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GROWTH AS FREEDOM IN JOHN DEWEY'S  
PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

by Fabian S. Essiet

Thesis presented to the School of Graduate  
Studies of the University of Ottawa  
as partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Ottawa, Canada, 1983



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the assistance of Professor Leslie Armour, this thesis was supervised by Professor Jean-Louis Allard, whose helpful suggestions and guidance are hereby gratefully acknowledged. Apart from some personal savings, the financial assistance for the research was offered by the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa, the Department of Philosophy, and the Federal Government of Nigeria. I am very grateful to all these bodies for their various forms of financial assistance.

## CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Born on Nov. 16, 1945, Fabian Essiet obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) from the Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Rome, in June 1972. In June 1978, he obtained the Master of Arts degree (M.A.) from the University of Louvain, Belgium. He obtained a postgraduate diploma in Public Administration (D.P.A.) from the University of Ife, Nigeria, in June 1980, before coming to Ottawa to pursue studies for the Ph.D. degree in Philosophy.

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## PREFACE

When the present writer attended a series of lectures on Peirce, James and Dewey at the University of Louvain, what struck him about Dewey was his rather "practical," "concrete" or "simple" philosophy. There seemed to be none of the "abstract" talk about being which characterizes many other philosophers. On the contrary, his philosophy looked like a verbalization of common everyday practice. The writer was so captivated by it that he thought it necessary to investigate what this deceptively "simple" philosophy has to offer.

When he started, he did not really think of anything specific such as Dewey's metaphysics, theory of knowledge, social and political philosophy, or his philosophy of education. He just wanted to "listen" to this "new", captivating philosopher. However, on reading Schilpp's The Philosophy of John Dewey, the writer's interest shifted from being merely a good listener and admirer to such a specific sphere as Dewey's social and political philosophy, and finally to his philosophy of education. The writer discovered that almost every book and article on Dewey's philosophy of education seemed to focus on the rather tautological and ambiguous nature of growth leading simply to more growth. He could not but wonder what message this "new", captivating and "simple" philosopher could really be trying to convey by his reference to growth. The thought of his being misunderstood or misinterpreted kept on haunting this writer. Because of his previous interest in Dewey's social and political philosophy, the writer still had at the back of his mind Dewey's emphasis on democracy as both a way of life, and as a form of government, as well as his conception of democracy as characterized by freedom. The present

writer thought that if Dewey's conception of education, or his educational exemplar, is that of education in a democratic society, such an education could be considered as aiming at the attainment of freedom, which Dewey views as characterizing a democracy. But, since he specifically emphasizes growth in his philosophy of education, the speculation took a slightly different form. Could growth be related to freedom, or could it even be synonymous with freedom? If so, could it help to explicate what Dewey means by growth leading to more growth?

These cogitations led to the present research. I have learned that Dewey's philosophy is not as "simple", "concrete" and "practical" as it seemed to be. Like many other philosophies, it is faced with the numerous perennial problems and issues of philosophy. Like any good consistent philosophy, it has not been able to avoid the "abstract" talk about being. Like many other attempts to resolve the perennial problems and issues of philosophy, it has its strong and weak points, its truths and falsities, as well as its inconsistencies. I must confess, however, that I am not at all disappointed by my findings. For, all through the various stages of the investigation, I had never presumed that I would be able to reach a clear, certain and evident solution that can be readily accepted by all. Part of my guiding "philosophy" had always been that one cannot think, and think rightly, until or unless one is ready to hurt as well as to get hurt in the process. I was always aware of the risks of waste, loss, and error that are involved in engaging in specific doubting, inquiring, or creating and testing tentative hypotheses. Not for once was belief in a guaranteed outcome entertained. Neither was there any naive presumption that the research would solve every problem associated

with Dewey's concept of growth. Nevertheless, I do hope that the conclusions I have reached will give rise to some further research along similar lines. If Dewey is now perceived as an advocate of "education for freedom", or of "freedom in education", rather than as just an apostle of educational aimlessness because of his conception of growth as leading simply to more growth, then, I certainly have no regrets, no requests, and no apologies to make for having embarked on this research.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In one of his most authoritative books on the philosophy of education,<sup>1</sup> Dewey writes: "since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself."<sup>2</sup> This tends to justify an understanding of Dewey as maintaining that growth is the end of education, and that it ultimately translates into educational aimlessness. It has also led to a number of theses, articles and books that decry, as well as try to clear the confusion, ambiguity and vagueness that becloud his concept of growth in education. In the following section, such literature is briefly reviewed. The authors are selected as representative of the various complaints that have been made about Dewey's concept of educative growth, and of the attempts that have been made to clarify the concept, especially as such attempts suggest a link with Dewey's notion of freedom, and thus lead naturally to the problem under investigation.

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1. Dewey writes: "... Democracy and Education was for many years that in which my philosophy, such as it is, was most fully expounded...." ("From Absolutism to experimentalism", in John Dewey on Experience, Nature and Freedom, ed. by Richard J. Bernstein, New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960, p.14.

2. John Dewey, Democracy and Education. New York: Free Press, 1968, p. 53. See also p. 49-51, and Reconstruction in Philosophy. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970, p. 177, 184, 185.

### 1. Review of the Literature

The first part of the review concerns complaints that have been made about the ambiguity of Dewey's meaning of education as growth. The second part discusses individual efforts that have been made to understand Dewey's concept of growth in terms of social development, moral development and intellectual development. In part three, literature that concerns the self as the focus for growth is discussed, and a few references to freedom as the end of education are considered. The final part of the review is devoted to a statement of the problem that emerges out of the literature concerning Dewey's concept of growth in education.

#### A. Complaints about the Concept of Growth.

Dewey's conception of education as growth has led to some confusion and complaints as to the meaning of growth leading simply to more growth. Skilbeck, for example, expresses the inadequacy of Dewey's conception in the following terms:

...by defining the aim of education as "growth leading to further growth" he (Dewey) appeared... to be offering a formal definition which incorporated no criteria at all for distinguishing between educative and miseducative experiences.

Archambault, another Dewey author, nicely expresses concern about the difficulties accompanying Dewey's concept of growth in education in the following illustrative passage:

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3. Malcolm Skilbeck (ed.), John Dewey. London: Collier-Macmillan, c 1970, p. 19. Dr. Skilbeck is Professor of Education, and the Director of the Education Centre at the New University of Ulster, Northern Ireland.

The tendency to insist upon experience alone supplying its own ends, while denying the validity of the admission of external goals, clearly serves as the source of the difficulty in the experimentalists' view in general, and in the thought of Dewey in particular. The inadequacy of this approach can best be exemplified by pointing to the supposedly complete and self justifying concept of growth as an educational end. In spite of attempted defenses of the view by Dewey and his followers emphasizing the inadequacy of distorted criticisms of the view, we seem left with little in the way of tangible criterion which could direct the educative process.

This is a rather penetrating criticism. Yet one cannot dismiss Dewey's philosophy in general, and his conception of education as growth in particular, as a mere collection of disjointed, unorganized or ill-organized thoughts, given the rather wide acceptance of his ideas in various fields. His critics suggest that since growth can be indifferent, positive, healthy, destructive or malignant, some criteria are needed for distinguishing positive, healthy or educative growth.

Archambault represents this view when he writes:

In essence, however, insistence upon education to further growth is a negative concept in that it merely calls for the abandonment of imposed goals which might deter the process. We can all admit that nothing must be allowed to interfere with healthy development, but we are still left with the need for establishing a standard for ascertaining exactly what is healthy in a given instance.

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4. Reginald D. Archambault (ed.), John Dewey on Education; Selected Writings. New York: Modern Library, 1964, p. 177, Dr. Archambault has been Professor of Philosophy and Education at Brown University, Rhode Island, since 1967. He is also the author of John Dewey's Lectures in Philosophy of Education, and Dewey on Education: Appraisals, both published by Random in 1967.

5. loc. cit.

It appears that Dewey's criteria of continuity and interaction as distinguishing educative from miseducative experience<sup>6</sup> do not answer the complaints arising from his conception of education as growth. Accordingly, Dworkin writes as if to justify the various complaints:

Even more complaints have been made about the ambiguity of Dewey's meaning of growth as an end in itself. The dictum that education ought to lead only to more education; growth to more growth, has been criticized as without precise meaning at best and as a justification of aimlessness at worst. In a way, Dewey may be said to deserve whatever confusions came to be associated with his name.

In summary, Dewey's conception of growth as the end of education seems ambiguous enough to warrant these various complaints. Several efforts aimed at critically analyzing and explicating the concept have led to a rather wide variety of opinions being held as to how it should be conceived and interpreted. This includes its conception as intellectual development, social development and moral development, respectively.

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6. Vide John Dewey, Experience and Education. New York: Collier Books, 1974, Ch. 3, p. 33-50.

7. Martin S. Dworkin (ed.) Dewey on Education; selections. New York: Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1967 (c 1959), p. 13-14.

B. Growth as Intellectual,  
Social and Moral Development.

Some writers on Dewey's concept of growth maintain that the essence of the concept is to be found in Dewey's propositions concerning moral, intellectual and social development. Skilbeck, for example, frequently refers to growth as an "intellectual process" or as "reflective inquiry."<sup>8</sup> Intellectual development is perceived as both the means to growth, as well as a product of the growth process. But, one wonders if the conception and interpretation of growth as intellectual development sufficiently covers other aspects of growth, such as the social and moral aspects, which Dewey seems to attribute to the concept. Does it fully explain growth in its most pregnant and Deweyan sense as a rather complex concept? If an individual grows by developing his intellectual capacities, does he also and automatically grow socially and morally, for example? Is the self exhausted by its intellectual dimensions? If it is admitted that growth is reflective inquiry, as it seems to be, may it not be asked what the inquiry is all about? Is it superfluous or naive to ask what such inquiry aims at? Is it inquiry into how best to develop one's intellectual capacities only? May it not also involve how best to develop the social and moral dimensions of the self, and thereby attain the best possible all-round growth? This notwithstanding, could Skilbeck's insight suggest any relation between growth and freedom that may warrant the conception of growth as freedom? Has freedom anything to do with developing intellectual capacities?

Brownson, who analyzes Dewey's concept of growth in terms of the development and refinement of habits, suggests that without thought, judgment,

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8. Skilbeck, op. cit., p. 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 20, 57, & 84.

reasoning and intelligence, the possibility of educative growth is limited.<sup>9</sup> The implication is that thought or intelligence is necessary for the attainment of educative growth. It is a condition for growth. But, one may ask, is it a sufficient condition, or is something more required? And if something more is required, does the conception and interpretation of growth as involving thought or intelligence include "this more" that is needed? If not, is the concept of growth fully explicated, then, by indicating that it involves thought? Should one not look for a more inclusive explication that embraces the element of thought, as well as "the more" that is needed to supplement it? Can the conception of growth as freedom combine both of these elements?

Edman, another author who emphasizes the intellectual dimensions of growth, believes that there are "habits of judging and reasoning (which must be acquired if growth is to be attained) as truly as of handling a tool, painting a picture, or conducting an experiment."<sup>10</sup> To attain educative growth, one must acquire habits of judging and reasoning, just as he acquires those of handling a tool, painting a picture or conducting an experiment. In this conception, growth seems to be related to inquiry. It seems to involve the acquisition of habits and dispositions necessary for inquiry. But, one may ask, is mere acquisition

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9. Vide William Brownson, John Dewey's Concept of Habit and the Dynamics of Growth. Ph. D. Thesis, Stanford University, 1970. vii - 292 p.

10. Irwin Edman (ed.), John Dewey: His Contribution to the American Tradition. New York: Greenwood Press, 1976 (c. 1955), p. 143, quoting John Dewey, Democracy and Education. New York: Free Press, 1968, p. 48. Before his death in Sept. 1954, Dr. Edman was Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University. He also taught or lectured at the University of California, at Harvard, Oxford and the Sorbonne, and in Canada, Sweden, and Brazil.

of them sufficient for educative growth as Dewey conceives it? Suppose an individual acquires the "habit of judging and reasoning" about how best to stop being an alcoholic, and yet remains one himself, has he attained educative growth? Does the acquisition of "habits of judging and reasoning" therefore explain sufficiently Dewey's concept of educative growth? And, what of the conception of growth as freedom? Does such a conception include both these habits, and what "more" may be needed to sufficiently explain the concept?

With respect to growth as social development, Archambault maintains that Dewey, himself, seemed to have been dissatisfied with his conception of growth as leading simply to more growth, and so he appealed to societal values in order to better explicate his conception of growth as the end of education: "Dewey, in his later writings, seems aware of the need for such a standard to serve as a directing force for the educative process."<sup>11</sup> But is it not possible that Dewey's appeal to societal values is, after all, an attempt to supplement other aspects of the concept of growth? May it not indicate the complexity of the concept, rather than fully explicate it? Does Dewey not maintain that society should not determine educational ends, despite his appeal to societal values? Could it be that the appeal only indicates the social aspect of the complex notion of growth, and therefore points to the need for an integrative approach that includes this, as well as other aspects of the concept? If so, can an analysis of Dewey's notion of freedom, and the explication of the concept of growth in terms of it, serve as such an integrative approach?

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11. Archambault, op. cit., p. 179.

In analyzing Dewey's "test of consequences" as offering the criterion by which to determine the growth that is a value, Childs touches upon the social dimensions of growth. He writes:

That which makes for continued growth of flesh and blood human beings in their social relations is the end<sup>12</sup> the end of life and the end for education.

The consequences that help to determine whether an activity or an object is a value, that is, whether it makes for the attainment of growth, are not the consequences that the activity or object has for the individual involved, and for him alone. The consequences are not purely individual or personal, but are those established in group and personal experience. The "test of consequences", as a criterion for growth, implies social dimensions. But, one may ask, are these social dimensions sufficient to adequately explain the concept of educative growth? If not, can the conception of growth as freedom provide what more may be needed in order to adequately explain the concept, as well as take care of these social dimensions?

Axtelle seems to divert attention from these social dimensions, and to point to the moral aspects of growth instead, when he lists a number of moral concepts among the characteristics of growth. Asking what those characteristics are, he writes:

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12. John L. Childs, "The Educational Philosophy of John Dewey," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. by Paul A. Schilpp. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1971, p. 434. Dr. Childs is an Instructor in the Philosophy of Education, at Teacher's College, Columbia University.

They are "flexibility, openness to new insights, new possibilities, hospitality to novelty, to the imaginative and to the creative." Growth involves, at the same time, "integrity, balance, proportion, dynamic equilibrium; a unified wholeness of character. It involves the integral expression of all the resources and powers of the self."<sup>13</sup>

Concepts like "integrity" and "character" are clearly moral. Maintaining a "balance", "proportion" or "dynamic equilibrium" is a moral expression that goes as far back as Aristotle's advice to tread the middle course. Without doubt, they are moral aspects of Dewey's concept of growth. They indicate an attempt to interpret the concept in terms of moral development. Such an attempt, however, raises the question of how to determine what is a morally genuine balance. An attempt to answer this question apparently involves a consideration of all the other aspects of growth, such as the social and the intellectual. The implication is that all these various aspects need to be integrated if Dewey's concept of growth is to be properly understood. The writer wonders if Dewey's notion of freedom may not meet such a need for integration.

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13. George Axtelle, "John Dewey's Conception of the Religious", as quoted in Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), Guide to the Works of John Dewey. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970, p. 263, from Religious Humanism, No. 1, 1967, p. 66-67. Dr. Axtelle is a Lecturer at the United States International University and Professor Emeritus of the New York University. He is the author of several articles on Dewey and on Dewey's thought. He was the Director of Co-operative Research on Dewey Publications, at the Southern Illinois University, from 1961 to 1966. He is also a Former President of the John Dewey Society.

As if aware of this need for integration, Emerson indirectly refers to some of these aspects in his discussion of growth as moral development.<sup>14</sup> He thinks that moral growth is closely linked with intellectual growth. To grow morally, he says, the individual needs knowledge of alternative actions, as well as of their consequences:

... the individual holds the key to his own moral development. He possesses the freedom of experience, to act, and above all to make moral choices. However, in order to attain moral growth it is necessary for him to use his freedom wisely .... He must be aware of alternative courses of action and reflect carefully on the outcomes of these alternatives.<sup>15</sup>

It may be noted that there is in this passage an indication of a relationship or interaction between growth and freedom. However, it is not clearly worked out to warrant our conception of growth as freedom, a conception which the writer thinks will facilitate a better understanding of Dewey's concept of growth in education. Such a conception seems to demand a clear exposition of Dewey's notion of freedom, as well as an indication of how growth fits into such an exposition. But, more of this later.

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14. Chapter four of his thesis is wholly devoted to an analysis of growth as moral development. Vide Goldwin James Emerson, John Dewey's Concept of Growth in Education. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975. XV-266 p. Dr. Emerson has been an Associate Professor of Education, Policy Studies Department, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, Canada, since 1977. His articles on Dewey include "Freedom in Education: A second look at John Dewey", in Educational Courier, vol 6, 1975, and "Dewey on Indoctrination", in Teacher Education, vol. 10, 1982.

15. Emerson, op. cit., p. 137-138.

In attempting to understand Dewey's concept of growth, some commentators focus on its cumulative nature. Axtelle and Burnett, for example, refer to this cumulative theme when they write:

Dewey especially emphasizes these points... making the principle of continuity the criterion for judging a truly educative experience: Where does the experience lead? What are its potentialities for physical, intellectual, moral growth?<sup>16</sup>

Comparing the educational process to the art-process, Morris similarly emphasizes the cumulative nature of growth. Both education and art are conceived as a cumulative movement that constitutes growth:

The art-process easily becomes the paradigm of the educational process: And indeed Dewey defines them both in the same way. "This cumulative movement of action toward a later result is what is meant by growth." The only difference is that whereas art has an end, a finality, education has none, since "there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education."<sup>17</sup>

Much as it is important to bear in mind this cumulative nature when discussing Dewey's concept of growth, the stated difference between art and education with respect to ends remains significant. Indeed, it is such a difference that

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16. George Axtelle and Joe Burnett, "Dewey on Education and Schooling", in Guide to the Works of John Dewey, ch. 10, p. 260. Dr. Burnett is Professor of Philosophy of Education, at the University of Illinois, and a former President of the John Dewey Society.

17. Bertram Morris, "Dewey's Theory of Art," in Guide to the Works of John Dewey, ed. by Boydston, p. 164. Dr. Morris was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Colorado.

has contributed to the various complaints about Dewey's conception of growth as an educational end. Despite this, Geiger goes ahead to emphasize "the continuity of experience and therefore growth," reiterating a "fusion of ends and means."<sup>18</sup> In his view, growth in both education and life is not a means to any ultimate end, other than "more growth."<sup>19</sup> It is true that Dewey stresses a dynamic inter-relation between means and ends. The meaning of each becomes obscure because of his emphasis on the cumulative, ongoing character of growth as the end of education. It is this very obscurity that partially explains the difficulty in understanding the concept. A mere reiteration of the cumulative nature of growth, and of the fusion of means and ends, does not therefore seem to particularly help in better understanding the concept. One wonders, however, whether the conception of growth as freedom may not eliminate this obscurity.

As if to eliminate the obscurity, Frankena emphasizes the moral dimensions of growth as the end of education. He suggests that we can find the criterion of growth "if we put what Dewey says about education as growth together with what he says about the good."<sup>20</sup> On this view, we are growing educationally

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18. George Geiger, John Dewey in Perspective: a reassessment. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 199. Dr. Geiger was a John Dewey Professor of Humanities, Department of Philosophy, Antioch College, since 1968.

19. loc. cit.

20. W.K. Frankena, Three Historical Philosophies of Education: Aristotle, Kant, Dewey. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1965, p. 157. Dr. Frankena was an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Michigan, since 1980. He was a Guggenheim fellow from 1948-1949, and the President, Western division of the American Philosophy Association, from 1965 to 1966.

"if and only if our lives are becoming better or richer."<sup>21</sup> But, it seems legitimate to ask what criteria help us to determine when and if our lives are becoming better or richer. Such a question seems to demand a consideration of the other aspects of growth. It seems apparent that some integration of these various aspects is needed. The writer wonders if the explication of the concept of growth in terms of Dewey's notion of freedom can provide such an integration, as well as reveal the ideal according to which one's life could be said to become better. As a matter of fact, it can be asked whether these efforts that individually focus on growth as intellectual, social, moral or cumulative do single-handedly give a good or adequate understanding of Dewey's concept of growth in education. Does any of them individually offer sufficient criteria for distinguishing educative from mis-educative growth? Does any of them offer the ideal according to which an individual may be said to be growing educationally? If not, can the integration of these aspects in the conception of growth as self-development offer such criteria and ideal?

### C. Growth as Self-Development

Roth, who emphasizes self-realization in Dewey's philosophy, approaches Dewey's concept of growth in terms of an ongoing, developing self. The self is never complete at one particular moment. There is always something more to learn or to experience, by virtue of which the self is to be developed. Roth

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21. Frankena, *ibid.*, p. 158.

maintains that this ongoing process of self-realization is dependent on "social awareness"<sup>22</sup> and reflective inquiry. He suggests that it should be applied to every phase of human activity, such as morals, social issues, as well as education. Apparently, this approach, which focuses on an ongoing developing self, indicates that self-development provides a focus for understanding Dewey's concept of growth in education. And the writer wonders if it can also be perceived as lending weight to the hypothesis that the concept may be better explicated in terms of freedom. It may be asked whether freedom has anything to do with an ongoing developing self, or with self-realization? This, of course, will be found out later.

Brownson continues Roth's emphasis on self-realization by maintaining that growth in terms of self-development, results from the continuous reconstruction of habits or of experience. In his view, such a reconstruction is feasible only if the self interacts with society. The individual must communicate with others if he is to attain growth understood as self-development. To illustrate this, Brownson quotes with approval a passage from Dewey's Experience and Nature:

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22. Robert J. Roth, John Dewey and Self Realization. Inglewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962, p. 57. Rev. Fr. Roth is Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University. His articles on Dewey include "Is Dewey's Pragmatism anti-Jamesian?", in International Philosophical Quarterly, vol. 12, 1965; "John Dewey: Social Philosopher and Educator", in Proceedings of American Catholic Philosophy Association, 1973; and "John Dewey's Moral Law Ethics", in International Philosophical Quarterly, 1980.

"... personality, selfhood, subjectivity are eventual functions that emerge with complexly organized interactions, organic and social."<sup>23</sup> One wonders, however, if Dewey's principle of interaction sufficiently explains his concept of educative growth. If it does not, can the conception of growth as freedom augment it? Mayeroff, however, speaks neither of freedom nor of habits. Instead, he views two kinds of adjustment — active and passive — as essential for growth as self-development. Active adjustment entails the modification of conduct "in accordance with the particular state of affairs", and is described as "adaptation."<sup>24</sup> Passive adjustment, on the other hand, occurs when the individual cannot change external conditions and therefore has to "accomodate" himself to them. It is exemplified by one's acceptance of the weather or the colour of one's eyes.<sup>25</sup> Both "accomodation" and "adaptation", Mayeroff maintains, are essential for self-unification and therefore for growth. But, much as self-unification forms an essential part of growth, it seems that the question may still be asked whether by itself it sufficiently expresses and explains Dewey's concept of educative growth. It makes the writer wonder whether Dewey's notion of freedom brings these active

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23. Brownson, op. cit., p. 250, quoting John Dewey, Experience and Nature. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1958 (c 1929), p. 208.

24. Milton Mayeroff, John Dewey's Concept of the Unification of the Self: An Exposition and Critique. Ph. D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1961, p. 5. Dr. Mayeroff is Professor of Philosophy at the State University College at Cortland, New York.

25. Mayeroff, *ibid.*, p. 4.

and passive elements into such a better perspective that the concept of growth may be best understood in terms of freedom.

Johnson tries to go further than self-development by maintaining that growth should be conceived in the broadest sense possible, especially as Dewey is critical of the attempt to reduce the explanation of human behaviour to a few, clearcut, unchanging motives such as mastery, hunger or sex. In Johnson's opinion, the basic urge of an organism is to grow, and such growth is not only of the self, but also of other members of society:

It follows that each individual should be encouraged to develop his distinctive capacities in such a fashion as to contribute to the "all-round growth" not only of himself but also of all other members of society<sup>26</sup>

Johnson's suggestion that growth should be conceived in the broadest sense possible appears to be indicative of the complex nature of growth. It points to the fact that it has social, intellectual, as well as moral connotations. Johnson seems to integrate these various aspects when he speaks of the all-round growth not only of the individual, but also of all other members of society. Individual growth takes care of the moral and intellectual aspects, while growth of all other members refers to the social aspect. However, the integration seems to emphasize the social dimension as only a consequence of individual growth, that is, the development of the individual's "distinctive capacities" contributes

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26. Allison Hartz Johnson (ed.), The Wit and Wisdom of John Dewey. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969, p. XXVII. Dr. Johnson has been an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, since 1976. He was awarded the Nuffield fellowship in 1967.

to the growth "of all other members of society." But the rather circular or spiralling relation between "the individual" and "the social" in Dewey's conception of growth seems to be such that the individual needs the social in order to grow, just as much as the social needs the individual in order also to grow. Despite this, the present writer wonders whether Johnson's observation that growth involves both the individual and others in the society, may not actually support the hypothesis that growth may be better explained in terms of freedom. Does the latter concept not often arise within a context in which the individual is considered vis-à-vis other individuals or society?

Childs, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the individual in the conception of growth, while indirectly pointing to the conception and interpretation of the concept of growth as self-development. He sees individual growth as constituting the supreme moral end in a democracy. Since such growth is relative to nothing except more growth, he continues, "there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education."<sup>27</sup> He reiterates Dewey's objection to interpreting this as implying the placing of too much emphasis on the felt needs of children, and depending on their initiative in selecting those experiences that would lead to educative growth:

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27. John L. Childs, "Dewey and Education," in John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom, ed. by Sidney Hook. New York: Dial Press, 1950, p. 155.

He (Dewey) has emphasized that what are often asserted to be the present needs and interests of the children are superficially derived from what may have been suggested to them by the radio, the movies, the billboards, the newspapers, or current developments in the life of the family and neighbourhood.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, growth as self-development, and as relative to nothing save more growth is not undirected growth. As far as children are concerned, it demands adult guidance or direction. But what does adult guidance mean to Dewey? Does it mean the imposition of adult needs, desires, impulses, instincts and standards on the child? Can the conception of growth as freedom consistently explain such guidance? Has it anything to do with individuality? Although Ratner maintains that both the curriculum and the methods of teaching must be geared to satisfying the needs, enriching the qualities, and maturing the powers of the individual, he nevertheless points out that this "does not mean that the child is to be left to his own devices, so that he may unfold according to the dictates of his own nature."<sup>29</sup> Dewey's concept of growth in education, understood and interpreted as self-development, leaves room for the recognition of children as beings existing in their own right. Each child is viewed as having his own individual stage of growth or development. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the children should be left to develop on their own without guidance or direction. Neither does it mean, on the other hand, that their development

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28. Childs, *ibid.*, p. 157.

29. Joseph Ratner (ed.) *Education Today*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969, p. XI. Dr. Ratner is Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, and has edited or written a number of works on Dewey's thought.

or progress should be measured in terms of how closely they approximate adult standards. The writer wonders whether the conception of growth as freedom can provide the implied or needed<sup>2</sup> balance.

To avoid judging the growth or development of the child by adult standards, and in the attempt to provide a balance, Edman suggests that attention should be focussed on a positive conception of "immaturity." He suggests that it should be viewed, in a Deweyan sense, as "the ability to develop", rather than "the capacity of a quart measure" which is to be filled with liquid.<sup>30</sup> The latter is a negative non-Deweyan sense of immaturity that leads to disregard for the intrinsic worth of the child. It also encourages the setting up of standards that relate to static ends. The implication is that growth becomes an accomplished fact, or a static end, once it attains adult standards. This reference to an "accomplished fact" or "static ends" seems to be related to Dewey's emphasis on the dynamic interrelation between ends and means, which obscures the meaning of each, and contributes to the difficulty in understanding the concept of growth. If the positive conception of immaturity suggested by Edman is linked with this obscurity of the means-end distinction, as it seems to be, does it then help very much in understanding the concept of growth? If not, can the conception of growth as freedom possibly eliminate this obscurity?

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30. Irwin Edman, John Dewey: His Contribution to the American Tradition, p. 136.

In summary, various authors maintain that Dewey's concept of growth in education may be understood as self-development. They suggest that growth, understood as self-development, demands social awareness and reflective inquiry. It is also indicated that such growth results from a continuous reconstruction of habit through interaction between the self and society. The need for active adjustment understood as "adaptation", and for passive adjustment described as "accomodation", has also been emphasized as necessary for growth. Individuality is also emphasized as the basis of self-development. The individual, they maintain, must be given a chance to develop his capacities and powers if he is to develop himself. Some authors further point out that immaturity as a prerequisite for growth should be understood in its most positive connotation as an opportunity for increased self-growth. They indicate that adult guidance or direction is necessary if growth as self-development is to be properly oriented. In general, these authors seem to agree that self-development or self-realization provides a focus for understanding Dewey's concept of growth in education. Each of the author's efforts seems to contribute to an understanding of the concept of growth. But each also seems to raise a question as to its ability to fully explain the concept. The present writer therefore wonders if the conception of growth as freedom cannot integrate these various aspects which the authors have examined, provide the ideal in terms of which one may be said to have grown educationally, and consequently explain more fully Dewey's concept of growth in education.

It may be noted that a few attempts have been made to relate Dewey's conception of education as growth to his concept of freedom. These include

the attempt by Hardin<sup>31</sup>, who seems to have moved away entirely from the concept of growth to that of freedom. He sees freedom as the end, means and criterion of education in Dewey's philosophy of education. However, he does not explore or analyze the idea further, investigating perhaps the relation between growth and freedom. Nevertheless, he suggests that Adler's The Idea of Freedom should be thoroughly explored by educational philosophers for educational implications.<sup>32</sup> In a similar vein and by implication, Hook relates education for growth with education for freedom. He starts with the premise that education for growth goes hand in hand with education for democracy.<sup>33</sup> The democratic ideal, he points out, rests on the primacy of freedom.<sup>34</sup> He therefore admonishes that "if freedom is to have a future, our philosophy of education must help sustain a passion for it by the arts of intelligence and imagination."<sup>35</sup> If education

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31. W.J. Hardin, Free Will, Determinism, and the Nature of Education: The Philosophical Viewpoints of Benedict Spinoza and John Dewey. Ph. D. Thesis, St. Louis University, 1971. 100 p.

32. id., op. cit., p. 85

33. Sidney Hook, Education for Modern Man, a New Perspective. New York: Knopf, 1967 (c. 1963), p. 16. Professor Hook has been an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, New York University, since 1968. He was head of the Department of Philosophy there from 1934 to 1968. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1928-29, and in 1953. He was the President of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in 1959-60, and received the Medallion Award of the John Dewey Society in 1969.

34. Hook, *ibid.*, p. 38.

35. id., op. cit., p. 53.

for growth goes hand in hand with education for democracy, and if the ideal of democracy rests on the primacy of freedom, the present writer wonders if education for growth is not education for freedom. Can educative growth not be conceived as freedom? Can such a conception not offer the ideal of educative growth, and help to reduce the ambiguity and confusion that becloud the concept? An attempt to answer these questions seems to form the core of the present research.

#### D. Statement of the Problem

Dewey's conception of education as growth has led to his maintaining that education is relative to nothing save more education. Just as growth leads to further growth, so education leads to further education. This seems to justify our understanding of him as advocating growth as the end of education. But this tends to translate ultimately into an advocacy of educational aimlessness. It has therefore given rise to several complaints, as well as to a wide variety of opinion regarding how growth is to be conceived and interpreted.

Several authors maintain that the concept is severally explicated in Dewey's propositions concerning intellectual development, social development, moral development as well as self-development. However, the particular interrelationship of each of these aspects is not clearly worked out. They are not integrated by some one specific concept that may provide a focus for understanding the concept of growth. Much of the literature on the concept tends to indicate further that part of the difficulty in understanding the concept of growth as the end of education stems from Dewey's emphasis on the dynamic interrelation between means and ends. Such emphasis obscures the meaning of both means and ends, and tends to blur their distinction because it seems

that they have to be distinguished or separated at least temporarily if each is to stand for something specific in its own right. Some other commentators have reiterated the cumulative ongoing character of growth, while others emphasize adjustment to the environment or interaction with it as a prerequisite for growth. Another group has viewed growth as self-development through the reconstruction of habits. And finally, there is some indication by other authors that the conception of education as growth may be clarified by exploring its relationship with freedom.

In other words, the present state of ideas concerning the concept of growth seems to suggest that more research is needed if a focus is to be provided for understanding the concept. The writer wonders if a clarification of the concept in terms of freedom may not meet the purpose of such a research. Could the various aspects of growth such as the intellectual, social, moral, as well as self-development or self-realization, not be interrelated and integrated in Dewey's notion of freedom? Can the conception and interpretation of educative growth as "growth in freedom" integrate the diverse efforts made at understanding Dewey's concept of growth in education? Can such an integration offer a common standpoint and focus by which the concept of growth in education may be better and further clarified? The writer wishes to examine these possibilities by confronting what Dewey says about education as growth with what he says about freedom. The aim is to ascertain whether the conception of growth as freedom can help to clarify Dewey's conception of growth as

the end of education, and whether it will help to specify the method by which this goal can be attained. Since Dewey maintains that "when it is said that education is development (or growth), everything depends upon how development is conceived",<sup>36</sup> the writer attempts to answer basically the following questions:

1. Can any evidence be found in Dewey's writings to support the thesis that his concept of educative growth should be explained in terms of freedom?
2. What are the main advantages of such a conception or interpretation when compared to other individual efforts that have been made to explain the concept in terms of its components, that is, in terms of social development, intellectual development, moral development and self-development?
3. Can such a conception solve some of the difficulties that are associated with Dewey's concept of growth?

## 2. Method and Sources

The approach to the problem consists of five steps. The first step provides a summary of Dewey's basic philosophy as a preliminary background material that may be useful in understanding the exposition of the concepts of growth and freedom. It includes an analysis of Dewey's philosophic or intellectual development, his theory of knowledge as involving his method of inquiry or the scientific method, his metaphysics,

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36. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 49.

and his conception of democracy as an ideal society or as a way of life. In the second step, a conceptual analysis or clarification of freedom and growth is attempted. This is based on an intensive and extensive textual analysis --- a sort of exegesis --- and, in the case of freedom, it is carried out under the guidance of Mortimer Adler's synthesis of Dewey's concept of freedom as contained in his book, The Idea of Freedom. The third step is an attempt to correlate the various elements of the concepts of growth and freedom, especially as they relate to the end and method of education. The aim is to justify the interpretation and explanation of Dewey's concept of educative growth in terms of his notion of freedom. In the fourth step, an appraisal of the main findings is presented. An attempt is made to indicate the advantages of explaining the concept of growth in terms of freedom, rather than in terms of any one of the components or traits of growth. The fifth and final step involves a critical approach, which indicates some of the difficulties that the conception of growth as freedom cannot resolve, and which demand further research if they are to be adequately resolved. Such difficulties are mainly those which are inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general, and which the interpretation reflects and makes more obvious especially because it is an interpretation that is consistent with Dewey's philosophy in general. These inherent difficulties include the dualistic tension between fact and value, the individual and the society, and between Dewey's recognition and use of metaphysics and his ode to science. Finally, there is sought a justification of the conception of educative growth as freedom, rather than as democracy, which seems to be Dewey's

ideal way of life. The method used can therefore be described as analytical, synthetical, correlative and critical.

The primary sources that are used in approaching the problem are Dewey's own works, but with an emphasis on the later works, especially as these seem to be a refinement and sometimes even a rejection of his earlier position. These later works contain what may be considered to be distinctive in Dewey's intellectual development. Such works include The School and Society (1900), The Child and the Curriculum (1902), Ethics (1908), How We Think (1910), Democracy and Education (1916), Reconstruction in Philosophy (1920), Human Nature and Conduct (1922), Experience and Nature (c.1929), The Quest for Certainty (1929), Sources of A Science of Education (1929), Philosophy and Civilization (1931), The Way Out of Educational Confusion (1931), Experience and Education (1938), Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (1938), Freedom and Culture (1939). What is involved, however, is mainly a matter of emphasis, rather than of neglect. As a matter of fact, any material that helps to explain Dewey's concept of educative growth in terms of freedom is readily made use of, even though the focus is Dewey's works, and especially his later works.

The Secondary Sources to which the writer refers are mainly those works on Dewey which further the explanation of the concept of growth in terms of Dewey's notion of freedom. They include such works as Adler's The Idea of Freedom, Bernstein's John Dewey on Experience, Nature and Freedom, Ratner's Education Today, Schilpp's The Philosophy of John Dewey, Dworkin's Dewey on Education, and Boydston's Guide to

the Works of John Dewey. Other works and journal articles, as well as those theses that help to expound the concept of growth and its relationship to freedom, will also be consulted. As a matter of fact, a more inclusive detailed account of the sources is given in the bibliography.

