, physical and psychical, practice and theory, rationalism and empiricism, etc. From Logic: The Theory of Inquiry we must add logic and methodology; from almost any of his works add eternal and temporary, fixed and changing, fact and value.

What is Mr. Dewey's point? He does not object to a distinction made but he objects violently to a separation. To debate the influence of heredity over environment, in Dewey's view, is meaningless. They are both factors and one is never found without the other. Although not identical, hence distinguishable, they enjoy what Thomists call reciprocal causality; one influences and determines the other while being itself influenced and determined by the correlative.

The same might be said of character and conduct, physical and psychic, etc. He dislikes intensely any attempt to consider one and ignore the other. They must all be mentioned together, or at least any pair should never be divorced. Perhaps the dualism which brings Dewey the most pain is the one between science and morals. Just as he objected to the two worlds of Medieval churchmen, so he will always object to any system wherein science is said to be concerned with

nature, whilst morals deal with man. His point is that man is a part of nature, hence an object of science. And science is as concerned with man as is morals. The particular techniques are called psychology, anthropology, etc. but they are concerned with man no less than morals. Ultimately Dewey will be driven to declare that there is only one kind of knowledge, that pluralism is as unacceptable in knowledge as anywhere else...but either Dewey refuses to admit this, or else has not lived long enough. In his 89th. year he is still battling dualisms and any type of pluralism which separates instead of distinguishing. He traces modern lapses in the dualism of science and morals to Kant.

"I find that Kant's decisive contribution is the idea of a dual legislation of reason by which are marked off two distinct realms--that of science and that of morals...the world of sense, of phenomena in space and time; on the other hand...the supersensible, noumenal world, the world of moral duty and moral freedom." (11).

This view prevailed until the 19th, century when science and intelligence began to come into their own. Darwin's contribution made men see that the division of matter and spirit had no solid basis, says Dewey, and progress for the future was guaranteed. The two realms of Kant were seen to be only one reality. They could be considered distinct but not separate. There was continuity as one evolved out of the other. Change was real, evolution a fact, and dualisms ended. This held for science and morals as well as anything else.

(11) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 20.

"From this point of view there is no separate body of moral rules, no separate system of motive powers; no separate subject matter of moral knowledge, and hence no such thing as an isolated ethical science." (12).

As a matter of fact Dewey objects not merely to dualism but to any division of beings which really separates. He is so preoccupied with the unity of reality that dualisms come in for the greatest abuse but he is also opposed to any separation. As an American and democrat, he dislikes social classes and castes. Reading history, he deplures any other divisions along these or other lines.

"The distinct classes to which things belong by their very nature form a hierarchical order. There are castes in nature. The universe is constituted on an aristocratic, one can truly say a feudal, plan. Species, classes do not mix or overlap--except in cases of accident, and resulting in chaos." (13).

In short, classic thought accepted a feudally arranged order of classes or kinds, each "holding" from a superior and in turn giving the rule of conduct and service to an inferior." (14).

2. Reaction

It is a commonplace that today men are living a confused existence. Supposedly it is at a faster pace, under more difficult living conditions, more nerve-racking than ever before. Despite greater educational facilities than history has ever seen, there are no more intelligent people

(12) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 69.

(13) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 59.

than in less fortunate eras, and we still have wars and rumours of wars. The general condition of mankind has been a cause of worry or at least great interest to all philosophers, indeed to every man of common sense. John Dewey has been equally puzzled by our world and has sought, first, the origin of the trouble, then, possible solutions.

A book on the destiny of men was compiled by Charles Beard and in it Dewey contributed a chapter entitled PHILOSOPHY. Therein Dewey says that men are confused because there are too many categories. Our life and whole civilization is so complicated that the average man must either exist as a dumb sheep, obeying blindly, or else struggle ineffectively for answers. The same condition obtains for philosophers. They must first reconstruct their philosophy before the activities of men can be integrated.

"This fact seems to me to define the connection of philosophy in America with civilization. Classic Greek philosophy and the medieval synthesis at least reflected the conditions and aspirations of their own times in a coherent system of beliefs...That is, a theory of knowledge which isolated both its method and its outcome from practical action was the essence of classic theory, and the theory had authority, since it laid down both the goal of life and the means of attaining the goal." (15).

- (15) PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Whither Mankind: A Panorama of Modern Civilization. Edited by Charles Austin Beard. p. 319.

Examination of medieval and Greek beliefs did not convince Dewey that they were correct in their interpretation of reality. But true to the genetic method he sought to determine how they arrived at such conclusions. As we have just seen, their philosophy reflected social conditions and convictions. Now, says Dewey, we must do the same.

Unquestionably the idea of democracy as evolved in America is something new. Freedom of speech, equality of opportunity for all, the possibility of unlimited progress, all these American ideals are as novel as they are inspiring. Their actual existence is something else again, but even as an idea it must be admitted that they are a bright point in history. Dewey is a firm democrat, a believer in the value of the vote for everybody over 21, whether men and women. He is convinced therefore of the need of a new philosophy to reflect this new type of government. Its necessity is obvious from the muddle of thought we live in. And the muddle comes from holding over Greek and medieval thought and trying to apply this to a new way of life. Greek thought went well with Greek government; medieval thought with medieval government; now we need a new thought for the new government system. This new thought or philosophy must not only interpret democracy, it must point out new aims, new goals, new ideals. It must study the methods of democracy and then teach that same democracy what it can do with its techniques. This provides the background for understanding Dewey's reaction against dualisms. If they are allowed to live on (for they are far from dead), then we may retrogress from democracy to medievalism, from freedom to

authority, from scientific progress to ecclesiastical restrictions imposed by an eternal law.

Logically then, Dewey sees certain groups as enemies. In education, the supporters of classic views must be opposed. In a subsequent chapter it will be seen how Mr. Hutchins became a favourite opponent. In morals, that medieval institution known as the Catholic Church will be opposed. In politics, any European system based on privileged classes is an enemy. In economics, the modern equivalents of the robber barons, our trusts, are enemies. In art, Dewey will defend the new against the old; the same might be said for mathematics, for physics, for astronomy, anthropology; etc. To single out one branch of learning we mention logic. He opposes formal logic because of its categories. It explains reality in segments, therefore it cannot be adequate. The new logic, which he calls inquiry, will have to consider reality as a whole. It is the core of his philosophy, and will be treated in our next chapter. But since Dewey is in reaction against the older logic, the older philosophy, what can be said about his philosophy? We said already that it is in the nature of a reaction but can nothing be said positively?

Dewey hopes to provide a complete philosophy, hence it will have the best that other systems have to offer. This is not to say he professes an eclecticism but simply that he is not above taking elements wherever he can find them, if only they stand up under the empirical test.

What then shall we call it? What are the elements?

Dewey says it is a realism and also rationalism; it has an idealistic import and it is undoubtedly an empiricism. It first had no metaphysic and now it has one. It is naturalistic and instrumental. Now are we any further ahead? The difficulty comes from the persistent way that Dewey has of using words in his own way, and never worrying about being consistent. It is agreed by his critics that he is very difficult to understand. Is there any solution? We believe there is and that it is in the keyword: reaction. When Dewey says he favours empirical methods, remember that he is complaining about the excesses of "a priori" reasoning. He is not so empirical or material that he denies the existence of truth because it cannot be held in a test-tube. When he says his philosophy has elements of rationalism, he refers to his confidence in the power of intelligence of man. For Dewey that is sufficient to accept the label of rationalism. It might help us to group the adjectives and see how they add up. John Dewey's philosophy is:

1. A Realism: because it is a reaction against absolute hegelian idealism.
2. A Rationalism: because a reaction against crude materialism. (British Empiricism of 19th. century).
3. Idealistic: if rationalistic, then idealistic inasmuch as he defends the existence of ideas, ideals, reason, but he prefers the use of the word intelligence.
4. Naturalistic: in reaction to anything outside of, above or independent of nature. He reacts against the supernatural as unproven, not empirical, hypothetical at best.

5. Instrumental: in reaction against those who hold that philosophy should reflect reality as a spectator might. His philosophy must be operative, effective in altering things that are and making them into the things, situations, etc. that they should be. It is instrumental because it must use the powers it has as efficient agents in making the future come into line with its ideals.

In every case, the label came by way of his reaction, consequently when an adjective is used in connection with John Dewey's philosophy, the first thing one should ask is: what is the opposite position or belief which he is reacting against.

3. Metaphysics

In his bias against medieval fixed ideas or notions concerning reality Dewey developed an intense dislike for metaphysics. For him it was an utterly useless quest. Any attempt to investigate the nature of being was either hopeless or of no value even if successful. What philosophy must do is help men how to live, study techniques, methods for making progress. The ultimate structure of the universe is none of our business. It is not subject to change, if it exists, so being unable to alter it why bother about it in the first place. It was a sterile occupation, one indulged in by clerics or cranks; certainly not by a progressive thinker. How things came into existence; what we could do with them; which ideals or goals can we project? These are the aims of philosophy and not the nature of being. Our knowledge is to be an instrument in changing present

conditions so as to make them the way we want them. Knowledge is active, not a mere recorder. Its very nature is functional, not static. And in Dewey the word "reflective" always implies adjustment of means to an end or projection of a new end. It does not have anything in common with reflection which is related to contemplation, meditation, speculation or anything passive.

"Philosophy itself is a mode of knowing, and of knowing where reflective thinking is much in play. It is hence self-contradictory for an instrumental pragmatism to set up claims to supplying a metaphysics or ontology... (Instrumentalism) involves the doctrine that the origin, structure and purpose of knowing are such as to render nugatory any wholesale inquiries into the nature of being." (16).

This was in 1910, at a period when Dewey was still busy with his reaction against intellectualism. At the same time it must be noted that he did not mean to be so sweeping in his denunciation as he implies. As a matter of fact in that same year, 1910, Dewey was saying that stability of meaning is an undisputed fact. The argument was from everyday experience. His theme is that a conception is a definite meaning which is standardized.

"Various persons talk about an object not physically present, and yet all get the same material of belief.. If pounds arbitrarily changed their weight, and foot rules their length, while we were using them, obviously we could not weigh nor measure. This would be our intellectual position if meanings could not be maintained with a certain stability and constancy through a variety of physical and personal changes." (17).

(16) SOME IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 1 Sept. 1910, VII, p. 479.

(17) How We Think, by John Dewey. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1910, p. 125-6.

He does not deny permanence of meaning; and how can he deny the permanence of being. I do not believe that he does, really. Once again he is worked up about intellectualism's extravagance and he is extreme in denunciation. But he still believes in the existence of being. Its just that philosophy should not be concerned with it.

A different interpretation is given by Feldman (18). He believes that Dewey roundly condemns metaphysics and later had a change of heart. My own conviction is that Dewey condemned sterile metaphysics, and gradually saw how there could be a true and valid metaphysic. He had not been well impressed by previous philosophical attempts and suspected that the thing was useless. Certainly he could see no value for it. By 1925 he was prepared to explain his own metaphysic which he did in Experience and Nature. (19).

This interest has changed from an antipathy to deliberate concentration. In fact many think that Experience and Nature is Dewey's best book. It must be admitted to be a very important one for students of Dewey. And the position taken in it was not repudiated later on. In fact it has been confirmed.

"Contemporary philosophy shows a marked disposition to invade the field which 19th. century thought contemptuously dismissed as ontological; it manifested a marked tendency to revert to the issues of the Greek

(18) The Philosophy of John Dewey,ⁿ by W.T. Feldman. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1934, p. 9.

(19) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey. Chicago: Open Court, 1925, xi, 443 pp.

and medieval speculation, and to inquire into the intrinsic nature of matter and mind, nature and spirit, and their relations with one another." (20).

This was in 1928. The following year a new edition of Experience and Nature was published containing a new preface, and with the first chapter completely rewritten. The rest of the volume had only minor corrections. The general impression is that Dewey now feels the absolute necessity for a comprehensive metaphysic, and believes that he has indicated its main features. In that same year, 1929, there appeared his book The Quest for Certainty. In it he says that the most critical task of contemporary philosophy is:

"the need of a thorough-going revision of ideas and thought and their connection with natural things." (21),

Henceforth there will be no further wavering. Logic will emerge triumphant as the major element, but it will have a metaphysical basis. And of course it will be Logic as Inquiry, not formal logic. The precise nature of his logic will, again, be difficult to determine. But it will contain a metaphysical basis. However, can we determine what sort of metaphysic Dewey holds?

Possibly the best approach to this thorny problem is indicated in Dewey's first essay of Studies in Logical Theory: The Relationship of Thought and Its Subject-Matter.

(20) PHILOSOPHY AS A FINE ART, by John Dewey.
In New Republic, 15 Feb. 1928. p. 352.

(21) The Quest for Certainty, by John Dewey.
New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1929, p. 166.

There are three areas of inquiry which might be represented by three concentric circles. The illustration is Ratner's.

"The first area, bounded by the innermost circle, is occupied by reflective thought, by logic, or what Dewey now calls inquiry. In the second area are the typical modes of human experience, such as the practical or utilitarian, the esthetic, religion, socio-ethical, scientific...The third area is that of the socio-cultural world, society in its organized and institutional form." (22).

Three concentric circles, three areas providing a blueprint of reality. Not a division based on Cartesian coordinates, nor a frame of reference with independent pigeonholes but areas which are distinct, only functionally. All three are within the inclusive field of experience, total experience. Yet, they serve their purpose as a blueprint with its several pages all concerned with the same house.

It must be said that this plan denoting the limits of philosophic inquiry has more than two dimensions. It has depth, and length in time as well. In fact, it includes all human experience and consequently has a place for historical perspective. What must be stressed is that no part of human experience is ever to be thought of as isolated. It is the role of reflective thinking, the very core of the blueprint, to cut back and forth across the three areas, uniting them, interpenetrating them, correlating them in order to extract the full meaning from reality. The areas are not hermetically sealed off. On the contrary, radii stem from the centre and

(22) DEWEY'S CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHY, by Joseph Ratner. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 49.

these radii represent the function of intelligence. The three areas are not distinct stages of human thought or development. They are indissolubly and interactively interconnected, mere phases of total reality. An understanding of reality is contingent on our being able to work back and forth between the inquiry which is philosophy, and the largest circle which is social experience.

In Dewey's philosophy one notices a lack of cosmology. There is little or no concern with the nature of the world without people. The illustration of the three circles makes this clear. Logic at the core, experience around it and the third circle is nature. What is this nature? The socio-cultural sphere, not the prime matter and substantial form of inanimate beings. It is concerned with human relationships, society in its various forms, organized institutions with human subjects.

With inquiry at the centre, philosophy will provide the vision necessary to direct human institutions in particular, and society in general. It will take its role in the public domain and not remain speculative. At the same time it is Dewey's contention that intelligence is affected by society at the very moment that it helps determine human destiny. One must not say that there is "pure philosophy" and "applied philosophy". Methods and application cannot be separated. New and better methods evolve during the very application of older and less scientific methods. There is a busy back-and-forth travel between inner and outer circles.

It would also be contrary to Dewey's views to imagine that he places the circles as an indication of the different classes of men. He does not mean to put philosophers in the inside and the common uneducated people on the outside. Intelligence is possessed by every man, and every man must make this shuttle-journey all his life. The distinction is not a classification of men but of phases of reality.

The middle ring represents typical modes of human experience, we said, such as the scientific, the religious and socio-ethical. When inquiry or logic passes through this area it most nearly approaches scientific method. Here "knowing" must learn the lessons taught by scientific progress. The laboratory provides the key, or rather provides a key, which will explain many mysteries. Much of reality will be grasped and understood if we allow empiricism its due credit. And within this same circle we can learn more from religious experience and art. The esthetic has a contribution to make and from all of them our inquiry will emerge the richer. At the centre we had inquiry as vision, imagination, reflection. Now entering the second phase, the middle circle, it adds the advantages of the lessons of ethics, art and religion. Later the radius penetrates the outer layer, nature, and in this wide social field there are other lessons yet to be learned. Go back and forth over the three rings, include the lessons of all three, exclude or neglect none, and you will have a general theory of all reality.

Pro. Concerning the inner ring, Dewey has written: Logic; The Theory of Inquiry. On the middle ring: the best single book is Human Nature and Conduct. The outer circle: Experience and Nature. All indicate special phases of reality and all are interwoven. The ultimate function of philosophy will be to provide a general theory of reality as these phases act and react on one another. It will not be concerned with the nature of being so much as the function of being. It will not be static in its approach but experimental and it will consider all experience as its province.

Reality is all of a piece and philosophy must also be all of one piece. Metaphysics, logic, etc., do not differ in their ultimate subject-matter but in phases or perspectives of the same subject-matter. The reciprocal interpenetration of intelligence will make classification of knowledge very difficult if not impossible. However, we need not hope that our criticism will move Dewey to change his attitude. It has been tried before; always unsuccessfully. He is utterly opposed to classification, even of knowledge.

"When we assume that our clefts and bunches represent fixed separations and collections in rerum natura, we obstruct rather than aid our transactions with things. We are guilty of a presumption which nature promptly punishes. We are rendered incompetent to deal effectively with the delicacies and novelties of nature and life." (23).

(23) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 131.

From Hegel we find the stress on continuity and the absolute aversion to any separation or division. Nevertheless, Dewey differs from Hegel. He is willing and even anxious to observe things as they are existentially. They are not lost in the whole but retain individuality. They are in and of the world but they are not the world.

"For Dewey as for Hegel, continuity is pervasive and all-embracing. While, to be sure, Dewey's empiricism stresses the specific and differential conditions under which natural events are experienced, and thus differs from Hegel in noting the plurality, individuality, novelty and piecemeal characters of events; yet these articulations are not alien to one another but fall within a unitary world. Experience and nature are not separate entities conjoined or added together; experience is rather the forms which nature assumes in interactions of non-organic and organic events including human events." (24).

The individual being retains its individuality but it is never isolated, indeed it cannot be isolated from its fellows. Each being has a meaning and it gets this from the particular circumstances which surround it and contain it. These circumstances are really part of the being since without them it loses its connection with the whole. Therefore every being must be considered in its context and with its context of circumstances. Then it has meaning and can be grasped logically or functionally.

(24) DEWEY'S LOGICAL THEORY, by Donald A. Piatt. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 107.

In accordance with this view, Dewey says that every individual experience is unique. This is obvious since all the conditions of a particular situation are never repeated. Several circumstances might recur but not all of them.

"I have pointed out that one person cannot communicate an experience as immediate to another person. He can only invite that other person to institute the conditions by which the person himself will have that kind of situation the conditions for which are stated in discourse." (25).

And besides each situation being unique, Dewey further limits the range of individual experience. Thus we call his metaphysic CONTEXTUALISM because it attributes reality to an individual experience within a given context.

"...it is impossible to imagine a living creature coping with the entire universe all at once. In other words, the theory of experiential situations which follows directly from the biological-anthropological approach is by its very nature a via media between extreme atomistic pluralism and block universe monisms. Which is but to say that it is genuinely empirical in a naturalistic sense." (26).

Dewey cannot be called an absolute monist since he recognizes pluralism. Each being has reality, providing you include its context. By the same token he should not be labelled an atomist, since he insists on including context with individual being and besides, individual being is thought of as organic. From this viewpoint Dewey might

(25) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey.
Ibid., p. 546.

(26) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey.
Ibid., 544.

be called synthetic. With reference to Hegel's influence one must say that Dewey has passed from a totalistic to a particularistic view of reality. Contextualism seems as good a name as any for Dewey's metaphysic, yet Savery prefers Concatenism.

a. Metaphysics as Concatenism

In his essay: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY (27) William Savery says that a metaphysic must be either a monism or a pluralism. In the 19th. century monism triumphed but in the early 20th. century the reverse took place. Credit for this event is given to the work of William James' Principles of Psychology. Therein he stressed the conjunctive relations of experience and this stress was to lead Dewey to the development of his metaphysic. James saw clearly that the individual units of experience overlap; the world is a chain and all its links are interpenetrated. The time element thus involved led Bertrand Russell to speak of events, rather than situations. There is a "togetherness" which one must account for. A pluralism is necessary but all beings and events must be recognized as bound together even while they retain individuality. Leibniz had tried to explain the universe with his monads. Their individuality was preserved inasmuch as no two were alike. But Leibniz was not very clear on

(27) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by William Savery. Ibid., p. 488.

how the universe was interconnected. This was explained later, by Dewey. And Savery thinks Concatenism is the best word to designate Dewey's metaphysic.

b. Metaphysics as a Totalitarianism of Experience

This is a phrase used by Dominique Parodi (28). He thinks this a good name as it expressed Dewey's opposition to the dualisms of subjective and objective, the psychical and the physical. The expression is awkward, has political overtones, and seems inadequate for a technical metaphysical use. In fairness to Parodi, though, we must say that he uses the phrase adjectivally and concerning Dewey's philosophy in general. In fact, Parodi does not believe that Dewey has any real metaphysics as such.

"He scorns metaphysics altogether and is inclined to see in several of its classical problems only illusions and verbal difficulties." (29).

c. Metaphysics as Contextualism

In his Essay: DEWEY'S EPISTEMOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS (30) Arthur E. Murphy gives us Dewey's favourite thesis against epistemological dualists. Theories of knowledge which place "reality" over against "mind" take their usual abuse.

(28) KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION IN DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY, by Dominique Parodi. Ibid., p. 239

(29) Ibid.

(30) DEWEY'S EPISTEMOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS, by Arthur E. Murphy. Ibid., pp. 193-225

In repeating Dewey's thought that both the knower and the known are part of the same situation, Murphy says the name Contextualism (31) is best applied to Dewey's metaphysic.

It is agreed that a metaphysic must be a generalized account of reality. In the past the attitude was to conceive of mind as grasping and interpreting reality. To arrive at a generalized view, the philosophers of the past assumed a theory of mind, then argued from a particular mental experience, or a series of such experiences, to a general theory of reality. Dr. Murphy points out that since Dewey has been indefatigable in stressing the unity of mind with reality we should label his views Contextualism.

And the same term, contextualism, is used by Donald A. Piatt. In his endeavour to reconcile the use of several labels which are not usually found together, he explains his use of the term rationalist by saying that it expressed Dewey's insistence on the paramount role of intelligence. And so Piatt thinks it in order to call Dewey both empiricist and rationalist.

"It will be asked how an instrumentalist, experimentalist, and immediate empiricist can be a rationalist. The answer is, by being a contextualist--by placing thought as inquiry within the natural existential context in which alone it can yield warranted assertions." (32).

(31) Ibid., p. 199.

(32) DEWEY'S LOGICAL THEORY, by Donald A. Piatt, Ibid., p. 110.

Here we have this word "contextualist" which Murphy also uses and which seems most appropriate. It gives the meaning of environment, suggests the shuttle-voyage between the three concentric circles of knowing, experience and nature. And an explanation is also provided by Piatt in these words:

"It must be noted that the pragmatist does not say that qualitative objects are external in the sense of being independent of organisms; these objects belong to our environment, and our environment is a function of our organic structure as much as of the structure of inanimate things. Moreover, organisms belong to nature as much as inanimate things do." (33).

Inasmuch as Dewey's philosophy is always trying to keep these different things in focus, trying to imply the presence of the elements of knowing, experience and nature in every event, then the word "contextualism" has a real value as a label. It implies the existence of an object of knowledge, but never an isolated object of knowledge. Every being must be considered as connected with its own set of circumstances, its own neighbors, its own activity. BUT, once again, we are bound to keep in mind that this being is not an eternal being, but a contingent one. It is changing. As it is changed, so also it changes the beings around it.

(33) Ibid., p. 115.

"A thing "absolutely" stable and unchangeable would be out of the range of the principle of action and reaction, of resistance and leverage as well as of friction...Every existence is an event." (34).

And this mutual activity can be grasped only if our knowledge is extended to the context. Unless this is done our knowledge has no meaning. And meaning implies grasping reality.

Two notes of caution must be inserted at this point; (a) Dewey does not say that the limits of knowledge mark the limits of reality. And (b) Dewey is not trying to teach phenomenalism along with the positivists. As to the first caution, Dewey would simply say that we do not know everything. In fact it is not the business of "knowing" to try to grasp everything. Our concern and the concern of knowledge is with a problem. When there is a problem, we must think. And thinking has as its purpose the solution of problems. It is not meant to grasp all of reality because all of reality does not present any problem. It is always some section of reality, some particular set of circumstances which is problematic. Then it is the business of knowledge to solve this problem and not attempt to go outside the context of the problem at hand. There is reality outside of knowledge but until it becomes a problem, it is none of our business and any investigation is pointless and fruitless. Reality is bigger than knowledge. The problematic area is the field for knowledge.

(34) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 71.

The second cautionary note concerns phenomenism. As we have seen in our third chapter when considering the implications of Dewey's immediate empiricism (35) it must be acknowledged that he is guilty of phenomenism although he prefers not to discuss the matter. To Dewey it makes no difference. It is not the business of philosophy or metaphysics in particular to determine the nature of reality, but rather to discover how we can make it behave as we want. He is quite unconcerned about teaching or denying phenomenism; it has no importance for him. What he is interested in doing is to insist on all the varying and variable elements of an experience, everything within the context of an event, to explain reality. As changing or moving, these elements are important for us inasmuch as we can determine their direction. As to their ultimate nature, Dewey has nothing to say.

According to Dewey, then, metaphysics is concerned with the functions of beings rather than their intrinsic essence. That is, metaphysics must be concerned with the dynamic aspect of reality rather than the static viewpoint. However, through his writings we can glimpse something of the essence of beings. His metaphysics is not a monism. Dewey believes in each being's own separate and distinct existence. But he equally believes that for our knowledge to have any meaning we must consider each being in its context. He upholds pluralism and a dynamic pluralism.

(35) Ut supra, p. 18.

It alone has meaning. That is what living man experiences, and that is reality. Speculation is guesswork. Reality is grasped by experience, by acting and suffering, not by being a mere spectator. It behoves us then to examine Dewey's use of the word experience.

4. Experience

There is probably no term in all of Dewey's writings which has aroused as much misunderstanding as "experience". Everett W. Hall has a devastating review of Experience and Nature in the Journal of Philosophy (36) wherein he complains that Dewey uses the word "experience" eleven different ways! Still it is essential that the meaning behind its various uses be grasped before Dewey becomes intelligible. In fact, William O'Meara says:

"Experience is his leading conception." (37).

From what has been said already, it is clear that the scope of "experience" will largely determine Dewey's metaphysic. The new ontology will have two main problems:- (1) the nature of existence in se and (2) as it is known. The old ontology, the traditional one we associate with past history, was concerned with existence per se primarily, and sometimes exclusively. Dewey is much more concerned

(36) SOME MEANINGS OF MEANING IN DEWEY'S EXPERIENCE AND NATURE, by Everett W. Hall. In Journal of Philosophy, 29 March, 1928, pp. 169-181.