#### SUMMARY

Dewey's conception of education as growth tends to justify an understanding of him as maintaining that growth is the end of education. Such a conception seems to translate ultimately into an advocacy of educational aimlessness. It has therefore given rise to several complaints, as well as to a wide variety of opinion regarding how growth is to be conceived or interpreted. Some writers maintain that the essence of the concept is to be found in Dewey's propositions concerning intellectual, social, moral and self-development. However, these various traits are not integrated by some one specific concept that can provide a focus for understanding the concept of growth, as well as an ideal in terms of which one may be said to grow educationally. As if aware of this lack of integration and ideal, some writers have tried to relate Dewey's concept of growth to his concept of freedom. But such attempts are rather indirect, and the suggested relation between growth and freedom is not clearly indicated. Consequently, the much needed focus for understanding the concept of growth, as well as the ideal in terms of which one may be said to grow educationally, are not provided. It seems apparent, therefore, that more research is needed if these demands are to be met. The writer attempts to meet the need for such a research, by trying to find out whether there is any evidence in Dewey's writings to support the thesis that his concept

of growth can be explained in terms of freedom; what the main advantages of such an interpretation can be when compared to other explanations, such as the explanation in terms of intellectual, social and moral development; and whether such an interpretation can help to solve at least some, even if not all, of the difficulties that are associated with Dewey's concept of growth. Such a search for evidence and advantages is, of course, carried out within the framework of Dewey's basic philosophy. An understanding of this basic philosophy is therefore essential for understanding the attempt to interpret the concept of growth in terms of freedom.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### DEWEY'S BASIC PHILOSOPHY

Dewey emphasizes the principles of continuity and interaction in his philosophy. Every one of his ideas or concepts seems to be related to every other one in one way or another. Knowledge of the essentials of his philosophy seems therefore to be necessary as a background against which the interpretation of his concept of growth in terms of freedom is to be understood.

In the first section of this chapter, Dewey's philosophic or intellectual development is summarily discussed. It is indicated how each phase of his intellectual development contributes to an understanding of the interpretation of his concept of growth in terms of freedom. The second section briefly deals with his theory of knowledge, especially as it is related to, or as it facilitates, the conception of growth as freedom. The third section is devoted to a discussion of those of Dewey's metaphysical postulates which are essential for the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom. Finally, Dewey's conception of democracy as an ideal society, or as a way of life, is discussed in section four, as grounding his conception of freedom as an ideal. Democracy is indicated as providing a context within which freedom is a good, an end, a value, or an ideal, and in terms of which the concept of growth is to be explained.

#### 1. Dewey's Philosophic Development.

There are in Dewey's philosophic development three rather distinguishable but continuous phases. These are the theological and intuitional

phase, the Hegelian phase, and the experimental phase. These phases are not, however, sharply demarcated one from the other. Neither is there a conscious dropping of one phase in order to enter into a new one. There are instead shifts in emphases which seem to characterize one phase and distinguish it from others. Rather than a total abandonment of one phase for another, there appear a reexamination and critical analysis of earlier ideas. Like his concepts of behaviour and inquiry, Dewey's intellectual development exhibits some flexibility, readaptability and continuity. It portrays a serial or sequential pattern in which one phase grows out of another and leads rather cumulatively to the next. Earlier conceptions or positions seem to be refined and integrated in later ones. Indeed, one may surmise that but for Dewey's death in 1952, he might have continued this trend of development as if in testimony of his recipe for "growth in freedom" – a continuous reconstruction of experience through knowledge (or inquiry) and action. But rather than speculate, it seems that the present inquiry will be better advanced by an examination of the characteristics of each phase and of their implications for understanding Dewey's concept of growth as freedom.

#### A. The Theological and Intuitional Phase

This phase may be dated from 1882 which marks Dewey's earliest publications<sup>1</sup>, although Dewey himself dates from "the late seventies"

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1. John Dewey, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" and "The Pantheism of Spinoza", in Journal of Speculative Philosophy, vol. 16 (April 1882), 208-13 and (July 1882), 249-57 respectively. Reprinted in The Early Works of John Dewey, vol. 1, p. 3-8 and 9-18 respectively, hereafter referred to as "The Early Works".

the "awakening of a distinctive philosophic interest."<sup>2</sup> The awakening may, of course, have taken place in the late seventies but it was not until the publication of 1882 that the world knew what form it had taken. The publications offer some evidence of the characterization of this phase as theologico-intuitional.

The awakening, Dewey says, came through a rather short course in physiology offered, with Huxley's book<sup>3</sup> as the text, at the University of Vermont where Dewey did his undergraduate work. From it he derived a sense of interdependence and inter-related unity which made him "to desire a world and a life that would have the same properties as had the human organism in the picture of it derived from study of Huxley's treatment."<sup>4</sup> This craving for unity must have predisposed him for a ready acceptance of Hegelian Absolute Idealism that seemed, to him, to have provided the philosophical equivalence to this Huxleyan, physiological unity.

While in the University of Vermont, Dewey found that the teaching of philosophy was influenced by the then dominant Scottish school. The method of teaching was rather formal, and almost all the teachers were clergymen. The main task of intuitionalism of the Scottish School seemed

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2. John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in On Experience, Nature, and Freedom; representative selections. Edited with an introduction by Richard J. Bernstein. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960, p. 4.

3. Thomas H. Huxley, Lessons in Elementary Physiology, London, 1866.

4. Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in Bernstein, Op. cit., p. 4.

to have been to defend the validity of religion or theology. The fate of the latter was somehow closely tied to the validity of Scottish intuitional philosophy which was the dominant philosophy at that time. In its zeal to "defend the faith", intuitionalism seemed to have played down on the empirical elements in life. Dewey learned only too well the method and spirit of this intuitional philosophy as evidenced by his earliest article<sup>5</sup> sent to Dr. W. T. Harris, the editor of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* and one of the first major American Hegelians who influenced Dewey. Couched in the language of intuitionalism, this article was highly schematic and formal.

Dewey's study of intuitional philosophy seems to have painted in his mind a picture of religion as a rather pessimistic attitude to life. Religion seemed to have considered man's knowledge and action so limited that by himself, man always fails miserably in his struggles in life. This is so, not because God is malevolent but because man is only a finite creature whose plight is worsened by the possession of a defective human nature. His struggles are not considered unreal. Rather, they are as real as they are futile. To overcome this futility, man needs the grace or saving hand of God. By implication, this view tends to derogate practice, instituting a dualism between soul and body, God and nature, spirit and matter, the

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5. John Dewey, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism". First published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 16 (April 1882), 208-13. Repr. in *The Early Works I*, p. 3-8

divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal, theory and practice, as well as between subject and object. It thus became the "problematic situation" that controlled or dominated Dewey's later philosophical inquiry. His later philosophy seems to have originated from concern for how to restore some unity between the subject as knower and the object as known. In terms of method or "logic", he tried to institute the same method for both morals and the physical sciences. His naturalistic metaphysics aimed at restoring a unity between man and nature, while his social and political philosophy became an attempt to unify the different social classes through his conception of democracy as not only a form of government, but above all as a form of life. In the sphere of education, Dewey sought to establish unity between the teacher and the pupil, both of whom are to be seen as involved in cooperative learning. He also sought to establish unity between subject matter and method. In morals, effort was made to unite the ideal with the real, while the conception of freedom is such as to maintain some unity between the individual and the society. Would it, then, be preposterous to conclude that the intuitional philosophy which Dewey learned in the theologico-intuitional phase of his philosophical development was actually the "problematic situation" that propelled him into the late phases of his philosophical inquiry? Apparently, his search for unity must have contributed to his conception of education as growth.

#### B. The Hegelian Phase

Dewey states that three factors contributed to the appeal that Hegel's thought made to him. One was a person, the other an historical movement, and the third a temperamental, subjective factor. The person

was Professor George Sylvester Morris, under whom Dewey did a graduate course in German idealism at the Johns Hopkins University. Professor Morris attacked the dualistic theory of knowledge as presented in British empiricism. The latter isolated the knowing subject from the object known, maintaining a rather "mechanical relation" between them. Against this, Morris opposed an Hegelian "organic relation" which unifies in "universal consciousness"<sup>6</sup>, both the rather subjective, individual "empirical consciousness" and the object of knowledge. This Hegelian approach of Professor Morris to the problem of knowledge seems to have met Dewey's earlier craving for unity, and to have attracted him at an early stage to Hegel's absolute idealism.

The historical movement that contributed to this appeal of Hegel to Dewey was the reaction against atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism. It found strong representation in such people as Thomas Hill Green. It was, in Dewey's view, the only vital and constructive movement in philosophy at the time that could stand its ground against the bludgeonings and mistakes of both atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism. The movement objected to the reduction of knowledge to mere sensations or impressions, and thus reinforced the influence of Professor Morris.

The subjective factor that contributed to the appeal that Hegel's thought made to Dewey was the belief by the latter that Hegel's philosophy seemed to hold the promise of unification or "inter-dependence and interrelated

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6. Morton White, The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943, p. 10-13. In these pages, White relates Dewey's philosophy to that of Professor Morris.

unity" for which a craving had been awakened by Dewey's earlier study of Physiology.<sup>7</sup> Painfully oppressed or rather inwardly lacerated by the intuitional and theological isolation of subject from object, soul from body, spirit from matter, and the divine from the human, Dewey believed that Hegel's synthesis of them in "universal consciousness" was more than a mere intellectual formula. It was, to the inwardly lacerated Dewey, "an immense release, a liberation."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Hegel's treatment of human culture, institutions and the arts had a special attraction for Dewey, not only because it involved the dissolution of dualisms but because it involved as well a systematic criticism of Western modern culture as disorganized because of a disintegrative individualism. This, Dewey maintains, heightened the appeal which social interests and problems had for him right from an early period.

Certainly, so many factors could not but contribute to Dewey's acquaintance with Hegel leaving "a permanent deposit" in his thinking. It reinforced his earlier idea of organism and led to the belief that the application of the category of the "organic" or of Hegel's logic would dissolve all philosophic dualisms. This abhorrence of dualisms in all its forms seems to be preponderant throughout Dewey's philosophic inquiry. Thus, as early as 1884, he had published an article criticizing Kant from an Hegelian standpoint that leaves no room for reference to "things and

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7. Vide p. 31 supra.

8. John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in Bernstein, op. cit., p. 10-11.

thoughts as two distinct spheres."<sup>9</sup> He continues the critique of Kant in the form of what he calls a "digression", in an 1887 article entitled "Knowledge as Idealization."<sup>10</sup> Praising Kant for his recognition of "an apperceptive unity interpreting sensations through categories" as essential or indispensable to experience, he criticizes him for conceiving the categories "as purely logical and hence as formal."<sup>11</sup> Dewey maintains that Kant was unable to resolve "the dualism between his a priori form and his a posteriori content" because he ignored the "material" or "psychological content" of "self-consciousness", and "because he conceived of sensations as furnishing meaning (whereas) in truth, the sensations supply no meaning."<sup>12</sup> Dewey's theory of knowledge at this stage seems to be summarized in the title of the article – "Knowledge as Idealization." Knowledge is conceived as the idealization of experience: "Experience begins when intelligence projects something of itself into sensations." It "grows, or gets more meaning, just in the degree in which intelligence reads more ideal content into

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9. John Dewey, "Kant and Philosophic Method", Journal of Speculative Philosophy, 18 (April 1884) 169-71. Reprinted in The Early Works, I, p. 34-47.

10. John Dewey, "Knowledge as Idealization", in The Early Works, I, 176-193 (First published in July 1887).

11. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 190

12. *loc. cit.*

it."<sup>13</sup> There is also in this article a passage that seems to prefigure Dewey's later distinction of experience into primary and secondary. He writes:

The experience as an existence, as a clustering of sensations, is already there. The sole thing is to find out what it means, and this can be done only as there is supplied the mediate relational ideal factor.<sup>14</sup>

It seems apparent that "experience as an existence" or "as a clustering of sensations" is what Dewey later refers to as "primary experience". And, that which supplies "the mediate relational ideal factor" or meaning and significance seems to be what he later refers to as "secondary experience". His "indifferent description" of knowledge "as a process of idealization of experience, or of realization of intelligence"<sup>15</sup> is not very different from his later conception of knowledge as belonging to the realm of secondary experience, and as performing the function of enriching experience with meanings and significances.

However, this Hegelian phase of Dewey's philosophic development is more clearly reflected in his conception of knowledge as the realization of some universal element in individual consciousness. Knowledge appears to be the process by which individual empirical consciousness mirrors universal consciousness:

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13. Dewey, op. cit., p. 191

14. loc. cit.

15. Dewey, op. cit., p. 192

Knowledge may be defined as the process by which some universal element – that is, element which is in possible relations to all intelligences – is given individual form, or existence in a consciousness.... To obtain knowledge, the individual must get rid of the features which are peculiar to him, and conform to the conditions of universal intelligence.<sup>16</sup>

Dewey similarly emphasizes, in his theory of knowledge, the principle of continuity or the Hegelian relatedness of all things in the universe.<sup>17</sup>

He equally stresses the active role of the self, the organism or the individual in the knowing process: "... knowledge of particular things is not a passive operation or impression.... The mind does not wait for sensations to be forced upon it, but goes out in search of them...."<sup>18</sup>

With respect to what one may call his metaphysics, we find Dewey already alluding to a teleological category in this phase of his intellectual development. He speaks, for example, of a purposive mind, spirit or soul which seeks to realize its own purposes by making use of the body.<sup>19</sup> He also distinguished two senses of ends: "end as an actual last term occurring

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16. John Dewey, Psychology. New York & London: Harper, 1898, p. 5-6. The first edition was published in 1887.

17. Vide Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 82, 145, 199, 204, 222, & 233.

18. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 158

19. John Dewey, "Soul and Body", in Bibliotheca Sacra, 43 (1886) p. 239-263. Reprinted in The Early Works, Vol. I, p. 93-115.

at some future time, and as an ideal forever present in the way of a norm for action."<sup>20</sup> With respect to the latter, he maintains that,

There is in nature, as natural, no end; there is no final result; there is no outcome; there is no tendency.... There is then unanimity of agreement with Spinoza, that the idea of an end in nature is a figment of the human imagination. Final causes have no right in physical explanations, no basis in physical processes...."<sup>21</sup>

Dewey therefore challenges the physicist's use of the concept of end in physical explanations. Such use, he says, is compatible or consistent only with a teleological conception of nature, "one which sees it (the world or nature) as the embodiment of reason, and the manifestation of intelligent purpose."<sup>22</sup> In other words, Dewey conceives of nature as having no inherent values, norms, ends, standards, ideals, ends-in-view, aims, goals or purposes. Where, then, do these come from? How do they arise? Dewey maintains that they have their origin in individual impulses, habits or needs. They are "a projection" of the latter. They are "the self-consciousness of the impulse" or "its self-interpretation; its value in terms of possible realization."<sup>23</sup>

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20. John Dewey, "Ethics and Physical Science", in The Early Works, vol. I, p. 220. First published in June 1887.

21. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 222

22. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 224

23. John Dewey, "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will", in The Early Works, vol. 5, p. 134. First published in 1896.

Thus originated, they function as "motives", a motive being defined as "a power inducing to activity."<sup>24</sup> If an ideal or end does not become or function as a motive, Dewey maintains, the indication is "that the ideal itself is not yet definitely formed. There is conflict of ideals. The agent has two possible ends before him (and) thought, reflection is not focused, accordingly, in any single direction."<sup>25</sup> In summary, Dewey relates ideals or ends, from the point of view of their origin, to individual impulses, interests or needs, and to action or activity in terms of their function. He rejects "the empty or formal ideal" which is not suggested by, does not grow out of, or is not related to the agent's impulses, interests or needs. This conception of ideals or ends evinces Dewey's objection to ultimate ends, as well as to the imposition of ends. With respect to the former, it is worthwhile quoting a rather lengthy passage from an 1896 article that enables one to grasp the flavour, enthusiasm or spirit of Dewey's objection. He writes, inter alia:

Mr. D'Arcy then goes on to deal with the proximate end, this ultimate end being obviously useless for the immediate guidance of conduct... In other words, the real end is always the content of some special act performed with its own space and time considerations involved in it... it is of great advantage to the individual to be aware of what he is really about in a

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24. loc. cit.

25. loc. cit.

special case, and any principle, however formal and abstract, which aids him in doing this is justified thereby. But it is not the remote goal, but simply a larger view of the present, which thus helps one.<sup>26</sup>

Dewey sees ultimate ends as useless for the guidance of conduct and therefore has no place for them in his philosophy. The real end must take into consideration present powers and conditions. It is an enlargement or development of present ends, a better doing of what is already being done. Unlike such an end, an ultimate or fixed end "simply removes all value from the present.... It makes rainbow chasing the essence of the doctrine of moral ideas."<sup>27</sup> There is here an indication of Dewey's later objection to ultimate ends which probably contributed to his conception of growth as the end of education, especially as growth seems to connote more of a process than an attained, fixed or ultimate end.

Having established his ethical position in 1887 as involving "teleological action", "volitional action" and "activity towards an ideal, that which is not, but which ought to be",<sup>28</sup> Dewey gives some clues the following year to his later objection to the imposition of ends on education. He

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26. John Dewey, "The Metaphysical Method in Ethics", in The Early Works, vol. 5, p. 32. First published in 1896.

27. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 33

28. John Dewey, "Ethics and Physical Science", in The Early Works, vol. 1, p. 210

expatiates on the democratic ethics, stating that it includes "the fact that personality cannot be procured for any one, however degraded and feeble, by anyone else, however wise and strong."<sup>29</sup> The individual, he says, must make the choice to develop the personality that indwells in him as in everyone else:

you cannot say that he knows no law; you must say that he knows no law but his own, the law of personality; no law, in other words, externally imposed, however splendid the authority, and undoubted the goodness of those that impose it.<sup>30</sup>

Dewey's later conception of education as not being a preparation for some future life, and as not having an end beyond itself, also finds some expression at this stage of his philosophic development. In 1893, he writes:

..if I were asked to name the most needed of all reforms in the spirit of education, I should say: "Cease conceiving of education as mere preparation for later life, and make of it the full meaning of the present life."<sup>31</sup>

Dewey would rather conceive of education as an activity that has an intrinsic worth, that is, as an activity that has "worth enough to be carried on for

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29. John Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy", in *op. cit.*, p. 244

30. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 244-245. Underlining mine.

31. John Dewey, "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal", in The Early Works, vol. 4, p. 50. First published in 1893

its own sake"; one that "is indeed, an end in itself, not a mere means to something beyond itself."<sup>32</sup>

Dewey's commitment to democracy, not merely as a form of government but more as a way of life, had already taken some shape at this stage. He contrasts democracy with aristocracy, indicates his preference for the former, and links it with freedom or liberty. He maintains that,

There is an individualism in democracy which there is not in aristocracy; but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism; it is an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal, not an individualism of lawlessness.<sup>33</sup>

There is in this passage, Dewey's conception of freedom as an ideal in a democratic way of life. The latter seems to make no sense without liberty or freedom. Indeed, Dewey avers that "the democratic ideal includes liberty, because democracy without initiation from within, without an ideal chosen from within and freely followed from within, is nothing."<sup>34</sup> In other words, the core of democracy is freedom; it finds whatever meaning it has in the concept of freedom; it is nothing without freedom. As a matter of

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32. loc. cit.

33. John Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy", in Early works, Vol. I, p. 243-244. For his conception of democracy as not "only a form of government", but as a way of life, see Dewey, ibid., p. 240

34. Dewey, ibid., p. 245

fact, freedom is so central to Dewey's conception of democracy that he equates the two. The "spiritual meaning" of democracy, he says, is freedom:

If God is, as Christ taught, at the root of life, incarnate in man, then democracy has a spiritual meaning which it behooves us not to pass by. Democracy is freedom.... Democracy, as freedom, means the loosening of bonds, the wearing away of restrictions, the breaking down of barriers, of middle walls, of partitions. ... Democracy is, as freedom, the freeing of truth.<sup>35</sup>

If Dewey's most authoritative book on philosophy in general, and on the philosophy of education in particular, is titled Democracy and Education,<sup>36</sup> and if "democracy is freedom", it does not seem presumptuous to suggest that there is found in the Hegelian Dewey some evidence that supports the hypothesis, which the writer intends to investigate, that Dewey's conception of education as growth can be better conceived, interpreted or explained in terms of freedom. Of course, Dewey himself offers some clues to his later conception of freedom as an "ethical ideal" that should guide the process of education, to his later conception of freedom as a potentiality, that is, as an end that is to be attained, as well as to his linking of freedom

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35. John Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy", in The Early Works, vol. 4, p. 8. First published in 1893. Underlining mine.

36. Vide ch. I, p. 1, footnote no. 1 supra.

with action, reason or intelligence. A passage from an 1888 publication sums up all these clues:

Freedom, in fine, is not a ready-made garment with which all men are clothed to do with as they will. It is the ethical ideal; it is something to be attained; it is action in conformity with reason...; it is not the starting-point, it is the goal.

By 1891, he had worked out in summary form the rudiments of his concept of freedom. He conceived of freedom as a "moral capacity", as "the ability to conceive of an end and to be governed in action by this conceived end",<sup>38</sup> or as "the power of conceiving ends and of realizing the ideal end in action."<sup>39</sup> He analyzed the concept of freedom rather briefly, and indicated that it has three aspects or forms: "negative", "potential", and "positive."<sup>40</sup> Negative freedom is "freedom from the appetites and desires." It is one with "the power of self-government", which is the "capacity to control and subjugate impulses by reflection upon their relationship to a rational

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37. John Dewey, "Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding", in The Early Works, vol. I, p. 339. First published in 1888.

38. John Dewey, "Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics", in op. cit., vol. 3, p. 340. First published in 1891

39. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 342

40. Dewey, op. cit., p. 340-344.

end." Potential freedom constitutes "freedom of choice", understood as "the possibility of thinking of many and various ends, and even of ends which are contrary to one another." It is "the power to put various ends before self." Dewey's emphasis, however, is on positive freedom which he also calls "actual freedom." This, he says, "lies in the realization of that end which actually satisfies." It is the freedom enjoyed by "only the good man, the man who is truly realizing his individuality." The other aspects of freedom, Dewey maintains, "are simply means instrumental to the realization of individuality." There are also in this Hegelian Dewey, clues to his later conception of freedom as self-perfection through the modification of character<sup>41</sup>, or as the realization of moral good.<sup>42</sup> Needless to say, much of Dewey's later conception and analysis of freedom seems to be mainly a refinement and exposition of these early, rather summary cogitations. . . And with respect to the other aspects of his philosophy, it would not seem unreasonable to conclude that many of the theses of most of his later works, such as How We Think (1910), Democracy and Education (1916), Human Nature and Conduct (1922), Experience and Nature (c.1929), as well as Freedom and Culture (1939), had been sketched or even developed

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41. John Dewey, "The Study of Ethics", in The Early Works, vol. 4, p. 343. First published in 1893. Published as a book in 1894 by Register Publishing Co., Ann Arbor, and titled The Study of Ethics: A syllabus.

42. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 344

during the Hegelian phase of his philosophic development. It does not seem apparent, however, that Hegel's logic, which deals with the formal structure of thought that is found within the organic totality of individual-universal consciousness, left any "permanent deposit" that can be readily evidenced in Dewey's logic, which seems to describe the process of inquiry, especially as it was finally expounded in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, (1938). When conjoined with Dewey's philosophic interpretation of Darwin's biological theory of evolution, one cannot but surmise that this rather radical difference in methodology or logic must have contributed to Dewey's drift away from Hegelianism to the experimental, instrumental or naturalistic phase of his philosophic development. But before investigating the characteristics of this phase, it may be pertinent to reiterate a point that is very relevant or central to the present inquiry, and which the exposition of Dewey's Hegelian phase seems to evince. If "actual freedom lies in the realization of that end which actually satisfies",<sup>43</sup> and if "education ... is concerned with the formation of a character interested in ends that are valuable",<sup>44</sup> it would not seem presumptuous to deduce that education is concerned with the attainment of freedom. It seems that the latter can be conceived

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43. John Dewey, "Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics", in The Early Works, vol. 3, p. 343. First published in 1891.

44. John Dewey, "Freedom of Will" (Contributions to Cyclopaedia of Education), in The Middle Works, vol. 6, p. 464

as the end of education for Dewey. As a matter of fact, he allocates the educator a threefold task with respect to freedom. He writes, inter alia:

With respect to freedom, then, the task of the educator is threefold. First, to keep alive plasticity, initiative, capacity to vary; to prevent induction and fixation in fossilized automatic habits... Secondly, to confirm preferences; to build up and strengthen positive and constructive interest in specific directions... Thirdly, to make preferences reasonable; that is to say, to develop in individuals the habit of forecasting the consequences of acting upon a given preferential tendency, of comparing one set of results with another, <sup>45</sup> and by these means enlightening preference....

Why does he say "with respect to freedom"? Could he have stated the task of the educator differently if it was to be "with respect to growth", for example? Probably "yes", if the first task, for example, exhausts his analysis of growth. The implication would, then, be that the concept of freedom is broader than that of growth. In that case, it would offer more criteria for explaining the latter in terms of freedom. Suppose, however, that the concept of freedom is the same as that of growth. In other words, what, if growth is freedom, and freedom is growth? Can one still be explained in terms of the other? How would a mere substitution of words help one to better understand a concept? Philosophically, perhaps, this may be a dilemma, but it is common everyday practice. What are the whole bulk of words that are called "synonyms" used for? If a person knows the English words "door" and "chair", for example, and one talks

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<sup>45</sup>. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 466

to him about an "entrance" and a "seat" -- words which he does not understand -- would he understand if the word "door" was substituted for "entrance", and the word "chair" for "seat"? What happens if it is explained that the "door" is an "entrance", and the "chair" is a "seat"? With respect to the concepts of growth and freedom, however, the issue does not seem to involve a mere substitution of words. Or, are Dewey's propositions about growth, which are to be explicated, the same as those about freedom in terms of which they are to be explained? Is it not rather a question of such relationship between them that one can be better understood in terms of the other? but, before trying to verify such a postulate, it can also be asked what happens if freedom as a concept has less connotations than the concept of growth. Can it still help to better explain the latter? This, of course, is a possibility that has to establish its credibility in the course of inquiry. The point that is to be reiterated, however, is that there is some evidence, in the Hegelian phase of Dewey's philosophic development, in support of the hypothesis which the writer intends to examine, namely, that the interpretation of Dewey's concept of growth in terms of freedom can provide a focus for better understanding Dewey's conception of education as growth.

### C. The Experimental Phase

This was the period when Dewey rather slowly and imperceptibly drifted away from Hegelianism. The key category in this phase is "experience", which Dewey conceives as revealing nature. This emphasis on experience,

and on its relation to nature, seems to account for the publication of Experience and Nature in 1925. The question that seems to have persistently haunted Dewey at this time was whether experience finds its primary correlation in the Hegelian universal consciousness, or whether it is primarily correlated with natural "events", understood as inclusive of human or conscious acts, as well as of organic states. Unlike Hegel, Dewey came to believe that the starting point is the factual, rather than the logical. Genuine analysis has therefore to start from nature to the logical sphere, and not the reverse. Moreover, Dewey had difficulties with Hegel's conception of nature and of man as a mere manifestation of an eternal consciousness, whereas natural events and human acts exhibited everywhere a distinctively temporal character. In other words, Dewey had difficulties with Hegel's idealism, and such problems propelled him into the instrumental or experimental phase of his philosophic development. In this phase, Dewey devoted himself mainly to a revision or reconstruction of what he calls "classic philosophies." In the preface to one of his books, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, he states why such a revision or reconstruction was necessary. He writes:

Classic philosophies have to be revised because they must be squared up with the many social and intellectual tendencies that have revealed themselves since those philosophies matured. The conquest of the sciences by the experimental method of inquiry; the injection of evolutionary ideas into the study of life and society; the application of the historic method to religion and morals as well as to institutions; the creation of sciences of "origins" and of the cultural development of mankind — how can such intellectual

changes occur and leave philosophy what it was and where it was?<sup>46</sup>

Dewey sees Darwin's theory of evolution as a major factor that necessitates a reconstruction of past philosophies. The former involves proof of evolution as a fact, and a description of its mechanisms. Darwin maintains that because the time needed for the origin of a new variety in nature is too long, we do not directly observe the process of evolution. Nevertheless, he continues, certain facts force us to conclude that there must be evolution. Furthermore, adoption of the hypothesis engenders a rather uniform explanation of a wide range of hitherto unconnected and rather inexplicable facts. He gives the mechanisms of evolution as natural selection, sexual selection and the inheritance of acquired characters.<sup>47</sup> His theory of natural selection appears to be a differential death rate between two variant subclasses of a population, in which the better-adapted subclass has the less death rate. He maintains that populations of plants and animals exhibit variations, some of which give the organism an advantage over the rest of the population, in the struggle for survival. These favoured variants transmit their advantageous characters to their offspring, so that in time they outnumber

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46. John Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965 (c 1910), p. v.

47. Vide Charles Darwin, The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, vol. I. New York: D. Appleton, 1897, p. 97-163.

unfavourable variants.<sup>48</sup> As this evolutionary trend continues, new varieties, species, genera, or even populations can result. In other words, natural selection is an agency of change rather than of permanence, since some variations from the ancestral type represent better adaptations to the environment.

With respect to sexual selection, Darwin argues that the males or females in a population may possess unequally some characteristic that increases their tendency to have off-spring. This characteristic influences selection even though it may not be otherwise favoured by natural selection. Such a characteristic may be the possession of a more efficient organ of copulation, or of a behaviour pattern that engenders the fertilization of a larger percentage of eggs.<sup>49</sup> He sees sexual selection as accounting for the evolution of such things as mating rituals and secondary sexual characteristics, such as breeding plumage in birds. In man, it accounts for the loss of body hair which Darwin attributes to systematic choice among man's ancestors, of mates that exhibited large regions of bare skin.

As regards the inheritance of acquired characters, Darwin maintains that some variations are due to the action of the environment on the germ

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48. Darwin, *ibid.*, p. 97-107, and 159-160.

49. *id.*, *op. cit.* p. 107-110, and 160.

plasm, to the effects of use and disuse, or to both of them together.<sup>50</sup> If a wolf develops its muscles by chasing rabbits, for example, its pups may inherit larger muscles. It may be noted here that Darwin was at the time ignorant of the laws of heredity as explicated in the modern theory of the origin of genetic variation in population, such principles of genetics being discovered by Mendel. It is also worth noting that several rather damaging objections were raised against Darwin's theory of the origin of species.<sup>51</sup> But of immediate relevance to the present inquiry is a consideration of what form Darwin's theory could and did take in Dewey's philosophy.

Generally, Darwin's theory gave a deeper meaning to the temporal aspects of nature. Change was emphasized as a fundamental feature of nature, not merely as the reshuffling of pre-existing materials in accordance with physical law, but as implying that the materials themselves are subject to alteration. Thus, the species change in such a way that new regularities of behaviour replace old ones. Indeed, even the laws of nature were conceived as historically conditioned. This led to the post-Darwinian view of method, with its insistence upon the investigation of origins. Man was viewed

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50. Darwin, *ibid.*, p. 7-17, 167-173, and vol. 2, p. 249-250.

51. See, for example, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution. London: Chatto & Windus, 1959, p. 221-254.

as continuous with the rest of nature and as subject to the laws of nature. Even his mental, moral, and spiritual qualities were viewed as evolving by precisely the same processes by which an eagle, for example, acquires its talons. Darwin was interpreted, especially by German materialists, as refuting all natural teleology. Some reformers, such as Karl Marx, saw him as demonstrating that no particular economic or political institution need be regarded as unalterable. Rather, the forms of society are to be viewed as local, temporary and functional. As such, they should be changed for the better. Societies were viewed as undergoing a progressive evolution akin to that of living organisms. In one of his books, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, Dewey himself gives some of the forms which Darwin's theory took in his philosophy. He maintains that past philosophies assumed a superiority of the fixed and final over the changing.<sup>52</sup> The advent of Darwin's theory, on the other hand, meant a transvaluation of such values. With his "Origin of Species", Darwin shifted such centrality to the changing. The principle of transition became central. Dewey maintains that before Darwin, scientific or experimental method was limited to the inorganic world, as investigated by the strictly physical sciences. Rather hesitantly, it found its way into the kingdom of plants and animals, or into the sphere of the strictly biological sciences. With Darwin, there came an extension of the experimental method into the spheres of mind, life and morals, or into the realm of the specifically human sciences,

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52. Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 1.

as exemplified by psychology. There came with Darwin an emancipation of "genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking questions and looking for explanations" in all spheres of inquiry.<sup>53</sup> In other words, Darwin represents the institution of a new logic, "the Darwinian genetic and experimental logic",<sup>54</sup> which is to replace Aristotle's Organon. This new logic "outlaws", "flanks" or "dismisses" one type of problems and substitutes for it another type. Armed with such logic, "philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values and the specific conditions that generate them."<sup>55</sup> Philosophical interest is transferred from the fixed, permanent, or perfect to the changing, the concrete, or the specific. The question is no longer how specific changes find their individual meaning in the absolute, or in some "wholesale essence." The issue becomes how these changes meet or fail to meet the requirements of concrete purposes:

Interest shifts from the wholesale essence back of special changes to the question of how special changes serve and defeat concrete purposes; shifts from an intelligence that shaped things once for all to the particular intelligences which things are even now shaping; shifts from an ultimate goal of good to the direct increments of justice and happiness that intelligent administration

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53. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 9

54. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 18

55. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 13

of existent conditions may beget and that present carelessness or stupidity will destroy or forego.<sup>56</sup>

The realm of inquiry shifts from the absolute to "the facts of experience." Philosophical concern now centres on the hazards of nature, and on how they can be coped with or minimized, as well as on the potentialities in nature that await realization through human effort. What the new logic demands of philosophy is "insight into specific conditions of value and into specific consequences of ideas", rather than an a priori formulation of "the legislative constitution of the universe."<sup>57</sup> It also demands the abandonment of old questions if any progress is to be made. They should be allowed to disappear or evaporate. Having outlived their usefulness, they demand no solution from the new logic. As a matter of fact, "we do not solve them: we get over them."<sup>58</sup> Thus, according to Dewey, Darwin swept aside old philosophical issues, instituted new philosophical problems, and donated a new philosophic method of dealing with them. Dewey seems to have been so fascinated by this great movement that he declared almost in a rather solemn tone:

Doubtless the greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions, the greatest precipitant

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56. Dewey, op. cit., p. 15

57. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 17

58. Dewey, op. cit., p. 19.

of new methods, new intentions, new problems  
is the one effected by the scientific revolution  
that found its climax in the "Origin of Species."<sup>59</sup>

His later philosophy became a specification of the "new problems" and of their solution through application of the "new methods." He maintained that the revolutionary substitution of new problems for old ones includes the following: the emphasis on change as opposed to the fixed, final or permanent; the institution of the principle of continuity in place of dualisms of all sorts; and the emphasis on human action as vital to the management of human affairs, rather than the need to await the working out of natural law, to await the outcome of the slow evolutionary process, or to slavishly depend on providence. The first substitution implies a shift from final ends to ends-in-view. The second shows man as evolving from less complex natural beings, and therefore as a being of nature that must actively adjust himself to factors in his environment. In other words, man is continuous with nature, and this continuity eliminates the dualism between man and nature which previous philosophies instituted.

In summary, it can be maintained that Dewey tries in both his metaphysics and in his theory of knowledge to meet the challenge of Darwin's theory of evolution. He attempts to integrate the findings of evolutionary thought into a philosophical schema, and to free moral inquiry, for example, from the constraints of misunderstandings about the significance of the facts of evolution. One such misunderstanding was that part of the theory of evolution which was offered in a context that formed part and parcel of the prevailing scientific outlook of the late nineteenth century. Men

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59. loc. cit.

claimed, in the name of science, to know that man was merely a by-product of nature, just as it was strongly suggested that nature, itself, could not be regarded as an orderly and planned structure. Some room had therefore to be left for novelty, change, becoming, order, or planning through human endeavour. Indeed, one of the key elements that philosophers of that time, including Dewey, took from Darwin's theory of evolution was the element of novelty, change, or becoming. Dewey therefore tries to work out the metaphysical implications of the theory of evolution, one of which would be the necessity for constructing reality as a developing process that has a place in it for novelty. He attempts to reintegrate man into a different kind of nature, since he believes that the Aristotelian order of nature, which involves natural ends and a theology of providence, has been abolished. Nevertheless, he does not want to go to the opposite extreme of inserting man into a purely mechanical form of nature. His first move in this rather grand enterprise, is to substitute "experience" for the "traditional" objects of knowledge, so that everything now takes place within that experience. And, he presumes that his hierarchy of experience, involving various levels and kinds of interaction or transaction, allows for novelty, genuine growth, or for freedom. Experience, in his view, is rational, or it attains rationality through the control of impulses, needs, or desires. In other words, it is rational because it is purposive. The unity of man and nature is viewed as a unity of intelligible purpose, and the attainment of growth as freedom is considered to be impossible in a mechanical universe, or in a conception of nature in which everything is considered to move or to tend towards its natural end. But since Dewey

views growth as improvement, or as progress within the same species, rather than as a total transformation that results in a new species, his concept of growth can be considered in this sense to be rather Aristotelian. Nevertheless, such a rather partial similarity should not be allowed to blur the close relation between Darwin's theory of evolution and Dewey's philosophy in general, as well as his philosophy of nature in particular. The latter is neither Aristotelian nor mechanical. An understanding of this characterization seems to be necessary for understanding the issues, problems, and difficulties that are involved in Dewey's concepts of growth and freedom, as well as in the proposed interpretation of the former in terms of the latter. What should be noted in the present context, however, is that Darwin's theory of evolution was a major factor in Dewey's shift from Hegelianism to experimentalism, naturalism, or to pragmatism. He set out to reconstruct the theory of knowledge, logic, and metaphysics in this evolutionary context. And to further the interpretation of his concept of growth in terms of freedom, it is essential to investigate what form such a reconstruction took in each of these philosophical realms.

## 2. Dewey's Theory of Knowledge

Dewey's theory of knowing is fundamental to an understanding of the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom. Taken in its logical version, it forms the focus of Dewey's philosophical reconstruction. In this section, a brief exposition of the problems that necessitated his reconstruction of the theory of knowledge is presented. The presuppositions and basis, nature and scope, as well as reliability

of knowledge in Dewey's theory of knowing are also examined. The distinction and connection between knowledge and intelligence is discussed, and inquiry as the process by which both knowledge and intelligence are obtained is examined.

#### A. Need for Dewey's Theory of Knowledge

Dewey thinks that a philosophical interpretation of evolution demands two basic changes in the traditional theories of knowledge. The knower must be seen as an active participant in nature, rather than a mere spectator. The object of knowledge, on the other hand, must be conceived as produced by or in the process of inquiry, rather than being an antecedently given reality. Dewey maintains that the classic theory of knowledge, bequeathed to Western philosophy by Plato and Aristotle, conceived of knowledge as "immediate grasp and incorporation of objects",<sup>60</sup> as "immediate possession of being",<sup>61</sup> or as "insight into, grasp of, real being as such."<sup>62</sup> Dewey examines other theories of knowledge, such as idealism and epistemological realism, and concludes that,

The common essence of all these theories, in short, is that what is known is antecedent to the mental act of observation and inquiry, and is totally unaffected by these acts; otherwise

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60. John Dewey, Experience and Nature. New York: Dover, 1958; also La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1958 (c 1929), p. 108.

61. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 135.

62. *loc. cit.*

it would not be fixed and unchangeable....  
 A spectator theory of knowledge is the  
 inevitable outcome.

The object of knowledge was conceived as fixed, final, or unchangeable. Logic was accordingly a matter of definition, classification and demonstration. The "demonstrative syllogism" remained the basic form of apprehension of truth.<sup>64</sup> As a matter of fact, there was a dualism of sense and reason, in the sense that some philosophers appealed to experience in the form of sense perception as the source of truth or valid beliefs, while others appealed to reason as the ultimate authority. By the Eighteenth Century, Newtonian science had ushered in a new method of acquiring knowledge, but it still maintained the dualism between the knower and the known. Dewey maintains that various theories of knowledge reflect the three historical "levels of the organization and presentation of inquiry" which he designates "Self-Action, Interaction, and Transaction."<sup>65</sup> The Aristotelian theory of knowledge, he says, belongs to the sphere of Self-Action "which establishes a knower 'in person', residing in, at, or near the organism to do... the knowing."<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, Dewey continues, both knower and the known are "cut off from" each other. The development of physics,

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63. John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: a study of the relation of knowledge and action. New York: Minton, Balch, 1929; also, New York: Putnam, 1960 (c 1929), p. 22-23.

64. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 152-153.

65. John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, Knowing and the Known. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975 (c 1949), p. 107.

66. Dewey, ibid., p. 134.

with its conception of causal connection, advanced this Aristotelian picture into the realm of "Interaction". The latter "assumes actual 'real' things like marbles which impinge on certain organic regions such as nerve endings or perhaps even brain segments."<sup>67</sup> Dewey maintains that the dualism of the knower and the known persists in this conception, despite the superficial connection in "physical-physiological organization." And yet, it remained the theory of knowledge "up to the beginning of the last generation."<sup>68</sup> As a matter of fact, even Dewey's philosophy up to, and including about 1929, seems to belong to this phase. At that time, he entertained, for example, the idea of vertical and horizontal interactions, involving "three plateaus": "physical", "life", and "that of association, communication, participation."<sup>69</sup> However, his use of the word "interaction", by then, is only deceptive because his discussion reveals that what he actually meant was what he later termed "transaction". The latter, he maintains, upholds no radical separation between the knower and the known. His theory of knowledge should therefore be viewed as set in the sphere of "Transaction". This, he says, is necessary to reflect the developments in modern science and mathematics. In Knowing and the Known, he shows

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<sup>67</sup>. Dewey, op. cit., p. 135

<sup>68</sup>. Dewey, ibid., p. 108

<sup>69</sup>. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 271-272.

how physics, physiology, ecology and taxonomy have employed this manner of observing which he calls "transactional."<sup>70</sup> Evolutional biology, in particular, emphasizes the genesis of man and of his functions from an animal basis, and how these functions adapt man as an organism to his environment. It makes it difficult to see man as just a passive recipient of impulses from nature, while thought becomes no more than any other biological process that adapts man to his environment. Logic and the theory of knowledge have to reflect these developments in the sciences<sup>71</sup> by going "transactional." Dewey undertakes this task in that "logical version of pragmatism termed instrumentalism", culminating in his joint research with Bentley in Knowing and the Known. In the latter, the authors set out a theory of knowledge in which knowledge is considered as a natural behavioural event that is to be investigated by methods which have been successful elsewhere in the natural sciences.<sup>72</sup> They outline eight differences between their theory and previous ones.<sup>73</sup> There is no dualism of subject and object, soul and body, mind and matter, or self and not-self. Both the knower and the known

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70. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 103-138.

71. Dewey emphasizes this point in his books, especially in The Quest for Certainty, (Chs. I, III, IV, VII, VIII, IX & XI), and in Reconstruction in Philosophy.

72. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 87.

73. *idem*, *ibid.*, p. 120-121.

belong to the same natural realm. There are no names that can be considered as expressive of "inner" thoughts. The whole knowing behaviour is conceived as an organic-environmental transaction. In other words, their theory of knowledge is transactional,<sup>74</sup> as opposed to earlier theories which were either self-actional or interactional. It reflects Darwin's evolutionary theory as it affected the development of the sciences. Being transactional, it is opposed to classical mechanics which Dewey sees as consistently interactional.<sup>75</sup> It is pertinent to note that mechanistic conceptions leave little or no room for human freedom. Everything seems to have its fixed place, so that there can only be action-reaction in which little or nothing is changed or changeable. Human freedom makes no sense, if at all it is conceivable, in such a context. Dewey's transactional theory of knowledge, as opposed to classical mechanics, therefore gives a hint of its connection with the concept of freedom in terms of which his concept of growth is to be explained.

#### B. Presuppositions and Basis of Knowledge

Dewey's theory of knowledge does not involve the performing of any Husserlian epoché. There is no bracketing of all presuppositions in order to arrive at pure consciousness and from which vantage point

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74. For characterizations of "Transaction", see Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 121-124.

75. *idem*, *ibid.*, p. 124.

to investigate the essence of different phenomena as they appear to consciousness. Such an approach seems to be appropriate to a spectator theory of knowledge, which Dewey seeks to replace with his transactional theory. The latter accepts man as an acculturated organism, or as a social subject and agent, which interacts with an environment that is rich in habits, attitudes, beliefs, and institutions. He is conceived as embedded in a culture, and therefore as entering with presuppositions or with his past experience into the transactional process that constitutes knowledge. There is therefore no tabula rasa, or pure consciousness, waiting and staring in the hope that things will stamp their images on it:

The organism does not stand about, Micawber-like, waiting for something to impress itself upon it from without. The organism acts in accordance with its own structure, simple or complex, upon its surroundings. As a consequence the changes produced in the environment react upon the organism and its activities. The living creature undergoes, suffers, the consequences of its own behaviour. This close connection between doing and suffering or undergoing forms what we call experience. Disconnected doing and disconnected suffering are neither of them experiences.

Man plays an active part in acquiring experience. He goes into a transaction with the environment. The latter stimulates him to act on it, so that he acquires experience and effects other changes. The experience that is

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76. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy. New York, Holt, 1920; New York, New American Library, c 1950; Enlarged edition with a new introduction by the author, Boston: Beacon, 1970 (c 1948), p. 86.

thus acquired, involves habits, attitudes, and dispositions which man carries into the process of knowing. As a matter of fact, it is this experience that forms the basis of knowledge in Dewey's theory. It is broader than knowledge, the latter being only one form of it. Dewey refers to it as "gross experience", assigning it primacy and ultimacy: "primary", he says, "as it is given in an uncontrolled form, ultimate as it is given in a more regulated and significant form -- a form made possible by the methods and results of reflective experience."<sup>77</sup> Gross experience, understood as exhibiting the rudimentary cognitive traits of commonsense knowledge, or of knowledge by acquaintance, as well as non-cognitive traits such as moral and aesthetic, is the basis of that which Dewey thinks should be properly designated "knowledge", that is, scientific knowledge.<sup>78</sup> It forms both the foreground and the background of such knowledge. Dewey reiterates, in this respect, its importance "as a starting point and terminal point, as setting problems and as testing proposed solutions."<sup>79</sup> In other words, gross experience is both the source and the testing ground of knowledge.

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77. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 15.

78. See Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 270-285.

79. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 3.

The latter is therefore only intermediary, secondary, and instrumental.<sup>80</sup> With respect to gross experience, the "scientific man" does not differ from "the man in the street": "stars, rocks, trees, and creeping things are the same material of experience for both."<sup>81</sup> Gross experience seems therefore to be man's basic method of dealing with nature. It is the medium in which nature reveals or discloses itself to man. Dewey states that it "reaches down into nature",<sup>82</sup> or "penetrates into nature."<sup>83</sup> Knowledge, in such a conception, seems to be a particular, or perhaps a specialized, form of experience.

### C. Nature and Scope of Knowledge

Dewey defines knowledge as "the outcome of special inquiries undertaken because of the presence of problems."<sup>84</sup> It is man's effort

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80. Dewey's division of experience into "primary" and "secondary", as well as the functions or roles of each, will be discussed in section three, p. 90-99 infra.

81. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 2a.

82. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 4a.

83. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 1

84. John Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value", in The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1971 (c 1939), p. 521. See also John Dewey, Logic, the Theory of Inquiry. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1939 (c 1938), p. 7-9, 21.

to provide solutions to specific problematic situations as they arise in gross experience. Dewey emphasizes the point that this link between knowledge and problematic situations is vital to an understanding of his theory of knowing. He writes:

the problematic situation is the context in which everything I say about knowing is placed and by reference to which it is to be understood. It controls my meaning of "ideas" .... It controls my theory of the place and function of facts or data.... It controls the nature and function of ... future experiences... Finally, it controls the meaning to be put upon the operations by means of which the terminal conclusion "reliably ensues" .... I have held that the relative defects of both the idealistic and realistic epistemologies is the result of their failure to set knowing in this context of problematic situations.<sup>85</sup>

It should be noted in this connection that, to Dewey, a situation designates a "contextual whole" within which objects and events are experienced, and within which judgements are made about such events. The isolated singular object or event, within this contextual whole, does not constitute a situation. Rather, it forms a special part, phase, or aspect of the situation which is an enviroing experienced world. A situation can therefore be viewed as forming both a foreground and a background for the individual object or event. It is the backdrop against which the latter is experienced. As such, it could be likened to a visual field or horizon. It is this complex environment, and not the isolated singular object or event, which presents the problem of use, of enjoyment, or of whatever active and adaptive/

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85. Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value", in Schilpp (ed.), op. cit., p. 560.

response is required in order to carry on a course of behaviour. It is this total or complex environment to which Dewey refers as a situation.<sup>86</sup>

It should also be noted that a problematic situation is not, to Dewey, an unsettled or indeterminate situation that "comes into existence from existential causes, just as does, say, the organic imbalance of hunger."<sup>87</sup>

The existence of this latter unsettled situation, Dewey says, involves nothing intellectual or cognitive. In itself, it is precognitive, even though it is the necessary condition of cognitive operation or inquiry. It becomes a sufficient condition, that is, the unsettled or indeterminate situation becomes a problematic situation, when inquiry is evoked. This evoking of inquiry results in the taking or adjudging of the situation to be problematic. In other words, the existentially indeterminate situation does not, by itself, constitute a problematic situation. Rather, the latter is instituted from it. It is equally pertinent to note what the word "problem" means to Dewey. He states that a problem, to him, "is not a task to be performed which a person puts upon himself or that is placed upon him by others..."<sup>88</sup> Rather,

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86. Vide Dewey, Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, p. 66-67. The apparent similarity between this conception of a "situation" and some of the tenets of Gestalt Psychology may help to further explain the concept.

87. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 107

88. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 108

it "represents the partial transformation by inquiry of a problematic situation into a determinate situation".<sup>89</sup> What Dewey refers to as a problematic situation, in this definition, is apparently an existentially indeterminate situation which is partially transformed by inquiry into a determinate one. In other words, a problem is instituted. As such, it is not a datum. But, neither is it self-set nor arbitrarily instituted. It is rooted, instead, in an actual existential situation, that is, in an existentially indeterminate situation.<sup>90</sup>

Knowledge is therefore a tool that enables man to restore harmony to his environment. Whenever his needs and desires are fulfilled, man remains content with gross experience. But, when these are thwarted, he institutes inquiry, aimed at instituting knowledge that will enable him to live in harmony with the environment, realizing his goals, and fulfilling his desires. Knowledge is therefore secondary and derivative, rather than primary, separate, or self-sufficing. It is part of "the process by which life is sustained and evolved."<sup>91</sup> It involves doing, and makes a difference in, and to, things. It changes, and not simply mirrors, reality. It manipulates, arranges, or re-arranges natural energies. Thus, Dewey maintains that

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89. loc. cit.

90. For Dewey's meaning of the latter, see p. 68-69 supra.

91. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 87; and Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 106.

science, his paradigm of knowledge, "is itself a form of doing, of practice."<sup>92</sup>

As knowledge, it involves the noting, and formulation into "laws"; of the connections or relations that are found in the "doing-undergoing-doing" which constitutes gross experience. When thus formulated, the laws are used to control or regulate the course of changes or events in nature.

Dewey therefore emphasizes experimental or scientific knowledge, not because it is "the only kind of knowledge, but because its comparative maturity as a form of knowledge exemplifies so conspicuously the necessary place and function of experimentation."<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, Dewey conceives of science as an enterprise that is concerned with the advancement of knowing<sup>94</sup>.

He maintains that this concern distinguishes scientific knowing from common sense knowing, because the latter is concerned mainly with the affairs of everyday life.

Although Dewey stresses the "place and function of experimentation" in knowing, it is important to remember that experimentation is not limited to what scientists do in the laboratories. Rather, it involves recognition of the place of doing or action in knowledge. It indicates that an active manipulation of the environment is necessary in order to transform the

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92. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 284.

93. Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value", in Schilpp (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 527

94. Vide Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 281-282

problematic situation into a determinate one. As problematic, the situation challenges man to do something, even if what is to be done involves nothing more than the changing of his mind, dispositions, habits, attitudes, or beliefs. In other words, certain "operations" of inquiry must be carried out if knowledge is to ensue. The emphasis on experimentation is therefore Dewey's method of advocating experimental knowing. Such knowledge involves doing, action, or transformation. It can therefore be tested out in experience, and is contrasted with knowledge as contemplation, that is, as an affair that goes on in an individual consciousness. In Dewey's view, this emphasis on the place and function of experimentation in knowing does not necessarily subordinate knowledge to doing or action. Rather, it indicates that "action is involved in knowledge, not that knowledge is subordinated to action or 'practice'."<sup>95</sup>

Dewey maintains that his conception of the nature of knowledge eliminates mind as the bearer of knowledge:

"Mind", "faculty", "I.Q.", or what not as an actor in charge of behaviour is a charlatan.... The "mind" is wholly redundant. The living, behaving, knowing organism is present. To add a "Mind" to him is to try to double him up. It is doubletalk; and doubletalk doubles no facts."<sup>96</sup>

The transactional approach to the problem of knowledge seems to share, in this respect, something of the rather holistic approach of gestalt psychology.

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<sup>95</sup> Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value", in Schilpp (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 528. See Ch. 3, p. 213-221 (*infra*), where Dewey's conception of action is expounded on, especially as it relates to the present inquiry.

<sup>96</sup> Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 132.

It is not mind, but the whole organism or man that knows, and such knowledge is possible only in the context of some transaction with the environment. Mind, like matter, is only a character, rather than a cause or source of natural events. It is "no absolute monarch; no principle of explanation; no substance behind or underlying changes.... The name designates a character in operation, not an entity."<sup>97</sup> Mind and matter are both different characters of natural events. While mind expresses the order of meanings of natural events in their connections and dependencies, matter expresses their sequential order -- the realm of cause and effect. They are therefore functional characters, rather than static structures, belonging to "the complex of events that constitute nature." Indeed, Dewey predicts that the conception of them as structures would no longer be maintained if men were banned, for another generation, from using them as nouns.<sup>98</sup> In his view, the conception of mind as a kind of Being springs from "a substantiation of eventual functions." It is the fallacy of converting "consequences of interaction of events into causes of the occurrence of these consequences."<sup>99</sup> Mind, on the contrary, is a consequent function that emerges from the interaction of events. It is the "function", or "fruit and consummation" of behaviour;<sup>100</sup> something

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97. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 73.

98. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 75

99. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 261

100. John Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, New York: Capricorn, 1963 (c 1931); also, Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1968 (c 1931), p. 303.

that is acquired, or is built up through interaction with the environment;<sup>101</sup>  
 "an added property assumed by a feeling creature when it reaches that  
 organized interaction with other living creatures which is language, communication."<sup>102</sup>  
 Rather than denote an independent or an isolated entity, mind is derivative,  
 mainly because it is "formed out of commerce with the world."<sup>103</sup> As such,  
 it cannot be a bearer of knowledge.

It may also be noted that Dewey distinguishes "individuals with  
 minds", or "the mind that appears in individuals", from "individual minds"  
 or an "individual mind." He defines the former as:

a system of belief, recognitions, and ignorances,  
 of acceptances and rejections, or expectancies  
 and appraisals of meanings which have been instituted  
 under the influence of custom and tradition.<sup>104</sup>

It is the conception of mind that is exemplified by the man who cannot  
 break loose from the weight of tradition and custom. Such a man cannot  
 initiate observations and reflections, or form designs, plans, and hypotheses.  
 He cannot undertake experiments which may yield results that diverge

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101. idem, Human Nature and Conduct. New York: Modern Library, c 1930, p. 138, 176-177.

102. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 258.

103. John Dewey, Art as Experience. New York: Capricorn, 1958 (c 1934), p. 263.

104. idem, Experience and Nature, p. 219.

from accepted doctrines and traditions.<sup>105</sup> Individual mind, on the other hand, is an instrument or an agent of change. It has to do with individual thought and desire, and therefore with freedom. It is exemplified by the individual who has a lively imagination, and who experiments with ideas in order to modify the objective order, dissolve old objects, and institute new ones in their place. Such an individual uses old materials, such as accepted doctrines, traditions, and customs, in order to modify them, or to replace them with new and better ones. Thus, an individual mind occupies an intermediate position, and is defined by Dewey as "a mode of natural existence in which objects undergo directive reconstitution."<sup>106</sup> It is constructive, and has a "re-creative function in objects of industry, art, and politics."<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, it remains derivative, intermediate, and functional. It is derived from the transaction of the individual with his social environment. It is therefore not an entity which knows, or which can be considered to be a bearer of knowledge. In other words, whether mind is viewed as an "individual mind", or as "the mind in individuals", it is not, for Dewey, the bearer of knowledge. On the contrary, knowledge is an affair, a doing, or a transaction between the whole organism and its environment -- an affair, a doing or a transaction which is feasible because both participants are natural, and therefore share something in common. This conception, in Dewey's view, eliminates the dualism

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105. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 218-219

106. *idem*, *op. cit.*, p. 220

107. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 227

between man and nature, or between mind and matter. Consequently, it eliminates the epistemological puzzle as to how knowledge can ever arise if and when each of these dualistic elements is conceived as belonging to different realms of Being.

#### D. Knowledge and Truth

How reliable, one may ask, is knowledge as conceived by Dewey?

What is truth in such a conception of knowledge? How can an individual know that his knowledge (or idea) is true? When is his reasoning valid so that he can at least hope to enjoy some talking of truth. These questions demand an examination of the issues of validity and truth in Dewey's theory of knowledge. It is pertinent to note, from the start, that Dewey offers no "correspondence theory of truth", in which truth is defined as correspondence with what is, or with reality. In such a theory, truth and Being are viewed as interchangeable. Being is, is true, or is the ground of truth. Dewey maintains that, in this theory, truth is established by reference of our ideas to the antecedently existent, by comparison with what is already given, or by reference to Being. But, he sees the realm of Being, of the antecedently existent, of the already given, as the sphere of having, using, and enjoying or suffering, into which knowledge, as such, has not yet entered. To him, knowledge is an outcome, a result, or a product of inquiry. It is consequent, rather than antecedent. The realm of Being, of the antecedent, or of the prior, therefore has little or nothing to do with truth. In this sphere of Being, no questions arise as to the truth or falsity of events. Rather, man's basic concern is to take, to use, and to enjoy or suffer the consequence of his use. It is

only when problems arise, in this process of using and enjoying, that questions are asked concerning the significances of things, as well as their truth and falsity, in guiding the individual successfully to further use and enjoyment. In other words, truth finds its abode in Becoming, rather than in Being. It is prospective, rather than retrospective; consequent, rather than antecedent; reflecting, in this way, Dewey's conception of knowledge as an outcome, as a result, or as a product.

It may be noted that this conception of truth tends to blur the distinction between validity and truth. Validity seems to become a form of truth. It is the truth of a particular proposition, as this is determined, here and now, by the resolution of a problematic situation. It is therefore consequent and provisional, and subject to the outcome of continued inquiries. Truth, on the other hand, is an abstract idea, and is defined by Dewey as the ideal limit of an indefinitely continued inquiry.<sup>108</sup> This definition seems to presuppose the continuum of inquiry, so that truth, as an abstract idea, is attainable only if inquiry attains its ideal limit. It seems, therefore, that Dewey has no notion of validity, but has instead, two notions of truth, namely, the truth of a particular proposition, and truth as an abstract idea. In both cases, Dewey maintains that truth is consequent rather than antecedent, prospective rather than retrospective. In order to clarify the relationship between his theory of knowledge and the interpretation of growth in terms of freedom, it would be more advantageous, however,

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<sup>108</sup>. Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: a rejoinder", in Schilpp (ed.), op. cit., p. 572.

to focus on the truth of particular propositions. It is important to remember, in this regard, that Dewey considers things and events, rather than propositions, as the material and objects of inquiry. To him, propositions are only means in inquiry. As the conclusions of a given inquiry, their purpose is to help in carrying on further inquiries. They are therefore modified, improved, or refined in the course of their being used. This openness to modification explains why they are not infallible, and why their truth is provisional. Since they are constantly refined in the course of inquiry, their truth is only a matter of degrees. They come as near to the truth as inquiry has approached its ideal limit. In other words, the truth of every proposition is subject to the results of future inquiries. When this is properly understood, Dewey's conception of "truth as utility", or of "truth as satisfaction", seems to have its intended meaning. Such an understanding helps to indicate, for example, that it is of the truth of a particular proposition as a means to further inquiry, rather than of truth as an abstract idea, that Dewey writes:

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. Now an idea or conception is a claim or injunction or plan to act in a certain way as the way to arrive at the clearing up of a specific situation. When the claim or pretension or plan is acted upon it guides us truly or falsely; it leads us to our end or away from it..., in the quality of activity induced by it lies all its truth and falsity.

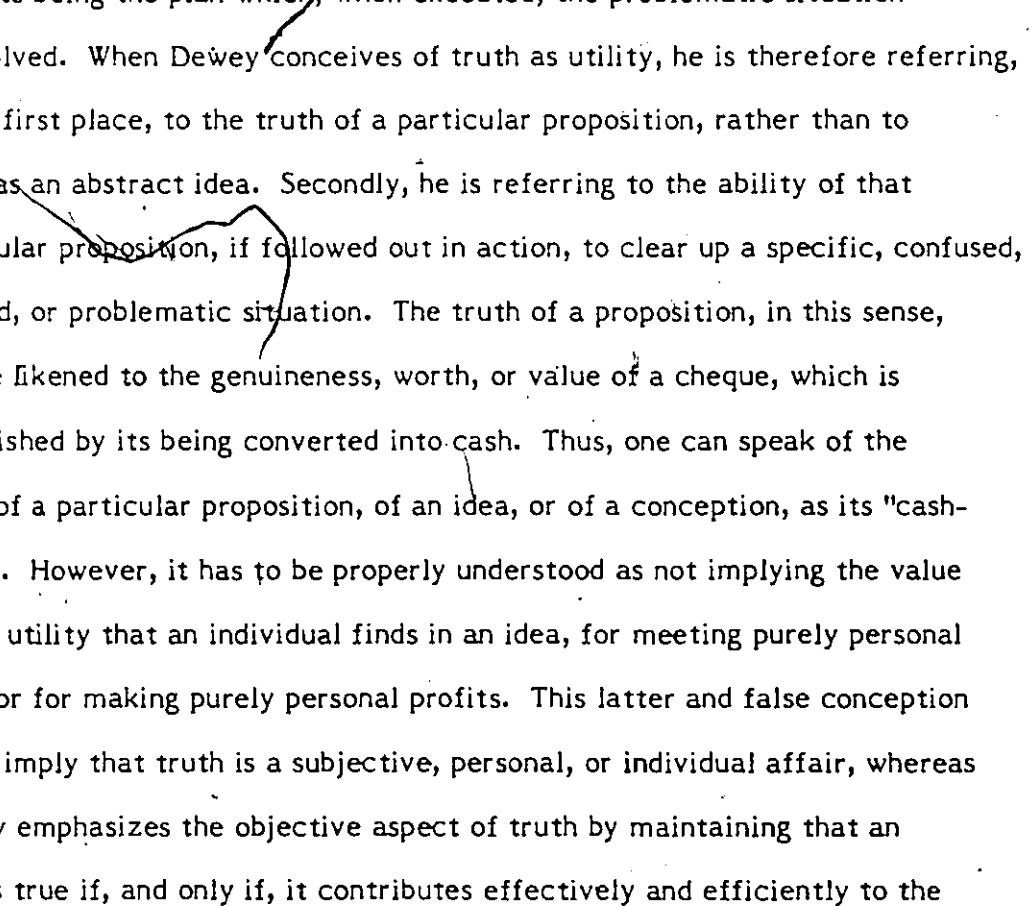
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109. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. New York: Holt, 1920; also, New York: New American Library, c 1950; enlarged edition with an introduction by the author, Boston: Beacon Press, 1970 (c 1948), p. 156.

Truth, in this sense, is the truth of an idea or of a conception which is expressed in a proposition as a means to the resolution of a problematic situation.

If the idea, conception, or proposition is such that, in following it out in action, an individual is led to the realization of his own ends, namely, the resolution of a problematic situation, then such an idea, conception, or proposition is true. The proposition can therefore be viewed as being literally a proposal, and its truth can be viewed as its ability to resolve the problematic situation.

It is a plan of action, and its truth lies in its being a successful plan, that is, in its being the plan which, when executed, the problematic situation is resolved. When Dewey conceives of truth as utility, he is therefore referring, in the first place, to the truth of a particular proposition, rather than to truth as an abstract idea. Secondly, he is referring to the ability of that particular proposition, if followed out in action, to clear up a specific, confused, blurred, or problematic situation. The truth of a proposition, in this sense, can be likened to the genuineness, worth, or value of a cheque, which is established by its being converted into cash. Thus, one can speak of the truth of a particular proposition, of an idea, or of a conception, as its "cash-value". However, it has to be properly understood as not implying the value or the utility that an individual finds in an idea, for meeting purely personal ends, or for making purely personal profits. This latter and false conception would imply that truth is a subjective, personal, or individual affair, whereas Dewey emphasizes the objective aspect of truth by maintaining that an idea is true if, and only if, it contributes effectively and efficiently to the



reorganization of experience, or to the resolution of the problematic situation which gave rise to the idea in the first place. The problematic situation, as such, involves genuinely objective conditions, rather than being a purely subjective discomfort. The proposition, idea, or conception that contributes to the reorganization, transformation, or resolution of such a situation is therefore said to be "objectively" true. This same proper understanding of Dewey's conception of truth, gives his conception of "truth as satisfaction", its intended meaning. It does not mean "merely emotional satisfaction, a private comfort, a meeting of purely personal need," but "a satisfaction of the needs and conditions of the problem out of which the idea, the purpose and method of action, arises. It includes public and objective conditions."<sup>110</sup> Truth, in this sense, is not an inherent property of propositions, existing prior to, and separate from, inquiry. Rather, an idea or a proposition "becomes" true, or "truth happens to it", when it becomes a verified or a warranted assertion. The test of its truth is provided by those consequences which are instituted in the operations of that particular inquiry in which the idea or the proposition is involved. Its truth is measured, in other words, by its ability to resolve the specific problematic situation that gave rise to the operations of inquiry. The implication is, of course, that knowledge need not be absolutely certain or reliable. It is sufficient if an individual has the best of grounds for his beliefs and claims, and goes on to act on such convictions, with the understanding that as he inquires further, he can come

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110. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 157

up with sufficient evidence which can enable him to review, or even to abandon altogether, such previous beliefs, claims, and convictions. In other words, there is no such thing as absolute knowledge or truth. Both are prospective and cumulative, requiring for their actualization and continuous improvement, development or refinement, some effort on the part of man. It is therefore a conception of knowledge that involves doing, making, or action.

#### E. Knowledge and Intelligence

The cumulative aspect of knowledge forms the sphere of intelligence. Knowledge itself is the end, terminus, outcome, or the product of inquiry. But the results of inquiry, which is knowledge, can be pooled in the form of meanings and significances, for use in future experience. Dewey refers to such a "pool" as "intelligence." It is the cumulative funding of meanings and significances that are obtained in the special inquiries that yield knowledge. Such a fund is maintained for the purpose of regulating, guiding, or controlling future inquiries which, in turn, help to enlarge, guide, control, or idealize future experiences. Intelligence is therefore related to knowledge, even though it is also distinct from it. Dewey, himself, maintains that such a distinction is necessary for an understanding of his instrumentalism. He, therefore, emphasizes the distinction "between knowledge as the outcome of special inquiries (undertaken because of the presence of problems) and intelligence as the product and expression of cumulative funding of the meanings.

reached in these special cases."<sup>111</sup> The denotative reference of both mind and intelligence, Dewey maintains,

Is to funding of meanings and significances, and funding which is both a product of past inquiries or knowings and the means of enriching and controlling the subject-matters of subsequent experiences. The function of enrichment and control is exercised by incorporation of what was gained in past experience in attitudes and habits which, in their interaction with the environment, create the clearer, better, ordered, "fuller" or richer materials of later experience — a process capable of indefinite continuance.<sup>112</sup>

It seems, then, that while knowledge is the particular outcome of a specific inquiry, intelligence gives a broader perspective by utilizing past experience or the outcome of past inquiry in present and future experiences. Intelligence therefore refers to the realm of meanings and significances that have been acquired in past inquiries or knowings, and which are funded for use in future experience. It is apparent, therefore, that an understanding of Dewey's conception of knowledge and intelligence is essential for the interpretation of growth in terms of freedom, since knowledge and intelligence seem to convert an otherwise random, blind, or impulsive preference into that intelligent preference which Dewey calls "choice". But since there can be neither knowledge nor intelligence without inquiry, it is necessary to investigate what Dewey means by the term "inquiry".

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<sup>111</sup> Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value", in Schilpp (ed.), op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>112</sup> idem, *ibid.*, p. 520.

## F. Knowledge and Inquiry

Dewey defines both knowledge and intelligence in terms of inquiry.<sup>113</sup>

And, the definitions are such that they indicate that without inquiry there is neither knowledge nor intelligence. An understanding of Dewey's conception of inquiry is therefore essential for understanding his theory of knowledge.

It may be noted, of course, that his theory of inquiry is part of his efforts to reconstruct logical theory. He maintains that such reconstruction is necessitated by the contemporary separation of science from morals. To bridge the gap, he conceives of logic as a "method of effective inquiry", and suggests that it should be applied to the sphere of science as well as of morals. To him, the dualism between a "logic of science" and a "logic of morals" is untenable. He therefore tries to construct a logic, or "a method of effective inquiry", that will apply to both the sphere of science as well as of morals.

As a matter of fact, his theory of inquiry is meant to be such a logic. It aims at generalizing the method of the natural sciences so that it can be used, as well, in morals. With such an aim in mind, Dewey defines inquiry, itself, as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole".<sup>114</sup> This definition, as well as its relevance to the interpretation of the concept of growth

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113. Vide p. 67, 81-82 supra, respectively.

114. Dewey, Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, p. 104-105.

in terms of freedom, will become clearer in the exposition of the antecedent conditions of inquiry, the process of inquiry, and the consequent conditions of inquiry.

(i). The Antecedent Conditions of Inquiry

Inquiry arises when there is a disruption in the habitual having, use, or enjoyment that characterizes the organism-environment interaction. Once in a while, there occurs a conflict, or some felt difficulty, in the interactional process. The situation "turns" indeterminate, questionable, uncertain, disturbed, unsettled, troubled, ambiguous, confused, obscure, or is full of conflicting tendencies.<sup>115</sup> Dewey maintains that this felt difficulty, which evokes inquiry, is not something mental or personal. Rather, it is something inherent in the existential situation. And the clearing up, straightening out, or putting in order of such a situation cannot be attained by merely manipulating personal states of mind. Since the situation is that of an interaction between the organism and its environment, it involves, not only the organism, but the environment as well. Moreover, to say that the situation is conflicting, questionable, confused or obscure, means that the outcome of the interaction cannot be anticipated, or that its final consequences cannot be clearly made out. It therefore tends to evoke discordant responses from the organism. In other words, the existential conditions that make up the situation may be determinate in themselves, and yet they remain indeterminate in their meaning and significance,

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115. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 105.

that is, they remain indeterminate in what they import or portend in their interaction with the organism. The problem, for the organism, is therefore how to make responses that are appropriate to the enviroing conditions. Dewey maintains that such responses involve more than a mere manipulation of personal states of mind. Besides such manipulation, it also demands an objective transformation of the environment. Dewey therefore maintains that inquiry is evoked as the anticipation of existential consequences, and that it involves an examination of enviroing conditions with a view to using them as a means for transforming the environment. It involves the selecting and ordering, or re-ordering, of responsive activities in such a way that one potentiality is actualized, rather than another. Simply because a felt or practical difficulty ordinarily occasions inquiry, it does not mean that man should always wait for such occasions to arise on their own. Rather, it is a mark of Deweyan scientific spirit to deliberately search out new problems.

(ii) The Process of Inquiry

Having been evoked by a felt difficulty, the next step in the process of inquiry is to transform the directly felt difficulty into an articulate or specified problem. An attempt is made to define the problem, or to state it in precise terms. In other words, a problem is instituted. This definite, precise, articulate, specific, or careful formulation of the problem guides the further process of inquiry. It "decides what specific suggestions are entertained and which are dismissed; what data are selected and which rejected; it is the criterion for relevance and irrelevancy of hypotheses and conceptual

structures".<sup>116</sup> It aids the observation of those constituents of the situation which are necessary for finding a relevant solution. As this observation of the facts of the situation becomes more definite, some solutions or ways of dealing with the problem are suggested. These, in turn, help in further observation, and in digging up more relevant facts, until a particular suggestion is finally accepted as being more relevant to the solution of the problem. This suggestion, which indicates the operations that are to be performed, is followed out until the problematic situation is resolved.