(37) JOHN DEWEY AND MODERN THOMISM, by William O'Meara. In The Thomist, Jan. 1943, p. 308.

with existence as it is known. This is where "experience" comes in. It will give us the clues concerning the nature of existence through its knowledge of the relations between existing beings. Feldman says:

"Knowledge and immediate experience thus supplement each other; the former reveals the interconnections of existence, the latter its qualitative uniqueness." (38).

We have already seen that knowledge for Dewey, is more concerned with the relations between beings than with the nature of the beings themselves. And this is so because our attention is focussed upon the conflicts between beings. Only a person with a very abstract mind would be likely to worry about natures as such. Our minds work first in a concrete way, they deal with concrete objects and their reactions to one another; then later, much later, with abstracted natures as such.

There is nothing new in this. It is simply the natural mode of procedure. Dewey however, wishes to halt the process. Beyond the first stage of concrete objects and their relations he is unwilling to go. In practice Dewey does not favour abstract thought. He abhors it because of what he believes to be the record of past thinkers. They became lost in abstractions. They lost touch with reality and eventually they separated reality into two camps; one type of existence was allotted to non-human reality; the other type to mankind.

(38) The Philosophy of John Dewey, by W.T. Feldman, p. 12.

"To me human affairs, associative and personal, are projections, continuations, complications, of the nature which exists in the physical and prehuman world. There is no gulf, no two spheres of existence, no "bifurcation". (39).

The existence of each being is then determined by itself or its own nature as we might say, but every existence is decided by its context. One cannot consider a particular being without its neighbours. Any existent must be examined with all those other existents which affect it and are affected by it. Unless this attitude is taken no meaning to any existent being is possible, or so says Dewey.

"There are...striking similarities between Dewey's present metaphysical position and the one he championed over 40 years ago. Then as now he argued that reality is an organic system of entities whose existence and character depend upon their interrelations with each other. However, his belief in our ability to apprehend this reality has altered strikingly during this period. Whereas in 1896 Dewey thought it possible to transcend the limitations of our individual standpoint and to attain in some measure the standpoint of the Absolute, he now infers from essentially the same premise that each of us is inevitably limited to his own particular perspective and that reality-from-a-perspective is all that can be known." (40).

All of the different beings which go to make up our reality are interconnected. We can experience their differences as we see them functioning in different contexts. However it must not be inferred that knowledge is

(39) HALF-HEARTED NATURALISM, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 3 February, 1927, p. 58.

(40) The Philosophy of John Dewey, by W.T. Feldman, p. 12.

as wide as experience, because we do not know everything. There are objects beyond our experience but they have no meaning for us. Besides, as ourselves elements within reality, how much of ourselves can we experience? Every man is a being, a component of total reality. And this reality is vast in scope. Man is a part of reality, different from other beings but dependent on them as they are dependent on him.

"Consciousness...is only a very small and shifting portion of experience. In the experience... are all the physical features of the environment, extending out in space..and...time, and the habits and interests...of the organism...(The word "experience") means just an immense and operative world of diverse and interacting elements." (41).

The quotation is valuable lest we think that "experience" is restricted to the human level. For Dewey this would be egotistical. Man is important, yes, but he is still only an element of reality. Other elements are equally important since they act and react. Importance seems to be attributed to function above everything else. It is not what you are but what you do, according to Dewey, which sets a value on you as a being. As an element, you are an important constituent of the total reality of experience; as human, you deserve no special consideration nor can you claim any special value.

- (41) Essays in Experimental Logic, by John Dewey.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
1916, p. 6-7.

(Experience) "is the entire organic agent-patient in all its interaction with the environment, natural and social...Experiencing is just certain modes of interaction or correlation of natural objects among which the organism happens, so to say, to be one." (42).

The essence of reality depends in no way on individual interpretation; it is not subjective and there is more to it than mere phenomena. Dewey teaches pluralism of an integrated variety. No being is independent of the others, especially of its immediate neighbours. A grasp of reality must account for all of these separate yet interlocked beings.

"Experience is a kind of continuum, but it is also a kind of aggregate, for Dewey. It is evident that we are far from all subjectivistic or phenomenalist views of experience." (43)

Dewey does not say there is nothing outside of or beyond man. To recur to the illustration of the three circles we might notice that the outside circle is labelled nature, the middle circle is experience and the inner circle is knowing. There is more in nature than meets the eye; that is, Dewey admits the scope of nature to be beyond the grasp of any individual, but he is quite sure of its existence. The nature of nature, so to speak,

(42) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, by John Dewey, A.W. Moore, H.C. Brown, George Herbert Mead, etc., New York: Henry Holt, 1917, p. 36-37.

(43) JOHN DEWEY AND MODERN THOMISM, by William O'Meara. In The Thomist, Jan. 1943, p. 313.

is not within the range of experience. At the same time Dewey attributes certain qualities to nature.

"Since experience is both individualized and associational and since experience is continuous with nature as background, as a naturalist I find nature is also both." (44).

So now nature is both individualized and associational. And recall that nature means the socio-cultural world, society in its organized and institutional form. It too is a continuum yet an aggregate. And always Dewey's basic interest is with the nature of existence. In fact he had referred to

"the generic insight into existence which alone can define metaphysics." (45).

Now this insight is perfectly aware of the existential content at hand. It is a grasp of reality which recognizes immediacy. It does not contribute immediacy but sees this quality in events, indeed in things. And once again we are confronted with Dewey's preoccupation with the here-and-now. There is no abstract essence which is, as it were, photographed by the mind. There is rather a direct realization, an experienced appreciation of immediacy.

(44) HALF-HEARTED NATURALISM, by John Dewey, p. 63.

(45) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 414.

"I repeat, then, that I hold that everything which is experienced has immediacy, and that I hold that every natural existence, in its own unique and brutal particularity of existence, also has immediacy, so that the immediacy which characterizes things experienced is not specious, being neither an unnatural irruption nor a supernatural imposition." (46).

It has been said that we cannot know the nature of nature. However we can recognize qualities possessed by nature. These qualities are: individuality, associationality, immediacy. When we say that nature, or the socio-cultural world, has the quality of individuality, we attribute to nature the quality previously attributed to experience. Hence nature cannot be grasped as a whole, but rather in segments. By a segment Dewey would caution us against isolating the segment, but still Dewey agrees that to have any meaning we must consider only one segment of nature at a time. This content of reality under discussion has individuality inasmuch as it occurs in time, indeed at a special moment, and under particular circumstances which are its individuating notes. Consequently, both experience and nature have the common quality: individuality.

The second quality refers to the fact that nature is associational. Once again this is Dewey's counterpoise. He fears that if he speaks of individuality alone we might think him guilty of building air-tight compartments. He is therefore most anxious to add the qualification associational. This will not only guard against any

"bifurcation" but it will explain, in part at least, the togetherness of nature. Once again we have the notions of a continuum and an aggregate as qualities of nature as well as of experience.

Immediacy, as a quality of nature, is to be attributed to the object of experience, not only to the subject experiencing. In the quotation above from HALF-HEARTED NATURALISM, we can see the emphasis on this. Dewey does not want us to think of a knower separated from the object-known. With such a division we then attribute immediacy to the experiencing subject. The knower "feels" that contact with the object-of-knowledge produces in his consciousness an awareness of immediacy; and then we are tempted to attribute immediacy to the knower. We might be led to say "I felt the object immediately present". Such language implies that immediacy is an effect, produced in the knower by the object known. Dewey objects violently to this. As we saw above in our third chapter, Dewey wishes to consider the elements of an individual experience as components of one indivisible unit. We must attribute immediacy to the whole experience, not to the "subject" alone. The experience is organic and any qualities which are to be attributed must be attributed to the whole unit. To qualify a segment is a distortion of values. If you do not wish to attribute immediacy to the whole experience as a unit, then attribute it to every element. Only in this way can Dewey preserve his organicism.

A further quality which must be attributed to nature is that it is evolutionary. Primitive peoples thought that nature unfolded in a definite way, in fact in a predestined way. Law was thought to be a rule, an inflexible order, which all beings were forced to obey. Sometimes this law came from a personal law-giver, sometimes its existence alone was recognized and no thought given to its origin. In any case it was universally admitted that everything happened necessarily, according to a fixed plan, and at best man could hope to recognize a part of the plan. He must never think he could alter any of it. This sort of thinking which implies a certain helplessness on man's part, is always opposed by the optimistic Dewey. It is mentioned here because it also implies that outside of and above nature there is a Being, or perhaps several beings. In the philosophy of John Dewey there is no room for such beings. Everything real is within the scope of nature. In fact Santayana, who claimed to be a dogmatic naturalist, criticized Dewey for being half-hearted. And the retort from Dewey gave him the title for his article: HALF-HEARTED NATURALISM. Dewey claims to be as naturalistic as anybody else. All reality is within nature and there are no laws which nature must follow because they were imposed upon it from without.

"The notion that laws govern and forces rule is an animistic survival...No, nature is not an unchangeable order, unwinding itself majestically from the reel of the law under the control of deified forces. It is only an indefinite congeries of changes." (47).

(47) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 72.

And since we are discussing existence as it is known, it is not out of place to repeat Dewey's insistence that man's knowledge is not mere insight into the existing order. Older views had been that the nature of reality had been revealed to man by a superior type of being. It was quite a condescension to allow such information to man and he should be grateful for it. Sometimes, very wise men were able to discover somewhat concerning the nature of reality on their own, without the help of revelation. This always implies a fixed order, a set plan, and man's grasp of part of the plan. For Dewey this is not knowledge at all. His objection is that there is no set plan to know. When we speak of knowing nature, we must advocate not a mere interpretation of reality but a recognition of facts in view of future control. We are not helpless because nature is not fixed, settled, determined, unchangeable.

"Knowledge of nature does not mean subjection to predestination, but insight into courses of change; an insight which is formulated in "laws", that is, methods of subsequent procedure."
(48).

Here we have a new conception of "laws". They are not expressions of what must be. They are human formulae for future control. Man can and must do something about nature. And so we learn something about nature: it is not independent of man's control, at least control in the future. Hence another quality of reality is that it is now partly subject

to man; in the future, when a sufficient number of "laws" are established through observation, man will exercise more and more control. Nature is changing, and can be further changed, by man. I suppose, from this viewpoint, one might say that experience is volitional.

"We are only commencing to appreciate how completely exploded is the psychology which dominated philosophy throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to this theory...except in combining atomic sensations the mind was wholly passive and acquiescent in knowing; "and" volition, action, emotion and desire "followed" in the wake of sensations and images. The effect of the development of biology has been to reverse the picture. Wherever there is life, there is behaviour, activity...Knowledge is not something separate and self-sufficing...The senses lose their place as gateways of knowing to take their rightful place as stimuli to action." (49).

Once again we see how Dewey holds that experience is not passive receptivity, it does not hold the mirror up to nature, but rather implies an active subject, a powerful agent, whose power increases with knowledge. The notion of experience is interpreted optimistically inasmuch as the benefits of human experience are increasing in number and such progress will continue indefinitely.

It should be further noted that Dewey holds for an integrated man. In his opposition to considering the human mind as a knowing faculty and independent of man's other powers, Dewey teaches rather that in the beginning is the act. The traditionalists had thought that we first

(49) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 84, 87.

had a knowledge-experience and thus stimulated, we act. Dewey says the stress should be reversed. Where there is life there is activity, and all man's powers take a part immediately. This will be considered at greater length in our next chapter but it is mentioned here in connection with the explanation of experience. The latter is not merely intellectual; it must be called volitional. Indeed in Dewey's philosophy it is rather volitional than intellectual. In fact if you mean passivity when you say intellectual, then for Dewey experience is not intellectual at all. To avoid this error, Dr. Dewey will use the word intelligence; it always implies an active, a volitional character, as well as the notion of understanding.

It cannot be gainsaid that for Dewey the concept of experience is a vital one. In an attempt to formulate his idea of reality, it is almost his favourite word. And this is nothing new in his philosophy. Its unchallenged position goes back sixty years!

"In short, the real esse of things is neither their percipi, nor their intelligi alone; it is their experiri." (50).

So if the esse of things is their experiri, we can see how much Dewey attributes to psychology; in fact one might well suspect that it supplants metaphysics. In 1886 this might have been a debatable point; after 1925 and the publication of Experience and Nature it is clear

(50) PSYCHOLOGY AS PHILOSOPHIC METHOD, by John Dewey. In Mind, 1886, Vol, XI, p. 157.

that Dewey requires a metaphysic, although psychology will always retain its importance; psychology with a biological flavour. Reality supposes several beings, acting on one another, in a given context. He rejects a psychophysical dualism which will imply a breach of continuity. By the same token he rejects every mechanistic or spiritualistic metaphysic which supports matter and rejects spirit, or vice versa. Dewey includes both these diverse elements in his conception of reality because they are both found together in almost any given context. We experience this every day, and esse is experiri.

"The empirical tradition is committed to particularism. Connexions and continuities are supposed to be foreign to experience, to be by-products of dubious validity. An experience that is an undergoing of an environment and a striving for its control in new directions is pregnant with connexions." (51)

The older view, which Dewey deprecates, considered reality in segments and was thus guilty of particularism. Dewey says we must rather take experience as it is. If we abandon any preconceived assumptions, we find, says Dewey, that environment implies connected beings, interacting beings, not mere passive neighbours. By their very nature they do not stand isolated but attached, and the more of this attachment we understand, the greater our understanding of reality. Direct experience shows us that

(51) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY,
by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence,
Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, p. 7-8.

reality consists of interlocked beings, and the interlocking shows a design.

"Organization is so characteristic of the nature of some events in their sequential linkages that no theory about it can be as speculative or absurd as those which ignore its genuine existence." (52).

Though Dewey will deny a soul to man, he will speak of organization. Similarly events have this characteristic of organization and after abandoning Hegel early in his life Dewey attributes no soul to nature either. There is a certain order, some plan, a direction to reality and this cohesive force he will call organization. However it is not predetermined, fixed, settled, etc. but is always in the process of forming and regrouping its forces. The connections which experience reveals are not haphazard, but organized. And as opposed to the particularism which Dewey deplors he sums up his position thus:

"In short, there appears to be a fairly straight road to the conclusion that a just gauge of the adequacy of any philosophic account of things is based upon taking things in the widest and most complex scale of associations open to the observation." (53).

This quotation is perhaps one of the clearest which could be used to justify using the label contextualism to describe the metaphysics of John Dewey.

(52) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 255.

(53) SOCIAL AS A CATEGORY, by John Dewey.
In The Monist, April 1928. Vol. XXXVIII, #2, p. 162.

5. Summary

This chapter attempts to outline the characteristics of Dewey's metaphysic in order that one may see all the better the nature of his epistemology. There is perhaps no more difficult study among contemporary philosophers than the determination of their epistemology and Dewey is no exception. Hence to grasp the organicism latent in his theory of knowledge, one must first trace its roots in his metaphysic. And historically, according to Dewey, philosophers suffered from a political attitude which bred dualisms. Tracing what he believes to be true history from the Greeks down through the Medieval Church, he always finds a dualistic version of thought. And this was so because thought reflected the political and religious convictions of man. These dualisms have led philosophy into hopeless error, and in particular epistemology has suffered. Hence Dewey reacts against any and every dualism and this attitude has produced an organicism which is obvious in his metaphysic and his epistemology.

One must guard against interpreting him as being a monist although his language leaves him open to misunderstanding. Hence it is necessary to say a word concerning Dewey's mode of expression. He is always reacting against something or somebody. His words have therefore a reference to the object of his distaste and must be understood accordingly. If he says he is a monist, (perhaps not in so many words but by implication), what he is

really saying is that he is against absolute pluralism. Very shortly afterwards he may be implying that monism is wrong; then Dewey is expressing his reaction against what he conceives to be the abuses of monism and does not wish to imply that he favours pluralism. Hence the section on the term reaction. He is against dualisms and expresses himself in the terminology of a reactionist.

Examination of the qualities of Dewey's metaphysic is a tedious process. So many have offered labels for it that one hesitates in making a choice. Still the word Contextualism seems the best when properly hedged in by the ifs, ands and buts. The various other labels were examined in turn and for the reasons stated above, this chapter received its title Contextualism. At the same time the intimate connection between Dewey's metaphysic and epistemology or logic as he prefers to call it was pointed out. Originally Dewey opposed metaphysics because of the weakness it possessed. Then he evolved what he considered to be a sound view of this subject as is found in his Experience and Nature. It is my conviction that he never repudiated metaphysics as such but only the presentations of it which other philosophers had made. Such sterile explanations had no point to them, as Dewey saw things. A different approach could, would and did bring the desired results for him. I believe therefore that for Dewey, Logic must have a metaphysical basis; but the two subjects are not independent. They are

distinct but not separate, otherwise you are guilty of another dualistic approach. All reality overlaps and we realize or understand this from experience.

The term experience in this chapter has received a lengthy treatment because it shows best of all the connection between Dewey's metaphysic and logic. It expresses his contextualism and organicism, his abhorrence for dualisms and his unification of subject and object in the process of knowledge. For all of these reasons, the treatment of experience is none too long and it provides the transition to the next chapter.

Chapter 10 - INSTRUMENTALISM AND TRUTH

The elements of John Dewey's philosophy are so numerous and so diverse that an orderly treatment of them is difficult indeed. They developed over a career of teaching and writing which lasted more than sixty years! It was for this reason that a chronological order served best, although this has not always given an exact record of development. At any rate, the last chapter devoted to his theory of knowledge shows all the elements of the previous chapters rolled into one. It is an involved theory and its nature has been disputed at some length.

For this reason it is proposed to consider Dewey's attitude towards truth, then we will see why his method is so different from the usual epistemological approach. Following this a list of the qualities which he attributes to truth will tell us much about its nature. It will be then in order to examine a definition or description of truth, not Dewey's although he approves of it highly. It comes from the mind of Charles Sanders Peirce who is frequently called the father of Pragmatism. It is the only definition Dewey uses and actually it is a fine one to reveal Dewey's mind on the subject.

Instrumentalism is not merely a theory of truth. By that we mean that it is not speculative only but has such a wide application, for Dewey at least, that it involves the practical order. In fact that is what he wants

most of all. He deplures any theory of truth which is not practical but speculative in character. Consequently we can see the necessity of treating all of his theory of knowledge before we can consider his ethical views. Instrumentalism is a theory of action, not reflection. Although labelled a theory of knowledge, it is moral inasmuch as its judgments are moral judgments. In fact for Dewey all judgments are moral. The link with conduct is obvious. But first we must understand Dewey's views concerning arbiters of conduct, concerning those powers which establish and interpret rules for the rest of mankind. He believes that man's convictions are seldom spontaneous or free but nearly always imposed from without. This unnatural condition of things, for Dewey at least, demands a special attitude.

1. Authority and Pragmatism

An unAmerican idea by contemporary standards would be the idea of authority. Dewey will never be impeached on this score. In fact all his life he has battled the concept to such an extent that his name is usually now linked with any radical movement which seeks a respectable front. Dewey has always been a champion for all those who consider authority as a narrowminded means of repression born of a pessimistic outlook for the future of man. It is the fashion now for every man to claim the right to do

as he pleases, to think as he pleases, to believe as he pleases and all too often to obey only when he pleases. Much of the blame for this current American attitude is placed at the door of John Dewey, the philosopher of Democracy. Is this attack on Dewey justified? Using the genetic method of which he approves so highly, we must examine his attitude towards authority.

It has always been a fear in his mind that there were certain institutions or organizations which determined what truth was and then forced everybody to assent. In Greek civilization, the State was the guilty party. For political reasons it was very important that the citizens recognize and obey the government. Any criticism might lead to rebellion, hence for the common good it was better that no questions be asked. This was justified on the ground that the average man did not know enough to share in government anyway, hence he had best accept as "true" whatever those in power said.

In the Medieval period, according to Dewey's version, the Church had the role formerly held by the State. The authority of one was as implacable as the other and now it was the ecclesiastical authorities who determined what was "true" and what was "false". For Dewey, the words ecclesiastical, medieval, authoritarian, Church, all imply something evil. They are a denial of the value of scientific inquiry, and are usually synonyms for ignorance and narrowmindedness. This attitude is still in existence and

it is shown in its reaction to the progress of scientific observation with its insistence on the value of textbooks written centuries ago. Relative to the "Hundred-Books" program sponsored by Chancellor Hutchins of the University of Chicago, Dewey wrote this:

"It is natural enough that the chief advocates of the scholastic reaction should be literary men with defective educations, or else theologians who are convinced in advance of the existence of a supernaturally founded and directed Institution, whose official utterances rank as fixed and final truths because they are beyond the scope of human inquiry and criticism."
(1).

The cardinal point at issue in the article from which we quoted is that such an authority, i.e. the appeal to one hundred "classical" books, is bound to conflict with scientific inquiry. Such authority is bound to decide what is "true" and such authority has been guilty in the past of teaching error and preventing the possibility of attaining real truth. Only the method of investigation and scientific experiment can be unbiased since it is free from the restrictions of any authority or previously determined attitude.

It would seem safe enough for a man to seek refuge in one predetermined set of values anyway and that would be the mathematical field. Although individuals may

(1) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, In Fortune, August 1944, p. 157.

argue about religion and politics, there is universal agreement concerning the multiplication table. Yet this "a priori" reasoning is subjected to a different interpretation by Dewey. It is commonly held that the terms "a priori", deductive, analytical, syllogistic, mathematical, are on the same side of the balance scale. On the other side we have the terms "a posteriori", inductive, synthetic, scientific, empirical or experimental. Dewey would object strenuously to placing mathematics in opposition to science or the empirical.

"Mathematics is often cited as an example of purely normative thinking dependent on a priori canons and supra-empirical material. But it is hard to see how the student who approaches the matter historically can avoid the conclusion that the status of mathematics is as empirical as that of metallurgy. Men began with counting and measuring things just as they began with pounding and burning them...The structure of alleged normative a priori mathematics is in truth the crowned result of ages of toilsome experience." (2).

This is a revealing quotation inasmuch as it shows Dewey's determination to say nothing good of anything like a fixed idea. He will readily admit that the multiplication table is true, but rather than call it "a priori" he will dub it experimental. The good adjectives in Dewey's vocabulary are all on the side of science and its methods. It is highest praise to call a thing inductive, synthetic,

(2) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 137.

empirical, or experimental. These are the words of modern progress and they refer to the method which freed the human mind and allowed it to soar to undreamed of heights. If this method is preserved and allowed full sway, there is no telling how far man may go. Everything is to be gained by the experimental method. Everything may be lost if we allow the reactionaries to get control with their authoritarian methods, their "a priori" reasoning and their syllogistic approach. The ancients knew a few things and for these they should be admired. But once their method was abandoned things really began to hum. Human knowledge advanced with seven league boots,

"--an advance so marvelous that the progress made in uncounted previous milleniums is almost nothing in comparison." (3).

Progress in scientific knowledge is Dewey's favourite shrine and he worships there at every opportunity. It is important to recall this when reading anything he says. The evil spirit which he seeks to exorcise is the belief in a fixed, immutable truth.

"fixity means the dogmatism that historically has always exhibited itself in intolerance and brutal persecution of the dissenter and inquirer." (4).

(3) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, p. 157.

(4) Ibid., p. 188.

It is simply a matter of history, says Dewey. If you consult the record of human events you will find that when men were submitted to authority, they made little or no progress. When allowed to think for themselves they advanced. He is convinced that in the Greek state men's minds were really shackled; and of course this was as nothing compared with the system of thought-control which the Medieval Church exercised. With freedom of religion, which came with the Reformation, there arrived freedom of scientific thought. Then natural science, experimentation and progress went along hand in hand.

"Protestantism marked the formal breaking away from the domination of Roman ideas... In time, there developed a formulated belief in the sacredness of individual conscience and in the right to freedom of opinion, belief and worship." (5).

With this historical attitude, it is quite logical for Dewey to oppose every possible encroachment of an ecclesiastical nature, especially if the Catholic Church is involved. By the same token it is natural for him to oppose any view which he believes the Catholic Church might teach in support of its authoritarian attitude. He is absolutely convinced that this method has led mankind nowhere except towards trouble, ignorance and suppression of truth. Any world-wide movement will be opposed

(5) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 45-46.

because he fears it will infringe on the rights of individuals. Today he opposes Communism on this very score. Truth is not predetermined, not universal, not above the individual mind, not "a priori". With freedom of opinion which followed the Reformation, progress arrived. And this was due to the scientific method in particular. All praise therefore must be given to the scientific, experimental, empirical. Disparaging words are always in order for anything eternal, fixed, immutable, or which may smack of authority.

2. The Approach to Truth

In the consideration of Dewey's views concerning knowledge and truth one must not omit his dynamic rather than static approach. Thought is not a passive process which mirrors external reality. In our previous chapter this was explained in showing that man and nature are elements in the same reality. When listing some of the dualisms which Dewey dislikes, it was said that knower and known are not to be opposed. The old epistemological relationship between thinker and object of knowledge must be forgotten. In the new view which Dewey expounds, the thinker and the object he is thinking about are considered as part of the same context, as elements in the same event, as parts of the one reality. They cannot be separated although he is willing to consider them as distinct. The point we wish to make here is that the dynamic element is always present in Dewey's epistemology.

He has a functional view of things. Mind is active, working, doing something in the process and hence not a mere spectator. Contemplation was an ideal of medieval times but such passivity is now decried by thoughtful people; it is passive, static, and not progressive. Thinking now must be thought of as active, dynamic, functional.

"Reflection is an indirect response to the environment, and the element of indirection can itself become great and very complicated. But it has its origin in biological adaptive behavior and the ultimate function of its cognitive aspect is a prospective control of the conditions of the environment. The function of intelligence is therefore not that of copying the objects of the environment, but rather of taking account of the way in which more effective and more profitable relations with these objects may be established in the future."
(6).

As with reflection, so with truth. Dewey will stress the functional aspect rather than anything else. It is a response to environment. It is not photographic but reactive. As vital, Dewey traces its origin to a biological behaviorism but with control as its aim. We must seek always to dominate our environment. And thinking is one means to dominate, to plan, to control, to alter things around us and direct the course of future events. When we make a judgment, it must be efficient rather than interpretative. A problem has been presented to us and it must be solved.

(6) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 30.

"That which satisfactorily terminates inquiry is by definition knowledge." (7).

To solve the problem we reflect, and when we come up with the right answer, that answer is called knowledge and as far as Dewey is concerned we cannot say too often that such knowledge, as transformative, is essentially dynamic. It alters the total situation, hence is not mere photography of the "object" of knowledge.