(iii) The Consequent Conditions of Inquiry

It has been indicated that inquiry begins in a situation that can be characterized as questionable, uncertain, or unsettled. The process of inquiry changes such a situation into one that can be characterized as determinate, unified, unquestionable, certain, or settled. Dewey maintains that this new situation can be called knowledge, even though he would prefer to call it warranted assertibility, "a term that designates a potentiality rather than an actuality (and which) involves recognition that all special inquiries are parts of an enterprise that is continually renewed, or is a going concern".<sup>117</sup> In his view, the end of inquiry, understood as both end-in-view and as terminus, is knowledge.<sup>118</sup> This is evident in his definition of knowledge as the outcome

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116. Dewey, op. cit., p. 108

117. id., ibid., p. 9

118. Dewey, op. cit., p. 7

of competent and controlled inquiry, or as "a name for the product of competent inquiries".<sup>119</sup> To him, every special case of knowledge is the outcome of some specific inquiry, while knowledge as an abstract term is a generalization of the properties that are discovered to belong to the conclusions or outcomes of competent inquiries. Such a conception of knowledge, he maintains, points to the conception of inquiry as a continuum.

(iv) The Continuum of Inquiry

Dewey's conception of knowledge as the convergent and cumulative effect of continued inquiry indicates that inquiry is a continuing process. The settled conclusion of a particular inquiry, which resolves an unsettled situation need not always remain so settled that it cannot be exposed to further inquiry. Rather, it is only "so settled that it is available as a resource in further inquiry".<sup>120</sup> As a mediated outcome, it is subject to error which further inquiry has to correct. Moreover, inquiry itself involves an existential transformation, that is, it involves the changing of environing conditions which are the occasions and stimuli of further experiences. Its conclusion cannot therefore be isolated from what precedes it, nor from what comes after it. Earlier conclusions have to prepare the way for later inquiries which, in turn, set the standards and conditions that are to be met by future inquiries, and so on ad infinitum. This continuum of inquiry explains Dewey's

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119. id., *ibid.*, p. 8

120. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 9

conception of the self-corrective process of inquiry as the source of logical forms and standards. The latter arise within the process of inquiry which, as it progresses, develops standards and norms to which further inquiry must submit if a desired end is to be attained. As some methods or procedures which are successful in attaining an intended end are discovered, they are retained and extended, while unsuccessful ones are discarded. When inquiry proceeds for a considerable time, the postulates of these successful procedures are extracted for future use. These postulates become logical forms, standards, first principles or "oughts", and are used for the guidance and regulation of future inquiry. Dewey's analysis of inquiry is, therefore, not merely a description of how inquiry is conducted. It is also normative, that is, it is an analysis of the method that is effective in gaining reliable knowledge so as to derive from it norms and standards that will guide further inquiries. In analyzing a successful method of inquiry, he is indirectly indicating the method or procedure that ought to be followed, just as an expert, in telling a farmer what he should do, "is instructing him in methods that have been tried and that have proved successful in procuring results".<sup>121</sup> But even though logical forms thus arise out of the process of inquiry, yet they are not fixed and eternal. Instead, they are subject to change in the course of further inquiry. It may be noted that in this conception, logical forms are neither denied, overlooked, nor interpreted as apriori determinations that are obtained through an intuitional act. Rather, Dewey maintains that

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<sup>121</sup>. id., *ibid.*, p. 104.

they are learned from experience, are refined in and by further experience, and are used in reconstructing that very experience out of which they arose. However, they are best developed and tested within a community of inquirers, since the funded experience of such a community establishes checks and balances, as well as a test of such rules, norms, or logical forms. Dewey's concept of growth seems to be, or to involve, this reconstruction of experience through the application of rules, principles, or norms that are learned from experience, and which are refined in and by further experience, through the process of inquiry. It involves the adjustment of impulses, needs, or desires to consequences, means to ends, and vice versa. It demands the institution of intelligence or rationality, understood as "an affair of the relation of means and consequences, not of fixed first principles as ultimate premises."<sup>122</sup> It involves the successful execution of intelligently chosen ends.

#### G. Implications For Growth As Freedom

The leading of one proposition, as the conclusion of a special inquiry, to another, as itself the conclusion of a further inquiry, and so on ad infinitum seems to exemplify the process of growth as conceived by Dewey. Propositions "grow" in the continuum of inquiry, through the self-corrective process of the latter. The propositions or conclusions of an earlier inquiry set the standards or norms to which a later inquiry must submit. This later inquiry makes use of such standards, modifies them to meet its own needs, and consequently

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122. Dewey, op. cit., p. 9.

derives new and more refined propositions or conclusions from the earlier ones. It thus establishes, in turn, new and refined standards that must be taken into account by further inquiries. The process seems to be cumulative and self-corrective, and can be viewed as a spiral. For, it is a continuous process of "growth" in the capacity of propositions, as the conclusions of inquiry, to resolve problematic situations as they arise in human experience. As such, it involves the enrichment of experience with meanings and significances, and entails the refinement of habits, understood as the main guide of the organism-environment interaction. It would appear, therefore, that the degree of refinement of propositions and of logical forms determines, or corresponds with, the degree of growth. It also seems that knowledge, as the outcome of inquiry, is essential for growth. It seems apparent, therefore, that an understanding of Dewey's theory of knowledge is essential for understanding his concept of growth and, ultimately, for understanding its interpretation in terms of freedom. It may be noted, however, that there are some metaphysical postulates which underlie such a theory of knowledge, and that an understanding of them is also essential for understanding the concept of growth, as well as its conception as freedom.

### 3. Dewey's Metaphysical Postulates

Dewey defines metaphysics as "cognizance of the generic traits of existence",<sup>123</sup> or as "a statement of the generic traits manifested by existences of all kinds without regard to their differentiation into physical

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123. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 51.

and mental."<sup>124</sup> Such a definition implies a belief in the existence of matter and of the external world, so that metaphysics becomes a matter of discovering the general features of experienced things that constitute the world or nature. It also involves the interpretation of the significance of things and of their features, for the intelligent guidance of conduct. It should be noted that, to Dewey, "existences of all kinds" constitute nature, and that the latter includes the physical world as a whole, human artifacts, as well as man himself. Its traits, which metaphysics has to detect and define, are given in experience which, to Dewey, "is such an occurrence that it penetrates into nature and expands without limit through it."<sup>125</sup> In other words, experience reveals "the generic traits of existence" or of nature, and is therefore the means for coming to grips with it. An understanding of experience seems therefore to be essential for understanding what it reveals, namely, the generic traits of existence or of nature, which metaphysics has to discover and to interpret. Indeed, Dewey maintains that "nature and experience are not enemies or alien. Experience is not a veil that shuts man off from nature; it is a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature."<sup>126</sup> For the purpose of the present inquiry, therefore, it would seem essential to find

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124. *idem*, *ibid.*, p. 412.

125. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

126. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. x-xi

out what experience means to Dewey, as well as what it reveals as the generic traits of existence.

As if to define experience, Dewey writes that "things interacting in certain ways are experience; they are what is experienced. Linked in certain other ways with another natural object -- the human organism -- they are how things are experienced as well."<sup>127</sup> Experience may therefore be viewed as a matter of interaction between an organism and its environment, and as involving a change in the character of either participant.<sup>128</sup> It has two distinguishable, although not separable, poles. These are what is experienced, and how it is experienced. They make up what may be referred to as the objective and the subjective poles of experience. The former involves things in transaction with one another, while the latter includes the human organism as a participant in this transaction. Sometimes, Dewey emphasizes the objective pole, such as, when he focuses on primary experience. At other times, he emphasizes the subjective pole, such as, when he focuses on the awareness of the hazards of nature, on anticipation of termini, or on teleology in nature. In all these, there appears to be an unresolved tension between

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127. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 4a

128. Dewey later used the term "transaction", as against "interaction" and "self-action", to reflect this change. It seems, in his view to be a more fitting formulation of the category of the organic (Cf., Dewey, "Interaction and Transaction", in Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, ch. 4, p. 103-115).

the subject and the object. However, the development of self-awareness, thought, reflection, reason or of intelligence, from the interaction of the human organism with other things in nature, seems to be more relevant to the present inquiry. In this section, an attempt is made to focus on such development, by discussing Dewey's conception of primary experience, teleology, and what he sees as the generic traits of existence, such as, ends and means, contingency and regularity, individuality and relations, as well as interaction or transaction.

It should be noted, from the start, that Dewey distinguishes between two kinds or levels of experience. The first is what he variously refers to as "raw", "primary", "crude", "macroscopic", "ordinary", "naive", "gross" experience; "crude but total experience"; "experience in its primary and vital modes"; "every-day primary experience"; or "crude, everyday experience". The other is referred to as "secondary, reflective experience".<sup>129</sup> Dewey's synonyms for primary experience seem to indicate that it is the observation of everyday objects by the ordinary man. It seems to be a matter of having and using things, with little or no thought at all as to their origin, meanings, significances, or consequences. Expectations in the sphere of primary experience seem to be based on habits, rather than on intelligent, rational or reflective control. Primary experience can therefore be viewed as the sphere of an

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129. For these various terms that are used to describe the two kinds or levels of experience, vide Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 433 (passim).

integrated unity of activity, in which thought distinctions are not yet operative. It includes both the organism and its environment, and is an undifferentiated unity, in the sense that there is as yet no division into the one that is experiencing as subject, and the other that is experienced as object:

"experience" is what James called a double-barrelled word...in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality.<sup>130</sup>

This integrated unity, which Dewey calls primary experience, is the context within which thought, reflection, reason or intelligence, functions. Since it contains or supplies the data for thought, there can be no thought without it. To better understand this, it should be noted that in primary experience, things are had, used and enjoyed, and habits are formed. Such habits of using and enjoying things, enable man to expect that things would continue to be had, used, and enjoyed. However, the contrary often proves to be the case. Things and events often surprise and confuse the individual, so that he does not know what response to make. In Dewey's terms, the situation can be said to become problematic, uncertain, indeterminate, or confused. And to resolve the problem, the individual must resort to thought, reflection, reason, or to intelligence. Thus, Dewey maintains, primary experience - the sphere of habitual using and enjoying of things - contains the common-sense objects that set the problems for thought. It is therefore the source of material for reflection, or for thought. But besides this originating function,

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130. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 8.

it also serves as the testing ground for thought. Since the function of thought is to resolve the problems that man encounters in his everyday primary experience, its effectiveness can be best tested and proved by reference to the actual experienced situation that characterizes primary experience. Thought has to be referred to such an experience in order to find out whether it has enabled the individual to know the kind of response to make in the indeterminate situation in which he finds himself. It has to be referred to primary experience in order to determine its effectiveness in restoring the habitual use and enjoyment of things. In other words, primary experience is both the foreground and the background of thought. It is the source of material, as well as the testing ground, for thought. Dewey summarizes this dual function of primary experience in the following terms:

The subject-matter of primary experience sets the problems and furnishes the first data of the reflection which constructs the secondary objects...; it is also obvious that test and verification of the latter is secured only by return to things of crude or macroscopic experience -- the sun, earth, plants, and animals of common, every-day life.<sup>131</sup>

In the integral unity of primary experience, things are had for use and enjoyment "before they are things cognized."<sup>132</sup> Sometimes, it seems that they cannot even be cognized without primary experience.

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131. id., op. cit., p. 4-5.

132. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 21

Dewey refers to the second kind or level of experience as "secondary, reflective experience".<sup>133</sup> It is secondary to the first kind of experience, namely, to primary experience upon which it depends for its data and for testing. It is not, to Dewey, a "datum", or something given with human nature. Rather, it waxes and wanes, comes and goes, or can be cultivated and improved. Dewey maintains that it is acquired and sustained through regulated, continuous, and reflective inquiry. It is a product of the constant efforts that are made to resolve the specific problems which arise in primary experience. It is knowledge, reflection, thought, or inquiry.<sup>134</sup> In Dewey's view, both science and philosophy belong to this sphere of experience. Philosophy, for example, is viewed by him as a mode of knowing wherein reflective thinking is much in play. It "is inherently criticism, having its distinctive position among various modes of criticism in its generality; a criticism of criticisms, as it were".<sup>135</sup> It is a realm in which pervasive, common, stable, non-temporal, or logical qualities are abstracted and converted into relations, or into temporal, numerical, and spatial order. These relations then serve as tools or as instrumentalities for regulating the course of events.

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133. See p. 93, footnote no. 129 supra.

134. Dewey variously refers to this experience as "reflective experience", "reflection", "knowing" and later, more technically, as "inquiry".

135. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 398.

The distinction between primary and secondary experience is also evident in their subject-matter, or in their objects. The subject-matter of primary experience, for example, is described by Dewey as "gross, macroscopic" or "crude", while that of secondary experience is viewed as "refined", or as "derived".<sup>136</sup> Moreover, the function of the "objects" of primary experience has been indicated to be the setting of problems for thought, as well as the testing of its ability to resolve such problematic situations,<sup>137</sup> whereas the role of the "objects" of secondary experience is to explain those of primary experience:

They explain the primary objects, they enable us to grasp them with understanding, instead of just having sense-contact with them...they define or lay out a path by which return to experienced things is of such a sort that the meaning, the significant content, of what is experienced gains an enriched and expanded force because of the path or method by which it was reached.<sup>138</sup>

The objects of reflective or secondary experience help to solve perplexities or problems to which primary experience gives rise, but which it cannot resolve by itself. Secondary experience can therefore be viewed as the means for controlling and enlarging the having, using, and enjoying of common, ordinary, or everyday things.<sup>139</sup> In other words, knowledge, thought, reflection,

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136. id., *ibid.*, p. 3-4.

137. Vide p. 94-95 *supra*.

138. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 5.

139. id., *ibid.*, p. 7. Herein lies Dewey's instrumentalism, that is, the conception of knowledge as instrumental, namely, as a means or method for enlarging experience.

or secondary experience enriches with meanings the crude, impulsive, instinctive, or habitual having, using, and enjoying which characterize primary experience. And such an enriching with meaning can be viewed as the institution of intelligence in human experience, especially because meanings and significances constitute intelligence.<sup>140</sup>

To Dewey, therefore, there is some continuity between primary experience and secondary experience. The former supplies secondary experience with the material on which to work. Indeed, it might even be said that it necessitates the attainment of secondary experience which, in turn, enriches primary experience with meanings and significances. This enriching with meanings is ultimately tested by reference or return to primary experience. Dewey maintains, however, that such a spiralling relation between knowledge and primary experience, should not be used to justify the philosophic fallacy of looking for the generic traits of existence in the objects of reflection, knowledge, or of secondary experience. In his view, these objects are secondary, derived, or refined objects whose worth and credentials cannot be established, except as they are referred to primary experience, from which they are derived. To discover the traits of existence, therefore, attention must be focused on primary experience, which Dewey emphasizes as "a starting point and terminal point".<sup>141</sup> In other words, primary experience reveals the generic

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140. Vide p. 81-82 supra.

141. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 3.

traits of existence which metaphysics has to note and describe, or which it has to detect and define. Some of these traits include ends and means, contingency and regularity, individuality and relations, as well as interaction or transaction.<sup>142</sup>

A. Ends and Means

One of the major traits of existence which experience reveals is ends, finalities, or consummations. In primary experience, things have a beginning, as well as an end. They are born, only to die after a time. They come into being and go out of being. In other words, things are in process, or in time. They are "qualified" events or histories. And nature, constituted by existences of all kinds, is "a scene of incessant beginnings and endings". To Dewey, therefore, "the enjoyment...of things is a declaration that natural existences are not mere passage ways to another passage way, and so on ad infinitum".<sup>143</sup> Rather, primary experience also manifests "objects which

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142. Hahn states that "these traits or basic categories are variously listed by Dewey and by some other philosophers". (vide Lewis E. Hahn, "Dewey's Philosophy and Philosophic Method", in Jo Ann Boydston (ed.), Guide to the Works of John Dewey. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970, p. 40). A fuller treatment of these traits can be found in John Dewey, Experience and Nature, and in Sidney Hook, The Metaphysics of Pragmatism.

143. Dewey Experience and Nature, p. 85.

are final".<sup>144</sup> To understand this, it should be noted that Dewey distinguishes between "two sense of ends, the primarily natural and the secondarily natural, or practical, moral. Each meaning is intelligible, founded, legitimate in itself. But their mixture is one of the Great Bads of philosophy."<sup>145</sup> The primarily natural end is an end understood as a de facto ending. It is the property of things as "directly possessed of irreducible and self-sufficing quality, red and blue, pain, solidity, toughness, smoothness and so on through the list."<sup>146</sup> End, in this sense, is a natural terminus, or "the boundary which writes 'Finis' to a chapter of history inscribed by a moving system of energies."<sup>147</sup> It is a limit or closure that has "no intrinsic-eulogistic quality", that is, a limit that is neither good, bad, perfect, nor perfecting. Rather, it simply points to the fact that things, as presented in primary experience, have some immediate and absorbing finality. It is a reminder that there is in everything, "something obdurate, self-sufficient, wholly immediate, neither

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144. id., *ibid.*, p. 80

145. id., *ibid.*, p. 104. Note how this distinction corresponds with that between primary experience and secondary experience (*vide p. 93-98 supra*).

146. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 112.

147. id., *op. cit.*, p. 395.

a relation nor an element in a relational whole, but terminal and exclusive."<sup>148</sup>

There is, in this conception, an indication that things have something qualitatively their own, and that objects are finalities or closures of change, and are therefore objects of direct grasp, possession, use, and enjoyment. The primarily natural end also refers to the qualities of things such as their being poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful, hard, green, or hot.<sup>149</sup> In other words, since "any quality as such is final; ...at once initial and terminal; just what it is as it exists, ...then nature in having qualities within itself has what in the literal sense must be called ends, terminals, arrests, enclosures."<sup>150</sup> Dewey therefore maintains that "nature is characterized by ends, the most conspicuous of which is the life of mind."<sup>151</sup> Such ends are "hit upon", rather spontaneously and accidentally, in primary experience. There is no element of control, that is, little or no intelligence, knowledge, reflection, or inquiry is involved. Instead, these primarily natural ends are merely had, used and enjoyed, even though experience reveals that they are rather unstable, irregular, or highly

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148. id., *ibid.*, p. 85.

149. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 96. See also p. 108: "Things are beautiful and ugly, lovely and hateful, dull and illuminated, attractive and repulsive".

150. id., *ibid.*, p. 96-97.

151. *loc. cit.*

uncertain. Indeed, Dewey maintains that it is the instability of enjoyed ends that makes man to form the second kind of ends, which he refers to as ends-in-view, aims, or purposes.<sup>152</sup> He therefore maintains that,

By "ends" we also mean ends-in-view, aims, things viewed after deliberation as worthy of attainment and as evocative of effort. They are formed from objects taken in their immediate and terminal qualities; objects once having occurred as endings, but which are not now in existence and which are not likely to come into existence save by an action which modifies surroundings.<sup>153</sup>

These are the secondarily natural ends, and they correspond to Dewey's secondary or reflective experience. They are objects and qualities which are assessed, are found worth pursuing, and are therefore selected by secondary or reflective experience. In other words, they are objects and qualities of reflective survey, as well as of choice. Having hit spontaneously and accidentally on some consummations in primary experience, and having found them to be fleeting, uncertain or problematic, man is faced with the problem of stabilizing them for further use and enjoyment. Since experience

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152. Vide Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 101: "What is unique is... the property of awareness or perception. Because of this property, the initial stage is capable of being judged in the light of its probable course and consequence. There is anticipation....What is more precisely pertinent to our present theme, the terminal outcome when anticipated...becomes an end-in-view, an aim, purpose, a prediction usable as a plan in shaping the course of events."

153. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

reveals that these consummations are multiple, varied, and often conflicting, the spontaneous enjoyment that characterizes primary experience has to be replaced by an enlightened choice concerning which of the numerous consummations should be stabilized for future use. The criterion for determining which of them should be stabilized, involves a consideration of the conditions for their realization, as well as the consequences of realizing them. In other words, spontaneous enjoyment through sense contact becomes a matter of dealing with things in their wider meanings. Man makes use of his intelligence, so that his experience goes beyond the realm of mere "action--reaction", and into that of an intelligent, controlled, and free interaction. Instead of being merely natural termini, things become the objects of foresight, invention, and industry. There is anticipation or foresight of the probable course and consequence of events, which changes habitual expectations into reliable predictions. The regularity or orderly sequence of the occurrence of consummations becomes a controlling principle when the sequential connections of things with one another are discovered. Mere regularity becomes causality, and engenders the selection and arrangement of things so as to enhance, enlarge, and stabilize enjoyment. Having come into contact with the conditions of the occurrence of various consummations in primary experience, man tries out various combinations and permutations of these conditions. Such an effort enables him to discover new ends, and to expand the realm of enjoyed consummations. Instead of being neutral, or "indifferently an ecstatic culmination, a matter-of-fact consummation or a deplorable tragedy", these newly discovered ends acquire eulogistic and moral connotations. They become objects and

qualities that are deemed worthy of selection and of human labour, objects of conscious intent, or conclusions that are attained through antecedent endeavour.

Thus, like classic thought, Dewey conceives of nature as teleological, that is, as having its finalities as well as its relationships. But his concept of teleology differs from the Aristotelian conception, because his primarily natural ends are merely termini of events, or things that are immediately had and enjoyed without consideration for their use. The appreciation of them is mainly aesthetic, rather than rational. Moreover, such ends are not absolute or eternal. Neither do they imply any hierarchy of ends. Rather, there are a multiplicity of them, with each being enjoyed in its own right or for its own sake. There is therefore no such thing as the end, but an end. Dewey contrasts this conception with that of classic teleology which, he maintains, meant that nature does nothing in vain. Every change, or event, was viewed as being directed to something else as its unchangeable terminus. The acorn, for example, was thought to grow inevitably to an oak as its unchanging end. Moreover, only the acorn was thought to be eventful and temporal, while the oak was viewed as only an end, indeed as the end of the acorn. There was therefore a hierarchy of ends, which terminated with the summum bonum. Dewey's objection to this classic conception of teleology, namely, that nature does nothing in vain, is based on his refusal to impute mind, rationality, or intelligence directly to nature. In his view, nature has no purposes, goals or aims. Rationality, intelligence, and purposes enter into the natural scene only through man. They are not given ready-made

in nature, not even in human nature. There are, instead, only rudiments of them in nature, since "consummations have first to be hit upon spontaneously and accidentally -- as the baby gets food and all of us are warmed by the sun -- before they can be objects of foresight, invention and industry."<sup>154</sup> Nevertheless, Dewey maintains that they are natural because man, through whom they enter into the natural scene, is a part of nature. They can also be viewed as natural because "natural processes must have actually terminated in specifiable consequences...before ends can be mentally entertained and be the objects of striving desire."<sup>155</sup> And because they are natural, they cannot be considered to be an arbitrary creation of private mental operations that are guided by some personal desire. Rather, they are, "intellectual and regulative means...employed as plans within the state of affairs."<sup>156</sup> As such, they help secondary experience, reflection, or inquiry to enlarge and enrich primary experience with meanings and significances.

#### B. Contingency and Regularity

Besides revealing that the primarily natural ends form the basis of the secondarily natural ends, that is, of aims, goals, or ends-in-view, experience also indicates that,

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154. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 81.

155. id., ibid., p. 102.

156. loc. cit.

We live in a world which is an impressive and irresistible mixture of sufficiencies, tight completenesses, order, recurrences which make possible prediction and control, and singularities, ambiguities, uncertain possibilities, processes going on to consequences as yet indeterminate. They are mixed not mechanically but vitally like the wheat and tares of the parable. We may recognize them separately but we cannot divide them, for unlike wheat and tares they grow from the same root. Qualities have defects as necessary conditions of their excellencies; the instrumentalities of truth are the causes of error; change gives meaning to permanence and recurrence makes novelty possible<sup>157</sup>

In other words, existence is both precarious and stable. It is a mixture of the perilous and the settled, or of the uncertain and the uniform. To Dewey, nature possesses a contingent character, for experience reveals that things are uncertain, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and hazardous. In his view, "Every existence is an event."<sup>158</sup> Even though things remain what they are, yet they also change. As a matter of fact, "the world is a scene of risk; it is uncertain, unstable, uncannily unstable. Its dangers are irregular, inconstant, not to be counted upon as to their times and seasons."<sup>159</sup> The world is, indeed, so precarious and perilous that man's actions can yield both desired or enjoyed consequences, as well as obnoxious and undesired ones. The present becomes ominous because the future is unknown and perilous. The past, in turn, carries over into the present, its unwanted, and often

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157. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

158. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 71.

159. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

unknown, consequences. This carrying over of consequences further deepens the uncertainty of the world. And, to Dewey, it is an uncertainty which science has failed to seriously modify or to eliminate:

Through science we have secured a degree of power of prediction and of control; through tools, machinery and an accompanying technique we have made the world more conformable to our needs, a more secure abode. We have professionalized amusement as an agency of escape and forgetfulness...(But) when all is said and done, the fundamentally hazardous character of the world is not seriously modified, much less eliminated.<sup>160</sup>

In Dewey's view, reality is precarious and incomplete, and change is real, even though it is not absolute. To him, nature is an intricate mixture of the contingent and the regular, of the stable and the precarious, or of the uncertain and the assured. There are relatively permanent, as well as temporarily changing things in nature, both of which testify to the unfinished, incomplete, or indeterminate character of nature.

#### C. Individuality and Relations

Another generic trait of existence, which experience reveals, is individuality. The trait has both metaphysical, as well as social and political connotations. However, it will be considered, in this discussion, only metaphysically. It has already entered into the discussion in terms of, or as "qualified" individuality, during a consideration of "qualified" events as ends, terminals, arrests, or enclosures.<sup>161</sup> But there is also an organismic conception of individuality,

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160. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 44.

161. Vide p. 100-101 supra.

in which plants and animals are considered to tend towards self-conservation. Dewey maintains that they act "as if they were concerned that their activity, their characteristic receptivity and response, should maintain itself."<sup>162</sup>

In his view, such a trait stretches as far as to atoms and molecules, in the sense that they also tend to show some preferential behaviour, indifferences, affinities and repulsions, in the presence of, or when interacting with, other events: "with respect to some things they are hungry to the point of greediness; in the presence of others they are sluggish and cold."<sup>163</sup> As a generic trait of existence, this preferential action or selective behaviour is "the evidence of at least a rudimentary individuality or uniqueness in things."<sup>164</sup> It is the basis of human individuality, which Dewey refers to as "an agency of novel reconstruction of a pre-existing order", or as "a mode of natural existence in which objects undergo directed reconstitution."<sup>165</sup> Human individuality can therefore be viewed as a quality that is rooted in nature, even though it is not a natural endowment that is released in the absence of external restrictions. It is, instead, the uniqueness of the history or career of an individual, that is, the series of interactions that enable the individual to

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162. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 208.

163. loc. cit.

164. Dewey, "Philosophies of Freedom", in Bernstein (ed.), op. cit., p. 265.

165. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 217 and p. 220.

become what he is, by the ways in which he responds to conditions or to occasions, understood as "opportunities". In other words, it is a unique way of responding to conditions. It may be noted, however, that such a conception of individuality does not rule out relations between things. For, apart from being ends, things are also means, or "passage ways" to other passage ways. They are also things cherished for the sake of other things. In other words, there is found in nature a simultaneous presence and cross-reference of immediacy and efficiency, of the consummatory and the instrumental, of ends and means, as well as of individuality and relations.

#### D. Interaction or Transaction

One other important characterization of nature, by Dewey, is that it consists of events which are in interaction with one another. Indeed, one of his definitions of experience is given in terms of interaction between things. To him, "things interacting in certain ways are experience; they are what is experienced."<sup>166</sup> And distinctions in nature, such as those between matter, life and mind, or between physical, psycho-physical and mental, are but "consequences of interaction of events."<sup>167</sup> They are viewed as characters of events that occur at certain different levels of interaction. Each is a property that belongs to a particular field of interacting events. Nature, as embodying all these distinctions, is therefore a series of events

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166. id., *ibid.*, p. 4a

167. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

which are in interaction with one another. But interaction should not be viewed as "wholesale" or as "homogenous". Rather, Dewey maintains that,

Interacting-events have tighter and looser ties, which qualify them with certain beginnings and endings, and which mark them off from other fields of interaction.<sup>168</sup>

In other words, events belong to "relatively closed fields" of interaction which range from the simpler, less organized, and more manageable field to the "more complete and highly organized". Dewey distinguishes between three such fields or "plateaus". These are the spheres of non-living things, of living things, as well as the specifically human sphere. However, Dewey refers to them as the realms of the physical, of life, and of association, communication and participation:

The first, the scene of narrower and more external interactions, while qualitatively diversified in itself is physical....The second level is that of life....The third plateau is that of association, communication, participation.<sup>169</sup>

It may be noted that the sphere of physical interactions is the field that is investigated by physics. It is the realm of matter in which "mathematical-mechanical" properties are exhibited. The second plateau, that is, the level of life interactions, is the "psycho-physical" realm in which qualitative differences become more conspicuous than they are in the sphere of physical interactions.

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168. id., *ibid.*, p. 272.

169. *loc. cit.*

~~physical interactions.~~ Such differences include those between plants and animals, as well as those between the lower and the higher animal forms. The third plateau is the specifically human sphere, where mind, intelligence, or the possession of meanings and the response to meanings, predominates. Dewey maintains that this sphere consists of "individualities". Moreover, each level has categories — matter, life, mind — which describe the empirical traits that are characteristic to it. However, they are not explanatory categories, because they merely note and denote "characteristic qualities and consequences peculiar to various levels of interaction."<sup>170</sup>

Dewey thus seems to indicate that there are two kinds of interaction in nature. One of them can be referred to as "horizontal" interaction. It is interaction between events that belong to the same plateau or level of interaction, for example, the physical. The other can be referred to as "vertical" interaction, and takes place between the relatively closed fields, levels, or plateaus of interaction. It is the sphere of increasing complexities, of critical alterations, or improvement, transformation, or of refinement. When such an interaction occurs, that is, when the relatively closed fields, levels, or plateaus of interaction come into conjunction and interact with one another, "a new larger field is formed, in which new energies are released, and to which new qualities appertain."<sup>171</sup> Thus, for example, the interaction

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170. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 273.

171. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

between the plateau of the physical and that of life, gives rise to a "new larger field" to which appertains the new quality of the mental. Indeed, Dewey maintains that the third plateau could not have occurred without the second, just as the second could not have occurred without the first:

Mechanistic metaphysics calls attention to the fact that the latter occurrence could not have taken place without the earlier; that given the earlier, the latter was bound to follow. Spiritualistic metaphysics calls attention to the fact that the earlier, material affairs, prepare the way for vital and ideal affairs, lead up to them; promote them. Both statements are equally true descriptively....<sup>172</sup>

Mechanistically speaking, the mental level of interaction could not have occurred without the levels of life and of the physical. Spiritualistically, the levels of life and of the physical prepare the way for the sphere of the mental. By containing these three plateaus of interaction, and by getting them to interact with one another, nature itself "grows". It acquires new qualities and energies. It becomes increasingly complex, critically altered, improved, transformed, or refined. Such growth, that is, the acquiring of new energies, qualities or properties, indicates that Dewey conceives of the universe as an open one, in which there is room for novelty, for change, or for becoming. It indicates that it is a universe which contains real potentialities, and which therefore demands human action in order to change, modify, transform, or to refine things. In such a conception, man is viewed as interacting with, and as modifying, his environment: "external or environmental affairs...undergo modifications in acquiring meanings and becoming objects of mind",<sup>173</sup> while

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172. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 273.

173. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 285

man himself is also modified, because anything changes according to the interacting field it enters.

Later, and together with Bentley, Dewey undertook "to fix a set of leading words capable of firm use in the discussion of 'knowings' and 'existings' in that specialized region of research called the theory of knowledge."<sup>174</sup> This attempt led Dewey to characterize his interactional conception as a "Transaction". And the change may not be unconnected with what the authors refer to as "a large crop of imitations and debasements",<sup>175</sup> which were consequent upon the success of the use of the term "interaction". However, it seems that only the term was changed, for the idea seems to remain basically the same. "Transaction" is basically a redescription or a restating of the earlier notion of "interaction". The authors emphasize, for example, Einstein's "transactional (i.e., free and open) treatment of physical phenomena",<sup>176</sup> which the writer indicates as one of the implications of the interactional conception of nature, namely, a free and open universe.<sup>177</sup> The writer will therefore not go into any detailed discussion of this substitution

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174. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. xi.

175. id., *ibid.*, p. 108-109.

176. id., *op. cit.*, p. 114. Underlining mine. Bohr's position, as presented there, also indicates that "transaction" is Dewey's earlier "interaction".

177. Vide p. 112 *supra*.

of the term "transaction" for "interaction". It is sufficient to note that both the earlier term "interaction", and the later one "transaction" connote an open universe that seems to be consistent with a belief in human freedom. They seem to make growth in freedom possible. Rather than discuss the later characterization of interaction as transaction, the writer intends to consider some of the major implications that Dewey's metaphysical postulates have for the explanation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom.<sup>178</sup>

#### E. Implications For the Conception of Growth As Freedom

Dewey views metaphysics, the theory that detects and defines the generic traits of existence, as "a groundmap of the province of criticism",<sup>179</sup> while philosophy is viewed as "a criticism of criticisms, as it were."<sup>180</sup> And since philosophy is also defined as the general theory of education, or as the theory of education in its most general phases,<sup>181</sup> metaphysics can also be viewed as the "ground-map" of the province of education. Such a conception of metaphysics is apparently relevant to the present inquiry, which attempts

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178. For a detailed discussion of interaction and transaction, please refer to the book, Knowing and the Known, especially Ch. 4 & 5, as well as p. 68-69, 270, 283.

179. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 413.

180. id., ibid., p. 398.

181. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 383, 386.

to clarify the concept of growth in Dewey's philosophy of education, by interpreting it in terms of freedom. It indicates that Dewey's philosophy of education is closely related to his metaphysics, and that an understanding of this metaphysics is essential for understanding the concept of growth, which is the key concept in his philosophy of education. Since growth is to be interpreted in terms of freedom, it is apparent that an understanding of Dewey's metaphysics is therefore essential for understanding such an interpretation.

The noting and defining of "end" as a generic trait of existence, as well as its distinction into two kinds, seem to shed some light on Dewey's rather cryptic remark that education has no end beyond itself. It indicates that such a remark should be understood as referring to Dewey's conception of education as a "qualified event", that is, as a natural event that has its own aesthetic qualities, or as something consummatory, and which should therefore be enjoyed in its own right or for its own sake. It indicates that the remark refers to Dewey's conception of education as a primarily natural end. But the distinction of "end" into two kinds indicates that Dewey also has a conception of education as a secondarily natural end. In other words, he also views education as having aims, purposes, goals or ends, rather than the end. To him, education is no exception to the multiplicity and variety of ends which experience reveals as one of the generic traits of existence. Different centuries and philosophies had focused on a variety of such ends in education, but Dewey focuses on growth which, the writer suggests, can be advantageously interpreted in terms of freedom. An exposition of Dewey's

metaphysics indicates that such an end is a secondarily natural one, that is, it is an intellectual and regulative means, which is used as a plan of action within the state of affairs. In other words, it is an ideal that is used to guide or to direct conduct. As such, it cannot be actualized, attained, or realized once and for all. Neither can it be instituted as an absolute, or as the end.

Dewey's conception of primary experience as the sphere within which thought distinctions are not yet operative<sup>182</sup>, indicates that thought, intelligence, or rationality is not a datum. It indicates that intelligence is, instead, a late-comer on the evolutionary scene, that it plays a secondary role, and that it therefore demands cultivation and nurture. And if intelligence is essential for the attainment of growth and of freedom<sup>183</sup> in terms of which the concept of growth is to be interpreted, then Dewey's conception of primary experience also indicates that neither growth nor freedom is a datum. Similarly, a consideration of contingency and regularity indicates that there can be no thought, knowledge, reflection, or intelligence without the unstable or the precarious. The contingent is the source of problems in primary experience, and reflection starts from this problematic situation, and tries to clarify, ascertain, or to transform such a situation into one that is more defined, systematized, or settled. Since, as it shall be seen later, there can be no "growth in freedom" without thought, knowledge,

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182. Vide p. 93-94 supra.

183. Vide chapter 3, p. 153-154, and 205-209 infra respectively.

reflection or intelligence,<sup>184</sup> the precarious or the unstable can be viewed as the bedrock of "growth in freedom". Moreover, Dewey maintains that without the precarious and contingent, "the flickering candle of consciousness would go out", since "the immediately precarious, the point of greatest immediate need, defines the apex of consciousness, its intense or focal mode. And this is the point of re-direction, of re-adaptation, re-organization."<sup>185</sup> It is therefore the precarious and contingent in nature that leaves room for human action, since man has to redirect, readapt, and reorganize the immediately precarious and contingent. If nature were to be only, stable and unchangeable, there would be no room for human action, because "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. Here it would have no applicability, no potentiality of use as measure and control of other events."<sup>186</sup> It seems that it could therefore be concluded that contingency, precariousness, or instability is necessary for both choice and action which will later be found to be vital aspects of growth as freedom.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, it seems that the possibility of actualizing freedom or of growth in freedom

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184. loc. cit.

185. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 312

186. id., ibid., p. 71-72

187. Vide ch. 3, p. 203-224 infra.

depends on the presence, in nature, of the trait of contingency, precariousness, or instability. Moreover, since growth is viewed by Dewey as a secondarily natural end, that is, as a plan or as an ideal for guiding or directing the process of education, its actualization depends on the precarious or the contingent in nature, which is "an indispensable condition of ideality, becoming a sufficient condition when conjoined with the regular and assured."<sup>188</sup> If nature were to be purely stable, Dewey maintains, there would be neither illusions nor ideals. The world would simply exist because there would be no needs, desires or wants, which are reflections or continuations of nature's contingencies and incompletenesses. It can therefore be hypothesized that without the unstable, the precarious, or the contingent, there would be no room in nature for "growth in freedom".

The stable, regular, recurrent, settled and uniform in nature seems to be equally necessary for growth as freedom. Without the regular, there can be no fulfillment of the possible. Growth as freedom would remain a mere potentiality if the stable cannot be used to control and regulate the occurrence of the precarious and contingent. Thought, knowledge, or inquiry would be unattainable, because the doubtful has to be settled by reference, or by adaptation, to stable objects. Indeed, Dewey maintains that the regular and stable "are the instrumentalities, the efficacious conditions, of the occurrence of the unique, unstable and passing."<sup>189</sup> The stable and

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188. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 63

189. id., ibid., p. 116.

the recurrent facilitate prediction and control of the unstable and precarious. The problematic is similarly mitigated and regulated by actively and intelligently employing the regular and the stable. And without such prediction, control and regulation, there can be no knowledge which is essential for growth in freedom.

Together, the contingent and the regular give rise to both science and philosophy which Dewey views as two modes of inquiry that are necessary for growth in freedom. Philosophy — and especially metaphysics — discovers, notes, and defines the stable and precarious traits of nature, in order to enable science to utilize the stable traits in the control of the unstable ones, as well as for predictions:

Science seizes upon whatever is so uniform as to make the changes of nature rhythmic, and hence predictable. But the contingencies of nature make discovery of these uniformities (by philosophy or rather metaphysics) with a view to prediction needed and possible. Without the uniformities, science would be impossible. But if they alone existed, thought and knowledge would be impossible and meaningless. The incomplete and uncertain gives point and application to ascertainment of regular relations and orders.<sup>190</sup>

This mixture of the stable and the unstable, or of the regular and the contingent, is the condition of all experienced satisfaction, just as it is the condition of all predicaments and problems. It is the source of the delight which fulfillments bring, just as it is the source of ignorance, error and failure. It is the basis of the entire human predicament, that is, of the human situation according to which the universe does not meet and satisfy our every wish:

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190. Dewey, op. cit., p. 160.

in nature itself qualities and relations, individualities and uniformities, finalities and efficacies, contingencies and necessities are inextricably bound together. The harsh conflicts and the happy coincidences of this interpenetration make experience what it consciously is; their manifest apparition creates doubt, forces inquiry, exacts choice, and imposes liability for the choice which is made.<sup>191</sup>

It seems therefore that it is within the context of the problematic, which is posed by the intermixture of the contingent and the regular in nature, that the interpretation of growth in terms of freedom is to be undertaken. Together, all the generic traits of existence which metaphysics discovers, help to root the concepts of growth and freedom in nature, even though they are not a datum, in the sense that they are not a ready-made endowment that is given with human nature. Rather, each is an outcome, or a development, consequent upon complex natural interactions.

In conclusion, it can be reiterated that Dewey's world-view is that of an open universe which admits of novelty. The possibility of growth seems to reflect this world-view, and it can therefore be concluded that his concept of growth, which the writer intends to explain in terms of freedom, is closely related to what can be considered to be his metaphysics.

#### 4. The Democratic Ideal

Dewey views education as a social need, or as serving a social function. It perpetuates social life, just as nutrition and reproduction perpetuate physiological life.<sup>192</sup> Such a perpetuation is possible because "all education

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191. id., *ibid.*, p. 421

192. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 9, 321.

proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race."<sup>193</sup> Education is therefore the means by which a society perpetuates itself, even though such a conception of education does not befit every society. It does not suit, for example, a conservative society that aims "simply at the preservation of established customs."<sup>194</sup> To make the definition or conception more specific and acceptable, "the kind of society aiming at its own perpetuation through education", must be specified.<sup>195</sup> Such a society, Dewey maintains, must be an intentionally progressive one, that is, it must be a democratic society. Indeed, Dewey explicitly takes "the sort of education appropriate to the development of a democratic community... as the criterion of the analysis of education."<sup>196</sup> As early as 1897, he had blamed many of the then educational failures on the lack of conception of the school "as a form of community life", the ideal community life being, in his view, a democracy.<sup>197</sup> Moral education, discipline, and the curriculum which includes

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193. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dewey on Education; Selections, ed. by Martin S. Dworkin. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967 (c 1959), p. 19. See also *ibid.*, p. 22 and 30.

194. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 322. See also p. 83, 86, 99.

195. *loc. cit.*

196. *loc. cit.*

197. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dworkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.23.

such subjects as history, cooking, sewing, manual training, the sciences, work in wood and metal, as well as weaving, should be understood as centering upon the "conception of the school as a mode of social life", or as a refined democracy.<sup>198</sup> In his view, much of the education of that time failed because it did not realize the significance of such a conception. In 1903, he reiterated this point, and indicated that any school which does not respect and apply the democratic principle in its organization, either drives away good qualified teachers, or hampers them in their work. He defines good qualified teachers as "those of independent force or intellectual initiative, and of inventive ability."<sup>199</sup> This disrespect for democracy in the school organization, affects both teachers and learners, and leads to the failures in education. Because there is no room for experimentation, the child is subjected to "an outside and ready-made material." This subjection restricts his intelligence because,

Full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs.<sup>200</sup>

"Full education", in Dewey's view, is possible only in a democracy because

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198. id., *ibid.*, p. 23-27. See also "The School and Society" in *op. cit.*, p. 39 & 41.

199. Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in *Education Today*, ed. by Joseph Ratner. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969, p. 68.

200. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. New York: Holt, 1920; New American Library, c 1950; Enlarged edition with a new introduction, Boston: Beacon, 1970 (c 1948), p. 209.

the relation between democracy and education, "is a reciprocal one, a mutual one, and vitally so."<sup>201</sup> Democracy itself is an educational principle, measure and policy, while education is in turn indispensable for its endurance and development.<sup>202</sup> This vital and reciprocal relation between democracy and education is indicated in the preface to Dewey's book, Democracy and Education. He writes that the book is,

An endeavor to detect and state the ideas implied in a democratic society and to apply these ideas to the problems of the enterprise of education. The discussion includes an indication of the constructive aims and methods of public education as seen from this point of view.<sup>203</sup>

Childs gives an insight into some of the democratic ideas which Dewey detects and applies to the educational realm.<sup>204</sup> The democratic conception of the individual as having intrinsic worth or dignity implies, for example, that the learner's present experience, uniqueness, felt needs and interests must be taken into account when drawing up a curriculum of studies. Moreover, education in a democratic society should not isolate the various courses that make up a curriculum. It should not assign them separate individual

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201. Dewey, "Democracy and Education in the World of Today", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 359.

202. id., *ibid.*, p. 359-360 & 362.

203. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. iii.

204. John L. Childs, "The Educational Philosophy of John Dewey", in The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, p. 441-443.

values.<sup>205</sup> The democratic conception of individuals as ends, or as "the ultimate locus of all value", and the conception of institutions as means, imply genuine educational opportunity for all, as well as the education of each individual in such a way that he can competently judge of values. The democratic objection to the principle of external authority is reflected in the sphere of education by Dewey's objection to the imposition of ends on education by any external authority. Similarly, the democratic method is viewed as one in which an attempt is made to resolve conflict without resort to external authority or to some fixed standards. In other words, it is the method of inquiry, discussion and conference, which appeals to the principle of majority rule. Dewey maintains that education must adopt this democratic method, if it is to be suitable for a democracy.

Dewey's philosophy of education can therefore be viewed as grounded in the democratic conception of society. As a matter of fact, one writer thinks that the word "democratic" summarizes his whole philosophy, and sets the pattern for his educational design:

The philosophy of John Dewey invites and challenges one-word characterization. It has been termed relativistic, evolutionistic, naturalistic; an experimentalist, instrumentalist philosophy, a pragmatic one. The invitation and challenge to distinguish this philosophy with one word I plan to accept. The word "democratic," in "my" Dewey, con-centers all the others. In

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205. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 249.

his philosophy, this word is summary. For his educational design, it sets the pattern, is architectonic.<sup>206</sup>

Apparently, there is no overemphasizing the fact that there is such a close link between Dewey's philosophy of education and his conception of democracy that an understanding of the essentials of the latter is necessary for coming to grips with the former. It should be noted, however, that Dewey's conception of democracy is a rather vast sphere for research. The writer therefore intends to indicate only the essentials of such a conception as they relate to freedom in terms of which Dewey's concept of educative growth is to be explained. It is hoped that such a discussion will disclose the type of society in which "growth in Freedom" is a value, an ideal, or an end. It is equally believed that this will ultimately facilitate an understanding and appreciation of the explanation of growth in terms of freedom.

#### A. Dewey's Conception of Democracy

Dewey seems to have at least three different meanings for democracy. He variously conceives of it as a form of political government, as religion, and as a way of life.<sup>207</sup> Its conception as a way of life implies that it can

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206. Sister Joseph Mary Raby, "John Dewey and Progressive Education", in *John Dewey: His Thought and Influence*, ed. by John Blewett. New York, Fordham University Press, c 1960, p. 87-88.

207. For the origins of Dewey's faith in democracy see, for example, "Biography of John Dewey" ed. by Jane M. Dewey, in Schlipp, op. cit., esp. p. 19 & 29-30; John Blewett, "Democracy as Religion: Unity in Human Relations", in Blewett, op. cit., p. 38-44.

be viewed as a moral idea or as a moral concept. As such, it seems to ground Dewey's philosophy of education, and to be closely related to his conception of growth as the end of education. The discussion will therefore focus on this meaning of democracy, and on its relation to freedom in terms of which educative growth is to be understood.<sup>208</sup> As a matter of fact, Dewey himself constantly decries the limitation of democracy to a special political form of government. He emphasizes its conception as "a way of life, social and individual". In his view, the various "factors of democratic government", such as universal suffrage, recurring elections and the responsibility of those who are in political power to the voters, are but the "means that have been found expedient for realizing democracy as the truly human way of living."<sup>209</sup> As a matter of fact, he maintains that political democracy will continue to be insecure unless democracy becomes a way of life. One major cause of the destruction of political democracy is, in his view, its exclusive conception as political. He maintains that it fails because "it had not become part

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208. For a discussion of historical or political democracy see, for example, Dewey's The Public and Its Problems, chs. III & V. His conception of democracy as religion forms the title of Blewett's article referred to above (footnote 207), p. 33-56. See also Dewey's "Religion and our Schools", in Education Today, p. 86; "The Ethics of Democracy", in Early Works I, p. 248; "Christianity and Democracy", in Early Works 4, p. 7-9; "Reconstruction", in ibid., p. 98-99.

209. Dewey, "The Democratic Form", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 400-401.

of the bone and blood of the people in daily conduct of its life."<sup>210</sup> He therefore likens its exclusive conception as political to the conception of a home as "a more or less geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar", or to the conception of a church as "a building with pews, pulpit and spire".<sup>211</sup> He points out that the error in both cases lies in forgetting that though they are these things, yet they are not only these, but infinitely more. Such rather "partial" conception of democracy forgets that,

Democracy is a personal way of individual life; that it signifies the possession and continual use of certain attitudes, forming personal character and determining desire and purpose in all the relations of life.<sup>212</sup>

In other words, democracy as a way of life involves personal or individual attitudes that constitute personal or individual character. It involves individual attitudes to fellow human beings, as the individual interacts with them in the daily affairs of life. It is therefore infinitely more than a form of government. Rather, it is primarily a mode of associated living, or of conjoint communicated

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210. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 720-721. See also Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 209.

211. Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy", in Early Works I, p. 240.

212. Dewey, "Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us", in The Philosopher of the Common Man (Essays in honor of John Dewey to celebrate his eightieth birthday), p. 222.

experience.<sup>213</sup> And it is high time, Dewey warns, democracy stopped depending on political institutions, and found expression also in personal or individual attitudes.<sup>214</sup> To make this feasible, he assigns to those who still believe in democracy, the task of declaring "that democracy is a way of life... a way of personal life and one which provides a moral standard for personal conduct."<sup>215</sup> He maintains that such a conception of democracy, which he advocates, is possible and tenable because of changes in intellectual and social conditions:

Democracy is possible only because of a change in intellectual conditions. It implies tools for getting at truth in detail, and day by day, as we go along. Only such possession justifies the surrender of fixed, all-embracing principles to which, as universals, all particulars and individuals are subject for valuation and regulation.<sup>216</sup>

The allusion here is to the replacement of what Dewey calls the "method of authority", as the method of fixing belief or of acquiring knowledge, by what he calls the scientific method of experimentation or by his logic defined as the theory of inquiry. He points out that other changes, such as the industrial

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213. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 87.

214. John Dewey, Freedom and Culture. New York: Capricorn, 1963 (c 1939), p. 125.

215. id., *ibid.*, p. 130.

216. Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 267.

ones resulting from the application of science, are involved. For example, the international market has grown because of cheap and rapid means of communication and distribution. So also have grown the manufacturing centers that supply this market, while even the physical forms of the earth are altered, political boundaries are wiped out and moved about, and populations are gathered from various points into cities so that lifestyles are also altered. Other changes involve moral and religious beliefs, as well as household and neighborhood occupations, which are practically eliminated. On the other hand, most employees become but appendages to the machines they operate. Learning, knowledge, and the materials of knowledge are equally affected. Learning, for example, is circulated or democratized so that "a distinctively learned class is henceforth out of the question. It is an anachronism."<sup>217</sup> Social life has undergone a change, transformation or revolution, which education must reflect if it is to be related to life:

If there is special need of educational reconstruction at the present time... it is because of the thoroughgoing change in social life accompanying the advance of science, the industrial revolution, and the development of democracy. Such practical changes cannot take place without demanding an educational reformation to meet them...<sup>218</sup>

The school has to be made an embryonic community life through which democracy can be instituted as a way of life.

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217. Dewey, "The School and Society", in Dewey on Education, ed. by Dworkin, p. 34-38, 46-47 & 49.

218. Dewey, Democracy and Education; p. 331.

It may be pointed out that there are some principles or beliefs which underlie the conception of democracy as a way of life. It is founded, for example, on "faith in the capacities of human nature; faith in human intelligence and in the power of pooled and cooperative experience."<sup>219</sup> It involves respect for individuality, or for the unique distinct qualities of each individual.<sup>220</sup> It includes a belief in the ability of human experience to generate aims and methods by which further experience can be enriched or enlarged.<sup>221</sup> Dewey uses the case of racial, sectorian or political intolerance manifesting itself, for example, in racial prejudice against negroes, Catholics and Jews, to illustrate the intrinsic connection between democracy and belief in the potentialities of human nature. He maintains that such forms of intolerance indicate an underlying attitude of fundamental distrust of human nature, or a deep-seated scepticism about the qualities of human nature, both of which are, in his view, highly undemocratic.<sup>222</sup> The conception

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219. Dewey, "The Democratic Form", in Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy. Ed. by Joseph Ratner. New York: Modern Library, 1939, p. 402. See also p. 400.

220. Vide Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 59.

221. Philosopher of the Common Man, p. 227. Freedom and Culture, p. 126-128, Education Today, p. 368

222. Dewey, Freedom And Culture, p. 126-128.

of democracy as a way of life is also based on pacifism, understood as opposition to the use of force of any kind as a means of settling disputes.<sup>223</sup> There are also some Deweyan metaphysical principles or postulates underlying the conception. These include contingency, change and transaction, which experience reveals as generic traits of existence. With respect to contingency, for example, Dewey writes:

A philosophy animated... by the strivings of men to achieve democracy will construe liberty as meaning a universe in which there is real uncertainty and contingency, a world which is not all in, and never will be, a world which in some respect is incomplete and in the making, and which in these respects may be made this way or that according as men judge, prize, love and labor. To such a philosophy, any notion of a perfect or complete reality, finished, existing always the same without regard to the vicissitudes of time, will be abhorrent.<sup>224</sup>

As regards change, another metaphysical postulate that underlies the conception of democracy as a way of life, Dewey maintains that institutional forms and mechanisms must change in order to keep pace with the times. He quotes various passages from Thomas Jefferson to delineate his emphasis on change.<sup>225</sup> In terms of transaction, he maintains that democracy is founded on the association of individuals with one another, so that there is the possibility of "interaction

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223. Dewey, "The Class Struggle", in Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 449.

224. Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy", in Characters and Events, vol II, ed. by Joseph Ratner. New York: Octagon Books, 1970 (c 1957), p. 851.

225. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 157-158.

without limit."<sup>226</sup> Each individual in the transaction is treated not only as a means, but mainly as an end, especially in the Deweyan sense of a primarily natural end.<sup>227</sup> In other words, the individual is not treated merely as a passage way to another passage way, or as a means, but as possessing irreducible, unique and distinct qualities. He is seen as capable of taking individual decisions, of enjoying individual experiences, or of having individual knowledge which he brings into the transaction that characterizes the democratic way of life. Accordingly, he is treated as having something qualitatively his own, and which should be given a chance to develop if the democratic sharing is to be enriched. But he is also treated as an end in the Deweyan sense of secondarily natural end.<sup>228</sup> In other words, he is viewed as having interests, desires, needs and impulses, which form the basis of ends-in-view, aims, purposes or goals. He is therefore considered to be capable of setting himself goals, aims or purposes, as well as being capable of realizing them if given a chance to do so. In other words, his individuality is respected.

It should be noted that the democratic respect for individual qualities, powers or capacities, goes hand in hand with the belief in their development,

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226. Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy", in Characters and Events, vol. II, p. 854-855. See also Freedom and Culture, p. 159-161.

227. Vide p. 100-101 supra.

228. See p. 102-104 supra.

growth or improvement, if only appropriate conditions can be provided. In other words, it involves a belief in novelty, change or becoming as a generic trait of existence. Like nature, the individual in a democracy is viewed as an intricate mixture of the contingent and the regular, the stable and the unstable, or of the uncertain and the assured.<sup>229</sup> He is "incomplete" or "indeterminate", and therefore is capable of change, growth, development, or improvement.

Similarly, the democratic respect for individuality involves acknowledgement of the relation of the individual with other individuals. As a matter of fact, it is considered that the individual actualizes his potentialities, powers or capacities, only as he interacts with the larger community, that is, with other members of the democratic community. Thus, just as nature exhibits traits of individuality and relations,<sup>230</sup> the individual member of the democratic community is respected as an individual, without overlooking his relation with others. In other words, the world-view that underlies the conception of democracy as a way of life, is a view of the world not as a fixed hierarchical order of species, grades or degrees, but as a "democratic harmony" through interaction or transaction between a community of interrelated individuals, in which the life of each is enriched and made more distinctive, qualitative, and unique. It is a world-view in which beliefs are fixed and

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229. Vide p. 105-107 supra.

230. Vide p. 107-109 supra.

knowledge is established by experimentation and inquiry, rather than by authority. It is also a worldview in which human activity counts as a factor in the establishment or realization of values:

There is an increased esteem, in democratic communities, of whatever has to do with manual labor, commercial occupations, and the rendering of tangible services to society...Labor is extolled; service is a much-lauded moral ideal.<sup>231</sup>

Morally, such a world-view involves inquiry into the moral grounds of political and social institutions, and into the principles that can guide men in the realization of individual freedom, in cooperation with their fellowmen.<sup>232</sup>

It calls for the substitution of power over physical nature for power over fellow-men. The issues of war, peace, and economic relations between nations are also involved. Physical interdependence, for example, has to be replaced, supplemented, or transformed into moral or human interdependence. Scientific attitudes and dispositions have to be incorporated into the character of every individual in the society. At the same time, the function of choice of values and the enlistment of desires and emotions in behalf of those values that are chosen, must be taken into account in order to develop personal responsibility for judgement and for action. Dewey maintains that all these issues form "the order of moral values involved in realization of democracy".<sup>233</sup>

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231. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 313. See also Dewey, "The School and Society", in Dewey on Education, ed. by Dworkin, p. 42.

232. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 164.

233. id., ibid., p. 163-167 and 172.

In a rather lengthy paragraph in The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, he summarizes these various values, principles, or beliefs which underlie the conception of democracy as a way of life. He maintains that,

Democracy... is not as 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 of individual tendencies. It is also impossible when appetites and desires are conceived to be the dominant factor in the constitution of most men's characters, and when appetite and desire are conceived to be manifestations of the disorderly principle of nature... Democracy is estimable only through the changed conception of intelligence, that forms modern science, and of want, that forms modern industry. It is essentially a changed psychology.<sup>234</sup>

Of particular interest to the present inquiry is the involvement of the scientific method, intelligence, appetites, and desires, interests, as well as of doubt and inquiry, in the democratic conception. The democratic way of life, as involving these elements, points somehow to its relation to Dewey's notion of freedom in terms of which growth is to be explained. But before coming to a discussion of this, it may be pertinent to note that it implies the application of intelligence to the resolution of human problems. As such, it demands a resort to scientific methods which "give us an exact and concrete exhibition of the path which intelligence takes when working most efficiently, under most favorable conditions".<sup>235</sup> The role of intelligence

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234. Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, p. 59-60.

235. Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in Education Today, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 69.

in the democratic conception cannot be overemphasized because Dewey, himself, states that "the efficacy and responsibility of freed intelligence" is "the spiritual basis of democracy".<sup>236</sup> He reiterates this vital role in a passage in Intelligence in the Modern World, a rather well-chosen title that seems to accentuate this central role of intelligence in Dewey's democratic conception. Although it is rather lengthy, it is worth quoting in full because of its relevance to the present inquiry. Dewey writes:

I have emphasized in what precedes the importance of the effective release of intelligence in connection with personal experience in the democratic way of living. I have done so purposely because democracy is so often and so naturally associated in our minds with freedom of action, forgetting the importance of freed intelligence which is necessary to direct and to warrant freedom of action. Unless freedom of individual action has intelligence and informed conviction back of it, its manifestation is almost sure to result in confusion and disorder. The democratic idea of freedom is not the right of each individual to do as he pleases, even if it be qualified by adding "provided he does not interfere with the same freedom on the part of others". While the idea is not always, not often enough, expressed in words, the basic freedom is that of freedom of mind and of whatever degree of freedom of action and experience is necessary to produce freedom of intelligence.<sup>237</sup>

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236. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 73.

237. Dewey, "The Democratic Form" in Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 404. See also "Democracy in Education", in Education Today, p. 62 and esp. "Democracy and Educational Administration", in *ibid.*, p. 341.

Democracy as a way of life emphasizes the life of intelligence. It involves the institution of intelligence in the sphere of morals. Indeed, Dewey maintains that to conceive of democracy as a way of life, rather than merely as a form of government, "is to realize that democracy is a moral ideal and so far as it becomes a fact is a moral fact."<sup>238</sup> He even maintains that historically, the idea has remained emphatically moral. He therefore considers Jefferson's formulation of the democratic principle to be "moral through and through", whether considered in its foundations, methods, or in its ends.<sup>239</sup> And, he views such a moral formulation as a proof that,

The source of the American democratic tradition is moral—not technical, abstract, narrowly political nor materially utilitarian. It is moral because based on faith in the ability of human nature to achieve freedom for individuals accompanied with respect and regard for other persons and with social stability built on cohesion instead of coercion.<sup>240</sup>

Democracy as a way of life, rather than as a form of government, is "an ethical idea"<sup>241</sup>, a moral ideal, or a moral concept. And it is so now, more

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238. Dewey, "Creative Democracy", in Philosopher of the Common Man, p. 226.

239. Dewey maintains that Thomas Jefferson "was the first modern to state in human terms the principles of democracy". (Vide Dewey, Freedom and Culture, ch. 7, p. 155).

240. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 162

241. Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy", in Early Works I, p. 248.

than in the days of the "frontier" and of "going west," when democracy was more or less "a gift of grace", rather than the result of conscious planning and of intelligent execution. Dewey therefore maintains that it has to be achieved now "by conscious and resolute effort", "of set purpose", as "a matter of deliberate effort", "by deliberate and determined endeavor", or "by inventive effort and creative activity".<sup>242</sup> Indeed, he suggests a method which, in his view, can ensure that such efforts do actually help in attaining democracy. It is what he refers to as "the method of democracy", or as an "experimental" method.<sup>243</sup> This suggestion is based on his belief that "if there is one conclusion to which human experience unmistakably points it is that democratic ends demand democratic methods for their realization."<sup>244</sup> He therefore objects to the use of authoritarian, monistic, wholesale or absolutist methods, which he considers to be a betrayal of human freedom, no matter in what guise it presents itself. He advocates, instead, the use

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242. Vide Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 173-174; Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 87; and Dewey, "Creative Democracy--The Task Before Us", in The Philosopher of the Common Man, p. 220-222.

243. Dewey, "Experimentalism in Moral Theory", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Ratner, p. 775.

244. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 175.

of "plural, partial, and experimental methods", in order to secure and maintain "a freedom which is co-operative".<sup>245</sup> One of such methods is the democratic method, which is an experimental or scientific method that employs "scientific knowledge as it functions in men's occupations."<sup>246</sup> It should be noted, however, that the use of the democratic method does not necessarily ensure the attainment of the democratic ideal. Rather, various democratic ends can be realized once in a while, or every now and again, but the democratic ideal itself cannot be attained once and for all, because it is not an "ultimate" or absolute end. It is, instead, an end which every generation has to accomplish for itself, that is, "It must be continually born anew in every generation."<sup>247</sup> Dewey's conception of democracy as a way of life, a conception which is operative in his philosophy of education, is therefore a rather very complex one. But, it is in the context of such a complex conception that the interpretation of growth in terms of freedom is to be understood.

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245. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 176.

246. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 229.

247. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 176; "Academic Freedom", in Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 721; "Democracy and Education in the World of Today", in Education Today, p. 365; Gordon W. Allport, "Dewey's Individual and Social Psychology", in The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. by Schilpp, p. 280.

## SUMMARY

The interpretation of Dewey's concept of growth in terms of freedom, the search for evidence in support of such an interpretation, and the attempt to delineate some of the advantages of such an interpretation, are carried out within the framework of Dewey's basic philosophy. The latter is continuously refined throughout the various phases of Dewey's philosophic development, which consists of the theological and intuitional phase, the Hegelian phase, and the experimental phase. Those aspects of his basic philosophy which are considered to be essential for an understanding of the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom, are mainly his theory of knowledge, his metaphysics, and his conception of democracy as an ideal society, or as a way of life.

With respect to his theory of knowledge, it can be said that the leading of one proposition to another, and the consequent refinement of logical forms, seem to exemplify the process of growth. It is also indicated that knowledge, as the outcome of inquiry, is essential for the attainment of growth, because it involves the enrichment of experience with meanings and significances, and entails the refinement of habits, which are the main guide of the organism-environment interaction within which growth takes place.

As regards his metaphysics, Dewey's definition of it as the ground-map of criticism, and of philosophy, which is the criticism of criticisms, as the general theory of education, implies that metaphysics is also the ground-map of education. Moreover, his conception of end as primarily and

secondarily natural, sheds some light on his rather cryptic remark that education has no end beyond itself. It is also indicated that the interpretation of the concept of growth must be effected within the context of the problematic that is posed by the intermixture of the stable and the unstable in nature, and that it must remain faithful to Dewey's view of the world as an open universe which admits of novelty.

With respect to his conception of democracy as an ideal society, it is indicated that freedom in terms of which the concept of growth is to be explained, is an ideal, or an end, only or mainly within such a society. It is also indicated that Dewey's philosophy of education is designed mainly for such a democratic society.

It is apparent, therefore, that an understanding of his basic philosophy is essential for understanding the interpretation of his concept of growth in terms of freedom. The next chapter is devoted to an exposition of these two concepts of growth and freedom, in order to delineate and correlate such similarities as may exist between them, and as can justify the interpretation of one in terms of the other.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DEWEY ON GROWTH, FREEDOM AND EDUCATION.

With the previous chapter as a backdrop, the present chapter is devoted to an analysis of Dewey's concepts of growth and freedom as they enter into his philosophy of education. The first section is an analysis of the concept of growth as found in various works of Dewey. It follows closely Emerson's exposition of the concept which appears to be the best, the most relevant, and the latest of such investigations, discussing growth under its traits of intellectual, social and moral development, and examining some of the problems that are associated with the concept. The second section gives a similar analysis of Dewey's notion of freedom based on Adler's characterization of it as consisting of three interrelated aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. It may be noted that Adler's analysis seems to be the best or the most thorough analysis that has so far been carried out with respect to the concept of freedom in Dewey's philosophy. In the third section, an attempt is made to gather some evidence from the analysis of both concepts and from Dewey's own works, in support of the thesis that Dewey's concept of growth in education can be advantageously viewed as freedom, understood as freedom, or interpreted in terms of freedom.

#### I. Dewey's Concept of Growth

It should be noted that the concept of growth in philosophy is a biological concept whose origin dates as far as Aristotle, and that Aristotle has a characteristic and distinctive picture of the physical universe as a whole. One writer describes this distinctive Aristotelian picture in the following terms:

It is a picture of nature as seen from the perspective of the various kinds of change and motion that are appropriate to the different kinds of things or substances in the universe

Thus, Aristotle maintains that the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, enjoy an eternally circular motion as distinct from what might be called sublunary bodies and substances. Light bodies, for example fire and air, tend to move upwards, while heavy ones, such as earth and water, tend to move downwards. In other words, each thing or substance has its appropriate characteristic development, motion, or change. The characteristic development or "change" of the acorn, for example, is development into an oak as its natural and final end. It is within such a scheme of motion and change that Aristotle considers "growth" to be the change which is characteristic of living things or of animate substances. What is distinctive of growth as the sort of change that characterizes living beings, is the peculiar way in which efficient causes operate in such a change. With respect to non-living beings, the efficient cause, which is often an external force, has to continuously act upon the physical body in order to move it and to keep it in motion. In contrast, no external force can ever make a living being grow. Rather, the efficient cause of the growth, motion or change of such a being is intrinsic to the being itself.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle refers to such a cause as the "soul" or "psyche", which he defines as a substantial form;

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1. Henry B. Veatch, Aristotle: A Contemporary Appreciation.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974, p. 57.

2. Veatch, op. cit., p. 58-59.

the "what-it-is" of a certain kind of thing, or as that which brings about a primary or an initial actualization of a living body that can perform such life functions as nutrition, growth, and reproduction. He writes:

The soul is the cause or source of the living body. The terms cause and source have many senses. But the soul is the cause of its body in all three senses which we explicitly recognize. It is (a) the source or origin of movement, it is (b) the end, it is (c) the substance of the whole living body.

Thus, in terms of Aristotle's four causes, the soul is the efficient, final and formal cause of the motion, change or growth that characterizes man as a living being. It is further distinguished from the soul or psyche of other living beings such as plants and animals. Unlike the soul of plants and animals, the human soul is an intellectual or a rational soul. As such, it enables man to perform not only such functions as nutrition, growth, and reproduction which he shares with plants, as well as such functions as sensation and locomotion which he shares with animals, but also to perform the distinctively and the peculiarly human functions that are related to rational knowledge or to cognition. These rational functions are, as far as man is concerned, determinate ways of being, as contrasted with mere ways of becoming. To Aristotle, they are man's natural end. In other words, rational knowledge and cognition are "that toward which man naturally tends", or that to which man is naturally ordered in his development, or in his growth.

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3. Aristotle, De Anima II, 4, 415 b 7-11, as quoted in Veatch, op. cit., p. 69.

It could therefore be maintained that Aristotle's view of nature is one in which goal-directed behaviour, that is, an activity which aims at some end, is a fact of nature, and that the efficient cause of such an activity is intrinsic to the organism. In such a scheme, "growth" is something done by the organism under the guidance of a final cause or end. An organism is said to "grow", in this context, when and if it moves along its natural path of development, that is, towards its natural end. It seems therefore to be rather difficult to maintain the idea of growth in the absence of such an Aristotelian scheme. Some evidence for this can be found in biology. Hoffman, for example, who describes the growth of the "mouse tumor cell", maintains that,

The cell literally pulls itself apart. There is no external agency or source of power. Internal molecular rearrangements determine when and how the separation of the chromosomes and the pulling in of the cleavage furrow will happen.

It should also be noted that, in this Aristotelian scheme, ends and goals are intrinsic to nature, rather than extrinsic to, or outside of nature. They form a part of the world of nature, so that there is no need to go outside such a world in order to discover them. In other words, they are simply facts

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4. Joseph G. Hoffman, *The Life and Death of Cells*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957, p. 278. This emphasizes the "intrinsic" nature of growth, and is very much in line with Aristotle's view (Vide p. 142-145 supra).

of nature, that is, they are not natural in the Deweyan sense of values, ends, and goals being natural because they arise from human purposes and designs, and of these purposes and designs being natural phenomena because man is a part of nature. In Aristotle, instead, it is simply a fact of nature that an acorn should develop into an oak, that is, an oak is the natural end of an acorn. If the acorn were to develop into something else, perhaps into a tadpole or a skyscraper, it would be considered to be not only unnatural, but rather magical or mysterious. And if it falls on rocky ground, becomes diseased, or is eaten by a hog so that it does not mature or develop to its natural end, it can be maintained that these happenings are "bad" for the acorn because they prevent it from attaining its natural perfection or end. In other words, the "good" of the acorn is the attainment of its natural end or perfection, that is, its growth or development into an oak. The "good" of anything, or what is of value to it, is revealed in ordinary human experience. It is this experience which discloses the capabilities, potentialities or tendencies of things, and hence the ends or goals toward which they are naturally oriented in their natural growth or development. In other words, the perfection or the good of a thing is determined by the very nature of the being in question: by the nature of the acorn in the case of the acorn and the oak, and by the nature of man in the case of human beings. The concept of growth in the Aristotelian scheme is therefore associated with an essential definition of the organism, and involves the conception of values, ends, and goals as facts of nature. More specifically, the Aristotelian concept of growth involves

a precise relationship between fact and value. It marries fact to value because both are facts of nature. Moreover, it is a biological concept that is rooted in a metaphysics in which goal-directed behaviour is a fact of nature. This Aristotelian conception of growth is the backdrop against which to comprehend the Deweyan concept of growth, especially as it seems to shed some light on the problems and difficulties that accompany Dewey's concept of growth.

It may be noted that, unlike Aristotle's, Dewey's philosophy in general, and his concept of growth in particular, are based môre on concepts rooted in biology and psychology, than in metaphysics. He has a rather specialized view of metaphysics in which there is no room for the Aristotelian conception of final end as a thing's natural end towards which it tends. Rather, Dewey coins new phrases, such as "end-in-view", which is contrasted with "end" understood as a natural terminus.<sup>5</sup> Thus, even if it is claimed that Dewey's concept of growth is based on metaphysics, it must be noted that such a metaphysics does not belong to the Aristotelian scheme. It should also be noted that apart from a chapter in Democracy and Education<sup>6</sup>, Dewey does not exhaustively, systematically, or clearly discuss his concept of growth

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5. Vide ch. 2, p. 100-104 supra. This seems to imply a division between value and fact, the former being a human institution, while the latter is a natural occurrence.

6. John Dewey, Democracy and Education. New York: Free Press, 1968, 1966 (c 1944), chapter 4, p. 41-53.

in any one specific work, or at any one specific place in any of his works. Even in the chapter referred to, the discussion is by no means such that it can free his concept of growth from ambiguities and confusion. However, an attempt has been made to systematize the discussion by analyzing the concept in terms of its traits or components. This is the attempt by Emerson who maintains that,

There are three main traits of growth, social, moral, and intellectual, which are interrelated, and these three find their focal point and their unity in the growth of the individual self.

In the present analysis of Dewey's concept of growth, the writer uses, as a guide, Emerson's analysis which seems to be the best and the most relevant in relation to the problem under investigation. Following his example, it is indicated that growth has three major traits, namely, intellectual, social, and moral development. However, this approach differs from Emerson's analysis, which sometimes refers to self-development or to self-realization as a trait of growth. Quoting from Dewey's The child and the Curriculum, for example, he concludes that "while educational growth may have a number of traits of development, the above statement (that is, the quoted passage)

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7: George Goldwin Emerson, John Dewey's Concept of Growth in Education. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975, p. 225. See also p. 187, 226 & 249. For more on Emerson's thesis see p. 189-194 infra.

indicates that the overriding and unifying trait is self-realization."<sup>8</sup> By contrast, the present writer intends to discuss Dewey's concept of growth as intellectual, social and moral development, and to indicate that all these traits involve a concomitant development of the self and of the society. It is pertinent to point out, however, that these traits are interrelated, and that their separation is mainly for heuristic purposes. But before considering these various traits, it may be useful to consider what Dewey offers as a definition of growth, as well as what he calls "the conditions of growth."