"A pragmatic intelligence is a creative intelligence, not a routine mechanic." (8).

Another way of insisting on this reference to the future consequences is his distinction between knowledge and thinking. It is obvious that every man does not have to conduct experiments all his life. He has information from others and over and over he uses this same information with a reasonable expectation that it is still valid. He also has other information from his personal experience. Once established that two and two make four, he need not go on testing this fact for ever. He has learned that fire is hot, ice is cold, etc. Once bit, twice shy, as we say. There is nothing quite so convincing as personal experience. Well for all of these established bits of information Dewey uses the name or label of knowledge. For the other, he uses the word thinking.

(7) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 8.

(8) THE NEED FOR A RECOVERY OF PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Creative Intelligence, Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude, p. 64.

"Knowledge, grounded knowledge, is science; it represents objects which have been settled, ordered, disposed of rationally. Thinking, on the other hand, is prospective in reference. It is occasioned by an unsettlement and it aims at overcoming the disturbance." (9).

Note that for Dewey, the latter, thinking, is much more interesting. He has far greater concern with the future than the past. It is the future which presents the challenge and it is the future which we can alter, not the past. Philosophy must concern itself with that future and bring it under the control which progress demands. In such control, thinking must play the leading part as the instrument of change.

3. Nature of Truth

Dewey has certain leading conceptions and two of these are intelligence and knowledge. We have just seen that knowledge refers to information which has warranted assertibility. Intelligence refers rather to the future. The term truth, when used in connection with these, must be used with great caution. Dewey does not like to use the term truth with reference to past and well established "facts". He prefers to use Peirce's version which stresses the elusive character of truth. This conception will be analysed in a moment but first we must examine some of the charges against Dewey. It is commonly said that Dewey teaches that

(9) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 380.

truth is what gives satisfaction; or, truth means success; or, its true if it works. Has he any respect for the truth at all? If Dewey never misses an opportunity to deride that which is fixed, eternal, immutable, how can he speak of truth, and if so what does he mean?

To begin with, Dewey maintains that he does not think lightly of truth. (10). He recognizes its value and respects it. By way of contrast he cites the case of the liar who is contradicted by truth and dislikes it, whereas the man involved in inquiry welcomes contradiction by truth since this permits him to correct his hypothesis. It is simply not correct to say that Dewey means to destroy truth and everything connected with it.

Another charge is that Dewey says the distinction between true and false is to be found in the success or failure of the effects of belief. This is explicitly denied by him. (11). Then he says:

"I believe most decidedly that the distinction between "true" and "false" is to be found in the relation which propositions, as means of inquiry, have to relevant occurrences." (12).

- (10) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 576.
- (11) PROPOSITIONS, WARRANTED ASSERTIBILITY, AND TRUTH, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 27 March, 1941, XXXVIII, p. 181.
- (12) Ibid.

The quotation shows that Dewey uses "true" to modify a proposition. It would seem to be an adjective, and indeed he prefers not to use truth as a noun. The proposition which "true" modifies is an instrument to bring about a belief. Your belief or conviction will then lead you to act.

When there is any choice though, Dewey prefers to use truth as an adverb rather than as an adjective. After all, an adjective modifies an noun and an adverb modifies a verb. Now since verbs express action rather than any static being, and since Dewey is the apostle of change, of movement and activity, his preference is understandable. Use "true" as an adverb and he is best pleased. His basic objection to the other use is that a noun refers to something definite, fixed, immutable, always possessed of the same meaning-content. For Dewey the validity of such a concept is extremely dubious. Arguing from experience, he would say that every event is unique, each individual experience also unique, and the beings which nouns designate have altered in each particular situation or event. Hence their meaning-content has varied with the individuating circumstances of each event. The safer procedure will then be to stick to verbs as much as possible; and use "true" as an adverb.

"Action is always specific, concrete, individualized, unique. And consequently judgments as to acts to be performed must be similarly

specific. To say that a man seeks health or justice is only to say that he seeks to live healthily or justly. These things, like truth, are adverbial. They are modifiers of action in special cases. How to live healthily or justly is a matter which differs with every person." (13).

The emphasis on the uniqueness of every event is unmistakable. So preoccupied is he with this element of every experience that he sees the adverb as a highly important part of speech, and especially important in epistemology. Judgments result in propositions. Since judgments are so individualized, then their products share in these same qualities and the active element is best modified by an adverb.

"Confirmation, corroboration, verification lie in works, consequences...By their fruits shall ye know them. That which guides us truly is true--demonstrated capacity for such guidance is precisely what is meant by truth. The adverb "truly" is more fundamental than either the adjective, true, or the noun, truth. An adverb expresses a way, a mode of acting."
(14).

Once again we note the functional versus the static view of truth; true means verified. And the stress is here on the future, not the past. We are accustomed to measure things with existing standards. If they agree with the standard, we call them true. Now this appeal to past standards has an odor of authority about it. This of course Dewey will not allow. If we are to be "shackled"

(13) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 167.

(14) Ibid., 156.

by such standards, then we had best break free. The only standard he approves will have to be one in the future, and an evolving one at that. Once again he wants nothing fixed, immutable, predetermined, etc, since all of these do not correspond to reality which is changing, elusive, evolving, unique in every event. Dewey will attack a problem with hypotheses, postulates, rather than standards and fixed yardsticks. And the application has its greatest consequences in the social field though the judgment is a thing for epistemology to consider.

"Thinking and its results present themselves as indeed hypothetical, demanding trial in terms of social action, and hence subject to error and defect." (15).

If our activity turns out in accordance with our hopes, then we were thinking "truly". If the result demands further alterations before we are satisfied, then we were thinking "falsely". And such terminology will be used in every situation where thinking is done, whether it be a mathematical, a metaphysical or social hypothesis in the beginning. We can see how all-embracing the science of such thinking must be. And the word which Dewey uses is logic. In his reading of the history of philosophy, Dewey found that most of the errors could be traced to epistemology. After some time, this word became a bete-noir for him. When we see him use

(15) SOCIAL AS A CATEGORY, by John Dewey. In The Monist, April 1928, Vol. XXXVIII, #2, p. 174.

it today, invariably it has a disparaging meaning.

(Dewey) "has habitually reserved the word "epistemology" as the designation for a particular sort of theory of knowledge of which he disapproves. This has led to some confusion, and has in particular left him open to the specious objection that he has not been able to avoid "epistemology", since he too has a theory about knowledge." (16).

If so many ills of philosophy have sprung from "epistemology" then one can hardly blame Dewey for avoiding its use. Instead he has tried the word logic.

"logic...(is)...the generalized account of the means by which sound beliefs on any subject are attained and tested..." (17).

As anyone can see, Dewey is not fond of definitions. This is the closest thing to one which could be found in a volume of 546 pages, and it occurs as late as p. 535. It is also interesting to note that under "Truth", in the same volume, there is only one entry, and it is the famous quotation taken from Peirce, and found in a footnote in Dewey's book.

"Truth is that concordance of an abstract statement with the ideal limit towards which endless investigation would tend to bring scientific belief, which concordance the abstract statement may possess by virtue of

(16) EPISTEMOLOGY AND METAPHYSICS, by Arthur E. Murphy. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 197.

(17) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 535.

the confession of its inaccuracy and one-sidedness, and this confession is an essential ingredient of truth." (18).

This same definition is found in CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT where its message is referred to as "an American contribution". (19). It certainly contains Dewey's ideal and is worthy of careful analysis.

The most striking characteristic of the statement by Peirce is its opposition to any fixed standard. Truth is not a relationship between an observed event and something else already established. There are no fixed and established principles by which we are to measure the "truth" of any proposition. We begin with a confession of ignorance, of doubt in the value of our statement. Then we must compare this tentative proposal with an elusive limit, almost a mathematical symbol. If one objects that this puts success beyond attainment, then Dewey wants you to explain success. If it means solving a problem once and for all, then he agrees; this can never be. This holds even of axioms. These are no longer to be thought of as "true" in the sense of fixed, determined, unalterable. They are not to be qualified according to any intrinsic value but must also be subject to this unlimited, this indefinite testing process which will go on until the end of the world.

(18) Ibid., p. 345n. The original definition is from Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. V, Section 407, p. 395-5.

(19) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, p. 188.

"This (Euclidean) conception of the nature of axioms is no longer held in mathematics nor in the logic of mathematics. Axioms are now held to be postulates, neither true nor false in themselves, and to have their meaning determined by consequences that follow because of their implicatory relations to one another." (20).

This will help us understand the reference by Peirce to the "confession of inaccuracy". There is a certain humility in admitting that we may not be right but there is also despair in stating that we can never be right! Yet this is what Dewey and Peirce have in mind. The limit or final measure is ideal; and must remain an ideal, never to be grasped nor held. They urge patient and tireless scientific investigation, since an essential ingredient is to realize how inadequate our efforts must remain. One feels a certain admiration for the caution they possess towards claiming the possession of truth but by the same token one wonders whether the motive be true humility or something else.

Applying the genetic method, our touchstone in accordance with the principles of pragmatism, quite a different explanation comes to light. The formula becomes intelligible in the light of their reaction, (or at least we are certain in Dewey's case), to an older view of things. Once again it is the logical development of the protest against Greek and Medieval views. It is the old battle between fixity and change, between the attitude of immutable principles and variable postulates,

between general truths and working hypotheses. The older attitude is usually called dogmatism by Dewey and the newer is liberalism.

Underlying Dewey's position, as well as that of Peirce since they use the same formula, is a fear. This fear is that those in power can and will decide for everybody what is true and what is false. We have already seen that Dewey believed this to be true of the Greek state as well as of the Medieval Church. Today something similar might well happen. In fact it has happened in Russia and Dewey deplores this. (21). It is quite in order then for him to be on guard against anything which he believes to be totalitarian in character, or a threat to individual opinion. To transfer this attitude to truth is a simple and logical step. If any authority is allowed to decide what is true or what is false, then scientific investigation of truth or inquiry, as he calls it, must fail of its purpose.

Truth then is a concordance of a hypothesis with an evolving ideal limit. To be honest in its pursuit we must acknowledge its elusiveness, and realize its essential quality as change. Dewey has in mind the mathematical concept of limit, as the curve of a parabola approaches but never reaches a straight line. To think of a parabola as eventually being straight is to distort its meaning as a parabola. Similarly with truth; it can never become fixed, settled, permanent.

(21) WHY I AM NOT A COMMUNIST, by John Dewey. In Modern Monthly, April 1934, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 135.

Understanding Dewey's reaction to whatever is fixed and settled, we can appreciate his definition or description of truth. To take him in a strict sense we are led to say that Dewey teaches that man can never be sure of truth, that nothing is fixed, that there are no absolute standards, etc. As we say this is not his intention. He means simply to deny that any authority can decide instead of, and for, the individual. To interpret him literally, the ideal limit will be reached only, as Lord Russell pointed out (22), when the last man is left alive on earth!

Another element of Peirce's statement which deserves mention is the "one-sidedness" of truth. It is a cardinal principle for Dewey as well that this must always be the case. We see not only in a mirror, in a dark manner, but limited by the circumstances of the individual experience or event. For a man to think that he possesses truth because of his individual grasp of reality is to ignore this one-sidedness. As we have seen, man does not and cannot encompass total reality. Consequently his view cannot be absolute; therefore it must be called one-sided. Now Dewey holds this to be true of every man's experience and holds it also of the authority of any and every institution. Nobody or nothing can possess more than a one-sided view of truth. If this is realized then all is well. If this

(22) DEWEY'S NEW LOGIC, by Bertrand Russell. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 145.

is ignored then all is lost. As an example of this Bertrand Russell cites the case of a question, "who is the greatest man now living?" (23). Then he says the answer depends on where the question is asked. It varies whether it be in Russia or the United States; therefore truth is geographical! Of course the answer is unsatisfactory to everybody and doubtless that is where the confession of inaccuracy comes in. As we shall see relative to goodness, and the same will hold for truth, for Dewey, the consequences which become the final arbiter must be long-term consequences. The ideal limit is in the distant future. The answers we get and use now must serve their purpose now, but these same answers must remain subject to further check. The explanation is that judgment is individual.

"Judgment has been analyzed to show that it is a continuous process of resolving an indeterminate, unsettled situation into a determinately unified one, through operations which transform subject-matter originally given. Judgment, in distinction from propositions which are singular, plural, generic and universal, is individual, since it is concerned with unique qualitative situations." (24).

As individual, therefore, the judgment can never express truth as an absolute. And the whole spirit of the new logic must be of this individualized nature. It is concerned always with a situation, a problematic situation, and the answer sought is always a particular, individual one.

(23) Ibid., p. 150.

(24) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 283.

Search for an absolute is a waste of time. What we must realize, says Dewey, is that it is the function of logic to accumulate data as instruments for further investigation. Nothing can be solved in a permanent way since no problem is ever quite the same as any other. Our goal is ahead, beyond immediate grasp. And our general statements or propositions are not isolated but stand in ordered relations to one another.

"Inquiry is progressive and cumulative. Propositions are instruments by which provisional conclusions of preparatory inquiries are summed up, recorded and retained for subsequent uses." (25).

As a matter of record Dewey has always held that not only have philosophers been wasting time pursuing an illusory goal in search of absolute truth, but they have also approached investigation in the wrong way entirely. Some questions cannot be solved. The endless attempt to satisfy such challenges must remain fruitless. It is best to forget them entirely. And the result of ignoring such problems is not defeat or a confession of frustration but progress:

"..in fact intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume--an abandonment that results from their decreasing vitality and a change of urgent interest. We do not solve them; we get over them." (26).

(25) Ibid., p. 311.

(26) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 19.

Dewey's optimism is irrepressible. If you ignore a barking dog long enough he will go away. Similarly those problematic situations which clamor for solution and which we cannot solve, will lose their importance, their vitality, their urgency and will apparently dissolve. Inquiry can get along without them. There are no individual questions or problems which are so absorbing that human wisdom requires answers to them. If you cannot solve them, forget them; others will replace them and provide inquiry with the necessary propositions which will be equivalent instruments of progress.

However, we notice that there are certain general propositions which are pretty well established. They have been accepted for centuries and have given yeoman service. What of them? Men have acted on the assumption that the multiplication table is an utterly reliable instrument. What will be the "one-sidedness" of such a truth or wherein will lie the necessary confession of ignorance?

"We may not exaggerate the permanence and stability of such truths, with respect to their recurring and prospective use. It is only relatively that they are unchanging. When applied to new cases, used as resources for coping with new difficulties, the oldest of truths are to some extent remade... Even the truth that two and two make four has gained a new meaning, has had its truth in some degree remade, in the development of the modern theory of number. (27).

(27) Ibid., p. 152. Dewey refers to the "eternal truths" of history; quotation marks are his.

Unfortunately Dewey does not explain this last example. It would seem that for him a truth has gained something, a new value, a certain alteration, in being applied to something new. Considering his view of truth as an adverb, there is a certain gain. Another activity has been modified or qualified by the application but few will care to admit that this is "truth remade". However, it at least illustrates his point that truth is not a noun, or a thing; it should be rather thought of as another successful application of one of those propositions which will lead us closer to that concordance with the abstract ideal of Peirce.

"If we put ourselves in the attitude of a scientific inquirer in asking what is the meaning of truth, per se, there spring up before us those ideas which are actively employed in the mastery of new fields, in the organization of new materials. This is the essential difference between truth and dogma; between the living and the dead and decaying." (28).

It would seem from this that a judgment does not express a truth but rather the application of a truth. The provisional, experimental, tentative truth is to be found in the propositions which are the instruments of judgment. To accept a judgment as truth, is to believe in dogma, and as always, the word dogma is a synonym for death and decay. It implies the fixed, eternal, immutable and inflexible.

(28) Ibid.

Bertrand Russell has been involved in several controversies with John Dewey and one of them is very much to the point here. It concerns a correspondence theory of truth. According to Russell, we state what we believe to be a truth in a general formula, e.g. "This is a tree". If tests then carried out justify the judgment, the latter may be called true. Actually however, the proposition was either true or false before the test was made and the test merely verified conviction. On this score Russell accuses Dewey of delaying use of the label "true" until consequences may be seen. Dewey's appeal is to the future, says Russell.

Dewey retorts that Russell appeals to the past! (29). Russell has in mind a standard "tree" when he makes his judgment and in his test he compares the object before him with this standard. Dewey points out that the standard is outside the immediate experience and Russell's argument involves a whole theory of causality which is dubious at best. In the past Russell saw a tree. Now he is appealing to this as a standard to verify his present judgment. As his present proposition is also the means whereby Russell has knowledge of the tree (the proposition expresses what he thinks he sees) he is begging the question by comparing the proposition with a previously known tree! Dewey says the problem is not to compare the proposition-now-made with a previously-known-tree but to show that the present proposition corresponds to the presently existing tree.

(29) PROPOSITIONS, WARRANTED ASSERTIBILITY AND TRUTH, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 27 March, 1941, XXXVIII, p. 179n.

This, Dewey says, Russell fails to do. The error is to bring in the past, and to suppose a causal law between previously-known tree and present-experience.

In defence of his own views, which he also calls a correspondence theory of truth, Dewey has this to say:-

"In contrast with this view my own view takes correspondence in the operational sense it bears in all cases except the unique epistemological case of an alleged relation between a "subject" and an "object"; the meaning, namely, of answering, as a key answer to conditions imposed by a lock, or as two correspondents "answer" each other; or, in general, as a reply is an adequate answer to a question or a criticism---; as, in short, a solution answers the requirements of a problem." (30).

Once again we have a clear statement from Dewey that the purpose of knowledge is not to reflect reality but to solve a problematic situation. His use of the term "correspondence theory of truth" may be misleading but we can see what he is driving at. A key corresponds to a lock, as a solution corresponds to a problem and inquiry when successful also corresponds to an indeterminate situation when it resolves it into a determinately unified one. Hence the whole Dewey approach is called a correspondence theory.

Admitting that warranted assertibility may only give a probability, Dewey says that the conclusion is still worthy of the name of knowledge.

(30) Ibid., p. 178.

"apparently Mr. Russell would deny the name of knowledge, in its fullest sense, to anything that is not certain to the point of infallibility, or which does not ultimately rest upon some absolute certainty." (31).

Then he goes on to stress that truth is in the future, not to be grasped as yet, etc. At least we can see why Dewey prefers "warranted assertibility" to "truth" when describing knowledge.

The investigations which Dewey refers to are all meant for immediate application. There is no disinterested pursuit for truth in se. This would be pointless. There is always a concrete problem which must be resolved. And if such a solution takes place, then the adverb "truly" may have its proper application. The element of verification comes out in the following:

"as respects truths, meaning is the wider category; truths are but one class of meanings, namely, those in which a claim to verifiability by their consequences is an intrinsic part of their meaning."
(32).

Since verifiability is always involved with the truth of a statement, we can expect truth to be subject to the conditions of the moment. Truth is not independent of time; what is "true" today may not be "true" tomorrow, inasmuch as the same hypothesis may work out now and not work out later. It is clear then that each hypothesis is restricted in its value to the immediate application at hand, and Dewey never tires in denouncing those who hold for truths which

(31) Ibid., p. 179n.

(32) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 5.

are always applicable, always retaining their intrinsic value. Truth must be restricted, in Dewey's view, and such restriction comes from the environment of the problematic situation. To have unlimited, unrestricted, immutable and eternal truth is a mistake.

"So common is (this error) that one questions whether it might not be called the philosophical fallacy. It consists in the supposition that whatever is found true under certain conditions may forthwith be asserted universally or without limits and conditions. Because a thirsty man gets satisfaction in drinking water, bliss consists in being drowned." (33).

For Dewey the proposition to be considered is: "water is good for a thirsty man", and we seek to know whether it be true. Here and now it is obviously good for the man in question but it does not follow that drowning would be better. Yet if there is to be no limit to truth, there should be no limit to the water; as one is restricted by the here-and-now circumstances, so should the other. Truth is therefore to be limited by time, by the individuating circumstances of the event at hand. Search for absolute truth is illusory. Success will come only to those who treat truth as something which varies from person to person, from time to time, as does experience. There is no one truth; it is rather a sum total of all the verified propositions of all time. As Dewey says:

(33) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 175.

"Truth is a collection of truths." (34).

The individual truth is all a man can hope for at one time yet here Dewey does not mean to be pessimistic. When he speaks of individual truth he means the truth of a proposition which has been verified under one set of circumstances. This is a small step but still a definite step towards that collection of truths which mankind is slowly but surely accumulating. Progress was slow and discouraging for centuries then there came a burst of success due to the extension of the scientific method. If we keep up the present rate the millennium may not be so far off. The pragmatic approach anyway is always to keep trying, to test and discover by individual experiences what should be done. There are many who will say that this is doing things the hard way. Dewey defends himself by pointing to modern science.

"Psychologists talk about learning by the method of trial and error or success. Our social organization commits us to this philosophy of life. Our working principle is to try: to find out by trying, and to measure the worth of the ideas and theories tried by the success with which they meet the test of application in practice." (35).

There is no sign of flagging here. Dewey sees a long road ahead and urges us to action. No use weeping over past failures and there is less use in being fainthearted about the future. There is enough success already attained to

(34) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 410.

(35) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 125.

justify optimism about the future and acceptance of instrumentalism will eventually solve all problems of importance.

A final point under this heading concerns substance and accident, nature and property. It is of interest to note that if Dewey's philosophy concerns itself so much with action there is going to be more information on appearance than reality. Properties are objects of scientific observation, natures are not. And with his materialistic empiristic attitude this is usually found to be the case. Dewey does not distinguish substance from accident because he is interested rather in how the thing works than in what it is. The dynamic approach leads to such expression as the following:

"Comparison as currently employed is defective... Facts are torn loose from their context in social and natural environment and heaped miscellaneously together, because they have impressed the observer as alike in some respect. Upon a single page of Spencer (Sociology, L, p. 57), which I chanced to open in looking for an illustration of this point, appear Kamschadales, Kirghiz, Bedouins, East Africans, Bechuanas, Damaras, Hottentots, Malays, Papuans, Fijians, Andamanese--all cited in reference to establishing a common property of primitive minds. What would you think of a biologist who appealed successively to some external characteristic of ~~say~~ snake, butterfly, elephant, oyster and robin in support of a statement?" (36).

The obvious thing which strikes everybody right in the eye is that the first list is a list of men! Therefore although they may have differing cultural backgrounds and environment,

it is quite natural to discuss a common property of their mind. Yet Dewey feels that they have no more in common than robins and elephants! To say the least this trait of his philosophy will leave him open to criticism. He will not recognize species, not even human species. This has already been discussed in our chapter concerning Darwinism but the point here is that inquiry or logic is careless in making distinctions between external characteristics and something more substantial. In fact Donald Piatt says so in these words:

"We know the properties of oxygen by noting how it behaves and what it does to other things. We don't know any things-in-themselves; we only know what things are under these or those specified conditions." (37).

This is a very important point in the determination of values. We are first concerned with what Dewey has to say about truth and if there are no "true things" his ethics will vary accordingly. Goodness follows truth; if the latter is an adverb, presumably the former will also be an adverb. Hence we must determine here what the mind knows when it knows truth. Piatt says it know phenomena rather than noumena and certainly empiricism would agree. At the end of the Schilpp volume there is a very valuable statement by Dewey entitled: EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND

(37) DEWEY'S LOGICAL THEORY, by Donald A. Piatt. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 133.

VALUE. Therein he gives a general approval of Piatt (38) but for our immediate problem he also gives an excellent example. He supposes an inhabitant of Grimm's fairy tales endowed with extraordinary vision who is confronted with the atom of modern physicists. What would he see?

"It depends. If he himself has had a scientific training and if in sensibly perceiving this particular thing he explicitly identifies it as having all the relational properties required by the scientific theory of atomic structure and with no properties incompatible with the latter, the answer is YES. But if he sees it merely as another man of lesser power of vision sees a rock, the answer is No. In other words, it is not just the thing as perceived, but the thing as and when it is placed in an extensive ideational or theoretical context within which it exercises a special office that constitutes a distinctively physical scientific object." (39).

Note the interest in action rather than being, in relations rather than essence. Were the observer in our example aware of a "thing" like a rock, then he would not see the atom of science. This latter is more dynamic than static, more of an activity than a being. Empiricism is phenomenal; so will be we find instrumentalism; and so will such philosophers consider truth to be.

(38) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 518.

(39) Ibid., p. 538.

4. Biological and Cultural Matrices

His early interest in biology has been a factor in Dewey's thinking which has grown with the years. In fact it is one of the dominating elements. Since Darwin made his epochal discovery that "species" were not fixed, and then taught his doctrine of evolution, Dewey has been developing his philosophy along similar lines. Instrumentalism teaches that nothing is fixed, stable, settled for all time but everything is part of a continuous development evolving towards something better and better. Biological science has so many lessons for us that Dewey refers to it constantly for examples and even indications for our conduct.

"For many years I have consistently--and rather persistently--maintained that the key to a philosophic theory of experience must proceed from initially linking it with the processes and functions of life as the latter are disclosed in biological science." (40).

And the philosophical basis for this continued interest in biology is Dewey's naturalism. If you hold for a real distinction and separation between matter and spirit, between nature and the supernatural, you will not be in the same camp as Dewey. As we saw in our last chapter on Contextualism, Dewey holds that all such dichotomies are invalid. Although not a monist, Dewey will never

(40) Ibid., p. 530.

admit that truth is spiritual and quite different from material beings. This ideal is not to be contrasted with the biological; in fact they are actually related. In his answer to Santayana's charge that he was not a thorough naturalist, Dewey wrote:

"I agree that the ideal "emanates" from the biological; I have been even criticized by other critics as if I held it to be a mere gaseous emanation from the biological. In reality I think that the ideal, sensation, for example, is as real as the biological from which it emanates, and, expressing a higher mood of the interaction of things than does the biological without sensation, is in so far I will not say more real, but a fuller reality." (41).

The biological level is certainly real. Now he will not say there is a higher level but he does speak of a fuller reality (?). This is hardly helpful. But it is his way of saying that events overlap. Within an experience all of the elements act and react on one another, and this takes place in such a manner that no dualisms can be tolerated. Therefore the ideal "emanates" from the biological since they are both found in the same event and the realities which these realities represent overlap. The ideal and the biological are made of the same ultimate stuff, hence truth is as limited as anything found in experience.

(41) HALF-HEARTED NATURALISM, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 3 February, 1927, p. 61.

The naturalism is well illustrated as Dewey follows the materialistic tradition in his opposition to every kind of supernaturalism and the dualism of mind and matter. If mind and matter overlap in the same event, then one can hardly be "higher" than the other, in his view. The science of biology has explained this to us and to it we are always indebted.

"The process of biology has accustomed our minds to the notion that intelligence is not an outside power presiding supremely but statically over the desires and efforts of man, but is a method of adjustment of capacities and conditions within specific situations." (42).

Truth, which follows successful adjustment of a specific situation, is not outside of the event either. Biology has led Dewey to this and Contextualism is the product. We are elements of a single realm and nothing can transcend this context of overlapping events.

This biological matrix within which truth is found cannot be overestimated in importance. Man is biological essentially. Add the cultural values and you have the whole man, according to Dewey.

"Man differs from the lower animals because he preserves his past experiences." (43).

(42) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 68.

(43) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 1.

And this memory evolved or developed as a response mechanism, as an answer to the particular problems which man had to face. Dewey's organicism prepared the way for his future naturalism. The denial of dualisms paved the way for thinking of men and animals on the same level, indeed of thinking of all beings on the same level. Dewey's reading of Darwin was instrumental in showing the common element between animal and human behaviour. This reinforced the unity and gradually there developed what we now refer to as the biological matrix of truth.

The organicism which Dewey once learned from Hegel was idealistic. Later Darwin showed Dewey that man and his capacity for thought was a product of environment. The combination of organicism and naturalism then resulted in the concept of a biological matrix.

At the same time we must mention the cultural matrix. Human thought, the formation of propositions and expression of judgment, all of these processes do not take place in vacuo but in a context. The situation or event involves not merely the biological side but in the case of man, a cultural side. Individual man is a member of a family, of a social group, of a distinct tradition and to a large extent he is a product of his cultural milieu. His thought will therefore be influenced by this background and his propositions will reflect his culture. If he had no memory he would not be under this influence but man does

have a memory. It is quite an advantage as he benefits from past experience, whether personal or the experience of others. In either case every man has some culture.

Going back to Dewey's development in his philosophical studies, we recall that Hegel was a great influence. The theory of a universal consciousness or objective mind was later rejected. Instead we now have the cultural matrix. As each man is soon influenced by his family, his friends, the members of his social group and of his own age and time, so he acquires the influence which is also very important. The cultural and the biological both make heavy contributions and between the two of them we have the mould which fashions truth. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the two chapters in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry entitled THE EXISTENTIAL MATRIX OF INQUIRY: BIOLOGICAL and THE EXISTENTIAL MATRIX OF INQUIRY: CULTURAL.

"The environment in which human beings live, act and inquire, is not simply physical. It is cultural as well. Problems which induce inquiry grow out of the relations of fellow beings to one another, and the organs for dealing with these relations are not only the eye and ear, but the meanings which have developed in the course of living, together with the ways of forming and transmitting culture with all its constituents of tools, arts, institutions, traditions and customary beliefs." (44).

(44) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 42.

4. Instrumentalism

A common term in our daily vocabulary but one which is used very loosely is the term "thought". One hears people saying: "I've given the matter some thought" and we are prone to evaluate the thinking done in terms of our like or dislike of the person concerned. The term "thought" is not easy to define. Dewey was so interested in it that he wrote a book How We Think (45) to express his views. After eliminating the various kinds of "thought" he finally considers "reflective thought" and this is the only one which holds any serious interest for him as a philosopher.

Reflective thought is consecutive and aims at belief. We are presented with some problem and reflective thought considers the basis and consequences of beliefs. It involves a chain of propositions and this chain is no mere sequence but there must be a real dependence of link on link to make the whole chain valuable. The thinker must not accept any preconceived notions but be willing to test whatever is in any way dubious. The basis for past convictions must be examined and some conclusion is usually drawn which ends in a belief. The conscious and voluntary effort may be called reflection when the thinker has all of these elements in mind. Or to put the whole thing in Dewey's definition:

(45) How We Think, by John Dewey. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1910, pp. 224.

"Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought." (46).

It is clear from this that reflective thought is not a mirror of reality. It rather implies something to be done, an attitude or action to be taken. We have arrived at a conclusion following such thought and the conclusion is dynamic in character since it has solved a problem and justifies future conduct. There would be no thought required unless there had been some problem.

"Demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection." (47).

Dewey supplies us with numerous illustrations of the point but the distinctions are hardly necessary for our purpose. The sixth chapter of How We Think is entitled THE ANALYSIS OF THOUGHT. Dewey himself refers to reflective thought as a forked-road situation. A decision must be made when reflection is required as to adequate means of further progress. His five steps are best listed:

"(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief." (48).

(46) Ibid., p. 6.

(47) Ibid., p. 11.

(48) Ibid., p. 72.

These five steps are referred to at least three times in the Schilpp volume (49) and are widely quoted. They offer an illustration to the instrumentalist approach to truth. It is active, organizing, searching, investigatory of solutions to a problem. The following definition will be a good explanation and formulation of what is implied in the five steps.

"Instrumentalism is an attempt to establish a precise logical theory of concepts, of judgments and inferences in their various forms, by considering primarily how thought functions in the experimental determinations of future consequences." (50).

The application to conduct makes examination imperative before any ethical treatment of Dewey's views can take place. In the case of most philosophers, one thinks of logic, or epistemology as separate compartments of knowledge. For most, there is little or no close connection between logic and ethics. Yet this definition illustrates a different approach altogether. It has been Dewey's fear that knowledge was too abstract. Now he is anxious to tell us of a logic or theory of inquiry which is so wide in scope that it will embrace all human conduct. Logic: The Theory of Inquiry is something new as a text. The striking

(49) In The Philosophy of John Dewey, (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, there are three different mentions. In INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by Gordon W. Allport, p. 278; in EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEWEY, by John L. Childs, p. 426; in DEWEY'S INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION, by William H. Kilpatrick, p. 469.

(50) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 26.

feature is its social application. Thought is designed to lead to action, every kind of action. The new theory of knowledge assigns a real work to reflective thought, one which carries over into daily life. No person has less patience than Dewey with an abstract or speculative thought.

"Instrumentalism assigns a positive function to thought, that of reconstituting the present stage of things instead of merely knowing it."
(51).

Thought becomes a means to further ends. It leads us to conviction and action. It begins with careful analysis and observation, implies constant checking and rechecking, and provides justification for conduct in the future. The usual thing is to stress the importance of ends, rather than means. Dewey feels that they are all together in a context and if ends are important, then means are equally important. The terms cannot be divorced as in his theory the ends projected are only means to further ends! The process goes on indefinitely and the old way of disparaging means as such, must stop.

"To say that a locomotive is an agency, that it is intermediate between a need in experience and its satisfaction, is not to depreciate the worth of careful and elaborate construction of the locomotive, or the need of subsidiary tools and processes that are devoted to introducing improvements in its structure. One would rather

(51) Ibid., p. 31.

say that because the locomotive is intermediary in experience, not primary and not final, it is impossible to devote too much care to its constructive development." (52).

He is indefatigable in his praise of means. The older philosophical view was to accept ends and discuss legitimate means to those ends. If all agree on what are the ends desired, the role of method will be to devise adequate means. For Dewey these ends are only means for further ends. Therefore they cannot escape investigation either. We must discuss all means; but all ends are means to further ends. Therefore we must discuss both ends and means.

This point is so involved with the concept of values that a fuller treatment will be given when we consider Instrumentalism and goodness. At this stage we merely note that his theory of knowledge is a method and it is concerned with ends and means and indeed with everything which leads mediately or immediately to action.

A charge against Instrumentalism is that it reflects the typical "American" way of life. It is said to glorify action, to preach the blessings of rugged individualism and in general to be eligible for all the epithets which are thrown at Pragmatism. William James had used the expression "cash value" and now it is thrown at Dewey. A thing is good if it works. The origin of this is supposed to be the period of history when the United States came

(52) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 148.

to its prominent place in world history just prior to the first World War. Now it should be remarked that Dewey has nothing so crude in mind. He believes that there is an element of truth here but he wants to guard the kernel of truth very carefully from ridiculous application. Bertrand Russell had accused Dewey of such extravagances. In defence Dewey wrote:

"They (American systems of thought) do not aim to glorify the energy and the love of action which the new conditions of American life exaggerated. They do not reflect the excessive mercantilism of American life." (53).

So at least we must remember that Dewey does not intentionally advocate action for action's sake. His system of thought stresses its value over mere contemplation of passive and indifferent speculation. In his mind thinking is instrumental towards obtaining control of environment and to this extent it is active. If there is profit in this, well and good, but the cash-value phrase popularized by William James holds no literal interpretation for Dewey. Nor is he anxious that the word pragmatic be used in connection with his views. Instrumentalism is a much better term since it invokes the idea of knowledge being used as an instrument in the moulding of a better future. In the last chapter we said that the word contextualism might best explain his metaphysic. Now it must be said that

(53) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 32.

instrumentalism is the best term to describe his theory of inquiry or logic. It is Dewey's version, or development of pragmatism, but it is a refinement; at least in intention.

The term pragmatism which was used by William James. left room for religious ideas. If it was a good idea for a man to believe in God and thereby enable him to do things otherwise impossible, then let him believe in God by all means. The example we have in mind is that of the sick person; for such people religious convictions may help recovery. Pragmatism would say: "if it works, its good; therefore believe in God whether you can prove such a belief or not". Dewey will not agree to this. In the long run it does not pay to deceive; judging by such consequences, we must first establish the existence of God. If it cannot be done, then better not lie to the patient even though recovery would be hastened. To this extent, instrumentalism is less "practical" than pragmatism, using the term "practical" in a most opprobrious way. James had said that truth is what gives satisfaction; Dewey would qualify this considerably.

5. Meliorism

Pragmatism is known as a rather cynical philosophy. Whether or not the epithet is entirely deserved or not is another question but the fact of the matter is that a "pragmatic attitude" is usually interpreted to mean:

"let's make the thing work and not be scrupulous as to how its done." There is no such attitude in Instrumentalism, or at least Dewey wants none of it. He is optimistic about mankind in general, suspicious and cynical only about a few men or groups of men. These latter have an axe to grind and must not be trusted too far. When in positions of power and authority, it was to their advantage to promote certain ideas, beliefs and practices. Sufficient general knowledge will unseat these frauds. This is evident particularly in the field of religious "truths".

"Biology has revolutionized conceptions of soul and mind which once occupied a central place in religious beliefs and ideas, and this science has made a profound impression upon ideas of sin, redemption, and immortality."
(54).

Dewey goes on to argue that we now have natural and scientific explanations for many former "religious" mysteries. When confronted with such shrines as Lourdes, he would simply argue that as science develops and more knowledge is available, there will be natural and scientific explanations for these miracles as well. There is great hope for the future. Not only will we be rid of false notions, but the added information will add to human happiness. All of this will ensue when men develop the methods of inquiry.

(54) THE LIBERATION OF MODERN RELIGION, by John Dewey.
In Yale Review, 1934, N.S., XXIII, p. 753.

"For my purpose the significant bearing of all this is that new methods of inquiry and reflection have become for the educated man today the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence, and intellectual assent. Nothing less than a revolution in the "seat of intellectual authority" has taken place...The mind of man is being habituated to a new method and ideal; there is but one sure road of access to truth--the road of patient, co-operative inquiry by means of observation, experiment, record, and controlled reflection."
(55).

Dewey's humanism and confidence in the power of general education come to the fore here. It reflects much of what the general public want to hear and such views help explain his very large following. At the same time, for our purpose it shows his belief in the perfectibility of man, an almost inevitable progress, when the methods of inquiry are applied. His motto might be: To Happiness Through Instrumentalism.

In the lives of most men there are values which we call religious. This is the case with John Dewey as well. However, he does not believe in a Personal God, nor in a transcendent Being. Everything is conceived within the framework of nature, as our chapter on Contextualism outlined. What sort of God does Dewey believe in? And has he any use for religion as it is commonly regarded? He does favour religion, but a naturalistic religion, to use an expression which is at least paradoxical if not contradictory. Lest we be begging the question, we must first examine Dewey's views.

"I have found--and there are many who will corroborate my experience by their own--that all of the things which traditional religionists prize and which they connect exclusively with their own conception of God can be had equally well in the ordinary course of human experience in our relations to the natural world and to one another as human beings related in the family, friendship, industry, art, science and citizenship." (1)

Religion has been described as morality touched with emotion. It has certain values in this appeal and the liturgy with its expression through the arts of music, sculpture and painting is a source of great pleasure and satisfaction. Everyone enjoys a quiet potent and psychiatrists never tire in their encouragement towards their patients to attend religious services for this emotional outlet and relief. Dewey has such enjoyment in mind and it has his approval. However he does not find that religion has any monopoly; the same pleasure can

(1) A GOD OR THE GOD? by John Dewey, In Christian Century, 22 March 1923, L, p. 394.

be had elsewhere." What then of the concept of God?

"Either then the concept of God can be dropped out as far as genuinely religious experience is concerned, or it must be framed wholly in terms of natural and human relationships involved in our straightaway human experience." (2)

This was in 1933 and Dewey was charged with atheism. He had his defenders as well as accusers until the following year when he published A Common Faith (3). The controversy began all over again with some saying the book proved his theism and others said the same book proved he was atheistic. A careful reading of the text shows that the 87 pages are just an amplification of the two quotations which we have just cited! For Dewey it is easy to expand a dozen lines into a small book without introducing any really new matter. But for all that he appeased some, gave satisfaction to others, and all without changing his position one bit. Proof was given in 1939 when he wrote this about it:

"A Common Faith was addressed to those who have abandoned supernaturalism...The book was an attempt to show such persons that they still have within their experience all the elements which give the religious attitude its value." (4).

There is no retreat here. It is the same conviction, or perhaps lack of conviction because Dewey does not deny the possibility of God's existence from a logical standpoint. It's just that so far there is no evidence on empirical grounds which notes his assent. (5)

(2) Ibid.

(3) A Common Faith, by John Dewey. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, 87 pp.

5) A GOD OR THE GOD? by John Dewey, p. 395.

William James had supported mysticism in his Varieties of Religious Experience. (6). This was in 1902, and Dewey followed a different path entirely. His naturalism is the opposite of any mysticism. He will not deny the existence of experiences that are called mystical but he suggests that they require no "supernatural" explanation. (7). For Dewey, union with God would be union with the forces of nature, sharing in life's pattern and working towards its fulfilment. Service has replaced humility. Through hard work and service towards his ideal, man will make his dreams come true. No other Being will come to his aid; there is none to hear him.

Originally, according to Dewey, "experience" did not fulfil men's hopes so they turned to supernatural religions. (8). With reference to the word "God", it has two meanings.

"On one score, the word can mean only a particular Being. On the other score, it denotes the unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action." (9).

It is his contention, as he explains on the following page, that the second notion was the original one; later it was hypostatized.

(6) Varieties of Religious Experience, by William James, London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1902.

(7) LIBERATION OF MODERN RELIGION, by John Dewey. In Yale Review 1934, N.S., XXIII, p. 756.

(8) WHAT I BELIEVE, by John Dewey. In Forum, March 1930, LXXXIII, p. 177.

(9) LIBERATION OF MODERN RELIGION, by John Dewey, p. 759.

Now He seeks to free religion from the restrictions which this new "God" has brought with it. As an objection to the new version, he says:

"All that an Existence can add is force to establish, to punish, to award." (10).

This might impress others as being quite a bit, but for Dewey it is the sort of pretense which is better left to children, very small children. As the peoples of the world become more mature they will see that there is no further necessity for such promises and threats, and conduct will improve for better motives.

Another subject which interests most of mankind is that of immortality. Is it a fact or a myth? Can it be proven? In the New York Times on Easter Sunday, 1928, a series of statements on this subject appeared. Dewey's was listed along with the rest, frank and unequivocal.

"I have no beliefs on the subject of personal immortality. It seems to be a subject, being one of continued existence, for science rather than philosophy, or a matter of physical evidence. If it can be proved it would have to be along the lines of psychical researchers, and so far I haven't been much impressed with their results." (11)

(10) Ibid., p. 76i.

(11) PERSONAL IMMORTALITY: WHAT I BELIEVE, by John Dewey, New York Times, 8 April 1928

The statement is interesting on several counts. One is the test which is to be applied: the empirical. As always this is the fundamental test. Whatever fails here fails as a value. Although it is not our purpose to list the values or valuable things which Dewey holds precious, it is our plan to try to determine how he decides what is valuable. And the test here applied shows belief in immortality and belief in God to be unwarranted.

Dewey does not though advocate the overthrow of religion. It does have a place. But what kind of religion? It will be a "natural" religion, that is, one which stays in this world. There is nothing to come, neither heaven nor hell nor judgment. The bible is not the revealed word of God since there is no reason to believe in a personal God; hence the account of creation is poetry. The soul is an unwarranted hypothesis. (12). Finally among the negative traits of the new religion we find that Dewey rejects both Old and New Testaments.

"Neither will true religion be based on historic facts such as those of Jewish history or the authority of a historic institution like a church or the life of Jesus." (13).

In full accordance with what we have seen concerning his aversion to all authority (Beginning of last chapter) we find that neither

(12) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 176

(13) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 26.

history, nor an institution nor a person such as Jesus will be allowed to wield any influence for good or evil over individual men. In the long run such an arrangement would not pay. Whatever notions of religion have ruled in the past have not been very successful and they have wrought much harm. The reason was that they stepped out of the framework of human experience. They introduced notions of good and evil, reward and punishment which were unwarranted hypotheses. Already we see what abandonment of these notions has done for educated people and it is all to the good. Hence with more understanding, with a more objective view, with warranted assertibility, a new form of religion will arise. We must trust the power of experience to provide all necessary consolations as well as the needed principles of conduct.

"Adherence to any body of doctrines and dogmas based upon a specific authority signifies distrust in the power of experience to provide, in its ongoing movement, the needed principles of belief and action. Faith in its newer sense signifies that experience itself is the sole ultimate authority." (14).

quite satisfied with the level of nature, no trace of pessimism or lack of confidence appears in his naturalism. This belief Dewey has transmitted to others. It seems such an unusual thing for a man who boasts that he is of the materialistic tradition to have such faith and confidence; yet there it is. Immersed in temporal and naturalistic values, willingly restricted by the circumstances of here-and-now, he faces the future full of hope.

A sample of his confidence in the power of knowledge to improve the lot of mankind is revealed in a statement published in The Nation concerning the birth-control movement. As usual, ignorance and dogma are opposed by knowledge and new control. The birth-control movement is supported because he sees a new application of knowledge which enables man to control the future consequences of present activities. It is also supported because he believes that quality is more important than quantity, hence the educational opportunities will likely favour smaller families. Let us examine the statement in some detail.

"The opposition to the birth-control movement is not a unique or isolated fact. It is an expression of an ever recurring struggle between darkness and knowledge... there is always a rear-guard of ignorance, prejudice, dogma, routine, tradition which fights against the spread of new ideas that entail new practices..." (15).

The litany of disparaging terms is the usual one. The argument is that the movement is opposed precisely because it is new. As a policy, Dewey supports the new against the old, the novel against tradition, an experiment against routine. There is every reason, in accordance with his usual practice, to support the movement on these grounds alone. However, in the next section he gives a sample of his naturalism which contrasts intelligence (as he understands it) with the blind forces of nature.

(15) EDUCATION AND BIRTH CONTROL, by John Dewey. In The Nation.

27 January 1932, CXXXIV, p. 111.

"We forget how comparatively recent is any scientific knowledge concerning the process of procreation and conception. It was only late in intellectual history that they were discovered to be chemical in nature..." (16)

Following this comes his conclusion that we have blind nature consisting of chemical forces on the one hand, opposed by intelligence, planning and control on the other. With such an arrangement there can be little choice. When we recall the title of the message: EDUCATION AND BIRTH CONTROL, we can see the force of the contrast all the better.

Our reason for including this example is to show that ideals of conduct which are usually thought of as connected with religion become subject to intelligence in Dewey's philosophy. With his naturalistic "religion", the only set of values possible is one determined by intelligence. There can be no moral code imposed from on high, or from outside the orbit of experience hence Dewey's religion will be determined by the function of intelligence. Whatever man wants at each moment will have to provide the religious ideals necessary for that moment.

His final point that he favours quality versus quantity, hence small families over larger ones, is a good example of his disregarding the distinction between substance and accident. Tom, Dick and Harry are usually thought of as three distinct substances hence

more important as substances than any one of them can ever be, no matter what qualities he may have. Dewey thinks along other lines. Tom, Dick and Harry equal three quantities; if you reduce this number and improve quality, you have made progress. This is a logical development of a naturalistic "religion" which does not recognize souls.

As far as the future of religion is concerned, Dewey is convinced that it is here to stay. He is also convinced that its presence can be a good thing. The notion of "God" will have to be revised and on this point Dewey simply urges men to return to the original. He is convinced that prehistoric man used the name "God" for the unity of all ideal ends which stirred him to action. We have simply to return to this notion.

"It is the active relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name God." (17)

As such, "God" could well be the stimulus needed for man. As everybody becomes mature enough to see through all the paraphernalia of contemporary religions, it will be realized that a personal "God" is not only unnecessary but impossible. Voltaire had said: "If there were no God we would have to invent one". Dewey has done just that.

There must be a social setting for this new "God" of Dewey's religious faith. The purpose is to help all men and since we have

within experience everything we may need, our social relations must benefit by strengthening the bonds between men. The old religion sought to bind men to God; the new faith will bind men to men. The old was a hopeful myth; the new will be a realistic experience. The new common faith must be instrumental in developing human solidarity.

"I would suggest that the future of religion is connected with the possibility of developing a faith in the possibilities of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests and inspire action to make that sense a reality. If our nominally religious institutions learn how to use their symbols and rites to express and enhance such a faith, they have become useful allies of a conception of life that is in harmony with knowledge and social needs." (18).

The philosophy of John Dewey is very much bound up with the social order. His early interest in education as a teacher in a Pennsylvania high school helped develop a realization of social values. Later residence in Michigan intensified his interest and the climax of conviction came with his experiments at the University of Chicago. The School and Society, (1) a series of three lectures later published in book form, outlines his position. Although this was fifty years ago, his views have scarcely altered in this respect. More than ever he is convinced that there is no closer bond than the one between the educational system and the social whole.

His reading of "social" sciences as opposed to "natural" sciences has always bothered him. (2). Henceforth Dewey would point out that society is as natural as it can be. In fact it might well serve as a framework for thought about everything else. Admittedly the concept was not perfect for such a framework of reference, but with proper organization following acute analysis, it might serve better than any other. There is some kind of unity in our thinking but just what is it? There are so many elements all limited in their own way, that we need some big map, some chart, something like the Cartesian coordinates against which we will see the meaning of our thoughts.

(1) The School and Society, by John Dewey. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1900, 129 pp.

(2) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 21-2

"Upon the hypothesis of continuity--if that is to be termed a hypothesis which cannot be denied without self-contradiction--the social, in spite of whatever may be said regarding the temporal and spatial limitations of its manifestations, furnishes philosophically the inclusive category." (3).

In our chapter on Contextualism we mentioned Dewey's concern with a unifying principle. Three concentric circles illustrated the realms of Inquiry; Experience and Nature. The third area, nature, is that of the socio-cultural world. Society is therefore a very important concept in Dewey's philosophy, a concept which must be understood before we can decide what makes anything valuable. It is a concept with a philosophical rather than a political implication. Dewey's travels and lectures in China, Japan, Turkey, Russia, as well as more accessible places, convinced him of the basic importance of society as a concept and an instrument for human progress.

"It is the historic claim of philosophy that it occupies itself with the ideal of wholes and the whole. It is submitted that either the whole is manifested in completely empirical ways, and in ways consonant with infinite variety, or else wholeness is but a dialectical speculation. I do not say that the social as we know it is the whole, but I do emphatically suggest that it is the widest and richest manifestation of the whole accessible to our observation." (4).

The references just given are dated 1900, 1928, 1931 and the same attitude appears in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, 1938, his last

(3) SOCIAL AS A CATEGORY, by John Dewey. In Monist, April 1928 XXXVIII, p. 166.

(4) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 92.

important book. It is a basic element for Dewey. And of course he is not interested in a study of society qua study; the purpose is to develop control.

"Philosophy originated not out of intellectual material, but out of social and emotional material... The task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day. Its aim is to become so far as is humanly possible an organ for dealing with these conflicts." (5).

Social values, for Dewey, are not the concern of politicians or statesmen alone but their determination is the responsibility of all thinking people. It will not be subject-matter for "pure-philosophy", that is, abstract thought or disinterested thinkers. Social values will be the concern of every man who can make a real contribution. As far as professional philosophers are concerned, if they are responsible citizens, they should be the first to realize the needs and the means to those needs which they see around them. In fact all their thinking should be orientated along those lines. How can a man be interested in serious thought and fail to see that its very purpose is to remedy social conditions? It should be obvious to all that thinking must concern itself with the nature of society; its origins, its preservation and the development of its various forms.

(5) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 25-26

"All philosophy has its raison d'etre in the organization and constitution of social life." (6).

And this same thought is developed at some length in his essay on Philosophy in Whither Mankind. (7) It had been the role of religion to decide on social values. For centuries the oracles and priests and prophets were the ones who regulated conduct within the social frame but with the advent of modern science, with improved methods of learning, we now find that philosophy, independent of the revelations of occult or supernatural powers, can do this work and do it better. In fact it had always been the province of philosophy, but, other powers had managed to obtain and retain control. Today with those other powers on the wane, philosophy must assume its rightful responsibilities and direct mankind; better still, help men to direct themselves.

In the beginning, social values were determined by custom. Rules for conduct simply evolved from individual circumstances and then this procedure was handed on from father to son. Society grew from a few families into towns, cities, states. As the size of social groups increased, so did the force of custom. It was a case of protection for the whole group as against the idiosyncracies of individual members. This went on without too much inconvenience for centuries. However, having their origin in individual circumstances, these customs lost their applicability with time. More and more men

(6) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 277.

(7) PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey. In Whither Mankind: A Panorama of Modern Civilization, especially pp. 316; 327; 330.

found themselves shackled by archaic practices which were far more of a hindrance than a help. It was at this stage that certain men sought a rational basis for custom. It was not to go on forever, simply because "that's the way my father did it and it's good enough for me."

Besides the stability of methods and techniques for conduct which custom had supplied, there was also the question of ends. Tradition had handed these down as well. Worst of all there had grown up the idea of a single end. All men had a common goal, said custom. Hence all men should follow the same rules of conduct in all ages and in all circumstances. No alteration is to be allowed for new conditions, new circumstances of any kind. The end is fixed; so must be the means to that end, hence custom can never be altered as far as conduct is concerned. Deeply concerned with both fixed means and fixed ends, the Greek thinkers sought the answer in the development of ethics.