Dewey defines growth as the "cumulative movement of action toward a later result."<sup>9</sup> This definition implies that growth has an end, understood as a terminus. If growth is a movement toward "a later result", it could be asked what constitutes that "later result". If it is growth, and Dewey insists that it is, then this definition is rather tautological. For, growth becomes the cumulative movement of action toward growth, that is, toward itself,

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8. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 198. Underlining mine. See p. 189-194 *infra* for more on Emerson's approach, and on how the present investigation goes further than his approach.

9. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 41. See also Dewey, "The Need For a Philosophy of Education", in Education Today. Ed. by Joseph Ratner, New York: Greenwood, 1969 (c 1940), p. 293: "But development involves a point towards which as well as one from which; it involves constant movement in a given direction". Cf. *ibid.*, p. 292: "In any case, development, growth, involve change, modification, and modification in definite directions" (underlining mine).

and there can be no proceeding further, other than going in a circle.<sup>10</sup> This anomaly is remedied, to a certain extent, in Education Today, where Dewey specifically raises the question, "Just what do we mean by growth, by development?"<sup>11</sup> His answer may not be considered to be a definition in the strict sense of the word, but it gives a better idea of the concept of growth than the first definition. Dewey states that "development, even with a plant, is a matter of the kind of interaction that goes on between itself and the conditions and forces that form its environment."<sup>12</sup> As already indicated, this shows more or less how growth occurs, but it neither defines the concept nor specifies what it is. Nevertheless, it is a definite advance over the rather ambiguous, vague, and tautological definition of growth as leading simply to itself. What is to be noted, however, is the difficulty which Dewey encounters in his attempt to define the concept of growth within the framework of a metaphysics and an axiology that have no room for ultimate ends, values, and principles.<sup>13</sup>

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10. This seems to indicate the need to explain the concept of growth in terms of another concept, such as freedom, which the present writer suggests.

11. Dewey, "The Need For a Philosophy of Education", in Ratner (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 289.

12. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 289-290.

13. See chapter 2, p. 90-114 *supra*, for Dewey's metaphysics, which differs from the Aristotelian "scheme" referred to on p. 142-145 *supra*.

It should also be noted that although Dewey's sub-title reads "The Conditions (in the plural) of Growth", he offers no more than one such condition, namely, immaturity: "The primary condition of growth is immaturity".<sup>14</sup> He defines immaturity as "a positive force or ability, the power to grow",<sup>15</sup> and maintains that "dependence and plasticity" are its "two chief traits".<sup>16</sup> Dependence is construed in constructive terms as "accompanied by growth in ability", rather than "by an ever increasing lapse into parasitism" or helplessness.<sup>17</sup> Plasticity is equally positively construed as "the specific adaptability of an immature creature for growth", an adaptability that entails the ability to learn from experience, to modify actions on the basis of the results of prior experiences, to develop dispositions, or to acquire habits.<sup>18</sup> In Education Today; these conditions are presented in a rather different manner. Having conceived of growth as a matter of interaction between the individual and his environment, Dewey states that "there are two factors

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14. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 41.

15. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 42.

16. *loc. cit.*

17. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 43

18. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 44. These definitions imply the Aristotelian view of the "intrinsic" nature of growth (Vide p. 143-145 *supra*).

involved in the existence of any interaction."<sup>19</sup> He variously refers to the first of these factors as "the diversity of capacities and needs that exists in different human beings",<sup>20</sup> as "tendencies that are urgent in the existing make-up of an individual"<sup>21</sup>, or as "concrete differences in individuality", that is, as "differences in needs, in desires, in direction of native interest."<sup>22</sup>

The second factor is the environment:

While the raw material and the starting-point of growth are found in native capacities, the environing conditions...are the indispensable means by which intrinsic possibilities are developed.<sup>23</sup>

Dewey goes on to specify such an environment as a social, rather than merely a physical one. He maintains that,

It must be seen to be dominantly human and its values as social. Through the influence of the social environment each person becomes saturated with the customs, the beliefs, the purposes, skills, hopes and fears of the cultural group to which he belongs.<sup>24</sup>

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19. Dewey, "The Need For a Philosophy of Education", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 290.

20. loc. cit.

21. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 291.

22. loc. cit. The description of this factor is akin to the Aristotelian scheme, in terms of what is intrinsic and natural to the organism.

23. loc. cit.

24. Dewey, op. cit., p. 295. It may be noted that this corresponds with his conception of democracy as a way of life, rather than as just a form of government (Vide ch. 2, p. 125-139 *supra*), and that the description apparently relegates values to a separate sphere, namely, the social realm.

It is in further examination of these conditions and their implications that the interrelated elements, components, or traits of growth stand out as intellectual development, social development, and moral development. For heuristic purposes, therefore, these traits will be analyzed before an attempt is made to offer a critical overview of the concept itself.

#### A. Growth As Intellectual Development

The cultivation, preservation, and melioration of reflection or thought form a vital aspect of Dewey's concept of educative growth. In his view, "all which the school can or need do for pupils, so far as their minds are concerned (that is, leaving out certain specialized muscular abilities), is to develop their ability to think."<sup>25</sup> Growth as intellectual development is variously defined by Dewey as the increment or enrichment of life's perceptible meaning<sup>26</sup>, as "growth in the grace of intelligence",<sup>27</sup> as "constant expansion of horizons

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25. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 152.

26. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 76.

27. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 153

and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses"<sup>28</sup>, or as involving the freeing of "intelligence" or of "the processes of mental growth".<sup>29</sup> Dewey also offers what may be considered to be preconditions or prerequisites of intellectual development. An analysis of his various definitions, together with these prerequisites, indicates that growth as intellectual development involves, among other things, active participation or sharing in an activity by the individual, formation of new purposes or modification of existing ones, confrontation with problematic situations, application of scientific or experimental method, as well as affectivity.

In his analysis of habit as an aspect of plasticity, which is a trait of immaturity understood as the primary condition of growth, Dewey defines education as the acquisition of habits that enable an individual to adjust to his environment. He points out, however, that adjustment must "be understood in its active sense of control of means for achieving ends".<sup>30</sup> In other words, the habit that yields intellectual development is not habituation, conformity, or accommodation. Rather, it involves doing something to the environment,

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28. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 175. See also Dewey, "Psychology and Social Practice", in *The Middle Works I*, p. 133 where Dewey conceives of the child as "concerned with arriving at specific ends and purposes".

29. Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in Ratner (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 71.

30. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 46.

that is, it entails actively using and modifying it.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, this implies action, activity, or active participation on the part of the individual who is to grow intellectually. This is stated in comparatively clearer terms in Dewey's analysis of "Thinking in Education." He maintains that "an individual must actually try, in play or work, to do something with material in carrying out his own impulsive activity."<sup>32</sup> He equally maintains that successful educational methods, those that yield intellectual development, are those that involve doing, that is, those that "give the pupils something to do, not something to learn".<sup>33</sup> He therefore emphasizes "the need of (sic) active pursuits".<sup>34</sup> The individual has to wrestle with his problems, that is, he has to find his way out if he is to think or to attain growth as intellectual development,<sup>35</sup> which can only occur if there is "participation, sharing, in an activity", both by the individual learner and by the teacher.<sup>36</sup> This emphasis on active participation as essential for the attainment of growth as intellectual development, is

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31. id., *ibid.*, p. 46-47.

32. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

33. *loc. cit.* Underlining mine.

34. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 156.

35. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 160

36. *loc. cit.*

also evident in Dewey's analysis of the vocational aspects of education.

He maintains that "a calling (that is, a vocation) is also of necessity an organizing principle for information and ideas; for knowledge and intellectual growth"<sup>37</sup>,

because an individual's occupation, calling or vocation motivates him, often unconsciously or unknowingly, to search for, classify, select, and to arrange relevant information or facts.<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that this reference to

search, classification, selection, and to arrangement<sup>39</sup>, emphasizes doing,

activity, or active participation as essential for the attainment of intellectual growth. And it is reiterated, in Dewey's discussion of what he terms "theories

of knowledge", as characterizing his theory of knowledge, and as justifying

its being termed "pragmatic". He maintains that "without the particulars

as they are discriminated by the active responses of sense organs, there

is no material for knowing and no intellectual growth."<sup>40</sup> Apart from this

activity of discriminating the particulars, there is also the activity of reorganizing

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37. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 309.

38. *op. cit.*, p. 310.

39. Cf. Dewey, "Psychology and Social Practice", in Middle Works I, p. 134: "...personal selection of means and materials..., personal adaptation and application of what is thus selected...."

40. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 343. The underlining is the present writer's.

experience in terms of placing the discriminated particulars in the context of meanings that are derived from previous experiences. Such a reorganization cannot be done unless the individual has a genuine problem which he is trying to solve. In other words, growth as intellectual development implies some activity that modifies the environment. It calls for active participation on the part of the individual learner.

Besides active participation or sharing in an activity by the individual, intellectual growth also involves the formation of new purposes or the modification of existing ones. As a matter of fact, Dewey defines intellectual growth in terms of such a formation or of such a modification. To him, "intellectual growth means constant expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses".<sup>41</sup> In other words, the rethinking, modification or the replacement of the individual's purposes which expands his horizons, constitutes growth understood as intellectual development. However, when Dewey refers to dependence and plasticity as stimulating "foresight and planning for the future"<sup>42</sup>, this reference to intellectual development as involving the formation of new purposes or the modification of existing ones, does not seem to be so apparent. And yet, this is what Dewey really means by his reference to "foresight and planning for the future". It entails the foreseeing of circumstances, and a consequent modification or replacement

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41. id., *ibid.*, p. 175.

42. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

of purposes in accordance with such circumstances. As such, it partially explains Dewey's quarrel with what he refers to as fixed ends. In his view, such ends give the individual the impression that whenever he cannot realize his ends, the trouble must lie with the means rather than with the ends. According to Dewey, the trouble may lie with the means, the end, or even with both of them together. The end, for example, may be unrealistic in a given circumstance. To be realistic or to plan for the future realistically, the individual should therefore re-examine not only the means, but also his purposes, aims, goals, or ends. He should rethink his purposes, modify them, or even replace them entirely with new ones, if the foreseen circumstances so demand. This is what Dewey really means when he states that dependence and plasticity stimulate foresight and planning for the future. The implication is that intellectual development involves the formation of new purposes or the modification of existing ones. This is made more obvious when Dewey, refers to the child as "primarily one whose calling is growth. He is concerned with arriving at specific ends and purposes, instead of having a general framework already developed."<sup>43</sup> In other words, growth as intellectual development demands not only active participation by the individual learner, but also the formation of new purposes or the modification of existing ones. Indeed, it is such formation or modification that can get the individual actively involved in the learning situation from which intellectual growth is to be derived.

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43. Dewey, "Psychology and Social Practice", in Middle Works I, p. 133. See also p. 134 where he speaks of the "realization of personal ends".

Another prerequisite of intellectual development, according to Dewey, is the presence of or confrontation with problematic situations.<sup>44</sup>

In a chapter which he devotes to a discussion of the place of thinking in education, Dewey states:

That the situation should be of such a nature as to arouse thinking means of course that it should suggest something to do which is not either routine or capricious—something, in other words, presenting what is new (and hence uncertain or problematic) and yet sufficiently connected with existing habits to call out an effective response...The most significant question which can be asked, accordingly, about any situation or experience proposed to induce learning is what quality of problem it involves.<sup>45</sup>

In this quotation, the reference to the "quality of problem" indicates that it is not confrontation with just any problem, for example an arithmetical problem set by the teacher, that engenders growth understood as intellectual development. Indeed, Dewey refers to problems that are not conducive to intellectual growth as "simulated or mock problems". They are either problems of the teacher or of the textbook, rather than those of the individual learner. As such, they are imposed from without, and such an imposition reduces the learner's problem to simply meeting an external requirement. On the contrary, problems that conduce to intellectual growth are genuine problems which naturally suggest themselves within the individual learner's experience,

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44. For Dewey's definition of this, see ch. 2, p. 68-70 supra.

45. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 154.

stimulating and directing observation, and leading to the formation and testing of relevant hypotheses. Such problems may be referred to as existential or as empirical. Dewey reiterates the role of such genuine problems in intellectual growth, when he criticizes what he refers to as a fundamental psychological distinction between the child and the adult, with respect to the conditions which secure intellectual development for both. In his view, and with respect to both the adult and the child, "an attitude of personal inquiry, based upon the possession of a problem which interests and absorbs, is a necessary precondition of mental growth".<sup>46</sup>

It may be noted that both discussions involve a reference to the scientific or the experimental method as the ideal method for solving such genuine problems and therefore for the attainment of intellectual development. Dewey indicates that plasticity, one of the traits of immaturity as the primary condition of growth, implies that the human infant "has to experiment in making varied combinations" of the reactions of his eyes, ears, hands and legs, if he is to use them effectively.<sup>47</sup> In other words, his method of learning

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46. Dewey, "Psychology and Social Practice", in Middle Works I, p. 134. Underlining mine. He also speaks of the "realization of personal ends and problems, through personal selection of means and materials..., through personal adaptation and application of what is thus selected, together with whatever of experimentation and of testing is involved in this effort" (loc. cit.).

47. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 45.

is what Dewey refers to as the experimental or the scientific method which, to Dewey, is the sole method that enables man to acquire the habit of learning: "He learns to learn."<sup>48</sup> And in learning to learn, he grows intellectually. Dewey's scientific or experimental method is therefore the method of reflective thinking that yields growth understood as intellectual development. Indeed, he maintains that "thinking is the method of an educative experience. The essentials of method are therefore identical with the essentials of reflection".<sup>49</sup> And he describes these essentials as follows:

They are first that the pupil have a genuine situation of experience—that there be a continuous activity in which he is interested for its own sake; secondly, that a genuine problem develop within this situation as a stimulus to thought; third, that he possess the information and make the observations needed to deal with it; fourth, that suggested solutions occur to him which he shall be responsible for developing in an orderly way; fifth, that he have opportunity and occasion to test his ideas by application, to make their meaning clear and to discover for himself their validity.<sup>50</sup>

It should be noted that this description is compatible with, and even seems to be an outgrowth of Dewey's description of his scientific experimental method, which has been described as the antecedent conditions and the process

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48. loc. cit.

49. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 163.

50. loc. cit. See also John Dewey, How We Think. Boston: Heath, c 1933, p. 12.

of inquiry.<sup>51</sup> In other words, Dewey regards the scientific method, or his method of inquiry, as the appropriate method of reflective thinking which yields growth understood as intellectual development.

Growth as intellectual development also has affective dimensions, "affective" referring to individual instincts, feelings, impulses, attitudes and emotions, as they contribute to the attainment of intellectual growth. Dewey maintains that the human young, like those of the higher animals, have to learn to utilize their instinctive reactions or tendencies, if they are to achieve the flexible and varied control that enables them to acquire the habit of learning to learn.<sup>52</sup> Besides this utilization of instincts, Dewey also lists a number of attitudes which he considers to be essential for intellectually dealing with any subject matter, and therefore for attaining intellectual development.<sup>53</sup> One of these attitudes is open-mindedness which he defines as,

Accessibility of mind to any and every consideration  
that will throw light upon the situation that

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51. To avoid unnecessary duplication, it may be noted that Dewey's scientific method is the method of inquiry discussed in ch. 2, p. 83-89 supra.

52. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 44-45.

53. id., ibid., p. 173-179.

needs to be cleared up, and that will help determine the consequences of acting this way or that.<sup>54</sup>

It is an attitude of impartiality, which is evidenced by the readiness or the willingness to actively search for, and to welcome relevant suggestions and information. As such, it is opposed to stubbornness of mind, prejudices, uniformity of procedure, and to excessive desire for prompt results. It involves, instead, a kind of passivity, or a willingness to let relevant suggestions and information accumulate, sink in, and ripen. It is opposed both to a rather hurried blank-headed accent, and to a procrastinated quest for certainty, especially for what may be referred to as absolute certainty. In other words, it implies a desire to ever learn more and more, a willingness to accept new truths, and to reject what had hitherto been cherished as truths, on the basis of new and more convincing evidence. As such, it involves a recognition of intellectual growth as a "constant expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and new responses."<sup>55</sup> As if to forestall the risk of misunderstanding that is involved in such a rather broad description, Dewey forewarns that open-mindedness should not be confused with empty-mindedness,<sup>56</sup> which is characterized by mental sluggishness.<sup>57</sup> He maintains that empty-

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54. Dewey, op. cit., p. 175.

55. loc. cit.

56. loc. cit.

57. Dewey, How We Think, p. 30-31.

mindedness has nothing to contribute to growth understood as intellectual development.

These two examples, namely, instincts and openmindedness, help to underscore the importance of affectivity for the attainment of intellectual development, understood as a trait of Dewey's concept of growth. Indeed, Dewey maintains that there must be a "marriage of emotion with intelligence", if a balanced or full growth understood as intellectual development is to ensue.<sup>58</sup> He therefore advises the individual who wishes to grow intellectually, to "widen, not narrow, his life of strong impulses while aiming at their happy coincidence in operation."<sup>59</sup> It may be pertinent to note that impulse, in this context, denotes motivation or motive force, and that it is often the starting point for intellectual development.

In summary, intellectual development is a trait of Dewey's concept of growth. This is evidenced by his conception of plasticity as one of the traits of immaturity, which is the primary condition of growth, and as involving habits. He maintains that habits include, among other things, the "formation of intellectual and emotional disposition,"<sup>60</sup> so that "there are habits of

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58. Vide John Dewey, Liberalism and Social Action. New York: Capricorn, c 1935, p. 51; idem, A Common Faith. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, p. 79-80.

59. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct. New York: Modern Library, c 1930 (c 1957), p. 184.

60. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 48.

judging and reasoning as truly as of handling a tool."<sup>61</sup> In his view, routine habits are unthinking habits, that is, those that are so severed from reason that they oppose the conclusions of conscious deliberation and decision.<sup>62</sup> As such, they indicate "the need of (sic) persistent care to see to it that the function of intelligence is invoked to its maximum possibility."<sup>63</sup> In other words, intellectual development through the constant exercise of intelligence is a trait of growth. It is pertinent to note that growth, in this context, and as the "goal", "end" or "good" of human beings, arises out of human nature and conduct, in a way that implies the Aristotelian idea of what is natural and intrinsic to the organism.<sup>64</sup> It involves active participation, that is, some activity on the part of the individual, which makes it similar to Aristotle's conception of the efficient cause of the motion, change or growth of the organism as being intrinsic to the organism. In other words, the motion, change, or the growth of the organism is not caused by some external force. Rather, it is the activity of the organism, and by the organism. To Dewey,

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61. loc. cit.

62. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 49.

63. loc. cit.

64. Vide p. 142-145 *supra*. See also ch. 2, p. 99-105 *supra*, for Dewey on "ends".

reason, rationality, or intelligence is a form of human behaviour, or of practice, that arises out of problem-solving situations. Therefore growth, as the development of reason or of intelligence, retains some elements of the Aristotelian scheme, in terms of what is intrinsic and natural to the organism. Indeed, Dewey maintains that it is one aspect of "the dominant vocation of all human beings."<sup>65</sup> It seems to belong to what may be referred to as the realm of facts and, as such, it does not exhaust Dewey's concept of growth, which is not only descriptive, but also normative. Growth, in Dewey's view, has also a social dimension which may be referred to as social development.

#### B. Growth As Social Development

Other than sometimes and rather loosely identifying the social with the moral, Dewey gives no definition of the term "social" as such. He only maintains that "the social interest" is "identical in its deepest meaning with a moral interest",<sup>66</sup> and that "the moral and the social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other."<sup>67</sup> It may be observed that this identification is a reaction to what he calls the Kantian theory, which identified the moral with the rational.<sup>68</sup> But it could be asked whether

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65. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 310.

66. id., *ibid.*, p. 288.

67. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

68. id., *ibid.*, p. 354.

Dewey is virtually not doing the same thing. For, an analysis of his identification of the social with the moral indicates that reason or rationality, which he now views as creative intelligence in a modern world, looms large in the identification. When Dewey states, for example, that "in truth, the problem of moral education in the schools is one with the problem of securing knowledge—the knowledge connected with the system of impulses and habits",<sup>69</sup> is he not conceiving of man as rational, that is, as a being whose impulses and habits are to be refined in the crucible of rationality if they are to serve truly human purposes? Dewey's criticism of the identification of the moral with the "rational", and his subsequent identification of it with the "social," seem to indicate that either he is using language loosely, does not grasp the full implications of the identification of the moral and the "rational", or that he has a rather vague or too broad a notion of the moral. The first and last hypotheses do not seem to be quite plausible. It seems more apparent that he interpreted the identification of the moral and the rational rather too narrowly, and therefore he set to work to remedy what he considered to be its ills by identifying it with the social. One of such ills, in Dewey's view, was the neglect of human impulses, instincts, desires, feelings and

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69. id., *ibid.*, p. 356. See also John Dewey, Lectures in China, 1919-1920. Translated from the Chinese and edited by Robert W. Clopton and Twain-chen Du. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1973, p. 302: "I do not deprecate emotion; emotion is essential, but it must be under the control of intelligence if it is to contribute to the solution of fundamental problems".

emotions, which constitute the affective dimension. He probably thought that the identification of the moral and the rational entails a depreciation, neglect or suppression rather than a sublimation, of the affective life of man. Sublimation, in this context, is to be understood in the psychological sense of modifying the natural expression of an instinctual impulse in a socially acceptable manner, what is socially acceptable being determined by reference to rationality and consequently linking the moral with the rational. In this sense, human affectivity is not destroyed or neglected, but is raised, uplifted, elevated or ennobled.<sup>70</sup> And this is compatible with Dewey's advocacy of the use of human impulses for the formation of purposes, ends, goals, or aims.<sup>71</sup> However, this similarity in identification does not eliminate the dissimilarity between Dewey's identification of the moral with the social and the Aristotelian conception of rationality or of intelligence as the natural end or as the "good" of man. In the Aristotelian conception, values, goals or ends are considered to be facts of nature. It is therefore a conception that marries fact and value. Dewey's identification of the moral with the social, on the other hand, involves a conception of values, goals, and ends as desiderata, or as states of affairs that are chosen from various possibilities, and therefore as creations of human beings. In other words, it tends to relegate

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70. Cf. "sublimare", to raise, and "sublimis", uplifted, as the Latin roots of sublimation.

71. Vide p. 206 infra. See also p. 167, footnote no. 69 supra.

values, goals, or ends to a separate realm, namely, the sphere of social phenomena where social and political constructions are undertaken. This, of course, becomes more apparent in his discussion of growth as social development.

Although Dewey gives no specific definition of the term "social", he nevertheless gives a definition, even if inadequate, of the term "society", which may help to clarify what he means by the terms "social" and "social development." He points out that the term society, like community, is ambiguous, having a normative as well as a descriptive sense, "a meaning de jure and a meaning de facto".<sup>72</sup> He maintains that social philosophy considers the former connotation to be uppermost, that is, it views society as one, whereas empirical evidence is to the contrary. Rather than revealing a unity or just one society, empirical evidence reveals "a plurality" of good and bad societies.<sup>73</sup> Dewey therefore defines society as:

association; coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realization of any form of experience which is augmented and confined by being shared.

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72. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 82.

73. loc. cit. Dewey also states that "Society is one word, but infinitely many things." (John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy. New York: Holt, 1920; New York: New American, c 1950; enlarged edition with a new introduction by the author, Boston: Beacon, 1970. (c 1948), p. 156)

74. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 160.

Again, Society is the process of associating in such ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and made common.

Such rather broad definitions enable Dewey to use the term "society" to cover a lot of things:

It covers all the ways in which by associating together men share their experiences, and build up common interests and aims; street gangs, schools for burglary, clans, social cliques, trades unions, joint stock corporations, villages and international alliances.

It should be noted that such a conception of society is rather amoral.

It implies no ideal society, or the society, to which other societies may be compared. Aware of this, Dewey tries to institute such an ideal society, basing his conception "upon societies which actually exist".<sup>77</sup> In other words, he tries to institute it empirically. His empirical search reveals two traits from which he derives his standard, measure, or criterion for determining such an ideal society. These traits are the numerosity and variety of interests consciously shared by members of the society, and the fullness and freedom of interplay of such a society with other forms of association.<sup>78</sup> Dewey maintains that these two traits or elements of the criterion of an ideal society

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75. id., *ibid.*, p. 161.

76. id., *op. cit.*, p. 156. See also Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 82.

77. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 83.

78. *loc. cit.*

point to democracy.<sup>79</sup> In other words, democracy understood as a way of life, as a mode of social life, or as a form of association, rather than as merely a form of government, is Dewey's ideal society. Apparently, the term "social" should therefore be understood as connoting the "democratic", and "social development" should be conceived as development along the lines of Dewey's democratic ideal.<sup>80</sup> However, the manner of arriving at democracy as an ideal society remains questionable, mainly because it is a conception that is based upon societies which actually exist, so that it may serve as a "practicable" ideal. This seems to imply that the ideal involves no more than a repetition of the traits of actually existing societies, which are both good and bad, and can therefore not be viewed as providing any ideal. Dewey himself is aware of this implication, and therefore he forewarns that,

The ideal cannot simply repeat the traits which are actually found. The problem is to extract the desirable traits or forms of community life which actually exist and employ them to criticize undesirable features and suggest improvement.

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79. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 86. See ch. 2, p. 120-139 *supra* for Dewey on democracy.

80. Vide ch. 2, p. 120-139 *supra*, and ch. 4, p. 319-327 *infra*, for what Dewey's 'democratic' ideal entails, especially in the educational context.

81. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 83. The underlinings are done by the present writer.

Is Dewey simply begging the question, or is he just going in a circle, even if he chooses to call it a spiral? Let it be supposed that an empirical survey of "societies which actually exist" is carried out, and that a jumble of traits is discovered. The problem then is to determine what criterion is to be used in sorting out this jumble into "desirable" and "undesirable" traits. Desirable, in the first place, for what? By what standard? And if they cannot be sorted out, how then can any improvement be suggested? Moreover, improvement is supposed to be along desirable lines. But there is no criterion, in the circumstance, for determining the desirable. Probably, Dewey would suggest an application of the test or criterion of consequence. But, is consequence actual or probable? If actual, is the trait of an actually existing society, such as "honor among thieves"<sup>82</sup>, desirable because it enables a society of "men banded together in a criminal conspiracy"<sup>83</sup> to enrich themselves? Or, is this not a trait of an actually existing society, and is such an enrichment not an actual consequence? To say that the trait or consequence must be socially desirable raises again the issue of deciding on the criterion for determining the socially desirable. Besides, what makes the two traits or elements, from which Dewey derives his criterion of democracy as an ideal society, inherently desirable? By what standard, norm, or criterion are they considered to be desirable? What stands out in this analysis is the

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82. *ibid.*, p. 82.

83. *loc. cit.*

tension between Dewey's avowedly empirical metaphysics, as well as his axiology, and his tendency towards ultimate ends, values, and principles for which the former leaves no room. It indicates the difficulty which he encounters in trying to maintain the idea of growth outside the Aristotelian scheme of things.<sup>84</sup>

These difficulties that are associated with Dewey's view of the social and of society do not necessarily becloud the fact that social development is a trait of his concept of growth. And although Dewey objects to the Hegelian conception of society as an organic whole or as an organism<sup>85</sup>, his description of the way that social development occurs seems to imply such a conception. However, this is only a deceptive semblance. For, if both society and the individual are organic to each other, the reform that yields social development can focus on one or the other. But, to Dewey, social development is attained through changing both society and the individual conjointly along the lines of his democratic ideal. Besides, and unlike the organic conception, neither the individual nor the society is a datum, "something given, something already there".<sup>86</sup> Rather, the individual "in a social and moral sense is something

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<sup>84</sup>. See p. 142-145 supra.

<sup>85</sup>. Wide Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 60, and Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 148-149.

<sup>86</sup>. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 152.

to be wrought out".<sup>87</sup> Its characteristics include "initiative, inventiveness, varied resourcefulness, assumption of responsibility in choice of belief and conduct," all of which Dewey views as achievements, rather than as gifts.<sup>88</sup> As such, they are attainable only in a democracy, which Dewey views as an ideal society. Society, on the other hand, is a process rather than some solidified mass.<sup>89</sup> It is the process of associated living, which is ideally exemplified in democracy understood as a way of life. Social development may therefore be viewed as the institution of those systemic changes, both individual and social, which are required for creating a social life that meets Dewey's democratic ideal. And such development is an important trait of Dewey's educational ideal of growth. Indeed, one of his creeds is that the teacher is not merely training an individual, but is forming "the proper social life."<sup>90</sup> In his view, education is a necessity for the continued existence of a society.<sup>91</sup> He therefore devotes a chapter of his Democracy and Education to a consideration of education as a social

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87. loc. cit.

88. id., op. cit., p. 152-153 & 155.

89. id., ibid., p. 160 & 161. Vide p. 169-170 supra.

90. John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Martin S. Dworkin (ed.), Dewey on Education; selections. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967 (c 1959), p. 32.

91. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 2-4, 9 and 12.

function.<sup>92</sup> He views educational practice as "a kind of social engineering"<sup>93</sup>, and education itself as "a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness"<sup>94</sup> of the group, community, or society to which the individual learner belongs. He states specifically that "social reconstruction is a function of education."<sup>95</sup> There is therefore sufficient evidence in Dewey's works to indicate that social development is a trait of his educational ideal of growth. And it is a trait that is grounded in his ideal of democracy, and in his belief that man is by nature a social being. He maintains, for example, that,

Most children are naturally "sociable".  
Isolation is even more irksome to them than  
to adults. A genuine community life has its  
ground in this natural sociability.<sup>96</sup>

In this passage, Dewey actually grounds his conception of democracy as a way of life in man's inherent social nature. He views such an inherent social nature as a natural "compensating power" for the human infant's "dependence" or helplessness, which he stipulates as one of the traits

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92. *id.*, *ibid.*, chapter 2, p. 10-22.

93. John Dewey, The Sources of a Science of Education. New York: Liveright, 1970 (c. 1929), p. 39.

94. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dworkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 30. See also Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 10-11.

95. Dewey, Lectures in China, 1919-1920, p. 301. See also p. 295, 297 and 298.

96. John Dewey, Experience and Education. New York: Collier, 1969 (c 1938), p. 56. Repr. 1971 and 1974.

of immaturity understood as the primary condition of growth.<sup>97</sup> He maintains that this inherent social nature constitutes the positive connotation of dependence, which otherwise connotes mere helplessness, impotence, or parasitism. In his view, human infants, who are physically dependent and helpless as compared with the young of brute animals, are compensated by their having "social gifts", "social capacity", the "power to enlist the cooperative attention of others", or the capacity "for social intercourse."<sup>98</sup> In fact, without this inherent social factor, there can be no social development, no education or no growth. There would be nothing to develop or educate because "if we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction."<sup>99</sup> It is this inherent social factor that must interact with the natural and social environment if social development understood as a trait of growth is to ensue. Thus, even though man is naturally social, Dewey maintains that such inherent social nature remains but a potentiality to be developed. Such development, namely, social development, is an educational aim, and constitutes a trait of Dewey's concept of growth. However, it is only constitutive of, rather than exhaustive of, the concept. As such, it cannot by itself sufficiently explain the concept. A full and

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97. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 42-43.

98. id., *ibid.*, p. 43. See also p. 44: "dependence denotes a power rather than a weakness; it involves interdependence". As such, "it provides a further push to social progress" (p. 46).

99. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dworkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

adequate explanation demands its integration with other traits of growth. Apart from demanding an integration with the conception of growth as intellectual development, it also calls for the conception of growth as moral development.

### C. Growth as Moral Development

It may be pertinent to note from the outset that Dewey's book, Ethics, conjointly written with Tufts, is actually devoted to an analysis of the concept of growth in terms of moral development.<sup>100</sup> It is therefore a rather vast sphere, and only those aspects of Dewey's analysis which are considered to be essential for understanding the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom will be presented.

Dewey maintains that "in its widest sense, the term moral or ethical means nothing more than relating to conduct",<sup>101</sup> and that conduct implies "purpose, motive, intention",<sup>102</sup> that is, it is more than an action understood as anything taking place, such as the working of a pump, the growth of a plant, or the barking of a dog. This early definition of 1891

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100. Vide John Dewey and J. H. Tufts, Ethics. Rev. ed. New York: Holt, c 1932, especially p. 10, titled "Divisions of the Treatment", and showing a division of the work into three parts, part one dealing with "the process of moral development in its general outlines", part two dealing with it in "its inner, personal side", and part three dealing with it "as action in society", or in its social dimensions. See also p. 6-9: "The Moral As A Growth".

101. Dewey, "Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics", in Early Works 3, p. 241.

102. id., ibid., p. 242.

is maintained and expatiated upon later in the Ethics. Dewey later states, for example, that,

Conduct or the moral life has two obvious aspects. On the one hand, it is a life of purpose. It implies thought and feeling, ideals and motives, valuation and choice... On the other hand, conduct has its outward side. It has relations to nature, and especially to human society. Moral life is called out or stimulated by certain necessities of individual and social existence... And in turn the moral life aims to modify or transform both natural and social environments, to build a "kingdom of man" which shall be also an ideal social order— a "kingdom of God."<sup>103</sup>

This summary description of conduct, or of the moral life, clearly indicates that growth as moral development has two interrelated aspects, which may be referred to as individual and social. Although they are closely related, they shall be analyzed individually for heuristic purposes, taking first the individual aspect before analyzing the social aspect. It may be noted that Dewey consistently and persistently maintains these two aspects of moral development throughout the period of his philosophic development. This may be so because it exemplifies one of the key principles of his philosophy in general, namely, his principle of interaction. As early as 1891, in the Outlines, Dewey maintained that the development of moral ideals "has two sides: the satisfaction of wants leads... to the creation of new capacities and wants; while adjustment to the environment creates wider and more complex social relationships."<sup>104</sup> The satisfaction of

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103. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 4. See also Early Works 3, p. 368-369, 370-371, and John Dewey, Moral Principles in Education. New York: Greenwood, 1969 (c 1959), p. 47.

104. Dewey, "Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics", in Early Works 3, p. 368-369.

wants represents the individual aspect, while adjustment to the environment refers to the social aspect of moral development. Dewey clarifies this bifurcation in his view of moral development as consisting "on one side in a richer and subtler individual activity, in increased individualization", and on the other "in increase in number of those persons whose ideal is a "common good", or who have membership in the same moral community."<sup>105</sup>

He further explains it in his conception of history as a "record of growth in the sense of specific powers",<sup>106</sup> and at the same time as "a record of the widening of the social consciousness."<sup>107</sup> It is therefore evident that Dewey had a rather early notion of moral development as consisting of an individual and of a social aspect. He later refers to these two aspects when he conceives of moral development as raising "the collision between self and others to the plane of personal rights and justice."<sup>108</sup> In two of his works, Dewey tries to specify what each of these aspects entails. One of these works is his book, Lectures in China, in which he treats these aspects separately under the titles "Moral Education/The Individual Aspect", and "Moral Education/ The Social Aspects", respectively.

Dewey maintains that the individual aspect of moral development entails the cultivation of habits "on the basis of reflection and desire."<sup>109</sup>

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105. id., ibid., p. 370.

106. loc. cit.

107. Dewey, op. cit., p. 371.

108. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 9.

109. Dewey, Lectures in China, 1919-1920, p. 288.

Those habits, which are to be cultivated, include "open-mindedness, intellectual honesty, and responsibility."<sup>110</sup> Intellectual honesty "means recognizing the value of facts, no matter where they point or lead."<sup>111</sup> It implies that an individual should have the humility to freely admit that he is wrong when he has made a mistake, and to properly credit even an enemy when he is right. Responsibility, on the other hand, "means finishing a course of action of which the consequences are foreseen, whether these consequences be advantageous or otherwise pleasurable or painful."<sup>112</sup> It entails the anticipation of the consequences of decisions taken, and reliability in carrying through such decisions at whatever cost. According to Dewey, these habits or qualities of mind, these moral qualities, or these attitudes of open-mindedness, intellectual honesty, and responsibility make up morality, and the school must help to cultivate them if growth as moral development is to be attained.<sup>113</sup> They constitute the individual aspect of growth, and the raw material for growth, understood as moral development. Dewey also views them as constituting knowledge,<sup>114</sup> although he sometimes

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110. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 289. See p. 162-164 *supra*, for the meaning of open-mindedness.

111. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

112. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 291.

113. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

114. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 286-291

conceives of knowledge as "a means to the end of cultivating" these habits, qualities of mind, attitudes or dispositions.<sup>115</sup>

In his book, Moral Principles in Education, Dewey refers to the individual aspect of moral development as "The Psychological Aspect of Moral Education."<sup>116</sup> Having established that the moral is the sphere of conduct,<sup>117</sup> he defines conduct in terms of individual and social traits. ~~Individual and social traits.~~ Individual traits include "the attitudes and dispositions of an individual", or "native instincts and impulses",<sup>118</sup> as well as "the individual's own activities, habits and desires."<sup>119</sup> Dewey lists three of these attitudes, dispositions or habits, and his description of them indicates that they are the same as those which have already been considered in his book, Lectures in China.<sup>120</sup> He mentions "force, efficiency in execution, or overt action" as "one necessary constituent of character."<sup>121</sup> He maintains that it involves the development of initiative,

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115. Dewey, op. cit., p. 293. This may be viewed as an example of Dewey's rather loose use of language, which creates difficulties in understanding his concept of growth in particular, and his philosophy in general.

116. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, chapter 5, p. 47-58.

117. Vide p. 177-178 supra.

118. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, p. 47.

119. id., *ibid.*, p. 48.

120. See p. 179-180 supra.

121. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, p. 49.

insistence, persistence, courage and industry, or of "all that goes under the name "force of character".<sup>122</sup> It may be noted that this description is compatible with Dewey's description of responsibility, especially as responsibility relates to reliability.<sup>123</sup> It is therefore another description of responsibility as one of the elements that constitute the individual aspect of growth, understood as moral development. Another constituent of character which Dewey indicates as essential for moral development is "good judgement", which he defines as "a sense of respective or proportionate values."<sup>124</sup> It involves the ability "to size up a situation", seizing upon factors that demand attention, while ignoring the irrelevant or the unimportant ones. As such, it may be identified with what Dewey refers to as intellectual honesty.<sup>125</sup> The third constituent is what he refers to as "a prompt and almost instinctive sensitiveness to conditions, to the ends and interests of others", or a delicate, personal and emotional responsiveness.<sup>126</sup> This description justifies the identification of the third constituent with what Dewey elsewhere refers to as open-mindedness.<sup>127</sup>

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122. id., *ibid.*, p. 50.

123. Vide p. 180 *supra*.

124. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, p. 51.

125. Vide p. 180 *supra*.

126. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, p. 52.

127. See Dewey, Lectures in China, 1919-1920, p. 289-290, and p. 162-164 *supra*.

It may be noted that Dewey lists similar attitudes in his book, Democracy and Education, as essential for intellectual development. These include directness and single-mindedness which, to him, virtually mean the same thing, open-mindedness, and responsibility.<sup>128</sup> The last two attitudes have already been analyzed,<sup>129</sup> while directness and single-mindedness are the equivalence of what Dewey elsewhere refers to as intellectual honesty.<sup>130</sup> The important thing to note in all these, as far as the present investigation is concerned, is that the individual aspect of growth as moral development has to do with man's affective life. It emphasizes the importance of man's spontaneous instincts, impulses, feelings, attitudes and emotions as the raw material for growth, understood in terms of moral development. Affectivity, which is the working structure of the individual, must neither be smothered, regressed, nor aborted if growth as moral development is to be attained. Roth, who emphasizes self-realization in Dewey's philosophy, basically states the same thing when he maintains that, in Dewey, "the task of morals is to organize man's desires and impulses so that there might be a 'voluntary self'."<sup>131</sup> His reference to organization, in this quotation, indicates that the avoidance of regression or of the smothering

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128. Vide Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 173-179.

129. See p. 180-182 supra.

130. Vide p. 180 supra.

131. Robert J. Roth, John Dewey and Self-Realization. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962, p. 16.

of man's affective life, does not necessarily imply the other extreme of allowing man's impulses and instincts to run wild. Man's affective life is neither to be smothered nor to be allowed a free rein. Rather, his impulses and instincts are to be "intellectualized", that is, they are to be developed in accord with rationality, or in accordance with intelligence. The individual aspect of moral development therefore seems to emphasize growth as intellectual development.<sup>132</sup> It seems to share something of the Aristotelian conception of intelligence as man's natural end.

Besides this individual aspect, growth as moral development also has a social aspect. This involves the creation of "wider and more complex social relationships",<sup>133</sup> or "the widening of the social consciousness",<sup>134</sup> because "all morality (including immorality) is both individual and social."<sup>135</sup> In fact, Dewey maintains that the main texture of disposition or every fibre of character and mind, is set in motion or is influenced by "current social occupations."<sup>136</sup> He maintains that this influence is most marked

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132. Cf. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 8 and 9; Dewey, Lectures in China, p. 286-293; and p. 153-166 supra.

133. Dewey, "Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics", in Early Works 3, p. 369.

134. id., ibid., p. 371. See also p. 315, 320-322

135. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 363.

136. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 17. He refers to this influence as the "unconscious influence of the environment" (loc. cit.).

in the acquisition of habits of language, manners, good taste and of aesthetic appreciation. And to him, manners in particular "are but minor morals."<sup>137</sup>

In other words, man's deeper standards of judgements of value or his conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are formed "in the constant give and take of relationship with others."<sup>138</sup> Morals, in Dewey's view,

has a social aspect, and this is made clearer in his book, Lectures in China, where he considers moral education in its social aspects. He states that "effective morality is a tripartite matter, involving knowledge, emotion, and ability."<sup>139</sup> And in his view, all these three parts of morality should serve social purposes:

Knowledge must enhance social sympathy;  
training must increase ability to live  
effectively and constructively in society.  
All school subjects should serve all three  
parts of morality – knowledge, emotion  
and effort; all of which are social.<sup>140</sup>

The study of language in the school, for example, serves the main purpose of promoting common ideals of associated living. In other words, moral education in its social aspect points to Dewey's ideal of democracy understood more as a way of life, rather than as a form of government.<sup>141</sup> It involves

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137. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 18.

138. *loc. cit.*

<sup>139</sup> Dewey, Lectures in China, p. 295. See ch. 2, p. 59-89 *supra*, for Dewey on knowledge, or for his theory of knowledge.

140. *loc. cit.*

<sup>141</sup> *Id.*, *ibid.*, p. 299. See ch. 2, p. 120-139 *supra* for Dewey's democratic ideal.

the development of individual potentialities in such a way that it broadens each individual's sharing in social ideals, and increases the number of individuals who thus share in those ideals. It is therefore both a qualitative and a quantitative development, that is, an intensive and extensive affair.

It involves the perception that "the individual and society are two aspects of a single process in democracy."<sup>142</sup> The social aspect of moral development therefore indicates that the individual should not only realize his own potentialities by developing his interests, but he should at the same time develop some sense of the "social" by being aware of the needs and interrelations of the wider society or of the community to which he belongs. He should also realize that as a member of a community, he may sometimes have to subordinate or sacrifice his own interests to broader social needs in order to attain the democratic ideal more intensively and more extensively.

Dewey approaches this social aspect of moral development from the perspective of subject-matter, in a chapter of his book, Moral Principles in Education, which is entitled "The Social Nature of the Course of Study."<sup>143</sup> He maintains that,

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142. Dewey, op. cit., p. 299.

143. Dewey, Moral Principles in Education, chapter 4, p. 31-44.

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<sup>144</sup> — at work in the service of social interest and aims.

Since the school can be viewed as a "moral trinity" in terms of its goals, that is, in its search for "social intelligence, social power, and social interests",<sup>145</sup> Dewey maintains that a course of study has positive ethical import only when it is taught as a mode of understanding social life,<sup>146</sup> or as a means of bringing the child to realize the social scene of action.<sup>147</sup> He therefore defines, characterizes and describes a number of courses of study in social terms. Geography, for example, is viewed as having to do with "all those aspects of social life which are concerned with the interaction of the life of man and nature", or "with the world considered as the scene of social interaction."<sup>148</sup> History is similarly viewed from a social standpoint, "as manifesting the agencies which have influenced social development and as presenting the typical institutions in which social life has expressed itself."<sup>149</sup> Dewey also maintains that the severance

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144. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 43.

145. *loc. cit.*

146. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

147. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 31.

148. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

149. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 39.

of mathematics from its reference to use in social life renders it unduly abstract.<sup>150</sup> In other words, if these courses of study are to contribute to growth as moral development, they must be approached from a sociological perspective or from a social standpoint. The implication is that there must be some recognition of the social aspect of growth as moral development. Roth, who emphasizes self-realization in Dewey's philosophy, takes into account this implication by maintaining that "the self which is the concern of morals develops through interest in values that are shared by the community which will contribute to the enrichment of the lives of all."<sup>151</sup> The social aspect of growth as moral development therefore involves some of the elements of social development. It has to do with Dewey's conception of values, goals and ends as desiderata, as states of affairs chosen from various possibilities, as social phenomena, as creations of human beings, or as some by-product of such creations. In this sense, it has more to do with his social and political philosophy than with his metaphysics. However, his metaphysics is not totally eliminated because Dewey maintains that goals, purposes, or aims are not facts of nature in the same sense as "ends" understood as natural termini.<sup>152</sup>

In summary, Dewey views moral development as an important or probably as the most important, educational aim. It has what may

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150. Dewey, op. cit., p. 41.

151. Roth, John Dewey and Self-Realization, p. 16. See also p. 114-115.

152. Vide ch. 2, p. 100-101 supra.

be referred to as an individual aspect and a social aspect. The individual aspect has some elements which are similar to those of intellectual development, while the social aspect is akin to social development in some respects.

Growth as moral development therefore appears to be a product of the interaction of the individual with his social environment. And in this interaction, both the individual and his social environment develop concomitantly.

Dewey is not of the view that in order to reform the society or to attain growth as social development, changes must first of all be initiated in the individuals that make up the society. Neither does he support the view that any changes in the individual presuppose some preceding changes in the society. He seems to consider both views to be a futile effort which is made to solve the puzzle, "who first existed: the chicken or the egg?"

He therefore prefers to argue both of them conjointly and maintains that both individual and social development are only two aspects of one and the same process, namely, the process of growth as moral development.

He seems to assume that the development of one aspect necessarily entails the development of the other.<sup>153</sup> Emerson's analysis of Dewey's concept of growth, which emphasizes self-development as providing a focus for growth,<sup>154</sup> and Roth's analysis which views self-realization as "the dominant

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153. See ch. 4, p. 300-304 *infra*, for a criticism of this assumption.

154. See James G. Emerson, John Dewey's Concept of Growth in Education. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975, p. 187, 225, 226, 249 (microfilm).

theme of John Dewey's philosophy",<sup>155</sup> are therefore a rather one-sided emphasis, even though they point out (in passing) the essential role of the "social" in attaining such development. Since Emerson is representative of the researches that are immediately relevant to the present investigation, the relevant portion of his thesis will be briefly presented in order to indicate its weaknesses, which the conception of growth as freedom may help to remedy.

The present investigation agrees so far with that of Emerson in its affirmation that growth has three interrelated traits, namely, intellectual, social, and moral development.<sup>156</sup> But the similarities seem to end with this affirmation. For, Emerson further states that "Dewey holds that the proper focus for growth and education is the self",<sup>157</sup> and that although growth has various traits of development, "the overriding and unifying trait is self-realization."<sup>158</sup> He rightly maintains that the Deweyan "self" is a changing dynamic agent that continues to develop towards self-realization, and that self-realization occurs through the interaction of human nature and culture, both of which lack a meaning when considered in isolation.<sup>159</sup>

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155. Roth, John Dewey and Self-Realization, p. 4.

156. Vide Emerson, *op. cit.*, chapters 3-5, p. 68-186; and p. 148-149 *supra*.

157. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

158. *loc. cit.*

159. Emerson, *ibid.*, p. 200-212.

He explains the Deweyan conception of human nature in terms of habits, maintaining that self-growth, according to Dewey, "implies a continual modification and development of one's habits."<sup>160</sup> In his view, such a modification needs some guiding principles if self-growth is to be along constructive lines, and he finds these principles in "Dewey's traits of social, moral and intellectual growth."<sup>161</sup> All these lead him to the conclusion that "there are three main traits of growth, social, moral and intellectual, which are interrelated and these three find their focal point and their unity in the growth of the individual self",<sup>162</sup> or that "It is in the continual development of self that social, moral and intellectual growth find their raison d'être."<sup>163</sup> In fairness to Emerson, it can be stated that there is no denying the fact that, in Dewey, intellectual, social and moral development lead to self-development. The bone of contention, however, is that this is only part of the story. In other words, Emerson is emphasizing only one aspect of Dewey's concept of educative growth at the expense of the other aspect. He is emphasizing self-development at the expense of social development, that is, the development of society, or the development

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160. id., *ibid.*, p. 211.

161. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

162. *ibid.*, p. 225.

163. *op. cit.*, p. 226.

of culture. Dewey does not view one as occurring without the other, or as taking precedence over the other. Rather, it is a tenet of his creed that the teacher does not only train an individual, that is, he does not only help the child to attain self-development, but he attains concomitantly the development of the society to which the child belongs. And he does this by forming "the proper social life."<sup>164</sup> As a matter of fact, there can be no self-development without a concomitant social development, and vice versa. Reformation of society demands changes in the character of the individuals that constitute the society, and reformation of the individuals demands changes in social conditions. There is in such a conception the problem of determining where to initiate changes. But this does not justify the one-sided view, such as is held by Emerson, that self-development provides the focus for Dewey's concept of growth. To Dewey, the focus for growth is both the self and whatever constitutes the environment of such a self. And Dewey views such an environment as mainly a social or a cultural one. Moreover, he maintains that the solution to the problem of determining where to initiate changes is to initiate them at both poles concomitantly. Changes in social institutions should go hand in hand with changes in the character of the individuals that constitute the society. Emerson's emphasis on self-development as providing unity and focus for the various traits of growth does not seem to do enough justice to this conjoint development of the self and its environment.

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164. Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dworkin (ed.), Dewey on Education, p. 32. See also p. 174-176 and 184-188 supra.

However, it delineates the need for another conception, such as the conception of growth as "growth in freedom", which can take into account this conjoint development.

Moreover, Emerson clearly realizes that even self-development, itself, needs some guiding principles, which he finds in what he refers to as "Dewey's traits of social, moral and intellectual growth".<sup>165</sup> Apparently, he is raising the issue of determining the ideal of growth in Dewey. Such an ideal, if any, should also serve as an ideal for the various traits of growth. In other words, social, moral and intellectual development, just like self-development, demand an ideal or some guiding principles, and cannot therefore serve as guiding principles or as ideals for self-development. Perhaps, this problem is inherent to Dewey's concept of growth. But the analysis of the concept so far indicates that he has a conception of an ideal society, and that development should be in accordance with the dominant ideal of such a society.<sup>166</sup> Unfortunately, this is not all that apparent in Emerson's work. The present writer contends that the conception of growth as freedom does offer this dominant ideal of Dewey's ideal society, which is to serve also as his ideal of growth.

Besides, there is lacking in Emerson the more serious philosophical interpretation of Dewey's conception of growth as moral development. It

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165. Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 212. See also p. 191 *supra*.

166. See p. 170-171, and 174-175 *supra*. See also ch. 2, p. 120-139 *supra*, for Dewey on Democracy, and ch. 4, p. 319-327 *infra*, for his democratic ideal especially in the educational context.

has been indicated that such a conception involves two interrelated aspects, namely, the individual and the social aspects.<sup>167</sup> It is philosophically important to note the similarity between this conception and the Aristotelian scheme of things, in which the idea of growth marries fact and value. Dewey's conception of growth as resulting from the interaction between the individual and the social may be construed as an attempt to use the concept of growth to similarly bridge the gap between fact and value. However, since he had destroyed the Aristotelian "scheme" which involves ultimate ends, values and principles,<sup>168</sup> and which leaves no such gap between fact and value, his path is strewn with problems and difficulties, some of which form the theme of the next section.

#### D. A Critical Overview of the Concept of Growth.

A number of problems must be taken into account by anyone who attempts to interpret Dewey's concept of educative growth. One of them is the fact that Dewey is a voluminous writer whose works cover a period of at least seventy years, beginning from 1882 and lasting until his death in 1952.<sup>169</sup> Within this period, his ideas changed, developed, or evolved


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167. Vide p. 178-188 supra.

168. See chapter 2, p. 99-105 supra, where it is indicated that Dewey's Metaphysics has no room for Aristotelian ultimate ends.

169. One of his earliest writings is his "Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism", in The Early Works I, while one of the last is his "Introduction" to E. R. Clapp's The Use of Resources in Education, N.Y.: Harper, 1952, p. vii-xi.

along lines that are not often easy to demarcate clearly, or even to understand properly. This change, development, or evolution often takes the form of Dewey using words in different and/or novel ways. He usually comes up with rather "new" phrases, such as "means-consequences", "warranted assertibility", or "ends-in-view". On the other hand, old words such as "habit", "truth", "reason" or "reflection" either lose their traditional meanings entirely, or they get a rather loose, more inclusive and broadened ones, as they are co-opted into Dewey's ever-changing philosophy. The result of all these is that what he asserts at one point may be so qualified at another that it constitutes an apparent contradiction. Besides, there ensues a lack of precise definition of terms which makes it more difficult to understand him. There arises the temptation to concentrate on rather superficial, individual or isolated ambiguities and apparent contradictions, rather than trying an integrative approach, such as using a concept which is explicated at one point to aid the explanation of another concept which is more ambiguous and confused at some other point. It is also easy to overlook the context of the interests that preoccupied Dewey at the particular time he was expounding a particular idea. But even if these pitfalls are guarded against, Dewey's rather imprecise writing style, the volume of his work, and the constant change or review of perspectives as he battled with various philosophical issues, accentuate the difficulty of understanding his concept of growth in particular, and his philosophy in general. His tendency to create new meanings for old words, while coining at the same time new ones that can be adapted to his philosophy, makes it no less difficult to unwind the intricate problems of philosophy that engage his attention at a particular time.



Of more philosophical interest, however, are the problems associated with his metaphysics. Dewey has a rather specialized view of metaphysics, which can be described as hypothetical, descriptive, and critical of notions of fixed truths, absolute values, ultimate reality and unchanging principles. If there is any ultimacy about metaphysics, in this view, it is only as it describes those "irreducible" traits of nature with which science has to deal. Consequently, Dewey leaves unanswered, most of the important metaphysical questions such as those of the origin, nature, and end of beings. Moreover, his aversion to absolute values, unchanging principles, and ultimate ends leaves his concept of growth without clearly defined terminus, and without evaluative standards. How is the direction of growth determined if there is no end or goal towards which growth proceeds? Dewey answers that growth has no goal; it is itself an end. But herein lie the ambiguities and confusion that becloud the concept. Besides, it could be asked by what ideal or standard growth can be measured or recognized. It seems apparent, therefore, that Dewey's metaphysical abhorrence of fixed aims and enduring principles leaves his concept of growth ambiguous, confusing and rather incomplete. It contributes in no small way to the difficulties associated with every attempt to understand the concept.

This metaphysical problem is reflected in Dewey's epistemology, which tends to emphasize the means or the method of knowing, learning and of growing, at the expense of the ends for which these acts are performed. As a matter of fact, ends and means are rather fused and confused in Dewey.

Consequently, growth seems to be both a process and a terminus, a means and an end, or a method and an aim. It even features also as a norm. It is both descriptive and normative. These various interpretations of the concept make it difficult to understand what growth really means to Dewey. Based on a rather descriptive metaphysics, one that simply observes and describes what occurs, Dewey's epistemological method involves him in looking around for methodological models that actually exist in order to select one as the most appropriate for his purposes. Accordingly, his epistemological method relies heavily upon the scientific method as the best method that man has come to develop for the attainment of truths and for the solution of problems. The implication is that the scientific method is, at least for now, the ideal epistemological method. But it would take a lot of naiveté not to admit the various problems and confusion that man has equally amassed through his use of the scientific method. A similar problem dogs Dewey's theory of values based, as it is, more on empirical methods than on metaphysical foundations. In trying to establish his ideal society, for example, he looks for an ideal that is practical in the sense of its being gleaned from "societies which actually exist".<sup>170</sup> The ideal society, in his view, is the democratic, which is characterized by interaction, communication and harmony between the society and the individual, and in virtue of which both develop, progress, or grow. But there is assumed, in this conception, a complete identification of individual and social interests which is lacking in any society, even in the kind in which Dewey

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170. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 83.

lived and died. As a matter of fact, his conception of democracy indicates that popular American democracy, which assigns itself the task of defending the cause of the "free" world, leaves much to be desired. His reference to some social model from which to abstract moral principles, norms and ideals, therefore raises some doubts as to whether such an ideal model actually exists. Probably, such doubts made Dewey leave his concept of growth rather open-ended, sticking to no clear-cut goals or ends, and fusing means and ends. But such a position leaves unresolved the problem of how growth should be conceived, recognized and measured. Ultimately, if the word is allowed, Dewey's specialized, "non-Aristotelian" metaphysics that turns away from a "quest for certainty" in fixed truths, absolute values, ultimate reality, and in fixed principles, to an experiential description of the generic traits of existence, is the source of much of the difficulties, ambiguities and confusion that becloud his concept of educative growth. His chief concern is human experience within which various entities are discerned, and his view of human nature is limited to various theses about the structure of this experience, as well as about its manner of changing.<sup>171</sup> Unlike the Aristotelian philosophy, his philosophy is based more on concepts that are rooted in biology and psychology, than on those that are rooted in metaphysics. And being outside the Aristotelian "scheme", it faces the problem of any enterprise that tries to maintain the idea of growth in the absence of the Aristotelian metaphysics. In other words, it faces the problem of coping with values, or more specifically, it faces

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171. Vide, ch. 2, p. 90-99 supra.

the problem of reconciling fact and value. Dewey aims at bridging the gap through the concept of growth. But having destroyed the Aristotelian foundation of the concept, he cannot but end up with difficulties, ambiguities, and confusion. The present writer posits that the conception of growth as freedom can at least reduce some of these difficulties, ambiguities, and confusion. As part of the attempt to substantiate this assertion, the next section is devoted to an analysis of Dewey's concept of freedom, in terms of which his concept of growth is to be interpreted.

## II. The Notion of Freedom in Dewey.

There is in Dewey's philosophy such a continuity of the human, animal, organic and inorganic worlds<sup>172</sup> that man seems to be taken as part and parcel of nature. Dewey continually emphasizes a biological and cultural continuity between man and his environment.<sup>173</sup> And yet, he speaks now and again, here and there, of human freedom. One cannot but wonder: If man is continuous with nature, if in some sense he is the final stage in the evolution of nature, what sense, if any, does it make to talk of human freedom? How is such freedom to be conceived? As if to answer the latter question, Dewey states that,

What men have esteemed and fought for in the name of liberty...seems to contain three elements of importance...(i) It includes efficiency in action, ability to carry out plans, the absence of cramping and thwarting obstacles. (ii) It also includes capacity to vary plans, to change the course of action, to experience novelties. And again (iii) it signifies the power of desires and choice to be factors in events.<sup>174</sup>

Thus, freedom can be said to have three major aspects, namely, action, variation of plans or course of action, and choice. Sometime Dewey emphasizes one

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172. Vide chapter 2, p. 109-113 supra.

173. See, for example, John Dewey, Experience and Nature. New York: Dover, 1958; La Salle: Open Court, 1958 (c 1929), p. 261 and 265.

174. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct. New York: Modern Library, c 1930, p. 278-279.

aspect; at other times he emphasizes another, and still at other times he emphasizes all three together. Which of the three he so emphasizes often depends on the context, and can best be understood within such a context. But above all, the contextual meaning in turn can best be grasped if the three aspects of freedom are always kept in mind. This would save people unnecessary excitement, surprise and confusion, on finding various apparently contradictory and rather incompatible definitions of freedom in Dewey. For example, Dewey speaks of freedom as consisting "in a trend of conduct that causes choices to be more diversified and flexible, more plastic and more cognizant of their own meaning, while it enlarges their range of unimpeded operation."<sup>175</sup> It is obvious that, in this passage, the emphasis is on choice as an aspect of freedom. But when Dewey defines freedom as "power to act and to execute independent of external tutelage",<sup>176</sup> the emphasis shifts to action as an aspect of freedom. And when he states that,

Genuine freedom, in short, is intellectual; it rests in the trained power of thought, in ability to "turn things over", to look at matters deliberately, to judge whether the amount and kind of evidence requisite for decision is at hand and if not, to tell where and how to seek such evidence,<sup>177</sup>

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175. John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*. New York: Capricorn, 1963 (c 1931); Gloucester: P. Smith, 1968 (c 1931), p. 291.

176. John Dewey, *How We Think*. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1933 (1910), p. 87.

177. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 90

it cannot be too wrong to conclude that the emphasis, this time, is on deliberation as an aspect of freedom. But the issue is only a matter of emphasis, rather than a separation of the three aspects.

Neff, who relates the concept of freedom in Dewey and Bode to education, combines all these three aspects in his definition of freedom:

Freedom may therefore be defined as that operation of individual capacities, when released from oppressive restrictions, which originates in reflective choice and culminates in a considered action which is ever mindful of social good.<sup>178</sup>

This tripartite character of freedom, in Dewey, is confirmed by a group of researchers headed by Adler. To them, the three aspects involved are the natural freedom of self-determination which deals with choice, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization which has to do with action, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection which takes care of deliberation, in terms of developing a certain state of mind or character. It is important to note that despite the terms used, the researchers carefully and rightly point out that these are not three separate freedoms, but rather only three aspects of one freedom. They aver that, for Dewey, "there is only one freedom with three distinct aspects ... self-determination through choice ..., self-

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178. Frederick C. Neff, A Pragmatic Interpretation of Freedom and Its Meaning for Education: A Study of the Writings of John Dewey and Boyd H. Bode. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Los Angeles: University of California, 1950, p. 74. Much as Neff's definition combines all three elements, it errs in maintaining that the "operation" culminates in a considered action. Actually, it originates in choice, realizes itself through a considered action, and culminates in individual growth or self-perfection. In short, choice and action go into the forming of a more continuous highly-organized self.

realization through unimpeded action, and self-perfection through power of growth."<sup>179</sup> In the following sections, the present writer intends to borrow Adler's classification in order to expound on each of the three aspects of Dewey's conception of freedom.

#### A. Natural Freedom of Self-Determination

It may be pertinent to note that although Dewey does not locate the basis of freedom in "free will", one particular aspect of freedom, in his conception, is rather similar to the notion of free will. That aspect is choice. Without any mincing of words, he maintains that "choice is an element in freedom and (that) there can be no choice without unrealized and precarious possibilities."<sup>180</sup> Like free will, choice is an "innate" natural capacity, and therefore is the natural basis of freedom. But unlike free will which implies the possibility of setting man against nature, choice assures continuity and interaction with nature, and also distinguishes him from the rest of nature. Continuity is assured through the concept of individuality understood as selective behaviour.<sup>181</sup> Individuality has its basis and conditions in the simpler events

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179. Mortimer J. Adler, The idea of Freedom. New York: Doubleday, 1958-1961, vol. 2, p. 548, footnote no. 3.

180. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 283

181. Vide Chapter two, p. 100-101 and 107-109 supra.

in nature, or more specifically, in the selective biases or preferences which even atoms and molecules show in their indifferences, affinities and repulsions when exposed to other "events" in nature. Of them, Dewey states: "with respect to some things they are hungry to the point of greediness; in the presence of others they are sluggish and cold."<sup>182</sup> In short, even atoms and molecules enjoy some form of individuality through their "preferential action" or through their "selective behaviour". And this, according to Dewey, is true of all things including even man himself:

Preferential action in the sense of selective behaviour is a universal trait of all things, atoms and molecules as well as plants, animals and man. Existences, universally as far as we can tell, are cold and indifferent in the presence of some things and react energetically in either a positive or negative way to other things... As we ascend in the range of complexity from inanimate things to plants, and from plants to animals, and from animals to man, we find an increasing variety of selective responses, due to the influence of life history, or experiences already undergone.<sup>183</sup>

Choice, then, is anchored in nature. It finds its continuity with the rest of nature through preferential action, which may not be exactly what we ordinarily understand by choice. Indeed, it is not even what Dewey, himself, means by choice. For, he maintains that "choice is more than just selectivity in

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182. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 208.

183. id., ibid., p. 265-266. See also Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 274.

behaviour but it is at least that."<sup>184</sup> Without continuity of choice, or at least an aspect of choice, with the rest of nature, the idea loses its meaning, genuineness or reality. The alternative for restoring such reality is to isolate man from nature, and thereby treat him as a supra-natural being in the literal sense.<sup>185</sup> But this would violate Dewey's key principle of continuity. Therefore, he maintains that choice is rooted in nature and, through choice, freedom also. To him, "the fact that all things show bias, preference or selectivity of reaction, while not itself freedom, is an indispensable condition of any human freedom."<sup>186</sup> It is the indispensable condition that assures man's continuity with nature. But despite such a continuity, there is "more" to choice which distinguishes man from the rest of nature. What is this "more"?

The key to answering that question seems to lie in the adjective "intelligent". Choice is not only a preference, but it is also a qualified preference, namely, "an intelligent preference". It is "a preference formed after consideration of consequences."<sup>187</sup> Atoms and molecules, as well as plants and animals, do enjoy preferential action. They have their preferences. But these are

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184. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 266; Philosophy and Civilization, p. 275.

185. Vide Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 274-275.

186. id., op. cit., p. 294

187. id., *ibid.*, p. 286

not intelligent preferences. To better understand this, it is essential to know what are the accoutrements, or the characteristics, of an intelligent preference.<sup>188</sup>

Dewey, himself, seems to give some of these characteristics when he tries to contrast the preferential selection of a stone, a dog, and of man:

A stone has its preferential selection set by a relatively fixed, a rigidly set, structure...and no anticipation of the results of acting one way or another enters into the matter. The reverse is true of human action. Insofar as a variable life history and intelligent insight and foresight enter into it, choice signifies a capacity for deliberately changing preferences.<sup>189</sup>

(Again) The chief reason why we do not think of a stone as free is because it is not capable of changing its mode of conduct, of purposely readapting itself to new conditions. An animal such as a dog shows plasticity; it acquires new habits under the tutelage of others. But the dog plays a passive role in this change; he does not initiate it and direct it.<sup>190</sup>

What stand out, in these passages, as the characteristics of "intelligent preference", or of choice, are flexibility, anticipation of results, insight and foresight, and an active acquisition or formation of habits, which signifies the factor of individual participation. These factors come into play when, and only when, man is faced with the problem of making a preference out of various preferences. In other words, they become operative when man is faced with a genuinely

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188. Vide chapter two, p. 81-82 supra, for Dewey on intelligence.

189. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 276.

190. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 339.

problematic situation.<sup>191</sup> In such a situation, the preference that reflects choice is usually a new preference, made out of a number of competing and often conflicting preferences, rather than an indifferent preference which happens to be stronger than others.<sup>192</sup> Such a preference reflects the mental operation of forecasting the consequences of acting upon the various competing preferences. This awareness, anticipation, consideration or foresight of consequences, a mental operation, is the "more" to choice which distinguishes man from the rest of nature.<sup>193</sup> It is evident that Dewey maintains his principle of continuity by conceiving of choice as preference, bias, or as selectivity, while at the same time not reducing man altogether to the lower realm of nature. A distinction is maintained through the conception of choice as a qualified preference, that is, as an "intelligent preference". But the idea of bias, preference, or selectivity also implies another principle, namely, the principle of interaction.<sup>194</sup> Man is rooted in nature which, to Dewey, is characterized by a mixture of the stable and the unstable, the certain and the uncertain, the settled and the unsettled, the predictable and the unpredictable,

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191. Vide chapter two, p. 69-70 supra, for Dewey on a problematic situation.

192. See Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 276; Human Nature and Conduct, p. 181.

193. See chapter 2, p. 59-75 supra for further explication.

194. Vide chapter two, p. 109-114 supra, for Dewey on interaction.

the controllable and the uncontrollable, the hazardous, the precarious, as well as the perilous.<sup>195</sup> Such a mixed and ominously hazardous natural environment leaves man in a situation where he has to "set" his aims, ends, or goals. Since nature is indifferent as to good or bad, there are no predetermined ends set for man. He has therefore to determine his ends himself, being aware however of the natural environment. Since his needs are many, including physical, social, and psychological needs, he has to "choose", among these often competing and conflicting needs, which of them is going to be his immediate end. Having settled this intelligently, he still has to determine the means of achieving the set goal. In this respect, his social or cultural environment leaves him with a variety of means, or of tried ways, for coping with the hazardous in nature, and of winning them over for the attainment of ends. It is his duty to "choose" one of these means that most effectively and most efficiently meets his needs. Thus, the principle of interaction is a factor in choice. It is man's interaction with an indifferent, mixed, highly perilous, natural and cultural environments which sets the need for choice both of ends as well as of means. Such a choice demands intelligence or a mental operation. It is not simply the issue of "choosing" an end or a means just because one's forebears chose them. Neither is it a matter of responding to the unstable in nature by habit. It demands insight and foresight, a unique transformation of man's organic and social needs and concerns, or a picking and choosing with an eye on alternatives and consequences. It demands that man asks

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195. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. x-xi, 42, 43, 63, 69-70.

himself certain critical questions, such as, "How did my forebears perceive nature? Were they right in so perceiving it? Is there no better conception than this? How did they cope with nature as they perceived it? Was this effective, or was this the most effective way of coping with the problems and issues raised by nature?" In attempting to answer these and similar questions, man becomes aware of the complexity, indifference and hazards of nature, as well as of the various means of coming to terms with them. This problematic situation in nature sets man the task of choosing his ends and means among various conceptions and means, or of rejecting them altogether and developing a new conceptual framework, creating new ideas, discovering new meanings, and learning new ways of responding to nature. This is the basis of choice as intelligent preference. It involves the continuity and interaction of man with his natural and cultural environment.

Such a choice is an important element in freedom because "to foresee future objective alternatives and to be able by deliberation to choose one of them and thereby weight its chances in the struggle for future existence, measures our freedom."<sup>196</sup> Human freedom, then, is one with man's capacity for intelligent choice, that is, a choice that is made in the awareness of alternatives and consequences, or an intentional preference that is based on consciousness of values. Without such a choice, there is no freedom:

Without genuine choice, choice that when expressed in action makes things different from what they otherwise would be, men are but passive vehicles through which external forces operate. This feeling is neither self-explanatory

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196. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 285.

nor self-justificatory. But at least it contributes an element in the statement of the problem of freedom. Choice is one of the things that demands examination.<sup>197</sup>

Choice, then, is an essential element in freedom. It is this element which Adler considers when he speaks of the natural freedom of self-determination. He maintains that it is "an innate or natural freedom", and that it is natural because it "is (i) inherent in all men, (ii) regardless of the circumstances under which they live and (iii) without regard to any state of mind or character which they may or may not acquire in the course of their lives."<sup>198</sup> But it might be added that such freedom is innate because its basis, namely, choice as intelligent preference, is an innate capacity. And it is natural because this very basis is rooted in nature, and is continuous with the rest of nature even though it is also distinguishable from it. Choice is thus a natural, rather than a supra-natural, capacity. This conception of freedom puts Dewey among authors in whom Adler finds "an explicitly developed conception of natural freedom as an exclusively human power of choice."<sup>199</sup> Choice, and therefore the freedom associated with it, is an exclusively human preference. But it is also a natural capacity because, as a preference, it is a trait (eventhough qualified in this case) which man shares with the rest of nature. Nevertheless,

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197. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 271-272.

198. Adler, The Idea of Freedom, p. 149

199. id., ibid., p. 407, footnote no. 13

it is only as a qualified preference that choice can be conceived as "the most characteristic activity of a self."<sup>200</sup> When thus viewed, choice is seen to sustain a double relationship to the self, revealing the existing self and forming the future self. It reveals the existing self because what is chosen is found congenial to the desires and habits of the self as it already exists. But this choice also shapes the self, and thus makes or creates, in some degree, a new self because,

Every choice is at the forking of the road, and the path chosen shuts off certain opportunities and opens others. In committing oneself to a particular course, a person gives a lasting set to his own being. Consequently, it is proper to say that in choosing this object rather than that, one is in reality choosing what kind of person or self one is going to be.<sup>201</sup>

Although intelligent preference seems to concern itself with the values and consequences of particular alternate ends and means, in the final analysis, "it is a process of discovering what sort of being a person most wants to become."<sup>202</sup> The self is determined in choice just as ends and means in general. Hence, the classification of the freedom associated with choice as a natural freedom of self-determination. Choice is a power of self-determination. It is a creative

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200. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 316.

201. id., ibid., p. 317

202. loc. cit.

and selective power. It is creative because it brings a possibility into existence, and it is selective because it extends to, and it considers, alternatives. As a power of self-determination, it is also a power of self-creation.<sup>203</sup> It is as the latter that it has a link with growth. For, growth is one with self-creation, self-development, or self-perfection. Thus, choice as an element in freedom, or as a natural freedom of self-determination, maintains some continuity and interaction not only with nature, but also with growth. It serves as a bridge that links growth and freedom. It also gives freedom a positive connotation. For, choice as a power of self-determination, or as a natural freedom of self-determination, is a power to determine what one shall do, be, or become. The freedom associated with choice, therefore, is "freedom to". It is a positive conception of freedom as the freedom to decide what one shall do or become. But since Dewey maintains that "what men have esteemed and fought for in the name of liberty...includes efficiency in action, ability to carry out plans, the absence of cramping and thwarting obstacles", the conception of freedom is not exhausted by a consideration of choice. There remains to be examined yet another element, namely, the element of action which Adler dubs a circumstantial freedom of self-realization.