"Ethical theory began among the Greeks as an attempt to find a regulation for the conduct of life which should have a rational basis and purpose instead of being derived from custom. But reason as a substitute for custom had the obligation of supplying objects and laws as fixed as those of custom had been. Ethical theory ever since has been singularly hypnotized with the notion that its business is to discover some final end or good or some ultimate and supreme law. This is the common element among the diversity of theories." (8).

(8) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 161.

The dilemma of the Greeks was too much for them. This pre-occupation of men with the search for a single goal, a single end, has been a source of much mischief, as Dewey sees it. There had to be some stable basis for the rules of conduct, hence the assumption that one goal for all men supplied this. Reason gave the answer and it was a more logical explanation for conduct than the haphazard roots of conduct in custom. The drawback was that if conditions in the future necessitated further change in the rules, there was no escape! Once agreed that all men have only one goal, you must also admit that all men must use the same means to that common goal. There was stability alright, but at the expense of possible further change. This Greek contribution continued into Medieval times.

"Metaphysics is a substitute for custom as the source and guarantor of higher moral and social values--that is the leading theme of the classic philosophy of Europe, as evolved by Plato and Aristotle--a philosophy, let us always recall, renewed and restated by the Christian philosophy of Medieval Europe." (9).

The problem perpetuated itself and was becoming a greater drawback all the time. Century after Century men conformed to rules and regulations of conduct which they had received from antiquity. As new problems arose, in new circumstances, demanding new techniques for their solution, people suffered more and more. It was impossible

(9) Ibid., p 17.

to escape since by now the system had developed a subordination of means to ends. One final or supreme end ruled over all and the other goals were given importance only as leading to this summum bonum. Philosophy had provided a basis for rules of conduct instead of mere custom; there remained the inflexibility and then the subordination of minor ends to the final, supreme, all-inclusive end. With religion replacing the state as an authority, this supreme end became a supernatural one called heaven.

"For Christendom as a whole, morality has been connected with supernatural commands, rewards and penalties."
(10).

Another feature which is not in agreement with Dewey's beliefs is that of individual conscience which is supposed to reflect a universal law. For the moment we are interested in this law. Whence does it come? Who made it? Is it a reflection of reason and if so, whose? This is a red herring, according to Dewey, and we should rid ourselves of this absolute as well. Really it all goes back to customs.

"Customs in any case constitute moral standards." (11).

This universal law is a myth; we have been told by our parents that it existed and their word in this was a matter of their own convenience or protection. Supplying children with rules which

(10) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 265

(11) Ibid. p. 75.

allegedly came from an invisible lawmaker produced satisfying results. This method was simply handed down from one generation of parents to another. The children never heard anything else until it was to their advantage to use the method on their children, and so the secret was kept. The fact of the matter was that moral standards originated in customs and

"any theory which attributes the origin of rule to deliberate design is false." (12).

To get rid of all this mumbo jumbo is a necessary means of progress. Dewey is anxious to explain the origin of such errors and hopes to persuade increasing numbers of people that progress is dependent on this. This is not to say that he favours anarchy and abolition of all rules. It does mean that he is an advocate of a system of morals which rejects an eternal law, a supernaturally imposed law, or a law based upon rational design of an inflexible nature. It further means that we must abandon belief in one final common goal for all men. There is no one heaven for all men; rather, to each his own. The new system will be one which he calls "free morals" and it stresses the unique element of experience as we saw in our chapter on Existential Matrix.

(12) Ibid. p. 3

"We should again exchange free morals for sterile metaphysics, if we imagine that "happiness" is any less unique than the individuals who experience it; any less complex than the constitution of their capacities, or any less variable than the objects upon which their capacities are directed." (13).

For Dewey there is not a single goal, not one end for all men, no common heaven, and happiness is necessarily a variable depending on the individual person in question. As a matter of interest here we must note that Dewey believes this almost universal conviction of mankind to be the source of strict confusion. For centuries men have lived, worked and died with heaven as their hoped for reward. The result has been a preoccupation with the affairs of another "world" and a corresponding neglect of social values here. Our social structure reflects this when you consider the millions who merely exist in India, China and other pagan lands. They are neglected by mankind because it is felt by many that if they deserve anything better they will get it in "heaven". Similarly, millions nearer home are victims of injustice, poverty, degradation, and we shrug our shoulders and satisfy ourselves that their reward for patience will come after death. This view is ridiculous, according to Dewey. And as soon as we rid ourselves of the notion of heaven, the sooner we may expect a new attitude towards society. Suppose that at one stroke all men forgot the supernatural destiny attributed to mankind and could be convinced

(13) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other essays, by John Dewey, p. 69.

at the same moment that all happiness was here below. Progress would be the first effect. Social welfare, first on a parochial later on a civic, national and world scale would follow. There are unrealized means of happiness all around us which we have been neglecting in our pursuit of a supernatural destiny. More concern with these would focus attention on the means to develop more immediate means, and more practical and certain means for making men happy.

"We may anticipate that the abolition of the final goal and the single motive power and the separate and infallible faculty in morals will quicken inquiry into the diversity of specific goods of experience, fix attention upon their conditions, and bring to light values now dim and obscure. Absolute goods will fall into the background, but, the question of making more sure and extensive the share of all men in natural and social goods will be urgent, a problem not to be escaped nor evaded." (14).

Here is the point to his objection to the supernatural view. Any theory which teaches that man's final destiny is outside of the social framework is bound to divert man's interest from that society of which he is a member. A future place of reward or punishment will compel the average citizen to judge everything by those final standards. Nothing here below can have anything but a relative importance. As such nobody will strive too much for goods existing here and now; they are as dust compared with the everlasting.

(14) Ibid., p. 70-71

Consequently the structure of society will grow weak through sheer lack of interest. This condition was very prevalent in the Medieval period and it is far from dead yet.

"Consider the place occupied in popular thought by search for the meaning of life and the purpose of the universe...Search for a single, inclusive good is doomed to failure...Belief in a single purpose distracts thought and wastes energy that would help make the world better if it were directed to attainable ends." (15).

The sad part of it all, according to Dewey, is that men strive for a goal which does not exist whilst there are acres of diamonds all around them. They cannot see the wood for the trees. The true values are social, and subordinate values must be those things which are means to that end. However, it would be wrong to use such terminology. Since there are to be no fixed values, but these are to vary with each context, we should not speak of subordinate values as though they were subject to other fixed values. Nothing is fixed but everything varies with the existential matrix. At the same time values will spring into existence as we forget heaven and hell and concentrate on the society we must live in. Dewey believes that such evils as economic injustice, racism, nationalism and war will gradually disappear when men surrender belief in another world. They cannot be of any lasting benefit here below and if there is no hereafter, men will be more concerned with avoiding such evils. (16)

(15) WHAT I BELIEVE, by John Dewey. In Forum, March 1930, p. 179.

(16) Ibid., p. 181.

There is also great hope that things will improve. As the supernatural is rejected by more and more thinking people, there will be a better opportunity for inquiry with a social psychology flavour. When this latter study realizes its power for good, more philosophers will spend their energy in this field and a general improvement is bound to result.

"Substantial bettering of social relations waits upon the growth of a scientific social psychology." (17).

It is difficult for such a rugged individualist as Dewey to find some common denominator towards which men could look as a guide. We cannot expect to hear him approve of any objective rule or standard yet how avoid having every man decide things for himself. If Tom, Dick and Harry all decide that society needs something different, how can each one expect to make any real contribution to the welfare of all? The answer Dewey gives is as close to an objective standard as he can bring himself to describe.

"The social affords us an observable instance of a "realm of mind" objective to an individual, by entering into which as a participating member organic activities are transformed into acts having a mental quality." (18)

The language is almost Hegelian and yet it is dated 1928, interpreting it in the light of its date of appearance, we are safe in

(17): Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 323

(18): SOCIAL AS A CATEGORY, by John Dewey, p. 173

concluding that it is a phrase with no idealistic content. There is no world soul involved. It is simply that as the physical is taken into the more delicate interactions of the social sphere (19) we have more possibilities opening up. The separate contribution of each citizen will add up to a spiritual force which will be a real element in the framework of society. Of course such an expression as "spiritual force" is misleading in any interpretation of Dewey's philosophy; but it is a synonym for the expression he has in quotation marks: "realm of mind".

It follows from all this that if there is no one end, there must be a multiplicity of ends. Dewey is definite on this point. The more ends projected, the more possibilities for a fuller development of man's powers. The thoughtful man today will use everything to multiply ends, always within the framework of society.

"The transformation in attitude...is the growing belief that the proper business of intelligence is discrimination of multiple and present goods and of the varied immediate means of their realization; not search for the one remote aim." (20).

So far, so good. Forget the one end; multiply ends. The next problem arising is the distinction between ends; some have been considered better than others. When the old order obtained, the varying "ends" of activity were divided into intrinsic and instrumental. The former were considered as being good-in-themselves.

(19) Ibid., p. 169.

(20) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 67

Others were considered good only as means to intrinsic goods. In theory, Dewey says there is no objection; the trouble comes in practice when you start naming things. It turns out this way: spiritual goods are intrinsically good and material goods are only good instrumentally. (21). The whole dualism is one which is bound to make Dewey see red. All the old troubles of separation are here again. The passage has his usual denunciation of dualisms along with blame heaped on the medieval Church. What Dewey wants is to consider every end by itself. Since it arises in an individual context, how can it be compared with any other good? Instead of the distinction of intrinsic and instrumental, he prefers the one of means and ends. Every end is an end by itself; also, every end is a means to further ends!

"Means and ends are two names for the same reality...
 "End" is a name for a series of acts taken collectively
 --like the term army. "Means" is a name for the same
 series taken distributively--like this soldier, that
 officer." (22).

This is certainly a new conception and an important one in the understanding of Dewey's philosophy. It is a special use of an old terminology and can easily lead to misunderstanding. But there is more than a terminological distinction. In his mind these means and ends all have value. If you consider an element here and now you may well call it an end. It has goodness and

(21) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 170-171.

(22) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 36.

cannot satisfy some need; as such it is an end or a value. If what you have in mind is something remote, this remote end must be approached by a series of means. But there is no end so remote, if it is really obtainable, that it in turn cannot be a means to a still further end. In other words, never an absolute end. And by the same token, to use a paradox, never an absolute means; that is to say that a means is never a mere means but has real value in its own right. This helps Dewey avoid saying that means derive their value from ends. He wants this to be innocent of what is so frequently said about the Jesuits.

"The idea that "the end justifies the means" is in as bad repute in moral theory as its adoption is a commonplace of political practice." (23).

He does not hold it, and his position illustrates his conviction that means are justified by being ends, not by being means. It is true that means are closer at hand than ends; this is only to say that most ends have some degree of remoteness and to approach them we need certain means. These means may be more or less involved but the very term "end" supposes a series of steps in the pursuit.

"Aladdin with his lamp could dispense with translating ends into means, but no one else can do so." (24).

(23) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 496.

(24) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 37.

However, it should be made clear that inquiry is concerned not only with means but with ends as well. Social inquiry must examine the situation at hand, look for possibilities, seek out the difficulties and make a judgment as to the chances for success. If the goal is possible, if inquiry reveals that the indeterminate situation can be resolved into a determinate one, then ends are projected. That the social element is the ultimate is stressed in the next-to-last chapter of Dewey's *Logic of Inquiry* (25). And the same thought is brought out in this passage on social intelligence:

"Ultimate moral motives and forces are nothing more or less than social intelligence--the power of observing and comprehending social situations,--and social power-trained capacities of control--at work in the service of the social interest and aims. There is no fact which throws light upon the constitution of society, there is no power whose training adds to social resourcefulness that is not moral." (26).

His concern with social inquiry as the main problem, the inclusive problem for every man's serious consideration is apparent here. Philosophy will fulfil its destiny if it directs all its power towards solving the social problem. The thing cannot be solved once and for all but if inquiry brings its full force to bear on social questions, philosophy will have realized its purpose: to help mankind recognize the nature of the situation at hand, then adapt the means to solve the problematic situation with the help of scientific method.

For centuries philosophy has been involved in investigation

(25) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, Chapter XXIV, SOCIAL INQUIRY.

(26) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1909. p. 43.

of fixed ends and this has resulted in a useless performance. Now that inquiry knows that ends are not absolute and are in fact changing in every separate context, we must develop the proper techniques to handle the situation. To replace the search for a fixed end, we must instead keep an eye on the social structure for our stable framework and measure the value of ends as they contribute towards this.

"I do not say that the social as we know it is the whole, but I do emphatically suggest that it is the widest and richest manifestation of the whole accessible to our observation." (27).

Any decision as to individual valuable actions must therefore be made with the social welfare in mind. It is a difficult standard in practice and Dewey knows full well its limitations but still he feels that it is the best available. Besides, he believes that in one special form, the social framework can provide all necessary answers. This of course is the democratic way of life.

Chapter 13 - THE INCLUSIVE CRITERION, DEMOCRACY.

In our search for Dewey's standards of valuation we have seen that religious values are really social values. Then under our examination of social values we saw that his preoccupation with "social" is simply that it is the most accessible unit or "whole" open to observation. It is the burden of this chapter that one particular form of the social whole, the democratic form, is Dewey's inclusive category.

There has been some discussion as to the legitimacy of Dewey's interpretation of democracy. Some have said he should rather be called a Communist. It is true that he has allowed his name to appear with almost every radical movement seeking a respectable front within the past 50 years. He has been allied with Socialists and other planners of the collectivist state, has visited Russia and expressed great admiration for many of the things he saw there, and is known to be the foe of everything traditional. As a man who does not believe in the existence of a personal God, he is hardly in the tradition of the writers of the American Constitution and on this score is suspect to many. This is not the majority opinion but examination of these charges will help determine his moral or ethical standard. Is Dewey, or has he ever been, a Communist?

"When John Dewey went to Russia he was bowled over by the burning faith he found there. It so infected him that he came away predicting world revolution." (1)

This was in 1928 and although he wrote many favourable things about Soviet ideas and plans, the methods of absolute dictatorship during the Moscow trials of 1937, cured him of uncritical appraisal. In 1943 a film, *Mission to Moscow*, was presented in New York as Russian propaganda. The most devastating critique came from Dewey. (2). But a formal statement with analysis had previously appeared. In the article now referred to, Dewey began by stating:

"I write with reference to being a Communist in the western world, especially here and now in the United States, and a Communist after the pattern set in the U.S.S.R. Such Communism rests upon an almost entire neglect of the specific historical backgrounds and traditions which have operated to shape the patterns of thought and action in America." (3).

Then he goes on to list the objectionable features. We note first that Communism is unacceptable because it could not exist in the American environment. What is implied is that a social structure should naturally grow out of the existing conditions of the situation at hand. In America this environment differs; hence it could not support such a form of government. He then goes on to mention some of the features which he dislikes.

- (1) IN SEARCH OF AN IDIOM, by Francis Hackett. In Saturday Review of Literature, 16 February 1946, Vol. XXIX No. 7, p. 7.
- (2) TIME Magazine, 17 May 1943, p. 3.
- (3) WHY I AM NOT A COMMUNIST, by John Dewey. In Modern Monthly, April 1934, Vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 135.

"belief in the plenary and verbal inspiration of Marx, the implicit or explicit domination of the Communist party in every field of culture, the ruthless extermination of minority opinion in its own ranks, the verbal glorification of the mass and the actual cult of the infallibility of leadership." (4).

This litany is a very useful one for our consideration of Dewey's idea of democracy because we have simply to reverse it and we get the qualities he advocates. Instead of Marxian inspiration with its fixed rules for conduct, Dewey favours experimentalism for every responsible citizen. Instead of domination by a group, he favours equality of opportunity for all. As a believer in free speech, Dewey defends the rights of minority opinion of expression. Instead of verbal glorification of the mass he has always striven for real assistance for the man in the street and last but not least, Dewey does not believe in infallibility for either any individual or group.

The rest of the article condemns Communism for its one-way interpretation of history, for its belief in the necessity of class-conflicts, for its lack of fair-play in reporting facts, and for its doctrine of violence. Certainly his position here is as orthodox as anyone might want. There is nothing new in the article and Dewey emerges as a safe-and-sound American citizen. The last paragraph, however, is enlightening.

(4) Ibid.

"I have been considering the position, as I understand it, of the orthodox and official Communism. I cannot blind myself, however, to the perceptible difference between Communism with a small c, and Communism, official Communism, spelt with a capital letter." (5)

His objection then is not intrinsic, but merely to the methods the Russians have been using. It is possible that in the American environment there might be some adaptation which could have a good result. Just what this might be he does not say. In the light of his other writings, what could this be?

Dewey has discussed forms of government which have existed from the time of the ancient Greeks to modern Fascist states. In all of them he disliked absolutes, divisions or social classes or any fixed, unalterable element. If it is possible to single out one absolute above all others which Dewey despises it might well be the doctrine of a goal of ultimate completeness or perfection. In century after century men were taught by those in power that obedience to government was necessary to have order, an order which would lead them towards a goal which they could never hope to reach! It was an absolute goal, a fixed end, and it existed in another world. No matter how good the obedience here below, there was no reward now. Believing as he does that there is no other world, Dewey can only see great deception here.

(5) Ibid., p. 137.

"By some strange perversion this theory passes for moral idealism...As a matter of fact, the idea sincerely held brings discouragement and despair, not inspiration or hopefulness...The honest conclusion is pessimism." (6).

There must be something tangible offered to mankind as inducement for further effort. That is why the philosophy Dewey offers with its stress on immediate experience is more realistic. The state must help men find happiness here and now in the fullest exercise of their capacities. It should not ask them to wait until after death. The theory of fixed ends or absolute goods was unsatisfactory and in the course of history, other theories have been tried. Of these, some held out glory as the prize for obedience to leaders, others offered booty, etc. Of them all Dewey has picked one.

"Upon the whole, utilitarianism has marked the best in the transition from the classic theory of ends and goods to that which is now possible." (7)

In its insistence that it sought the greatest good for the greatest number, utilitarianism had a practical approach to the problem. There was no sense in offering heaven as an inducement for good citizenship. Better offer a plan whereby at least some people could be happy right now, rather than a plan whereby likely nobody would be happy even hereafter! As utilitarianism grew in

(6) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 288.

(7) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 180.

influence, it could promise that more and more people would enjoy immediate benefits. A few would have to be neglected, but in time even, they would be rewarded. This theory flourished at a time when mankind did not enjoy many of the things we now take for granted. Absence of class distinctions, equal opportunity for all, universal suffrage, freedom of speech, all these were in the future. And so for its benefits Dewey gives utilitarianism a qualified approval.

"The conscious articulation of genuinely modern tendencies has yet to come, and till it comes the ethic of our own life must remain undescribed. But the system of morals which has come nearest to the reflection of the movements of science, democracy and commerce, is doubtless the utilitarian." (8)

However, this system of morals did not last. It could not adapt itself to changing conditions. Respectability got back in the saddle and the Victorian age restored the older view of morals with fixed rules, etc. Failing to measure up, utilitarianism was replaced. (9).

The most striking feature in the modern conception of democracy is the ideal of freedom for everybody. It is not always realized, as Dewey knows, and as he has written in support of economic freedom. (10). But the fact remains that democracy holds

(8) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 61.

(9) Ibid., p. 62.

(10) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey. New York: Macmillan, 1923, p. 160.

out the hope for freedom for all, and has in fact brought freedom to many who in former centuries would have lived the lives of serfs. It is obviously the duty of every man in the new social frame to do all in his power to preserve and extend that freedom. No matter what his walk in life may be, this obligation falls upon every member of the new democracy.

"the philosopher is of less account than the labourer in the fields unless he contributes to human freedom." (11).

Kant learned this first from Rousseau and Dewey agrees wholeheartedly. It is part of the new way of life that every beneficiary recognize his blessings and be anxious to share them. One of the troubles in the past has been that freedom was a mere academic concept. Everyone prattled about it but it was too ephemeral. The average man saw little of it. In reality freedom turned out to be one of those intrinsic goods, dwelling in the realm of fixed ends and beyond the grasp of the man in the street. The best thing is to have freedom within the social environment.

"When freedom is conceived to be transcendental, the coercive restraint of immediate necessity will lay its harsh hand upon the mass of men." (12).

Realizing that men must possess a measure of freedom, Dewey proposes an actual condition of things which will enable every man

(11) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 65.

(12) Ibid., p. 74.

to develop all his potentialities. There must be a minimum of restrictions, just sufficient to safeguard the social order. Even here there must be no absolute rules, no ten commandments. Develop a freedom which will allow growth, without stifling the individual in any way. The traditional way has been to make individuals conform to custom. This has resulted in great loss from time to time. It has helped avoid many mistakes, but on the other hand, perhaps it would be better to allow some errors so that we could learn through trial. The consequences may not be so bad and if they really are, then we shall know better the next time. In other words Dewey favours a margin of error in the interests of experiment. If this is not done, we may be missing great benefits.

"Society is strong, forceful, stable against accident only when all its members can function to the limit of their capacity. Such functioning cannot be achieved without allowing a leeway of experimentation beyond the limits of established and sanctioned custom. A certain amount of overt confusion and irregularity is likely to accompany the granting of the margin of liberty without which capacity cannot find itself. But socially as well as scientifically the great thing is not to avoid mistakes but to have them take place under conditions such that they can be utilized to increase intelligence in the future." (13).

Not many philosophers will make such a bold statement. It does, however, show Dewey's unbounded faith in the ability of the ship of democracy to right itself after an experiment. And in fact

(13) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 207.

he believes that experiment even of a risky nature is necessary for the full exploitation of all man's capacities. This is a strong feature of his concept of liberty. Allow a margin of error in order to develop hidden human capacities. How can there be any growth if stifling measures are always invoked? The greatest hope for the future will lie in this fearless application of the scientific method. Away with great caution based upon the security of custom and plunge into the experimental future. This is true freedom, democratic freedom; down with the reactionaries or authoritarians!

"Freedom for an individual means growth, ready change when modification is required. It signifies an active process, that of release of capacity from whatever hems it in." (14).

Personality, or the total development of an individual's power, will be an ethical end for Dewey. (15). We must seek a political philosophy which will guarantee this and democracy is our best bet. Now whereas democracy is capable of indefinite development, its members must constantly strive that it may strengthen this tendency to help individuals. And in fact this is way Dewey says nice things about Communism, or rather communism. He disapproves of the Soviet methods but as an experiment to help the masses of Russian people out of their Czarist difficulties, he is

(14) Ibid., p. 207-8.

(15) DEWEY'S INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by Gordon W. Allport. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 287.

in favour. Now perhaps this attempt in favour of the common people, ostensibly in their favour anyway, perhaps this attempt can offer useful suggestions to democracy. They are both upsets of authoritarian regimes inasmuch as they are suggestive of new values and bow down before no infallible fixed rule. At any rate his sympathy shows his concern with the individual.

"Democracy, the crucial expression of modern life, is not so much an addition to the scientific and industrial tendencies as it is the perception of their social or spiritual meaning. Democracy is an absurdity where faith in the individual as individual is impossible; and this faith is impossible when intelligence is regarded as a cosmic power, not an adjustment and application of individual tendencies." (16).

His version of democracy is not to be identified with mass production or great industrial and scientific progress but as an intelligent adjustment and application of every man's capacities. At the same time there is a definite link between the scientific method and democracy. It is the old contrast between a philosophy of fixed ends and a philosophy of change and development. Dogmatic rigidity has no place in either modern science or modern democracy. By all means throw out the old dualism of actual change versus future stability. Instead we should co-operate with change instead of fighting it; best of all direct it. And as science has succeeded in directing change through experiment, so also we will find that

(16) The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays, by John Dewey, p. 59.

democracy can enjoy a similar success. Essentially, science and democracy are related.

"The chief opportunity and chief responsibility of those who call themselves philosophers are to make clear the intrinsic kinship of democracy with the methods of directing change that have revolutionized science...Technological industry is the creation of science. It is also the most widely and deeply influential factor in the practical determination of social conditions." (17).

Besides the kinship of democracy and science there is another factor. Forms of government vary with different cultures. It is just ordinary historical fact that some people prefer monarchical government whilst others prefer a republic. Aristocracy is acceptable in England but not in France. This attitude varies with the individual historical environment. If the people have a long history, they will be reluctant to accept any change. They have long since accepted some philosophy and the more stability they show the greater likelihood that it is an a priori philosophy. Now what of America? It began in a revolution. It has been the scene of rapid change, tremendous progress technically, scientifically, industrially. And still it is a very young country. What type of philosophy does its people have?

"America is too new to afford a foundation for a priori philosophy; we have not the requisite background of law, institutions and achieved social organization." (18)

(17) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey, in Fortune, August 1944, p. 190.

(18) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 129.

In Dewey's mind, therefore, America is in the process of forming its own philosophy and this one cannot be a philosophy of fixity. In view of its kinship with science he favours an experimental democracy. It also fits in with everything else he believes. The superiority of change over stability (which he always suspects is the same as stagnation) is argument enough for America trying democracy rather than anything else. It must also be the type of democracy which has as its goal a constant evolution. There is no target towards which it must aim unless it be the moving target of constant adaptability and reconstruction. This will be the key to progress.

"Progress is present reconstruction adding fullness and distinctness of meaning, and retrogression is a present slipping away of significance, determinations, grasp." (19).

The democratic way must not fail to see present possibilities in its search for a remote improvement. Just as a business man progresses by comparing today's profits with yesterday's, so also democracy should be alert in seeing the beginning of every trend. A doctor watches his patient daily and governs medication accordingly. So also democracy must control and direct every trend right in the beginning and this is what Dewey means by "present reconstruction". The real error would be for the business man or the doctor to keep an eye on a remote end. Before they knew what had

(19) ^a Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 221.

happened both business and patient would be dead! There are values all around us and these must be incorporated, their energies directed and this is the type of control Dewey advocates. Release present powers; develop individual talent, exchange ideas as to procedure, experiment without fear and progress, democratic progress, will ensue. There is a positive creed of life in this attitude and Dewey believes that this is the religious ideal we should offer the people.

It is generally believed that if you dig deep enough, even the worst cynic has ideals. As applied to pragmatism, the same holds true. As far as the particular version of pragmatism, known as Instrumentalism, is concerned, there is no deliberate cynicism and the ideal lies right on the surface. Dewey is known, and is proud of his title, as the Philosopher of Democracy. All the oratory of a Fourth of July politician appears when his favourite subject comes up. He has made speeches and written a great deal about democracy and this feature of his thought also helps his popularity. At the same time, it is an unquestioned fact that he is absolutely sincere.

It should be said that this devotion to the democratic ideal is not a mere emotional overflow but in his mind it is the logical development of all his philosophy. His conception of democracy is not a narrow political one. For Dewey, democracy is a way of life. (20) It is not to be restricted to an expression of political institutions but must be extended to the economic field, to the arts, the sciences, to religion. There is no human activity beyond the scope of Dewey's

idea of democracy. It is the perfect social expression so far discovered. This is not to say that he is satisfied with it as it is; far from it. But he thinks that it has the power to solve all human problems, or at least it is the best possibility so far offered in the great human experiment.

In 1942 Dewey was asked, along with a number of other well-known writers, to pick from among his various writings a piece which he considered his best. Along with this selection he was to state why he thought it best. Then his choice and his statement would be published in an anthology entitled: This Is My Best (20). Dewey chose a passage from his Freedom and Culture (21) entitled: DEMOCRACY AND AMERICA. In his letter justifying his choice, Dewey tells of Hitler's book Mein Kampf which he was just reading. Dewey believed that Hitler must lose the war because he failed to understand the spirit of American Democracy.

"He (Hitler) never realized the moral principle embodied in what is strong and enduring in American democracy: That this unity is toughest and strongest when it is the work of a continuously recreated voluntary consent, which in turn is the product of continual communication, conference, consultation, contact; of the free give-and-take of free beings. He thought it had to be the product of force and the kind of propaganda that is possible only by suppression of all free speech, free publication, free assembly, and free education." (22).

- (20) Why He Selected DEMOCRACY AND AMERICA, by John Dewey. In This Is My Best, ed. Mit Burnett, Garden City, N.Y.: Halcyon House, 1944, pp. 1099-1100.
- (21) Freedom and Culture, by John Dewey. New York: Putnam's, 1939, p. 176
- (22) Why He Selected DEMOCRACY AND AMERICA, by John Dewey, p. 1099.

Here we are provided with a short litany of the qualities of democracy as Dewey sees it. He has always been a firm believer in the efficacy of the town hall meetings. When every citizen can express his opinion as to what should be done, Dewey thinks that the best results are obtained. There is the strong conviction that every man is as good as the next, or perhaps a little bit better! No class distinctions, no aristocracy, just a belief that every man can and should contribute towards the commonweal. A conviction that the freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the free assembly for the exchange of ideas, belief that these are adequate means for the realization of our fondest hopes, is a cardinal tenet for Dewey. The free education will be dealt with subsequently but it is part of the democratic litany. It is contrasted with countries where a general education is possible only for the chosen few. Culture is bound up with education and a democratic culture will be possible only with a democratic system of education.

Dewey has faith in democracy; in fact that is the only faith he has. There is a confidence, a conviction that here is the highest moral force in existence. It is an ideal and it has its distinctive method. The combination of these will win wars and win the peace which follows them. Faith is what the peoples of the world need, the democratic faith.

"The moral source of his (Hitler's) final defeat will be just this total lack of faith. As far as democracy lives up to its faith in the potentialities of human beings, by means of putting into practical operation the democratic moral means by which these capacities may be realized, American democracy will do more than

aid in winning the war. It will also play a significant role in an even more severe test and task, that of winning the peace." (23).

It would not be according to the mind of Dewey to speak of democracy as a way of life and then speak of its method as something else. The two are inseparable. As a way of life it is a method, the method of free interchange of ideas and common use of energies. It is opposed to regimentation, to absolute rule, to a denial of individual responsibility and opposed to any separation of citizens. The American boast that any baby boy may grow up to be the president of his country finds an echo in Dewey's heart. The democratic way supposes that unlimited opportunity must be provided for all, so that the individual's growth and the liberation of all his potentialities will be guaranteed.

"Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-round growth of every member of society." (24).

Note the inclusion of industry. His conception of democracy is wider than the political. It will include every field of human endeavour. In fact it is one of Dewey's beliefs that the dignity of labor is coming into its own. For centuries it was thought to be degrading but it is gaining in public esteem in democratic countries. If every man benefits from society, he should also contribute towards the commonweal. Individuals are responsible for

(23) Ibid., pp. 1099-1100.

(24) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 185.

the time and energy they have and owe a goodly portion of it to society. The days when a man apologized for being "in trade" rather than a gentleman of leisure, are fast disappearing.

"While there is still much admiration and envy of those who can pursue lives of idle conspicuous display, better moral sentiment condemns such lives. Social responsibility for the use of time and personal capacity is more generally recognized than it used to be."
(25).

There is a moral issue here. And Dewey thinks we should persuade people on this ground. By use of the word "moral" he does not mean that there is a moral standard. He just means that there is intelligent evaluation and a choice made. (26). This question of choice is always involved with freedom and Dewey feels that individuals should not be content to leave such choice to their leaders. Every man should be willing, nay anxious, to have his say and make his contribution. When all are persuaded of this sacred trust we can hope for real democracy, real freedom of social inquiry.

Dewey allows one restrictive power. If every man thinks he can make a contribution and every man's opinion differs, what then? Well the American way of voting is quite satisfactory. Every man is a member of the social organism, every man tends to gain or suffer from its various tendencies, hence every man should have his

(25) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 306.

(26) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. I of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 591, 594.

say; and universal suffrage is the best means so far discovered to obtain this. But Dewey feels more strongly about it than this. It is not a mere convenience but majority rule is an intrinsic feature of democracy. The majority is closer to the "whole" which society is than a minority can be. Therefore there is some sort of "right" involved.

"The majority have a right to "rule" because their majority is not the mere sign of a surplus in numbers, but is the manifestation of the purpose of the social organism." (27).

This was written in 1888 and there is a Hegelian trait. However, Dewey has retained his faith in majority rule even though he may not give specific reasons. He will now defend minority views, but when it comes to a vote the minority must submit for the sake of social order. This is the only restriction he allows on the freedom of the individual; otherwise he feels there would be chaos.

Democracy needs much tinkering with yet. Still it is the means towards realizing the social whole and fulfilling individual hopes and capacities. As yet there has not been enough interest in the application of the scientific method on such a vast scale as the social organism but this is needed. Certain skills must be developed before it is possible for us to have a political technology. Dewey feels this need.

(27) The Ethics of Democracy, by John Dewey. Ann Arbor: Andrews & Company, 1888, p. 14.

"The fact...that I have myself done little or nothing in this direction does not detract from my recognition that in the concrete the invention of such a technology is the heart of the problem of intelligent action in political matters." (28).

It follows from all this that his inclusive criterion is democracy. It is his ideal social whole. It has the means to release all human abilities and capacities. It can satisfy man's dreams, at least those dreams which are possibilities. Democrats must recognize this and strive tirelessly for the development of this evolving ideal. But it is not ephemeral. Apply the scientific method in the special sphere and you will soon find that the scientific method is really the democratic way of life.

- (28) EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND VALUE, by John Dewey. In The Philosophy of John Dewey (Vol. 1 of The Library of Living Philosophers), ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 592n.

It has been our purpose to discover the meaning of the term "good" in Dewey's philosophy. After an examination of his general standard of good as found in his religious and social values, we saw that the inclusive criterion, for Dewey, is democracy. It is the purpose of this chapter to discover the standard of good in an individual, What is a good man? Or, what makes a man good?

For the ancients, a good man was a virtuous man. No man was perfect, but in theory at least, the combination of all the virtues and the absence of all the vices will total the ideal man. Of course there had to be a golden mean between excess and defect and Aristotle was the one who worked this out. The balance of man's different powers had to be kept in equilibrium so that there was order within the individual and further order between the individual and other members of society. How low does Dewey feel about such matters?

As usual, it isn't easy to find out. He has a great deal to say about human conduct and its elements but there is more description than judgment. Man does this or man does that, and nothing is said as to whether Dewey approves of it or not. Besides leaving a great deal unsaid, there are hints that it is more prudent not to express one's views. The impression is that a complete revelation might be quite a shock! In speaking of habits

of mind of a moral nature which have developed in us almost from infancy, Dewey says that these infantilisms account for much of our silliness. We absorbed such attitudes by the approval or disapproval of parents before we were old enough to make a judgment, yet these have persisted in our thought and they govern us without our being aware of it.

"To list them would perhaps cost one from "respectable" society." (1).

It would seem that this list might include attitudes and habits which have hitherto been considered desirable traits or even virtues. Is it going to be possible to discover what Dewey approves of and what he thinks futile? Although it may not be possible to give such a list of virtues, still his general philosophy provides abundant leads and his real views can be reconstructed.

Dewey believes that human conduct is the interaction of man's nature with his natural and social environment. His metaphysical views had explained such a contextualism and we are familiar with the interaction aspect. It will be necessary for us to consider the elements in turn recognizing all the while that each element is not isolated, but always connected with the others. To begin then we notice that the individual man acts in certain ways and these ways we attribute to his "character". What is character?

(1) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 69.

"Character is that body of active tendencies and interests in the individual which make him open, ready, warm to certain aims, and callous, cold, blind to others, and which accordingly habitually tend to make him acutely aware of and favorable to certain sorts of consequences, and ignorant of or hostile to other consequences." (2).

In this description of character it is noteworthy that he places an emphasis on the habitual nature of the tendencies. Elsewhere (3), Dewey has referred to character as the interpretation of habits. It will be important for him then, to discuss the origin and development of habits since these decide the individual man's character. He discusses habit, then impulse, then intelligence and finally in the fourth and last part he draws certain conclusions. Briefly, habit represents the permanent tendencies, impulse the less stable elements, and the role of intelligence is to combine the two to best advantage. In other philosophies we may find impulse and habit contrasted, opposed, irreconcilable. For Dewey they are not essentially opposed but should be combined and when this is done the best type of character is produced.

In his discussion of habit, we find the old familiar criticism of everything established and fixed. Habits originate in custom. Children learn from their parents and others around them that certain patterns of conduct are approved and certain

(2) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts. New York: Holt and Co., 1909, p. 255. Only sections written by Dewey will be quoted or referred to.

(3) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 38.

others bring unpleasant consequences. Such responses gradually bring about a practical conviction that "crime does not pay". Dewey's objection is that such convictions have been imposed by vested interests, so to speak. Class distinctions explain this again. In this case the children are the underdogs or victims.

"Control has been vested in an oligarchy...Parents, priests, chiefs, social censors have supplied aims, aims which were foreign to those upon whom they were imposed, to the young, laymen, ordinary folk...everybody knows that good children are those who make as little trouble as possible for their elders." (4).

Conduct which is approved by the oligarchy was considered "good"; anything opposed to such was "evil" or a sin. Dewey cannot believe that such a standard has much value. It has certain conveniences admittedly, especially for those in authority. But as a democrat and opposed to all classes, he cannot believe that such an arrangement will pay. The long term consequences demand something better.

Although Dewey does not approve of this inglorious origin of our habits he is far from deriding the value of habits as such. On the contrary of all the elements in the moral situation, habits are most under our control. (5). There are forces within the individual and forces outside and although none is ever isolated, still we exercise control more by means of habits than

(4) Ibid., p. 2.

(5) Ibid., p. 51.

anything else. They are not only dispositions developed through the repetition of acts but they are the same as will.

"All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they are will." (6).

Once again, recall that Dewey is against any faculty psychology. In his insistence on the contextualism of every event he says that habits mean will; previously he said that character means the interpenetration of habits. And on top of this Dewey adds that the chief good of man is good will. (7). Now we have the whole story. The good man is the man of good will. And good will or a good character means a man with well-developed habits. The final question must be: which habits are good? This is where intelligence must give the answer. Intelligence is the human force which adapts means to ends in view of consequences. The resolution of an indeterminate situation calls for planning and the ability to treat every event as singular. In other words, intelligence is not bound by custom. It knows no laws which are fixed. It operates within the social matrix by realizing new meanings, and thereby creating new values. It is not a slave of tradition. It redirects habit.

(6) Ibid., p. 25, and 42.

(7) Ibid., p. 44.

"For what makes a habit bad is enslavement to old ruts...The genuine heart of reasonableness (and of goodness is conduct) lies in effective mastery of the conditions which now enter into action." (8).

His favourite criterion is thus the influence of a fixed custom. To follow it is bad. To keep one's eyes open to the possibilities offered by change, is good. And now we see the force of his qualities attributed to character: "open, ready and warm". These will be considered good when the person endowed is "open, ready and warm" to the advantages of novelty, and always within the social framework. So insistent is Dewey on this point that he considers the Ten Commandments as quite insufficient. They make no provision for novelty. They imply that human conduct must always be the same. For Dewey this is not the case. Every event is unique and no general rules can have any absolute value. There must always be the burden of discovery and adaptation, and intelligence must invent the required rule for each individual event. The best rule or moral code will thus be a rule of thumb, one of the individual experience.

The test must not be a selfish test. That is, the individual moral judgment must be subject to the general welfare. Dewey would say that individual good must gauge future consequences in the light of the social environment. Or in his own words:

"the supremacy within character of an alert, sincere, and persistent interest in those habits and institutions which forward common ends among men." (9).

(8): Ibid., p. 66-67.

(9) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts, p. 301.

The quotation cited is in the middle of a section on final happiness of the individual. There is great talk of peace of mind, joy and satisfaction, etc, and all of these depend on the individual's recognition of his promoting the common good. Logically this fits in very well with what we have seen of Dewey's metaphysic. The world of experience and nature, these are not really distinct from man. He is an element of the whole, and the best category here is the social. Consequently to be happy, man must contribute towards the progress of that whole. Hence the search for common ends, and the necessity for an intelligence which will further such ends as much as each man is able to do.

"There is an old saying to the effect that it is not enough for a man to be good; he must be good for something. The something for which a man must be good is capacity to live as a social member so that what he gets from living with others balances with what he contributes."
(10).

Here we have the double emphasis, one aspect on activity and the other on the social nature of the goodness described. Nothing static or contemplative will do. Goodness is an act, and a social act. And in support of this attitude Dewey refers approvingly to the Golden Rule. (11). It is an instrument of analysis, a tool for intelligence to use in the determination of values. It will help a man see what the consequences of his act are going

(10) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 417.

(11) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey. Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Company, 1891, p. 194.

to be. It is not a set rule to follow in the sense of a precept. Mind is a kind of doing (12) and this functionalism has its most important application in a moral situation. Indeed for Dewey every situation demanding a judgment is a moral situation (13) and indeed all philosophy is concerned with morals (14). Consequently the moral habits he is concerned with will be active tendencies, practical tools in the solution of difficulties.

After consideration of habits, Dewey goes on to discuss impulse. As contrasted with habit, impulses are principles of change. Certainly nobody would ever say that man is a creature of established habit. These latter are acquired and developed and it is a long struggle to develop desirable habits. Most of the time we act from impulse, without very much thought or without being aware of a reason for our act. When asked for an explanation we simply say it was due to impulse. There is something apologetic in the tone of voice as though we should really be ashamed of impulses. It implies action without a good reason, action without real thought. For Dewey, there is no such implication. They need never be apologized for. In fact he thinks very highly of them.

(12) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, 1929, p. 358.

(13) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p. 187.

(14) Philosophy and Civilization, by John Dewey, p. 8.

"Impulses are the pivots upon which the re-organization of activities turn, they are agencies of deviation, for giving new directions to old habits and changing their quality." (15).

Explained in this way, impulses assume a new dignity. They overcome the fixed and stale way of doing things and give it a freshness which will be suitable for the unique element of each event. They are merely starting points for action.

"They are tentacles sent out to gather...nutrition from customs." (16).

So impulses are means of redirecting activity, of reconstructing growth. As such they will enable the individual to assimilate what is good in custom and accept this for his own further purposes, not selfish purposes, but always within the framework of the social good.

On a later page Dewey says that impulses are practical equivalents of instincts. (17). This is surprising as most people think that instincts are to the individual what customs are to society, i.e. undeviating modes of behaviour. For Dewey, although custom is laden with inertia, instincts are not. They provide the principle for our ability to alter custom. Habits are not easily overcome, since they arise from custom. But impulses or instincts are the means to alter this. The impulses are intermediate between custom and directed habit, if intelligence learns how to control them.

(15) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 93.

(16) Ibid., p. 94.

(17) Ibid., p. 105.

Dewey has written in many places concerning conscience. He speaks of a belief in a peculiar moral faculty and he brands it as false. (18). His reason for doing so is best expressed in his objection to the dualism implied. If conscience is a faculty concerned with a field of morals which is a distinct area, then what of the other areas? Dewey recognizes none. All is a unit within the context of an event and there is no special area to be called a moral field. Hence there is no conscience as a distinct moral faculty.

"The belief in a separate organ involved belief in a separate and independent subject-matter. The question fundamentally at issue is nothing more or less than whether moral values, regulations, principles and objects form a separate and independent domain or whether they are part and parcel of a normal development of a life process." (19).

Recalling his views and oppositions to a fragmentary universe or any theory defending or implying a dualism of any kind, we can understand his reluctance in admitting a separate moral faculty. But he usually derides a conscience which is opposed to intelligence. Dewey thinks that other philosophers have defended the existence of a conscience almost opposed to thought. It supplies ready-made answers somewhat after the fashion of an individual oracle. (20). Place a person endowed with such a conscience in a moral situation and he comes up with the right answer every time. The

(18) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 32.

(19) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 185.

(20) Ibid., p. 187

"I ought" of every event is thus inspired. Dewey rightly ridicules such a notion. Man does not know right from wrong so easily. In high amusement Dewey gives an example of such opposition between a blind conscience and intelligence.

"A student in an ethics class once made this remark: Conscience is infallible, but we should not always follow it. Sometimes we should use our reason." (21).

This shows Dewey's real objection. Conscience is not a separate moral faculty but is the same as reason. Intelligence is the power we must use. It is not blind but judges value in terms of conscience, not in terms of agreement with rules from the past.

Reason or intelligence is not a faculty either. Neither is memory. What Dewey means by intelligence includes the whole thought process. The whole event must be considered and every element therein. Thus intelligence implies not only a thinker but an environment, both individual and social. No man simply thinks. He thinks about something. And his thought is conditioned by his early environment, education, family, social standing, economic status, political views, and the influence which public opinion has on him. Here we have the elements, at least the more obvious ones, of an event wherein a man begins to think. As his thought is thus bound up with the social environment and is conditioned by the social consequences of his reasoning (What will the neighbors say?), then such intelligence is wider in scope

(21) *ibid.*

(21) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts, p. 319.

than the man concerned. His ideas came from outside of him; they will have consequences outside of him, but this "outside" is the social environment. Hence the word intelligence means more from a social than from an individual viewpoint.

"It thinks" is a truer psychological statement than "I think". (22).

Intelligence is thus bound up with community. Dewey's approach to the moral problem will therefore be from a social aspect. Character has social roots. And we will be misled if we explain it from an individual viewpoint exclusively, or even primarily.

Dewey does not deny individuality. But he gives it his own interpretation. And his explanation is helpful in understanding character. The latter is thought of as personal, over against a specific environment. It is thought of as permanent or habitual and thus explanatory of specific conduct. This is too permanent for Dewey. We are changing every moment of our lives. There is nothing absolutely permanent about us, and this is true of character as well. The explanation is that every event is unique, every moral situation a special event, and individuality will include all the elements of each event.

"What do we mean by individuality? We may distinguish two factors--or better two aspects, two sides--in individuality. On one side it means special disposition, temperament, gifts, bent, or inclination; on the other side it means special station, situation, limitations, surroundings, opportunities, etc. Or,

let us say, it means specific capacity and specific environment. Each of these elements apart from the other, is a bare abstraction, and without reality."
(23).

The accentuation on the word specific is typical of Dewey's thought. And it is important in his consideration of character. The latter is bound to have this aspect. It changes with the specific event. Consequently we cannot list a number of qualities always found in a "good" character. What would be good for one situation would not be so for the next. About all we can say is that the traits or habits of character whose effect is to sustain or develop social values must be called virtues; otherwise they are vices.

Even virtues must change their meaning from time to time. Thus a very desirable virtue is chastity. But then the meaning of chastity will vary from age to age. In one time and place it may mean one wife; elsewhere or at another time it might mean four wives either simul or successively, as the Moslems and Hollywood people do today. Dewey illustrates this by comparing savage tribes with modern people but the point is exactly the same. (24). The same argument will hold for all virtues; his two samples are chastity and patriotism.

Dewey writes of "cardinal" aspects of virtue. These refer to the method of exercising virtues. A whole-hearted complete

(23) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p. 97.

(24) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts, p. 401.

interest, persistently active, unmixed and single, these are cardinal traits and desirable. They are not virtues themselves but are applicable to all virtues. Once again it is method which is approved, rather than content. Its not what you do but how you do it which counts. (25). Again we have a hint of what a good man is: And if we add that virtue and duty are co-extensive (26), we have the safeguard that he is not saying that Bluebeard was virtuous. Such a murderer may have the whole-hearted interest in killing people but his act is hardly one to further ends of the social whole.

The crux of this problem is to reconcile the self with the common good. If activities of individuals are good when in conformity with the social ends, is it true that a man must have no personal desires which are legitimate in their own right and independently of the good of the community? Must every act be referred to society? According to Dewey this approach to the problem makes it insoluble. We are contrasting self with society. on the contrary, they are not opposition but are elements of one unit. Morality must concern itself with explaining this. As individuality includes the personal and social environment, so conduct must include both sides or aspects of the whole. And character is not an aspect of self alone but includes the social environment. In accordance with this Dewey will express disapproval of self-control. (27). This is restrictive. Instead

(25) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p.230.

(26) Ibid., p. 225.

(27) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 139.

of being cabined, cribbed, confined, the self should be expansive, opening always to wider possibilities, enlarging its horizons. And this must be so because the moral end and the true self are both social. (28).

"The solution of the problem through the individual's voluntary identification of himself with social relations and aims is neither rare nor utopian." (29).

If we can develop methods whereby individuals will be convinced of this on a big scale, then such methods will develop good character in every citizen. It has happened and it happens daily that men achieve this identification of personal desire with the social welfare. Conspicuous historical names come to mind but we also know countless individuals doing their duty daily and quite happy about it because they know they are helping the social fabric. Their individual aim is one with the social aim and therein they derive their happiness. It should be the same for everybody.

Morals are concerned with developing good character, and the moral criterion must take the completest possible view of the act. (30). The test will be whether the act or law in question really

(28) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p. 118, 216.

(29) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts, p. 397.

(30) The Study of Ethics; a Syllabus, by John Dewey. Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Company, 1894, p. 22.

frees the individual capacities for the greatest benefit of the social whole. (31). And from the aspect of society there must be freedom not just for one individual but for all, that each may contribute his share. (32). When both of these aspects are satisfied, morals are doing their proper work and desirable character traits will be developed.

In summary, we are to consider character from these points: habit, impulse, intelligence. Habits originate in custom but they are also conditions of intellectual efficiency. (33). They represent the stable element which must be altered, controlled, directed. Impulses are blind (34) but still they are the twins of thought. (35). Impulses have a capricious element and must be co-ordinated with habits. This is the role of intelligence where we find the essence of freedom and choice. (36). When intelligence combines the effects of habit and impulse within the proper social framework by identifying the self as social, then desirable character traits will be developed. The good man will result. Just how this can be done is the business of education.

(31) Ethics, by John Dewey and James H. Tufts, p. 42-3.

(32) Ibid., p. 43.

(33) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 172.

(34) Ibid., p. 254.

(35) Ibid., p. 171.

(36) Ibid., p. 311.

No discussion of the views of John Dewey would be complete without a mention of his educational views. In this field his philosophy has had its greatest influence. The value of this influence has been a subject of bitter debate but it is at least agreed that his has been the most powerful single influence in American education in the past fifty years, and it is scarcely on the wane yet.

For our purpose it will not be necessary to outline all his theories but simply take a few samples of his attitudes. These will reveal other aspects of his standard of values, or what he means by good. As a general indication we might list the qualities of education which Dewey deems desirable. His theories claim to be libertarian as opposed to authoritarian, they encourage initiative rather than obedience, diversity over uniformity, they stress desire rather than duty, they promote activity and voluntary co-operation rather than receptivity and compulsory co-ordination.

It is useful to consider these qualities in the light of the formation of character since, for Dewey, the ultimate purpose of education is character-forming. (1). Therefore after seeing what he means by character, it will be helpful to see what he

(1) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909, p. 2.

means by education. The usual charge is that Dewey favours having schoolchildren learn how to sew, weave, cook and do manual work of all kinds. Is this what he means by education? And if so how can these mould character? And also, what sort of character is this likely to produce? The answers, as usual, lie in Dewey's reaction to other systems of education which he conceives to be inadequate.

His outlook reflects the industrial revolution and his conception of democracy. As people left the farms and modern city life developed, Dewey thought that this new condition of things required a new educational system. Formerly the household and neighborhood system was one wherein every child was familiar with the shearing of sheep, carding and spinning of wool, raking of candles.

"The supply of flour, of lumber, of foods, of building materials, of household furniture, even of metal ware, of nails, hinges, hammers, etc., was in the immediate neighborhood, in shops which were constantly open to inspection and often centers of neighborhood congregation." (2).

With the whole process of living thus revealed to the child's inspection he was more prepared for life than a later product of the three R's. With the new urban civilization, children had no idea of life outside the classroom and they could see no application for their geography, arithmetic, reading and writing. In

(2) The School and Society, by John Dewey. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1900, p. 23.

protest against this Dewey says that the error is in a faculty-theory of man. If you imagine that every human being is a bundle of faculties or separate powers and you try to educate or develop each of these by itself, your man as a final product will be ill prepared for life.

"An influential but defective theory is that which conceives that mind has at birth, certain mental faculties or powers, such as perceiving, remembering, willing, judging, generalizing, attending, etc., and that education is the training of these faculties through repeated exercise." (3).

The theory assumes that outside the knower or student there are corresponding divisions. Dewey opposes a curriculum which presents reality in segments. The child will not find this to be true. Why distort things from what they are? Besides, the whole theory of drilling one faculty at a time will inevitably produce lopsided individuals. One will have a wonderful memory but nothing else; the next chap will have a strong will, but lacking judgment he will not have a desirable character. Mind is not a separate faculty but should rather be regarded as a group of contents. (4). It is an outcome, a function, not a primitive power. (5). Dewey has a further objection to an implied dualism. Too many people accept distinct faculties or

(3) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 80.

(4) Ibid., p. 93.

(5) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 247.

powers which are supposedly spiritual, and deny separate manual powers. If a man has a faculty of reasoning which is spiritual, why has he not a power or faculty to play golf, or mend shoes?

"The simple fact is that there is no isolated faculty of observation, or memory, or reasoning, anymore than there is an original faculty of blacksmithing, carpentering, or steam engineering."
(6).

In fact there is never any bifurcation in real life. No separate faculties and no man isolated from his social environment. Any theory which so divides reality must fail. The things taught must have immediate application and the student must see and understand this.

"A gospel of duty separated from empirical purposes and results tends to gag intelligence." (7).

This statement applies fully to both the political and the educational field. Dewey feels that such an abstract thing as duty can never have sufficient appeal. It has failed in the past and it will always fail. What we need is something more concrete. His illustration is discipline in the classroom. The chaotic results which teachers complain of are to be attributed to trying to force the children to do what they do not like, and all this is done in the name of duty. Blind obedience of this type will

(6) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, p. 13.

(7) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 54.

fail. This is discipline as drill. (8). We are reminded of Mr. Dooley, the saloon-keeper of Archey Road: "It don't matter much what you study--as long as you don't like it."

What Mr. Dewey proposes is a more organic view of education. After all, education is to social life what nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life. (9). Besides this analogy with growth, there is Dewey's identification of education with morals to be considered.

"Morals means growth of conduct in meaning... Conduct is all one with growing. Growing and growth are the same fact expanded in actuality or telescoped in thought. In the largest sense of the word, morals is education. It is learning the meaning of what we are about and employing that meaning in action." (10).

The close relationship of education with moral theory is a favourite theme. Dewey believes that the process of education and the moral process are different names for the same thing. (11). Obviously that part of education which we call "schooling" is only a part of the process. Real education must go on for a lifetime. It will thus have wider-aims than the merely scholastic. In fact we are given three of the general aims as follows:

- (8) How We Think, by John Dewey, p. 63.
- (9) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 11.
- (10) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 280.
- (11) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 183.

"Development according to nature, social efficiency, and culture or personal mental enrichment." (12).

Following Rousseau whom he quotes with approval, Dewey uses nature to mean those native capacities of each individual which should be developed for the good of society. Combining nature with nurture will get the social efficiency, his second general aim. Finally the internal enrichment of a mind as opposed to a socialized disposition is called culture. The combination of all three aims will give an organic result, an educated man and a good citizen. The moral values are obvious. For a general statement of the meaning of education we have this:

"A truly humane education consists in an intelligent direction of native activities in the light of the possibilities and necessities of the social situation."
(13).

Dewey has great confidence in the power of education. He believes that it can transform physical and animal nature. (14). It is not an easy problem; in fact it is a larger problem than the problem of the family as a unit of society. (15). Goodness knows there are troubles enough trying to set a pattern for families to follow. For Dewey education is worse. And yet he is optimistic. Past results have been discouraging admittedly,

(12) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 144.

(13) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 96.

(14) SOCIAL AS A CATEGORY, by John Dewey, In Monist, April 1928, XXXVIII, p. 176.

(15) EDUCATION AND BIRTH CONTROL, by John Dewey, In The Nation, 27 January 1932, p. 112.

but this was because the problem was approached in the wrong way. Mind had been thought of as a permanent and complete thing. The new view is to consider it as a function, as outcome rather than a primitive thing. Consequently, to develop this function we must provide an environment which will induce proper activity. (16). The individual who serves as our example is "in" his environment as a plant is in sunlight and soil. (17). There are real connections. And no student can learn things properly unless he is placed in the proper environment. Control this latter and you control and direct the educational process. Ignore the necessity of a controlled environment and your educational system will fail.

"I am told that there is a swimming school in a certain city where youth are taught to swim without going into the water, being repeatedly drilled in the various movements which are necessary for swimming. When one of the young men so trained was asked what he did when he got into the water, he laconically replied, "Sunk". (18).

Lacking the proper environment, the result was necessarily a failure. The same will hold for every other educational experiment. Hence Dewey wants the student to learn by doing. Instead of telling him how wool is carded or spun, let the student spin some wool for himself. Show him how to mend boots, drive nails,

(16) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 162.

(17) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 296.

(18) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, p. 13.

saw wood, etc. and then let him do these things. The experience will give him an understanding which is incomparable in value. The reason is not so much that you want him to follow one of these trades. The purpose is to show him the connection between what is done and its consequences. This is true thinking. (19).

When habits are already established, they cannot be changed directly (20). But it can be done indirectly by modifying the conditions of the environment. Carefully select the objects of attention, and provide the subject with the means of satisfying desire and the direction of the process can be controlled. There is no question of ordering the students to do this or that under pain of disobedience. Instead the social control is indirect, emotional and intellectual, not personal. (21). This appeal to the dispositions of the individual through identity of interest and understanding is the proper function of education (22).

There are certain motives which are often appealed to and which Dewey dislikes. Affection for the teacher, competition, preparation for a remote future, (23) all of these are unsatisfactory. Instead we should realize that interest and discipline

(19) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 177.

(20) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 20.

(21) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 47.

(22) Ibid., p. 48.

(23) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, p. 23,24,25.

are correlatives. (24). If proper interest is provided and in the correct environment, discipline will take care of itself. It is not absence of discipline which Dewey advocates; it is a new ideal of discipline, a mental discipline which will eliminate the necessity for any coercion. (25).

The word discipline has reference to maintaining order among school children. It also includes a reference to the content of the curriculum. If Dewey favours the project method of teaching as more organic, what has he to say of the traditional divisions of human learnings? Categorically he does not like them. They represent an authoritarian scheme of thought which he intensely deplores. And in modern educational circles there is a school of thought which has fought with Dewey many times. Five men in particular represent the opposition: Hutchins and Adler of Chicago; Barr, Buchanan, of St. John's College, Maryland; and Van Doren of Columbia. On Dewey's side we find Sidney Hook, Arthur Murphy, Irwin Edman, Floyd Allport, etc. The views held by the latter are expressed in a book attacking the former group. (26). Almost all the same ground is covered by Dewey alone in his paper CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT of the previous summer, 1944. (27).

- (23) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, p. 23,24,25.
- (24) Democracy and Education, by John Dewey, p. 161.
- (25) How We Think, by John Dewey, p. 64.
- (26) The Authoritarian Attempt to Capture Education. Papers from the Second Conference on the Scientific Spirit and Democratic Faith. By John Dewey, Sidney Hook and Others. New York: King's Crown Press. 164 pp.
- (27) CHALLENGE TO LIBERAL THOUGHT, by John Dewey. In Fortune, August 1944, 155-219.

In this chapter we are interested only in the epithets, as these reveal all the qualities which Dewey thinks desirable for education.

The group led by Hutchins and Adler sponsor a movement called Education for Freedom. They have chosen approximately one hundred books which are recognized by most people as being classics. From these books they believe that the best education can be taken. The wisdom of the ages is then expounded to the student, supported by the authority of these sages. According to Dewey, the impression given to the students is that truth is stable, fixed, unchanging, and has been discovered and recorded in the hundred books; accept it as such or perish. This type of education is also charged with almost total neglect of experiment or empirical approach to science.

The controversy has been an acrid one with Adler calling Dewey "public enemy number one." The Education for Freedom group claim that they yield to no one in their use of the scientific method and laboratory studies. They also claim that this latter type of education is incomplete without other branches of learning which cannot be subjected to empirical methods, e.g., logic and metaphysics and history, etc. However interesting the whole thing may be, let it suffice for us now to point out the qualities which Dewey advocates: education must be:

1. Liberal, that is, we must not cram information down students throats and force them to accept such facts as truth as the authoritarians do.

2. Active as opposed to non-experimental. The students should not have to sit quietly, accept facts, write notes and then memorize these facts to pass examination. Instead let them learn by doing, in an empirical environment. Dewey stresses activity for the pupil; never passive receptivity.
3. Education should promote initiative rather than obedience. Present the student with an interesting problem. Give him the means to solve it. Then let his initiative take over, without restrictive supervision.
4. Education should appeal to desire rather than to duty. There will be voluntary co-operation in one case and coercion in the other.
5. Education should be democratic, that is, for everybody and for as many years as they care to attend school and there should be some system devised for adult life as well. The process is part of life and should endure as long as life.
6. Education should be cost-free, subsidized by the government if necessary.

7. Education should be free from the control of any church, religious sect, dogma, established principles, convention, custom, tradition, or other institution having a special axe to grind. (Presumably the State should not interfere in deciding the curriculum, etc.)
8. Education should be social, that is it should be directed towards the common good.
9. Above all, education should be empirical, experimental, and recognize the instrumental role of knowledge.

Things are not what they should be and Dewey and his friends readily admit this. In fact, the curriculum is so overloaded that it needs simplification, being something of a patchwork. The result is that even in the schools where Dewey's ideas prevail, these same problems exist. Concerning the whole sad tale he was moved to this admission:

"We agree that we are uncertain as to where we are going and where we want to go, and why we are doing what we do." (28).

Such candor is rather unexpected. It is admitted that there is no unity. And still Dewey has faith in the power of education

although as yet we have no sure means of forming character. (29).
 The crude devices of praise, blame, exhortation and punishment are inadequate. Techniques to stimulate interest and stir desire must be discovered to interest students in the problems to be solved. Pointing this interest in the direction of social progress, education will be the same as morals and will fulfill its purpose: to make good men.

"In so far as the school represents, in its own spirit, a genuine community life; in so far as what are called school discipline, government, order, etc., are the expressions of this inherent social spirit; in so far as the methods used are those that appeal to the active and constructive powers, permitting the child to give out and thus serve; in so far as the curriculum is so selected and organized as to provide the material for affording the child a consciousness of the world in which he has to play a part, and the demands he has to meet; so far as these ends are met, the school is organized on an ethical basis." (30).

With schools recognized as community life, there will be a realistic approach to education. With an experimental attitude and method, there will be adequate characters formed. When proper environment is provided, habits will be indirectly trained, with an appeal made to desire rather than obedience to any authority. Society will provide a general aim and all aims must be kept within the social framework. Individuals will improve their

(29) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 324.

(30) Moral Principles in Education, by John Dewey, p. 43-44.

personal values and grow in the culture they possess which in turn will be to the advantage of the social whole. All of these qualities will make education the means whereby good men will be produced. Liberate the powers of the individual and personal as well as social good will ensue.

We have finally arrived at the denouement of our study of Dewey. His philosophy is so involved that no lesser word seems adequate to express any attempt at unravelling it. Anything but the most careful reading of Instrumentalism will leave the reader with a confusion of metaphysics, ethics, psychology and what Dewey calls logic. Just how all of these can be interdependent and yet distinct depends, in my view, upon his theory of valuation. If it can be determined what Dewey judges to be valuable, or what his standard may be, then it will be possible to understand his metaphysics, for basically, philosophy is really a criticism of values. (1). Similarly, a grasp of the scope of values explains his theory of morals; finally a grasp of the method of evaluating will explain his psychology with its biological flavour, and logic, as inquiry.

In a general way we have already seen what Dewey considers as religious values, social values and finally his combination of these in the ideal democracy. In an individual, goodness is coterminous with character and this latter is developed in education. What we must finally determine is the nature of the process whereby we say that some things are valuable, or what makes a thing valuable. Once again, Dewey's position developed by way of a reaction and the explanation is made easier by use of a contrast.

(1) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 403.

1. Values

Two terms to be distinguished are "values" and "valuation". The former refers to ends-alone; the latter involves means-consequences. Values will refer to what we prize or cherish or hold dear. Valuation will imply a decision to be made, an estimate, a comparison, a judgment. The former, values, imply something fixed and as such Dewey does not like the expression.

"Speaking literally, there are no such things as values...There are things, all sorts of things, having the unique, the experienced, but undefinable, quality of value...Calling the thing a value is like calling a ball struck in baseball, a hit or a foul." (2).

Nevertheless, we commonly use the expression "values". And indeed so does Dewey. He says that values involve a liking, bias, interest, before we consider them as existing. (3). As this liking, bias and interest varies with every context, then each value must be considered on its own; there can be no comparison with a standard. There is simply a valuable thing, valuable to me here and now, and as such I call it a "value".

A contrast which Dewey uses between values and valuation is to say that the former may be called emotional-values, and the latter intellectual-values. (4) Thus, under values you must

- (2) VALUES, LIKING AND THOUGHT, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 8 November 1923, XI, p. 617.
- (3) THE MEANING OF VALUE, by John Dewey. In Journal of Philosophy, 26 February 1925, XXII, p. 128-129.
- (4) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey. In International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. Chicago: University of

list all those things which you prize, esteem, etc. without the necessity of judgment. For example, the average man today prizes \$1,000.00. No thought is required, it is simply something which he habitually holds dear. If you asked why this should be so, then thought must enter, judgment, plans, etc; that is, the purpose of desiring the money must be explained and this involves valuation (the second term). But to revert to the first term, values, they are accepted ends, either things or acts, and they have an intrinsic quality, not an instrumental value.

"Every case where moral action is required becomes of equal importance and urgency with every other. If the need and deficiencies of a specific situation indicate improvement of health as the end and good, then for that situation health is the ultimate and supreme good. It is no means to something else. It is a final and intrinsic value. The same thing is true of economic status..." (5).

So as a value, having something intrinsically good about it, and involving no judgment, Dewey will use the term or expression "emotional value". Each situation stands by itself.

"Values are values, things immediately having certain intrinsic qualities. Of them as values there is accordingly nothing to be said; they are what they are." (6).

(5) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 175.

(6) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 396.

This view has universal application. It extends to the field of morals, as well as everything else, indeed it has particular application in morals. In that branch of learning there is the view that certain ends are moral values, that is these ends should or ought to be attained and as judgment is required. (7). Thus moral values such as chastity, honesty, etc. have attributed to them a certain intrinsic quality which holds for all time and places. Dewey feels that there is no purpose in discussing these, "they are what they are" and discussion will add nothing. As possessing value intrinsically and not in comparison with anything else, they might be called "invaluable".

In the abstract or at large, outside of the order of existence, these values cannot mean very much. Honesty as an ideal can have little effect unless the person concerned can see an existential context. As a value, Dewey says that the existential question is the real one. (8). Reality comes with existence. To prove his point Dewey is always ready to show that eternal values have failed, "precisely because eternity is not real. Values are immanent in human experience; there is nothing transcendental about them."

"While others have cried "Lo here; lo, there!" Dewey has continually insisted that the kingdom of good is within human experience." (9).

- (7) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 496.
- (8) THE MEANING OF VALUE, by John Dewey, p. 128.
- (9) DEWEY'S THEORY OF VALUE, by T.V. Smith, in Monist, 1922, XXXII, p. 347.

The objection to values is that we have here a new name for an old idea. What used to be called ends are now called values. (10): If this is the case then all the old objections to ends must now be applied to values. As ends were fixed, stable, permanent, established by custom, convention or tradition so also we will find this with values. Dewey believes that the old error was a confusion concerning ends and means. Ends were true values; means derived their value only from their connection with ends.

"Upon the whole, the record of the history of philosophy displays a division into things called ends-in-themselves and other things that are mere means, intrinsically indifferent to ends-in-themselves, the ulterior source of value; into noumenal and phenomenal, physical and ideal, material and spiritual. All such separations root in the separation of ends and means from one another." (11).

As a simple illustration of the fallacy, Dewey points out that the value of ends frequently depends on the means. Thus if the means are very difficult, you lose interest in the end. Its value involves a consideration of the necessary means. (12). In fact, means and end should never be separated.

A ludicrous example of what happens when means and end are separated in evaluation is provided, says Dewey, by Lamb's

(10) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 396.

(11) PHILOSOPHY, by John Dewey, In Whither Mankind: a Panorama of Modern Civilization, ed. Charles Austin Beard, p. 328.

(12) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey, p. 25.

celebrated Dissertation Upon Roast Pig. In the story, a man's house burnt down and his pigs were destroyed. Inadvertently touching the still-smouldering pigs, his fingers were scorched and he instinctively tried to cool them by applying them to his mouth, and thus discovered for mankind the advantages of roast pig. After that, as soon as any pig of his farrowed, the house was seen to burn to the ground...and there was more roast pig. Dewey says the story is funny because we approve of the end, that is, eating roast pig; but the thing is ludicrous when you consider the means: burning a house each time. The solution would be never to separate means from ends and all would be well.

Ends by themselves or consideration of values alone, must lead to trouble. It means first of all that we accept already established ends. These came from custom, convention, tradition. They have been accepted without judgment, without any question. They are emotional values, and lack an intellectual element. They are fixed in nature and number, and they ignore the variation of contexts of events. On the other hand, Dewey wants us to consider valuation; a process involving what he calls intellectual values.

2. Valuation

The second use for values involves the existential element. It also concerns itself with choice, and this latter is the very core of human conduct. In fact, astronomy, physics, chemistry,

etc. do not have expressions referring to value-situations. (13). But on the other hand, all human conduct is influenced by estimates of value, or valuation. He believes this to be so because human conduct was referred to a moral standard with God as a final end. All other values or ends were then part of a hierarchy of values. There was always a better or worse, a greater or less, and they were all designed to lead to God with greater or lesser efficacy. Take away the notion of God and these values lose their hierarchical nature. Each must stand on its own, irrespective of the other values.

Now Dewey rejects God as the supreme value but he still favours an order of preference among values. He says this takes place in every judgment. Our intellectual values involve appraising, estimating etc., to determine which course of action would be better. An intellectual value-situation occurs when we must choose between this or that thing, between this or that mode of conduct. The reason for the choice is that the value is not fixed but is considered with reference to a further end. Ends are endless; one only leads to another, none is ever fixed or final. An end is simply a means to a further end. In this sense every end is possessed of an instrumental value. The wise man can recognize the role of an end not as fixed but as having an instrumental value with reference towards a further end. Wisdom

(13) Ibid., p. 2.

is not a search for already established ends, it is rather the development of a habit of mind which makes the right judgment in every event, each of which is a unique experience. It is thus concerned with action and indeed is above all concerned with human action or conduct.

"Moral goods and ends exist only when something has to be done. The fact that something has to be done proves that there are deficiencies, evils in the existing situation. This ill is just the specific ill that it is. It never is an exact duplicate of anything else. Consequently the good of the situation has to be discovered, projected and attained on the basis of the exact defect and trouble to be rectified. It cannot intelligently be injected into the situation from without. Yet it is the part of wisdom to compare cases." (14).

It follows that as there is no absolute good, there is equally no absolute evil. Each particular event has its evil aspect inasmuch as evil means not having things as we want them. (15). The problem of evil is not metaphysical or theological, it is rather a matter of choosing between two things. (16). What is better, is the good; what is rejected is the evil of that particular situation. (17). What Dewey is teaching is a species

(14) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 169.

(15) LIBERATION OF MODERN RELIGION, by John Dewey. In Yale Review, 1934, N.S. XXIII, p. 762.

(16) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 177.

(17) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 278.

of meliorism. Conditions can always be bettered, no matter how bad or even how good they may be. (18). As good is relative, so is evil, and the nature of the latter proves that there is no God. (19).

What we must do is use our thinking, our judgment, as instrumental towards improving conditions around us. This is the role of true thinking. What the philosophers must do is to develop a theory of criticism in accordance with this attitude. Dewey feels that any theory of values is an entrance into the field of criticism. (20). And what this implies is an examination into our motives for choice. It is obvious that we have desires and interest. There is a certain liking present which determines conduct. It is an indispensable ingredient of the valuation-situation but it is not the only ingredient. (21). There is also a desire involved, a desire to improve things. (22). We will therefore have to study the nature of interest or liking, and desire, until we can evolve a method for directing them. (23). Take the example of a person seated quietly in a theatre when a shout arises: "Help!" "Fire!".

(18) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 178.

(19) LIBERATION OF MODERN RELIGION, by John Dewey, p. 762.

(20) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 398.

(21) THE MEANING OF VALUE, by John Dewey, p. 130.

(22) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey, p. 15.

(23) Ibid., p. 17-18.

"There are thus involved (i) aversion to an existing situation and attraction toward a prospective possible situation and (ii) a specifiable and testable relation between the latter as an end and certain activities as means for accomplishing it. Two problems for further discussion are thus set. One of them is the relation of active or behavioral attitudes to what may be called (for the purpose of identification) liking and disliking, while the other is the relation of valuation to things as means-end." (24).

The disliking concerns being burned; the desire concerns escape. The real problem of valuation is how to escape, that is a relation between escape as an end and certain activities as means. A question of human conduct has arisen and intellectual values are present because a choice must be made. Thought here is really instrumental in bringing about a desired state of things, or resolving an indeterminate situation. The crux of the problem, for Dewey, is the recognition of a relationship between means and consequences: this is the core, the very heart of valuation. This is the essence of criticism and the real business of logic as inquiry.

"Means-consequences constitute a single undivided situation. Consequently when thought and discussion enter, when theorizing sets in, when there is anything beyond bare immediate enjoyment and suffering, it is the means-consequences relationship that is considered...And such a procedure is criticism." (25).

The former attitude had been to accept certain ends, and

(24) Ibid., p. 13.

(25) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 397.

search for means to attain them. Now the emphasis must be switched. Examination will show that ends are not fixed either in their nature or in their number. In fact when we realize that each good is the good of that particular situation, we will see that goods are multiplied with every situation or event. As for criticism, instead of bearing upon a search for means, it must try to state the relations of things as means to other things as consequences. And the judgment involved must be verifiable. Historically ends were accepted, not verified. Now the relationship between means and consequences must be verified in every case, just as the means to escape was verified in the example "Help!" "Fire!" Henceforth, criticism and inquiry must always contain verifiability as essential ingredient. (26). All judgments of practice are evaluations and there is no inquiry which does not involve such judgments. (27). It is wrong to assume that scientific inquiry must accept ends or values and that its business is merely to determine adequate means. Instead each situation must be subjected to observation, controlled experiment, verification, etc., before we can hope to make real progress.

"ends in their capacity of values can be validly determined only on the basis of the tensions, obstructions and positive potentialities that are found, by controlled observation, to exist in the actual situation." (28).

(26) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey, p. 21.

(27) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 174.

(28) Ibid., p. 503.

The existential element is present when we discuss real values. There is also a question of liking or desire. Inquiry must also concern itself with developing liking so that higher values will be developed. This involves education and taste. Liking alone makes no provision for this. (29). This must always be kept within empirical bounds to guarantee verification. And this high standard of judgment which we must develop will range over every field of human activity, in logic, morals and esthetics.

"educated interest or taste is, ultimately, supreme, the unum necessarium, in morals (where it is called conscience), in matters intellectual (where it is called insight), as well as in esthetics where it is more usually called taste." (30).

"Conscience in morals, taste in fine arts and conviction in beliefs pass insensibly into critical judgments." (31).

3. Conclusions

What is Dewey's standard? If the question means discovering a set rule which must be applied in human conduct, we must say that Dewey has none. If it means a goal or ideal towards which instrumentalism must strive, then it can well be the development of taste in esthetics, insight in intellectual matters and conscience in morals. The determination of meaning for each of these

(29) THE MEANING OF VALUE, by John Dewey, p. 131.

(30) Ibid., p. 132.

(31) Experience and Nature., by John Dewey, p. 401.

must lie in their verification in human experience. What we find to work out best in the long run, within the social framework, for all men and all ages, this will decide our aim or goal. As we saw earlier this will be a shifting goal as the nature of the social category evolves and the goal must evolve with it. The problem of valuation will be to develop our ability in an experiential situation to choose the better of two things or activities, the one which will pass the empirical test.

We can use certain general propositions such as the Golden Rule in making our judgments. But this Golden Rule is only an instrument of analysis, an aid, and we must not think we are bound by it. (32). It will be a guide, but not an infallible standard; there is no such standard. Rules of appraisal or valuation must not express custom, convention, tradition, but must state relations between things as means and other things as consequences, and all of this must take place in empirically ascertained and tested existential relations. Examples would be the doctor whose experience justifies his telling you what is "better"; or, engineers stating what the maximum load for a bridge might be, since both of these situations are verifiable. (33).

As far as emotional values are concerned, Dewey does not

(32) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p. 194.

(33) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey, p. 21.

admit having any standard, indeed he will not admit the possibility of any fixed criterion. What makes a thing good? He will not answer. What makes a thing better? Now you are in the field of intellectual values so Dewey will say that experience is your criterion. A judgment must be made between two or more courses of action and the choice involved raises the question to the intellectual level. The pattern of conduct must now stand the empirical test. Whichever alternative promises a better result will be chosen. And so he arrives at this definition:

"Valuations are empirically observable patterns of behaviour and may be studied as such." (34).

There is no standard of intrinsic value. This attributed quality of value has come to us from tradition, custom, convention. To ask what is valuable is to appeal to the established, fixed attitudes for ready answers. To ask for a method of evaluating is something else again. This latter refers to intellectual values and here Dewey says we need a theory of criticism, some method of discriminating between values, on the basis of origin and consequences. In fact this is the function of philosophy which is a criticism of criticisms.

"Criticism is discriminating judgment, careful appraisal, and judgment is appropriately termed criticism whenever the subject matter of discrimination concerns goods or values." (35).

(34) Ibid., p. 51

(35) Experience and Nature, by John Dewey, p. 398.

So we need a theory of criticism; not a theory of value but a theory of values. This means that judgment must determine our choice between values in the solution of an indeterminate situation. No value stands alone as a value. It is simply accepted, enjoyed, possessed and there can be no theory about it. (36). But when there are two values, that is two things or activities which present us with a choice, then judgment and the necessity for criticism is obvious. The approach to morals must take place in this light: no single thing or act can compel acceptance by its intrinsic worth; there must be a choice presented such that what we choose is the good of that situation and what we reject is the evil.

"Approach to human problems in terms of moral blame and moral approbation, of wickedness or righteousness, is probably the greatest single obstacle now existing to development of competent methods in the field of social subject-matter." (37).

This may appear radical and shocking but it follows logically from what has been said. The idea of a fixed standard for blame or approval implies a theory of value, that is, emotional value. It supposes intrinsic worth and denies the freedom of choice. For Dewey, there must be choice; the person must be free to choose either alternative and the one he rejects is the bad of that situation. His criterion must not be a past rule but an

(36) Ibid., p. 403.

(37) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, by John Dewey, p. 495.

estimated consequence. Experience is thus the ultimate criterion of value, an empirical test rather than an authoritative ruling. (36).

This emphasis on intellectual values, upon a choice, a judgment, leads us to the importance of inquiry. For Dewey, every act involving choice is a moral act, and choice always involved judgment. But judgment is the result of inquiry. Thus thought or inquiry is the instrument which produces judgment and solves indeterminate situations. Instrumentalism is not a mere theory of truth; it is equally a theory of goodness since it enables us to judge and choose between values. And since the rise and development of the experimental method, inquiry or instrumentalism has made its greatest contribution in moral situations. Hence it is quite in order for Dewey to call his Logic a theory of inquiry. It is not concerned with abstract truth, but applied truth, a truth which involves judging between two or more goods or values. Instrumentalism and truth involves instrumentalism and goodness, and the consideration of values makes this clear.

Valuation involves choice, and this must be preceded by thinking. Dewey disregards emotional values as fixed; he is vitally interested in intellectual values which change with every value-situation. The old system appealed to fixed values. The new system of valuation applied to human conduct is scientifically warranted, not supported by custom, tradition or convention. More and more this new system is finding favour and Dewey is heartened

by this condition of things.

"It is enough that such cases show that it is possible for rules of appraisal or evaluation to rest upon scientifically warranted physical generalizations and that the ratio of rules of this type to those expressing more customary habits is on the increase." (39).

And this tendency to judge or evaluate by gauging the direction of improvement is equally applicable with reference to men. Thus the bad man is the one who is growing less good; and the good man is the man (no matter what the past was like) who is getting better. Direction rather than fixed result decides values. (40).

And for a definition of good, Dewey gives this:

"the end of action, or the good, is the realised will, the developed or satisfied self--found in satisfaction of desires according to law." (41).

This law, he explains, is not external but is the law of man's own desires as it demands that particular activities be regulated in such a way, that natural desire be so reconstructed, as to bring the whole man into action. (42). The moral good is the realization of individuality, by the exercise of personal interests (43), the interaction of specific capacity and specific environment. With such satisfaction of the individual in mind, we are prepared to have Dewey call the common good a good which

(39) THEORY OF VALUATION, by John Dewey, p. 22.

(40) Reconstruction in Philosophy, by John Dewey, p. 176.

(41) Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics, by John Dewey, p. 95.

(42) Ibid., p. 95-96.

(43) Ibid., p. 85.

in satisfying one, satisfies others. (44).

What is the real problem of values? It is the development of techniques, of methods of inquiry which will reveal the relationship between means and consequences. A proper understanding of this relationship will produce the wise man. And the conduct of such a man will constitute the good. Instrumentalism has as its purpose the development of such methods and techniques. Thanks to the empirical criterion, we can test its efficacy. Constant testing will increase the meaning of our experience and will produce good men.

fact: "Good consists in the meaning that is experienced to belong to an activity when conflict and entanglement of various incompatible impulses and habits terminate in a unified orderly release in action." (45).

(44) Ibid., p. 32.

(45) Human Nature and Conduct, by John Dewey, p. 210.

Chapter 17 - THOMISTIC VIEW OF LAW AND THE GOOD

Value as an entity and object of separate consideration is a wholly modern conception. Nevertheless every philosophy which claims to be coherent must have an account of its meaning and implications. Thomism may not have the same terminology but it does have the answers to this problem. Values are real, independent of the individual situation and this position can be proven from the data of common living. There are three factors involved: the object valued, the valuing subject and the relation between them. Thomism has a great deal to say about each factor.

Concerning the object valued, the first point is that it must be real. (1). Dewey and St. Thomas agree that existence is a perfection and unless the object valued has this now or will have it in the future it will have no appeal. Even this future must not be so remote as to be beyond our grasp. A man will not work very hard for posterity as compared with the members of his immediate family; posterity is too remote an object.

By the same token we do not value an object in general. It must be a determined good. (2). And St. Thomas goes on to point out that this determined object must be conveniens, that is

(1) Contra Gentes, III, 2.

(2) Ibid., III, 3.

agreeable, befitting, suitable, consonant with the nature of the valuing subject, or more simply this is what we mean by a good object. The goodness attracts a subject, provides a goal for desire, arouses conation. There must be a bond between this determined good and the valuing subject and we call it interest or desire.

Common sense shows that there must be a subject who is a term of the relation. At one moment the subject did not know of the object. Then with knowledge came something else: a recognition that there was something about the object which made it an object of desire. Experience certainly proves that subject and object are not only distinct but separate. Something has happened to the subject which gave rise to this desire: there was a judgment made and conation resulted. This conation is a tendency towards action, an attempt to possess the object of value. It seems hardly necessary to labor this point and yet Dewey's metaphysics demands it. He says that every event is such that the elements are not separate. His contextualism allows distinctions but not separations. Frankly I do not believe Dewey to be sincere. His aversion to categories, divisions, etc., is so strong that he has been forced into his illogical position. But it is nothing less than illogical to deny that object and subject are really distinct, otherwise how can one explain the motion of valuing subject towards the possession of valued object.

Value belongs essentially to the object, Thomism and common sense say. (3). The subject cannot create value by desiring; wishing does not make things so. Yet the subject seeks possession of the object. This can only be because value lies outside the subject and in the object. Certainly value cannot lie outside the object. It exists only so long as the object exists; separately it is inconceivable. Some will say that a thing takes on value from being desired. This is to say that desire confers value, an obviously impossible thing since desire moves the subject to seek the object. The desire must be aroused by something in the object and that something we call value. The conclusion to this common sense view is that value is objective, having an existence independently of the subject although recognition of the value supposes the existence of a subject. Even though Adam and Eve had disliked the taste of apples, the latter would have been objects of value. Omne ens est bonum, as the scholastics say. Value is objective and real because it is predicated of the latter's being.

Having established the existence of an end, the goal of the subject's desire, Thomism teaches that all things are destined for one end which is God. (4). And God is the ultimate end because He is the highest good. (5). There is therefore a

(3) Summa, I, 2. 16, art. 1, c.

(4) Contra Gentes, III, 17.

(5) Ibid., I, 41.

hierarchy of goods or values. For a thing is good so far as it is desirable, and is a term of the movement of appetite. (6). Consequently we desire some goods more than others, and all of them as means to God, the ultimate end. The fact that every man experiences desires, and takes steps to satisfy these desires, is not an accident or coincidence. It proves the existence of values outside and independent of man, which values arouse desire and cause an appetite in him, a motion whereby he seeks to possess them as an end. There are therefore ends, existing independently of desires, and those ends cannot lead us on ad infinitum but are hierarchical and lead to God. (7).

These ends are fixed, that is they preserve their value independently of the here-and-now event. This is not disproved by Dewey argument that sometimes we desire a drink of water and sometimes we do not. He argued that if one drink was desirable, drowning should mean ultimate happiness. But here he is moving the locus of value from object to subject. That water is good to drink is always true, although at any moment a man may not care for a drink. Desires come and go with the circumstances of time and place but values remain, being rooted in fixed ends. This fixed quality reflects the natures of the different beings. Their permanent character is expressed in what we call natural law, the

(6) Summa, I, q. 5, art. 6, c.

(7) Contra Gentes, III, 2.

law of their natures. In man's case, natural law reflects what he is, that is it expresses those fixed, permanent, stable, essential elements which make up a man. Hence we say it is natural for a man to have a body and soul and it is also natural for him to seek his final goal or end. And his conduct must reflect this seeking, and when he does follow the natural law as made known by his conscience, man is bound to obtain his ultimate end. Human nature is fixed, its end is fixed although there is a choice of means, and when a proper choice is made (one in harmony with natural law, the end will be reached.

The purpose of this section is to show the bases on which morality rests. There are rules of human conduct, rules which are determinations of the natural law. They tell us what action is termed good and what is evil. Men are obliged by these laws and there is a keen sense of responsibility; in fact we are accustomed to speak of conscience as a voice, its message is so insistent and so clear. (8). What is this law? It is his moral good. And the moral good for man is to live in accordance with his specific nature, to perfect it insofar as he is able, and to respect the rights of others. It requires conformity of every action with human nature considered both in itself and in its relations with other men. Dewey is violently opposed to this view as he thinks it restricts liberty. Thomism sees a dilemma which

(8): A Grammar of Assent, by John Henry Newman. New York: The Catholic Publication Society, 1870, p. 103.

shows conclusively that Dewey is wrong.

The dilemma is this: either human reason makes the law or simply perceives it. If the latter is the case, and Thomism chooses this alternative, then natural law is authoritative, stable, fixed, independent of men, indeed above them, having a divine origin. Natural law is thus superior to man and this explains the voice of conscience, duty, etc. Dewey boldly chooses the former alternative: human reason makes the law. There is nothing good or evil before choice; what we choose is good and what we reject is evil. The way he tells it we have only a choice between good things or actions, never between a good and an evil. He further implies that our rejection makes a thing evil. Now as value lies in the object of act, independently of the subject, so also experience shows us that both good and evil are independent of the subject. Thus adultery is evil because it is against, not individual desire, but natural law. It follows that natural law is superior to man, independent of him, and reflects divine reason. God is therefore the foundation on which moral law rests and such an author is necessary. (9).

There is need of law. Caprice does not explain anything adequately. A rational act, a purposeful act is directed towards some end. The expression of such direction is found in law. Hence a law is something mental, a product of intelligence, an

(9) Summa, I-II, q. 91, art. 4, c.

expression of design. With reference to its subjects it implies an obligation. For men, beings capable of understanding the proper relations of many agents to a common end, it has a binding force with rewards for observance and penalties for disobedience. Otherwise, justice could not be obtained. To be perfect justice, the sanctions must reach all men and all actions, whilst being proportionate to the degree of merit or demerit. Thomism argues from experience that no human system of rewards and punishments can satisfy such requirements; the conclusion is that God must and will take care that justice is done. Dewey denies the existence of God, denies the necessity of such laws, and leaves unexplained the manifest deficiencies of his moral system. Experience is his favourite criterion and experience supports the Thomistic view rather than Dewey's.

There is no necessity for going into the various divisions of law such as temporal, eternal, natural and positive; human and divine; ecclesiastical and civil, negative and affirmative, as each of these supports the argument in its own way. Our task is to show that the notion of good, moral good, depends on the notion of law. A good deed is one which is in accordance with law, any law. Tell me the type of law the deed breaks and you tell me the kind of offence or sin. But we are less interested in kinds of evil or kinds of goodness than in the determination of a standard or criterion of moral goodness. Dewey has none in the sense of a fixed standard, and surely the word means just that. Thomism offers the standard of natural law. In the case

of moral goods, we have the law defined as "an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has the care of the community." (10).

Dewey says that common good means the satisfaction of many. Instead of satisfying people, the Thomistic view is that law is always intended to make men good. (11). At the moment it may not satisfy them but as a means to their ultimate end it will have its proper effect. Common good then supposes that every individual has certain rights which must give way in certain circumstances for the greater good of somebody else. Thus a man with a right to his property must surrender that right when throwing baggage overboard will save the lives of other passengers. It does not satisfy him, but it favours the common good. Certainly their lives are more important than his property, yet Dewey cannot admit this. Logically, if one hundred men were to lose baggage or one man lose his life, Dewey's principle would have us choose the baggage!

In the Thomistic interpretation, not everybody can make a law. (12). In Dewey's version, since there is nothing fixed by nature or God, every man must decide in the individual moral act what is best to do, or rather what is better. Each event is unique, every moral situation incomparable, and the law of conduct

(10) Ibid., I-II, q. 90, art. 4, c.

(11) Ibid., I-II, q. 92, art. 1, c.

(12) Ibid., I-II, q. 90, art. 3, c.

must be decided upon by the man concerned. His criterion cannot be utterly selfish but must be set within the social frame. Nevertheless he is fully competent, according to Dewey, to decide what is best for the social category. Once again, Thomism argues from human experience that this will not work out. Neither a posteriori reasoning nor a priori reasoning can support Dewey here. Of course Dewey never appeals to a priori principles anyway but they could save him a lot of trouble. If every event is unique, and the law of each situation has no force beyond that particular situation, there can be nothing stable, permanent or fixed about law and the individual must make it up as he goes along. No permanent progress can follow either and there can be no direction for conduct. Thomism rejects this rule of thumb sort of law in favour of law from a competent authority. The latter will have the character of universality, it will be applicable for all cases rather than for just one event. Positive law may have to be amended for exceptional cases but the natural law which is based upon essences, has perfect stability. It follows that since men are naturally equal, the source of moral obligation must be found in a Being superior to them, i.e. God. In the ordinance of the divine Reason and Will is found the source of moral obligation.

Chapter 18 - THOMISTIC VIEW OF CONSCIENCE AND THE GOOD

Hitler often said that conscience was a Jewish invention. Others have described it as the still small voice which warns us when somebody is looking. In any case, those who admit its existence agree that it is some sort of moral arbiter as to what we should do or avoid doing. It is something human, that is, all men are endowed with this ethical censor. Now just what is its nature?

Dewey is very much concerned to deny conscience as a separate faculty. He should have little trouble with St. Thomas. They are in complete agreement. Conscience is not a separate power or faculty, it is an act. (1). In fact, says St. Thomas, the very name makes this clear as it means cum alio scientia. It is the application of knowledge to an individual case, hence it proceeds from mind. Besides this argument from the nominal definition, St. Thomas refers to the operations attributed to conscience. It is said to witness, to bind, or incite, to accuse, torment or rebuke; hence conscience denotes an act.

Whence springs this act? It is a judgment and comes from intellect. The ordinary Thomistic teaching is that reason is the faculty by which the human mind determines what is right and wrong in human action. (2). And conscience is merely the act

(1) Summa, I, q. 79, art. 13.

(2) The Science of Ethics, by Michael Cronin. New York: Benziger Brothers, 1920, p. 473.

which is elicited when we use this faculty on moral matters. Now moral matters are practical in nature, as everybody agrees. There is nothing speculative about them. Dewey's complaint was that mind was thought of as dealing only with speculative objects, or at best as a reflector of experience. It either was unconcerned with this world or at best, it was entirely passive. The Thomists hold that mind has an active and a passive element. Instead of acting as a camera and simply recording events, the active intellect plucks out the form which reveals the essence of things. Now possible intellect shows us the passive element. Actuated by the form received from active intellect, possible intellect is made fruitful, producing the word of the mind. Now besides this function in connection with active intellect in the production of knowledge, intellectus possibilis has other functions, such as memory and judgment, reasoning. When one type of judgment, moral judgment, is the product, we name this act conscience.

It should be clear from this that the Thomistic expression intellectus possibilis, or even intellectus passivus, is used with reference to the process of knowledge alone. Hence it is related as potency is to act. But it is not always engaged in the production of ideas. Hence it is not correct to think of it as always inert, helpless, passive and a mere reflector or mirror of reality. Dewey's opinion of Thomistic thought on this point is a caricature.

Dewey also objects to the treatment of mind, or intellectus possibilis as a faculty. Separate powers or faculties are an abomination for him. Whence comes this aversion? It is just that Dewey thinks of a faculty or power as something distinct, separate, independent, fixed and unalterable and not wholly integrated with man. It is a mysterious agent somewhat like a guardian angel, and the voice of conscience might be likened to the whisper from such an angel. This is not Thomistic thought. Dewey's concept of faculty is too gross, as though a man's feet were to be identified with his faculty or power of locomotion. Thomism would rather say that a faculty or power denotes a capacity, according to its nominal definition. Really, it is the immediate and proximate principle of operation. (3). The powers or faculties of man cannot be understood except in reference to their acts. From their efforts we infer their existence and nature. (4). Faculties or powers are related to their operations as potency to act. But such operations are in the category of accidents. Since the soul is substantial, then powers are distinct from soul. Further, as potency and acts are distinct, then a power and its operations must be distinct. Finally, intellect and its moral act called conscience must be distinct. But conscience is not a guardian angel, nor a mysterious voice, nor supernatural, etc. It is an act of practical intellect concerning moral matters.

(3) Elementa Philosophiae Christianae, by S. Lortie. Quebec: L'Action Sociale, 1929, Vol. 2, editio sexta, p. 190.

(4) Thomistic Psychology, by Robert E. Brennan, New York: Macmillan, 1942, p. 28.

Dewey seeks to disprove the existence of conscience by arguing against its infallibility. If man has such a thing as a conscience to explain the road to heaven, how can he make a wrong judgment? Thomism agrees with Dewey that conscience is not infallible. Dealing with contingent and variable things, human reason may make mistakes. And since conscience is a practical judgment of the understanding (and not some mysterious preternatural or supernatural voice) it can be erroneous. Nevertheless, we must follow our conscience because our judgment is usually right. (5). Again, it happens that a person whose judgment is wrong, that is whose conscience is in error, must make a decision. Conscience reflects the law as each one understands it. Now for the person to go against conscience here, is to be willing to oppose the law. Hence we must follow the erroneous conscience, assuming the error to be guiltless.

"When reason in error proposes something as of divine precept, then it is the same to condemn the dictate of reason as the precept of God." (6).

This brings us right into the heart of the Thomist position. Conscience is the link between the general law and individual acts. It is the application of the law by the individual to a particular situation. As an act, it springs from a habit. The name for the

(5) Summa, II-II, q. 70, art. 2.

(6) Ibid., I-II, q. 19, art. 5, ad. 2.

habit of first principles is synderesis. (7). The whole process might be compared with a syllogism wherein the major term would be supplied by synderesis, and the minor come from conscience. Thus; Good must be accomplished (general principle from synderesis); but this act confronting me is a good act (conscience is the practical judgment made by intellect). Therefore I must do it. Conduct which would be in accordance with conscience would follow, or should follow. This conduct is then called "good" by Thomists, since moral goodness implies an act dictated by conscience which is in accordance with law. In this case we say that a man is acting in accordance with right reason.

Conscience is neither moral feelings nor moral sense. There is no question of self-approval or blame except as a consequence of recognizing a good object or a bad one, a deed which is good or evil. The function of comparing an individual act with a general law is one of discrimination, deliberation, comparison, reasoning and it is an intellectual judgment. Dewey says that conscience approves when activity is in accordance with what public opinion, or tradition, or custom says is right. These sources of law he rejects as inadequate. He then throws the individual back upon himself to make his judgment. Thomism agrees with Dewey that a conscience judging the morality of human acts by such standards must fail as a guide. Instead, Thomism points out that

(7) Ibid., I, q. 79, art. 13, ad. 3.

Conscience is the voice of reason. And the principles of reason are those which are conformed to nature. (8). And morality presupposes nature. (9). Therefore conscience is linked not with a human custom alone, nor any tradition, but with nature itself. It will therefore promote the essential harmony and subordination of one thing to another in nature. Within the individual there must be a subordination of one faculty to another. With respect to other individuals, there must be some social order. Reason commands us to respect this order within the individual and the further order among individuals. From this order are derived the complex duties which every man recognizes for himself. The moral good for man will then be to live in accordance with his specific nature, observing his proper place in the total scheme of things. Whatever promotes this order within himself and with reference to others will be good; whatever upsets the order will be evil. And the act by which he will judge this is conscience.

Thomism holds that moral acts lead man on to an ultimate end. As order obtains among natures, order must obtain among ends. As there is a hierarchy of natures, there is also a hierarchy of ends. The ultimate end of man is some sort of happiness. I say some sort because in each act man proposes to satisfy himself in some way and thus to be happy to this extent, but he is always seeking to be happy. Striving towards happiness is the same as striving

(8) Ibid., II-II, q. 154, art. 12.

(9) QQ.DD., Corr. frat. 1, ad 5.

towards the satisfaction of the will. (10). Yet we find that this strongest of all human desires can not be perfectly satisfied in this world. Indeed man can find perfect happiness only in God. Man's last end is happiness. (11). But since man's nature is an intellectual one, his final happiness must be to know God (12). In conclusion Thomism says that the supreme rule of morality is God; the proximate rule is the dictate of reason which is man's participation in eternal law. (13).

(10) Summa, I-II, q. 5, art. 8.

(11) Ibid., I-II, q. 69, art. 1.

(12) Contra Gentiles, III, 25.

(13) Elementa Philosophiae, by J. Credt. Fribourg: Herder, 1937, Vol. 2, editio septima, p. 356, n. 948.

In contrasting the Thomistic teaching on moral goodness with John Dewey's views, the first thing which strikes a person is that Thomism presents a positive outline of reality and of man's place within the general scheme of things; Dewey leaves many unanswered questions. This does not prove Dewey wrong and Thomism right, but it does make one suspect that Dewey's philosophy is at least incomplete if not inadequate.

To my mind his most objectionable feature is that nothing is settled. The problem of becoming, of an evolving universe, has taken such a hold on him that he has a distinct aversion to everything fixed. He finds value only in growth, fulfilling, development. However, he refuses to state what the direction is in which things are moving or should move. There is no fixed end or goal. There is aim but no target, tactics but no strategy, pawns but no king. Such thinking is not natural, and Dewey would be the first to agree. He does not admit fixed natures. Things just go on and on, endless ends. St. Thomas believes this is silly. (1). And common sense agrees as well. Experience shows purpose, design, ends in view for all conduct. Such patterns show that desires are desires for something. Agents act in view

(1) Contra Gentes, III, 2.

of a goal, and all activity demonstrates determined pursuit of ends. Individuals protect themselves and seek to propagate their kind. This is observed universally and we call it a law of nature. It proves that our world and everything in it is subject to teleology. There is no valid objection to this although it does raise an interesting question. In 1909, Dewey wrote this:

"Biological instincts and appetites exist not for the sake of furnishing pleasure, but as activities needed to maintain life--the life of the individual and the species. Their adequate fulfillment is attended with pleasure. Such is the undoubted biological fact...The same point comes out even more clearly when we take into account the so-called higher desires and sentiments." (2).

He goes on to show that a patriot risks his life, feels a glow of satisfaction, but did not take the risk to feel the glow; his purpose was a much higher end. He says that the desire springs up naturally to act in a certain way. The whole passage is an eloquent argument for teleology; and it does not appear in the revised edition of 1932! No explanation, no apology, just a slip!

It has already been pointed out that Dewey wrongly blames the Catholic Church for frustrating individual conscience, for proposing impossible rewards and punishments to ordinary men in order to keep them in subjection, etc. We have also seen that besides misunderstanding the Church he misunderstands Thomistic

(2) Ethics, by John Dewey, and James H. Tufts, p. 270, 271.

philosophy. As an illustration of this, he equates essence with ens rationis. (3). Now how is such misunderstanding explained? Dewey says that outside of scholastic circles there is more indifference than unfriendliness. He gives four reasons for such indifference: (a) non-scholastic thinkers have been brought up in the Protestant tradition, identifying scholasticism with the Catholic faith; (b) decay of interest if not of belief in Christian revelation; (c) scholasticism seems to neglect the empirical method; (d) scholasticism not in harmony with modern science nor its problems. (4).

Although the validity of these reasons might be questioned, their sincerity must be admitted. And it is only fair to say that there is fault on both sides. In view of a possible rapprochement Dewey suggests that followers of St. Thomas present their philosophy without their theology. Surely this is a reasonable request. Finally he asks for a more sympathetic attitude towards the problems of modern empirical philosophers, less smugness implying that all the problems have been solved by scholasticism, and a less accusing tone concerning the sincerity of non-scholastics. (5) I suppose these suggestions might have validity for both sides, nevertheless the essay shows cause why Dewey is not too familiar with Thomistic views. That several of

(3) THE MEANING OF VALUE, by John Dewey, p. 126

(4) Present Day Thinkers and the New Scholasticism, by John Zybura. St. Louis: Herder, 1927, p. 30.

(5) Ibid., p. 31.

Dewey's charges must be admitted as all too true has been acknowledged by Virgil Michel. (6). Despite all this, his philosophy must be judged objectively, let the chips fall where they may.

Therefore, Dewey's philosophy must be criticized for combining contradictory principles. (A) Thus he supports a principle of creative novelty in his search for new ends and his denial of teleology; yet he also supports a principle of continuity: ends are always means to further ends. (B) In his anxiety to present an organic event he holds for immediate empiricism, or immediacy: each event is unique, incommunicable, etc; yet he constantly upholds a scientific empiricism which would throw out the value of introspection, etc. (C) Absolutely opposed to absolutes, he has rejected a fixed universe with the security of a heavenly reward and has substituted insecurity with responsibility: there are manifest inequalities among men yet we should work for improvement without hope of reward. This is completely unrealistic. (D) He has no cosmology and includes the world of matter in his biological approach to human nature. One cannot ignore the differences between matter and spirit, or inorganic versus animate or simply say that one "emerges" out of the other without further explanation. (E) The provisionalism he advocates in morals can have only disastrous affects. When the Ten Commandments become

(6) SOME THOUGHTS ON PROFESSOR DEWEY, by Virgil Michel. In The New Scholasticism, October 1928, Vol. 2, #4, pp. 327-341.

working hypotheses, virtue and good character must disappear.

Dewey gives us descriptions of the stability of character, then advocates the instability of provisionalism to bring it about.

(F) His ethics must be rejected because it fails to provide fixed principles, aims, ideals. Its emphasis on activity without a goal can lead nowhere. Its social framework is inadequate to explain man's higher destiny. Its denial of a need for self-control must fail to produce good men. (G) He makes an invalid use of the evolutionary theory borrowed from biology: he uses it to prove the necessity for change in human conduct; too long a jump. Application of biological theories to psychology, logic, ethics, education is far-fetched to say the least. (H) His description of man as the highest manifestation of evolution, along with his practical atheism, makes one question an attribution of more to an effect than to its cause.

What is his notion of good? It is one of expediency, of liberating human forces from whatever hinders them in. It has a loose social framework. Is it valid? It cannot be any better than the phenomenalism whence it springs. Growth is the only ideal admitted. Growth for what? Dewey says the question has no meaning. Thomism is preferred because it sees purpose in everything, and these purposes reveal values. With no intrinsic goodness, Dewey's notion of good must disappear. Relativity of

truth, of goodness, of happiness cannot survive as philosophy. Thomism has as its two fundamental principles for ethics the existence of God and natural teleology. Without these prerequisites, the notion of good can have no permanent meaning nor any real value, and duty no binding force. Otherwise moral means social only, and criminals qualify as "good" men since they are part of society. The principle of order is offered by Thomism, denied by Dewey. It explains things in an essential way. All beings are ordered to each other in an essential way and not as an accident or by chance, and this is due to an extrinsic principle, outside and above our world. (7).

Thomism offers an existentialist metaphysic and is not of mere essentialist inspiration as was Plato's. The explanation afforded by potency and act provides answers for the problem of becoming and change. Reality is neither static alone nor dynamic alone but a fusion of both. Thomists are as emphatic as is Dewey in pointing out the deficiencies of absolute pluralism or absolute monism. Thomism is a via media between them and its theory of knowledge a synthesis of the partial truths found in rationalism and empiricism. (8). Such a metaphysic is

(7) De Veritate, q. 5, art. 3, c.

(8) JOHN DEWEY AND MODERN THOMISM, by William O'Leary, in The Thomist, January 1943, p. 317

necessary as a basis for ethical theory. Contextualism stresses the existential element at the expense of the essences of things. Ethics is then robbed of its bases.

Perhaps the final word should be said by Professor Dewey himself.

"There is no possibility of disguising the fact that an experimental philosophy of life means a hit-and-miss philosophy in the end." (9).

(9) German Philosophy and Politics, by John Dewey, p. 128.

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