#### B. Circumstantial Freedom of Self-Realization

One of the three elements in freedom, according to Dewey, is the power to act, a power which men possess when and so long as they are not

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203. Adler, The Idea of Freedom, p. 493: "The power of self-determination is one of choice and, through choice, of self-creation..." See also p. 468.

prevented from doing as they wish. This element is necessary because "choice would hardly be significant if it did not take effect in outward action, and if it did not, when expressed in deeds, make a difference in things."<sup>204</sup> In other words, the capacity of choice alone is not enough to guarantee freedom. Choice must issue forth in action if freedom is to be more than a capacity, a power, a potentiality, or a possibility. Choice and action must co-operate, unite, or interact if freedom is to be actualized. But before exploring the nature of such interaction, an attempt will be made to investigate what type of action or activity is a necessary component of freedom. Or, is it just any action or activity that is required? If not, what are the hallmarks of a free action? It seems rather difficult to separate action from choice, especially in a philosophy whose key principles are continuity and interaction. But an effort will be made to examine the one apart from the other, at least for heuristic purposes. What, then, is action as far as freedom is concerned? What are its characteristics and conditions? What is its basis?

It may be pertinent to note that action, like choice, assures or maintains man's continuity and interaction with the rest of nature. Action is elicited by the intermixture of the stable and the unstable in nature.<sup>205</sup> Such a mixture makes nature indifferent to man's goals or ends. To realize his various needs, desires and impulses, man has to act. And action, in this case, involves using

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204. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 285.

205. See chapter two, p. 105-107 supra.

the stable element in nature to control the unstable. It therefore demands of man an awareness that he is a part of nature, and that he is subject to her laws. For his own good, he has to understand these laws in order to use or manipulate them if he is to attain his goals and his freedom. For, after all, "men do not think about and gain freedom in conduct unless they run during action against conditions that resist their original impulses."<sup>206</sup> The action which is a vital element in freedom is therefore that action which maintains man's continuity with the rest of nature. It is that action which reminds man that he is a part of nature, that he is subject to her laws, and that his best bet is to get to know these laws in order to use them in meeting his needs, desires, and impulses. In other words, it is an action which makes man aware that there are no predetermined ends in nature, and that he has to set his own aims and goals. In this sense, it is a "purposeful" action, that is, an action undertaken because, thrown into a problematic situation by a hazardous, uncertain and unstable environment, man is faced with a vexing questionable situation which demands his setting or determining of goals and means for their achievement. That is why Dewey states that,

The individual who has a question which being really a question to him instigates his curiosity, which feeds his eagerness for information that will help him cope with it, and who has at command an equipment which will permit these interests to take effect, is intellectually free. Whatever initiative and imaginative vision he

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206. John Dewey, On Experience, Nature, and Freedom; representative selection. Ed. by Richard J. Berstein. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960, p. 279.

possesses will be called into play and control his impulses and habits. His own purposes will direct his actions.<sup>207</sup>

When one considers ends, goals or aims, the action which is an important element in freedom must be a purposeful action, that is, an action arising from man's own purposes or ends. But when one shifts the emphasis to a consideration of means, such an action exhibits another characteristic, namely, "control". While action considered in relation to ends tends to emphasize man's continuity with the rest of nature, action considered in relation to means seems to emphasize interaction with the rest of nature.<sup>208</sup> It does this through the notion of control. Action aims at controlling the flux or the changes in nature. It is more or less an attempt to determine the time, place, and the purpose of the occurrence of change, as well as the form it takes. This involves man in trying to control conditions in nature as they reflect the mixture of the certain and the uncertain.<sup>209</sup> Such control is the means through which man can realize his ends if he is to stay alive. Indeed, Dewey maintains that "a living being (such as man) is one that subjugates and controls for its own continued activity the energies that would otherwise use it up", and that "life (itself) is a self-renewing process

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207. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 304.

208. Vide chapter two, p. 109-114 supra, for interaction as a generic trait of nature.

209. See chapter two, p. 105-152 supra.

through action upon the environment."<sup>210</sup> If life is to continue, man must continuously readapt the environment (natural and social) to his needs. And he effects such a readaptation through control and interaction. It is in interaction with objective conditions that man's impulses run against resistance. This blocking of impulses triggers the need for control of environmental conditions which promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit, man's activities. Such control takes the form of transforming hostile, hindering, inhibiting, or indifferent conditions into favourable ones. This is what Dewey means when he states that "the activities of life are of necessity directed to bringing the materials and forces of nature under control of our purposes; of making them tributary to ends of life."<sup>211</sup> The action that is an important element in freedom is therefore one which involves control of environmental conditions. Dewey maintains that such control is consequent upon deliberation and choice, and that it is the core of human freedom:

The question is not what are the antecedents of deliberation and choice, but what are their consequences? What do they do that is distinctive? The answer is that they give us all the control of future possibilities which is open to us. And this control is the crux of our

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210. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p.-2.

211. John Dewey, The Child and the Curriculum and the School and Society. Ed. with an intr. by Leonard Carmichael. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956 (c 1943), p. 136-137.

freedom. Without it, we are pushed from behind. With it, we walk in the light.<sup>212</sup>

Action aims at executing what man has chosen, and successful execution depends on his ability to control the flux, the changes, the events, and the hazardous in nature. It is through such control that unrealized future possibilities can be actualized. In other words, action aims at the realization of ends through control of natural events. But such control cannot be achieved except where there is knowledge of facts that enables man to employ them in connection with desires, needs, impulses and aims.<sup>213</sup>

The action that enters as an element into Dewey's conception of freedom is therefore an "intelligent" action. It is action that demands an awareness of what one is dealing with. It calls for knowledge of facts, events and their relationships. In other words, it demands knowledge of laws understood as expressive of natural events and of their interrelations. It calls for such knowledge as is possessed by the physician and by the engineer, and which yields what Dewey refers to as "better doing", that is, "one better co-ordinated with the conditions that are involved in realizing purposes."<sup>214</sup> It is therefore not just any kind of spontaneous activity which inevitably yields or secures human freedom. Only intelligent action can achieve this. And, an intelligent

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212. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 311.

213. id., ibid., p. 304. See ch. 2, p. 59-90 supra, for Dewey on knowledge.

214. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 287.

action is one which considers consequences, putting the consequences of different ways and lines of action before man in order to enable him to know what he is about. It is such a consideration of consequences which "converts action that is merely appetitive, blind, and impulsive into intelligent action."<sup>215</sup> And only such an intelligent action is an essential element in Dewey's conception of freedom.<sup>216</sup>

It has been indicated that free action involves control of the changes that intervene between the beginning and the end of a process if the attainment of ends and goods is to be rendered more secure and stable. Such control can be achieved through art because, to Dewey, "art is a process of production towards consummatory fulfillment through regulation of trains of events that occur in a less regulated way on lower levels of nature."<sup>217</sup> It can also be achieved through science, which Dewey sees as "an art, at once instrumental in control and final as a pure enjoyment of mind."<sup>218</sup> Both give man the capacity or the ability to control because, in both art and science, nature is organized,

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215. Dewey, How We Think, p. 17

216. Vide ch. 2, p. 81-82 supra, for Dewey on intelligence, and as an aid to understanding what he means by "intelligent action".

217. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. XV

218. id., *ibid.*, p. xvi

simplified and transformed to yield greater order and unity. It seems pertinent to note, therefore, that it is not just any idea or form of control that has to do with free action. The issue involves control of states of affairs, events, processes, or of changes in nature, rather than the control of fellowmen. It has nothing to do, for example, with the control which a slave owner exercises over his bunch of slaves. Neither is it the sort of control exercised by a dictator over the citizens of his state. Such a misconception may be one of the reasons for Dewey's derision of the economic conditions which, in his view, relegates many men to a servile status. This situation, Dewey continues, renders illiberal or unfree the intelligence of those practically controlling the situation because "instead of playing freely upon the subjugation of the world for human ends, it is devoted to the manipulation of other men for ends that are non-human in so far as they are exclusive."<sup>219</sup> The only aspect of the control involved in a free action which is exercised over a human being is that which has been named "self-control". It is the control that man exercises over his impulses, inclinations and desires in the course of his interaction with the physical and cultural environment. Childs, who touches on the experimental conception of freedom, has a good grasp of this when he states that,

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219. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 136. Russell expressed a similar idea when he maintained that "it is more important than in former times to cultivate the idea of co-operative enterprises in which the 'enemy' is physical nature, rather than competitive enterprises in which there are human victors and vanquished." (Bertrand Russell, Education of Character, New York: Philosophy Library, 1961, p. 55).

To the degree that the individual becomes conscious of the forces that have entered into his own mental and emotional make-up and perceives their deeper tendency and meaning, so also does the possibility of intelligent control over these forces develop. Freedom—effective expression of individuality — is in direct proportion to the degree of intelligent understanding and control which thus has been developed.<sup>220</sup>

This is the internal aspect, as far as man is concerned, of the control that goes into the conception of freedom. It assures man's continuity and interaction with nature. Control is not merely something happening to nature. It is also something happening in nature. And man, as a part of nature, is no spectator to this event. In the interaction that engenders control, man's impulses, needs and desires are challenged, repulsed or resisted. Proper adjustment, one that ensures human freedom, demands control not only of the challenging or resisting conditions, but also of the challenged or resisted impulses. Control, in this sense of adjustment, involves all partners in the interactional process: man himself, as well as the rest of nature. The external aspect of this control is that which is exercised over the natural hazardous conditions, while the internal is exercised over man's very own impulses, needs, or desires. In fact, the internal seems to enjoy some priority as far as the concept of freedom in Dewey is concerned. For, he maintains that "freedom is in turn identical with self-control."<sup>221</sup> Self-control is therefore very essential for that action

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220. J. L. Childs, Education and the Philosophy of Experimentalism. New York: Century, 1931, p. 243.

221. John Dewey, Experience and Education. New York: Collier, 1974 (c 1938), p. 67.

which is considered to be a vital element in Dewey's conception of freedom. Indeed, it seems that such action could best be described as transaction, a term which seems to best connote the interactional involvement of all partners in the process, and which is even used by Dewey himself.<sup>222</sup>

The freedom, or the aspect of freedom, which is connected with such an action is what Adler rightly calls the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. It could be, and Adler maintains that it sometimes is, referred to as freedom of action.<sup>223</sup> It is circumstantial because its possession depends on the presence of favorable circumstances, or negatively, on the absence of obstructing conditions, each of which helps man to realize his needs, desires, and ends. It therefore calls for lack of coercion, duress or impediment, such as arises from other men or from resistant forces in the physical and social environment. If the circumstance is such that man acts under coercion or duress, then, there is no freedom at least in this sense of freedom of action, just as there is no freedom if man is not in full control of the situation, and is instead at the mercy of appetites, impulses or desires. It is freedom of self-realization, on the other hand, because action aims at executing what man has chosen. In other words, its purpose is the realization of man's needs, impulses, desires, aims, goals or ends.<sup>224</sup> And in realizing his ends, man is

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222. Vide chapter two, p. 109-114 supra.

223. Adler, The Idea of Freedom, p. 127

224. See chapter two, p. 100-105 supra, for Dewey on two senses of ends.

realizing himself to some extent. For, what is the self without needs, impulses or desires.

It is worth noting that the consideration of action as an element in freedom implies the negative aspect of freedom. It entails "freedom from", and complements the positive aspect, namely, "freedom to", which stands out in a consideration of choice as an element in freedom. Freedom of action involves freedom from the push and pull of nature, or from the compulsions and hazards of nature, which include spontaneous human impulses, needs and desires. It is freedom based on knowledge of facts and relations as a means of attaining desired ends. This seems to make it susceptible of the criticism that it is an aspect or one form of the rather trite saying that knowledge, and especially scientific or instrumental knowledge, is power. Such knowledge is said to be limited to the seeking of appropriate means to achieve a desired goal, and is criticized as being therefore fragmentary.<sup>225</sup> But it is rather hard to see how such a criticism devalues the conception of a free action as involving an element of control. Man's common everyday activities, as well as those "specialized" activities which are labelled as "scientific", seem to bear out the fact that the more knowledge man has of a certain event, including its date, place and manner of occurrence, the more capable he is of controlling such an event, and therefore the freer he is with respect to the event. The knowledge involved may be no more than the skill of the cook, the physician or of the engineer. It cannot be considered to be all that there

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225. See, for instance, C. F. von Weizsacker, The History of Nature. Tr. by Fred D. Wieck, p. 4

is to knowledge. Neither can it be substituted for knowledge in all its ramifications.<sup>226</sup> But this does not detract from the fact that such knowledge yields the control which is essential for intelligent action as an element in freedom. Even the legal system utilizes this notion of control in establishing liability. Lack of control, which incidentally means a lack of freedom, is often considered to be a mitigating, if not an exculpating, circumstance. Thus, if a drunken driver hits and kills a man, he is often viewed as not being in full control of the situation. His offence is generally mitigated by a lack of control, and he is not held liable for murder. Instead, his offence is manslaughter because he was free with regard to one of his actions, namely, his drinking. In other words, he could control his drinking and not get drunk. Control of his drinking implies control of his driving, and consequently of the killing. In other words, he was free with respect to his drinking, but not with regard to his driving. He lost his circumstantial freedom in the latter case because the circumstance was not favorable to careful driving. There was an obstructing condition, namely, the alcohol, which impaired his driving. This lack of freedom is what is meant by saying that he was not in full control of the situation. In sum, it seems that a consideration of the idea of control cannot be totally avoided in a comprehensive discussion of the notion of freedom. Dewey therefore seems to have been right in pointing out that the idea of control is essential when one considers at least the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. Such a conception of freedom implies "freedom from", and Dewey clearly states that,

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226. See chapter two, p. 59-90 supra, for Dewey's rather complex theory of knowledge.

Freedom from restriction, the negative side, is to be prized only as a means to a freedom which is power: power to frame purposes, to judge wisely, to evaluate desires by the consequences which will result from acting upon them; power to select and order means to carry chosen ends into operation.<sup>227</sup>

Freedom as the "power to frame purposes" etc., is the natural freedom of self-determination, or the freedom of choice. It demands freedom of action, or the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, if it is not to stagnate in the realm of mere possibility or potentiality. To actualize "choice", chosen ends, or the natural freedom of self-determination, action is called for. But action, the freedom of action, or the circumstantial freedom of self-realization in turn presupposes choice, the freedom of choice, or the natural freedom of self-determination. There is, then, such a continuity and interaction between the two aspects of freedom that the one needs the other if it is to be actualized. It seems, therefore, that it is only when the two are taken together that a correct notion of freedom can be had. It appears that the connection, continuity, or interaction of choice and action, of freedom of choice and freedom of action, of the natural freedom of self-determination and the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, yields that genuine freedom which Adler refers to as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. In the next section, therefore, the connection between choice and action will be examined as a preliminary to expounding Dewey's notion of the genuine "freedom of self-perfection".

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227. Dewey, Experience and Education, pp 63-64

### C. Acquired Freedom of Self-Perfection

The crucial difficulty in framing a philosophy of freedom is that of discovering the connection, or the lack of connection, between freedom defined in terms of choice and freedom defined in terms of action.<sup>228</sup> After going through an exposition of both aspects of freedom, it cannot but be asked: What connection, if any, can there be between the two? Could a consideration of just one of them give us a complete correct notion of freedom in Dewey? Could man be considered as enjoying genuine freedom if he possesses one, or the other of these two, or must he possess both of them at once? If the two are connected, how are they connected? Must they always be so connected? What, if anything, are the results, the outcome or the product of this connection? These and similar other questions demand to be answered if a correct and complete notion of freedom in Dewey is to be achieved. It is indicated that choice must issue forth in action if it is not to remain a mere possibility, a potentiality, or an unused capacity.<sup>229</sup> It is also indicated that action presupposes choice if it is to be considered to be an element in freedom. It has to be a qualified action, that is, an intelligent action.<sup>230</sup> It is this view which Dewey expresses when he maintains that,

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228. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 285.

229. Vide p. 213 supra.

230. See p. 217, supra.

Choice would hardly be significant if it did not take effect in outward action, and if it did not, when expressed in deeds, make a difference in things. Action as power would hardly be priced if it were power like that of an avalanche or an earthquake. The power, the ability to command issues and consequences, that forms freedom must, it should seem, have some connection with that something in personality that is expressed in choice. At all events; the essential problem in freedom, it seems to me, is the problem of the relation of choice<sup>231</sup> and unimpeded effective action to each other.

In other words, choice as an element in freedom demands action, as much as action as an element in freedom demands choice. There is a mutual demand, a continuity, or an interaction between them. And the relationship seems to be a mutually beneficial one in which choice confers some "graces" on action, and vice versa. Choice, because it involves alternatives, widens the range of action, raising it from the realm of mere spontaneous, appetitive, or impulsive activity to that of free action. It converts an otherwise unhindered, unreflective, or external activity into an action which is free, an action over which the individual has full control, rather than one issuing solely and merely from appetites, impulses, or circumstances. It changes an action which enslaves into one which frees. The free action in turn, because it demands a consideration of physical and social environmental conditions under which it is to be executed, as well as of the consequences of following its lead, renders choice more intelligent by demanding of it a more thorough application of insight and foresight to our needs, impulses and desires. This mutually beneficial, continuous and interacting relationship is described by Dewey as a circle, an enlarging circle, or a widening spiral:

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231. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 285-286.

There is an intrinsic connection between choice as freedom and power of action as freedom. A choice which intelligently manifests individuality enlarges the range of action, and this enlargement in turn confers upon our desires greater insight and foresight, and makes choice more intelligent. There is a circle, but an enlarging circle, or, if you please, a widening spiral.

Freedom defined in terms of choice alone seems to equate freedom with individualism, in which the highest and final court of appeal is the individual, or what some have come to call individual "conscience". It is believed that since the individual is endowed with choice as a native or an original right, all that is necessary for freedom is that the individual should be left alone to choose what he wants to do, be, or become irrespective of conditions and consequences. In this view, the individual remains the best judge of what is best for him in terms of doing or being. Since choice is considered to be a native power, the best that social institutions can do to assist the individual in realizing his freedom through choice is to remove whatever may obstruct the flowering, blooming, or the unfoldment of this native capacity. Probably, they could also remain passive, neutral or unconcerned, and watch that great native endowment unfold from within. But Dewey did not spare any effort in criticizing such a view as a fallacy, namely, the fallacy of classic liberalism and of unbridled individualism. There may be many other insignificant fallacies but, to Dewey,

The real fallacy lies in the notion that individuals have such a native or original endowment of rights, powers and wants that all that is required

on the side of institutions and law is to eliminate the obstructions they offer to the "free" play of the natural equipment of individuals.

Freedom as choice, therefore, overemphasizes the individual and his conscience, and puts little or no obligation on social institutions. Its minimizing, or even its total neglect, of the social aspect of freedom can lead at best to a dormant, inactive or ineffective freedom, namely, freedom as no more than a possibility or a potentiality. At worst, it can only substitute license for freedom, making every man a law unto himself.

While freedom defined in terms of choice tends to overemphasize the individual, freedom defined in terms of action seems to commit the opposite fallacy of overemphasizing the society. In some cases, such as in Hegel, it tends to absolutize social institutions, which are viewed as a manifestation, or as an objectification, of Absolute Spirit. The thesis put forward by this fallacy, which may be referred to as the fallacy of institutional absolutism, is that the individual realizes himself and gains his freedom only through submission to social institutions. The State becomes the dispenser of freedom. To realize his freedom, the individual has to co-operate with the State by obeying its laws, and by submitting to its authority without question. It appears to be a mundane counterpart of the religious or spiritual freedom which man gains by obeying God's laws, and by unquestioning submission to His authority and guidance. The State, a dispenser of freedom, tends to become also a deity. To realize his freedom, man must tailor his action to suit society. He is free to do what he likes so long as he ensures obedience to the rules and

laws of society, as well as compliance with its standards, norms and regulations. Such obedience and compliance, it must be noted, need not spring from the individual's own will, commitments or aspirations. It may be choice, but certainly not an intelligent one. It could be called a preference, but certainly not the intelligent preference which constitutes choice. The idealizing of society effected by this conception of freedom puts society above and beyond the individual. Instead of being viewed as a group of individuals sharing commitments and aspirations in a give-and-take that demands concessions, obligations and responsibilities, society becomes perjoratively abstract, beyond comprehension and beyond definition. The individual becomes swallowed, buried or insignificant, if at all existing, in the absoluteness of such a society. And yet, he cannot opt out of it if he is to gain that precious jewel for which men have fought and died. That very society, according to the advocates of this fallacy, is the alpha and omega, or the source and life-blood of man's freedom. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that both freedom as choice and freedom as action each contributes much that is necessary if we are to have a correct notion of freedom in Dewey. But each also contributes much that had better been dropped by the wayside if Dewey's notion of freedom is not to be distorted. It seems that this is why freedom as choice, or the natural freedom of self-determination, is only an aspect of, and subordinate to, genuine freedom. Similarly, freedom as action, or the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, is considered to be only an aspect of, and subordinate to, genuine freedom. Both contribute to a correct conception of freedom, but by themselves they are not genuine freedom. Genuine freedom seems to be a product of the interaction

of choice and action. It depends on the successful execution of choice. This is the freedom that Adler calls the acquired freedom of self-perfection, and it is its conditions, characteristics and consequences that will be examined next.

It should be noted from the outset that the acquired freedom of self-perfection presupposes man's natural ability to choose, and favorable circumstances under which to act. It is, in fact, the fulfillment of choice and action. When choice occurs without action, there is only the illusion of freedom, partial freedom, or a mere potentiality of freedom. Conversely, when action occurs without deliberate choice, the result is either partial freedom, the illusion of freedom, or freedom understood as no more than a potentiality. Complete or genuine freedom is acquired when choice is successfully executed. Such freedom therefore combines the conditions and characteristics of choice and action. It unites the positive notion of freedom as choice with the negative implication of freedom of action. In the case of the natural freedom of self-determination, it has been indicated that the individual determines what he wants to do or be. This aspect is reflected in the acquired freedom of self-perfection which, even as the name implies, is the process by which man becomes more rational, more social, and more moral.<sup>234</sup> It is the organization

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234. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 7. See ch. 4, p. 291-292 *infra* for the tension that this creates between his avowedly empirical values and his apparent tendency towards a hierarchy of values, and towards ultimate or absolute ends, values and principles.

of choice in such a way that it becomes habit and character.<sup>235</sup> The process of acquiring freedom as self-perfection is, therefore, one with the process of forming a highly-organized self, of building up a social self, and of acquiring habit and character. In this process, the apparent opposition between the individual and society, which a consideration of choice and action separately gives rise to, vanishes. Laws, norms, rules and regulations are no more obeyed willy-nilly or blindly. Rather, they are deliberated upon, assessed, and critically analyzed before they are accepted as right and good, and therefore as valuable for meeting individual needs. This process of interiorization is described by Dewey as a prerequisite for attaining the acquired freedom of self-perfection:

What is needed is that the more rational and social conduct should itself be valued as good, and so be chosen and sought; or in terms of control, that the law which society or reason prescribes should be consciously thought of as right, used as a standard, and respected as binding.<sup>236</sup>

This process of interiorizing social norms demands knowledge if the valuation of conduct it calls for is to be successfully effected. An individual needs such knowledge in order to be able to judge and accept the law as right, use it as a standard, and respect it as binding. The acquiring of complete genuine freedom of self-perfection, which comes from this process, therefore demands a certain state of mind or character, namely, a knowledgeable, developing or growing mind. It calls for a mind that is equipped with the knowledge of

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235. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 9

236. *loc. cit.*

laws, understood as relations in change. It must be a mind which is aware of its needs, the conditions of their realization, and the consequences of trying to realize one or the other of those needs. In other words, it needs a mind that is disciplined by its experiences, or a mind which exercises self-control. The individual with such a mind is the virtuous knowledgeable individual, who enjoys the freedom of self-perfection: "only persons who have developed a certain state of mind or character enjoy a certain freedom."<sup>237</sup> Almost anybody can choose; almost anybody can act. But only the disciplined person can choose and act in such a way that he realizes the freedom of self-perfection. Probably, this is why Adler maintains that "authors who advance theories of acquired freedom usually seek to reform men, not society or the environment. For them, no freedom can be gained, nor anyone become free, except by a change in the individual himself."<sup>238</sup> Fortunately, Adler carefully squeezed in the word "usually", which covers exemptions such as Dewey's theory of freedom. For, Dewey does not only seek to reform men, but also to transform society or the environment. According to him, there can be no change in the individual, no reform of men, without interaction with the environment. It is such an interaction which calls forth adjustment, and the latter involves a change in all parties involved in the interaction. That is why the acquisition of genuine or complete freedom calls for more than the mere elimination

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237. Adler, The Idea of Freedom, p. 134.

238. Adler, *ibid.*, p. 126.

of obstructions. It also demands positive and constructive changes in social arrangements.<sup>239</sup> But such changes are merely opportunities to be utilized. And they can be utilized only by the individual with the technical know-how, that is, the individual who has the discipline or self-control. In this conception of freedom, there is a marriage of choice and action, a unity of the internal and external aspects of freedom, and a meeting of Dewey's requirement that the "external and physical side of activity cannot be separated from the internal side of activity; from freedom of thought, desire, and purpose."<sup>240</sup> Such a unity goes hand in hand with a view of the "self", especially of the growing self, as the principle of freedom. For, freedom depends on something that proceeds from the self (choice), and expresses itself in action which achieves something for the self, namely, self-perfection. In this sense, Dewey's notion of freedom is similar to the conception of freedom found in individualism, which places emphasis on the individual. But it differs from it because the principle of freedom is not, as in individualism, the whole individual understood as opposed to others in the society. To Dewey, the principle of freedom is the better or higher self, that is, the growing or developing self. His notion of freedom also differs from that of individualism because of its emphasis on the social aspect of freedom. In his view, the better, higher or growing self, which is the principle of freedom, is such only by virtue of its interaction

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239. See Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 281-282.

240. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 61

with environmental conditions. The requirement of interiorization of laws, rules, norms and regulations emphasizes social responsibility without sacrificing individuality. Obedience and compliance result only from the acceptance, by intelligence, of what is right or good,<sup>241</sup> rather than from the coercion exerted by fear of what may befall the individual if he transgresses social laws, norms or regulations. This preserves individuality, but it is an individuality that does not stand aloof from society. Dewey's conception of freedom is therefore a conception in which the dualism between the individual and the society melts away because freedom, like morals, "is as much a matter of interaction of a person with his social environment, as walking is an interaction of legs with a physical environment."<sup>242</sup> Such freedom is not a datum, or an integral aspect of human nature. It is a possibility which can only be actualized through interaction with objective conditions.<sup>243</sup> These objective conditions include economic factors such as business and finance, as well as political

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241. This reference to what is right or good raises the question of a criterion or criteria of goodness and rightness, which tend to suggest a hierarchy of values, and to imply absolute ends, values or principles. See also ch. 4, p. 291-292 infra.

242. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 318.

243. Cf. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 297-298. See also chapter two, p. 109-114 supra, for Dewey's conception of interaction as a generic trait of nature.

factors or social conditions which are reflected in institutions, laws, morals, customs and culture. They also include the state of physical science as indicated by the knowledge of laws understood as constant and uniform relations in change, as well as fine and technological arts. Moral life, which is expressed in attitudes and dispositions, as well as friendships and family life, also constitute these objective conditions.<sup>244</sup>

However, a more vital objective condition, one that presupposes a metaphysics, is that there must be contingency, which Dewey views as "a necessary although not, in mathematical phrase, a sufficient condition of freedom".<sup>245</sup> It is a condition which involves a metaphysics that does not emphasize Being or Becoming, but Being-in-its-becoming.<sup>246</sup> It implies a world-view in which constituents of the world are not completely tight and exact, that is, the world itself is not "already done and done for", or its character is not entirely achieved. In other words, it implies a world in which change is genuine, and uncertainty is objective. Dewey maintains that without such a world-view, there would either be no room for freedom

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<sup>244</sup>. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 6-13, and Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 298.

<sup>245</sup>. John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: a study of the relation of knowledge and action. New York: Minton, Balch, 1929; Putnam, 1960 (c 1929), p. 249. See chapter 2, p. 90-114 supra, for the underlying metaphysics.

<sup>246</sup>. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 123: "Things have potentialities or are instrumental because they are not Being, but rather Being in process of becoming."

at all, or there would be just enough room for freedom of efficiency in overt action, which does not constitute genuine or complete freedom.<sup>247</sup> To him, genuine freedom is possible, or it can be realized, only if the world is risky, uncertain and unstable. It must be a world with irregular, inconstant, persistent, sporadic and episodic dangers, or a world in which past consequences dog the present, rendering it ominous, and making the future more unknown and perilous.<sup>248</sup> In short, the underlying metaphysics is one that recognizes as genuine the precariousness, incompleteness, and the contingency of nature. Freedom is therefore looked for and is found "in becoming, rather than in static being"<sup>249</sup> since contingency is an ultimate and irreducible trait of existence.<sup>250</sup> It may be pertinent to point out that becoming, in this context, is contrasted with "static being", whatever that may mean, and not with "Being", in order to clear the misconception that freedom is a part of human nature. The contrast serves to point out that "we have no divine right to freedom. (That) we have only the moral obligation to solve the moral problem: how can we continuously enhance freedom and

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247. Cf. Dewey, Quest for Certainty, p. 209 and 249, and Human Nature and Conduct, p. 284.

248. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 43.

249. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 293.

250. See chapter two, p. 105-107 supra.

secure that freedom for more men?"<sup>251</sup> In other words, it helps to indicate that freedom is a potentiality, or a possibility, which awaits actualization through human choice and action. Outside of such a context, the term "static being" is either a misnomer or simply meaningless because once there is Being, it is active, and it is this activity of Being which elementary metaphysics recognizes when it avers that there is Being in Becoming and Becoming in Being. In short, there is no such thing as "static being". Similarly, outside the context of maintaining this contrast, and of emphasizing the potentiality of freedom, it would be wrong to say that freedom is looked for, and is found, "in becoming" because there can be no Becoming if there is not something which becomes, that is, if there is no Being. It would therefore be most appropriate to state that freedom is found neither in Becoming nor in Being, but in Being-in-its-Becoming.<sup>252</sup> It may be important to keep this in mind if the statement that freedom is sought for and is found in becoming, rather than in static being, is not to be misunderstood. It is another way of calling attention to the fact that the underlying metaphysics of Dewey's notion of freedom does not recognize only the precarious, incomplete and

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251. L. P. Williams, "The Experimentalist's Conception of Freedom", in Educational Theory 4, April 1954, p. 111. A similar idea is expressed by Dewey in Philosophy and Civilization, p. 35, and in Individualism: Old and New, p. 124.

252. Vide p. 235, footnote no. 246 supra.

the contingent in nature. It also recognizes the presence and the active role of the stable, recurrent, settled or the uniform. Indeed, nature is viewed by Dewey as "an intersection of spontaneity and necessity, the regular and novel, the finished and the beginning."<sup>253</sup> He clearly realizes that there can be no settling of the doubtful without its adaptation to stable objects. Being, the universal, or the stable is therefore recognized as the instrumentality, or as the efficacious condition of the occurrence of the unique, unstable and the passing.<sup>254</sup> This is Dewey's clear statement that there can be no Becoming without Being, just as he points out that without Becoming, Being is either dead or meaningless, when he speaks of "static being". He sees Being in Becoming, and Becoming in Being. Prediction and control of Becoming, change, the unstable and the precarious is facilitated by Being, or by the stable and the recurrent. Nature is viewed as an intricate mixture of the stable and the unstable. Indeed, it may not be too wrong to say that what is often called and contrasted as "being" and "becoming" are none other than two phases or aspects of one and the same thing, namely, Being. "Being" connotes the relatively static aspect of Being, while "becoming" connotes its active aspect. Neither one nor the other, by and in itself, constitutes Being. Rather, Being is a product of the continuity and interaction of the relatively static with the dynamic. It is this mixture, continuity or interaction, which

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253. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 360. See also chapter two, p. 105-107 supra.

254. id., *ibid.*, p. 116.

sets the problems and issues of life, or of science and philosophy, the issue of freedom being a particular instance of these problems and issues. It is therefore a problem whose solution requires the genius of science, as well as of philosophy. It calls on philosophy to discover the stable traits of nature so that science may utilize them in its predictions.<sup>255</sup> Philosophy is also called upon to declare that without the world being such a mixture, there would be neither consciousness<sup>256</sup> nor thinking,<sup>257</sup> and therefore there would be no freedom. There would be no room for choice because "there can be no choice without unrealized and precarious possibilities."<sup>258</sup> Neither would there be room for action because "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 friction."<sup>259</sup> The mixture of the stable and the unstable, the continuity and interaction of Being and Becoming or, better still, Being-in-its-becoming, is therefore the condition of individual or personal freedom.

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255. Cf. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 160

256. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 312

257. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 69-70

258. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 283.

259. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 71-72.

It cannot be otherwise because it is this mixture that sets the problematic situation, which is necessary for actualizing freedom. Dewey maintains that it is this mixture that "creates doubt, forces inquiry, exacts choice, and imposes liability for the choice which is made."<sup>260</sup> The "objective conditions" necessary for the actualization of genuine or complete freedom thus presuppose a metaphysics, not of Being or of Becoming, but of Being-in-its-becoming.

However, genuine freedom understood as the freedom of self-perfection demands more than just these objective external conditions. It also demands that the objective external conditions be supplemented by what may be referred to as subjective internal conditions. These latter conditions may even be considered to be more vital to the realization of genuine freedom because, to Dewey, "the only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and judgement exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while."<sup>261</sup> The individual who wishes to attain this genuine enduring freedom must therefore exercise some power of reflection, knowledge and insight in forming his convictions and attitudes. Dewey states that the exercise of such powers must be "more personal in the sense of being more conscious in choice and more voluntary

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260. id., *ibid.*, p. 421

261. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 61. See also chapter two, p. 81-82 *supra*, for Dewey on intelligence.

in execution."<sup>262</sup> If the freedom to be attained is not to be a mere uninterrupted and unimpeded external activity, man must brace himself up to conquer, by personal reflection, those obstacles and difficulties which prevent intelligent choice from overflowing into intelligent action and spontaneous success.

He has to call his power of thought into play by foreseeing the possibility of the as-yet-non-existent, forecasting steps that will lead to the actualization of such a possibility, and letting his ideas guide and be tested by his actions.

The thought factor, or the reflective power in man, has a vital role to play in the realization of genuine freedom. It is in careful, thorough, and continuous reflection that preference is raised to the intelligent preference which is choice. It is because of such reflection that action ceases to be mere external, uninterrupted or unimpeded activity, and becomes the intelligent action which realizes intelligently chosen ends. Reflection, then, introduces the idea of an active, growing, or developing self as an element in freedom. It enables the self to "learn" from its experiences, including even its mistakes. This "learning" is one with discipline, self-discipline or self-control. It reminds man that freedom is not a mere absence of external restraint. Rather, it emphasizes the use of intelligence and co-operation in assessing possibilities, and in using such possibilities for purposes of self-recreation. This is why the concept of discipline understood as self-discipline or self-control, rather than as the authoritative imposition of purposes and of means of realization, is important for a complete notion of freedom in Dewey. Discipline, in this

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262. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 353.

sense, involves allowing the higher self to have the upper hand in decisions of purposes, and of the means of achievement of such purposes. And the higher self<sup>263</sup> in Dewey, is a moving, developing or dynamic self. It is one that seeks out and utilizes new demands and occasions, readapting and remaking itself in the process, rather than merely relying on past habits. Discipline, in this sense, therefore demands knowledge on the part of the self, namely knowledge of the conditions under which a choice arises so as to be able to form choice intelligently, rather than haphazardly in a stupid and dumb manner, as well as knowledge of laws of nature, that is, of constant and uniform relations in change, so as to use them in the realization of choice. Knowledge is therefore intimately bound up with Dewey's notion of freedom. It seems that knowledge and/or intelligence is actually the key to freedom. Man is not freed by just any choice realized through just any action, but by intelligent choice executed intelligently.

It may be pertinent to note that this freedom, in its tripartite character, is the core of democracy as conceived by Dewey. It is Dewey's democratic ideal without which democracy "is nothing."<sup>264</sup> Sometimes, he even maintains {

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263. This reference to a higher self implies some hierarchy of values, and connotes absolute ends, values and principles, thereby creating a tension in Dewey's avowedly empirical metaphysics and axiology (vide chapter 2, p. 90-114 supra, for Dewey's empirical metaphysics).

264. Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy" in *The Early Works I*, p. 245. See also chapter 4, p. 319-327 infra, for a more detailed discussion of the relation between democracy and freedom, and chapter 2, p. 120-139 supra, for a discussion of Dewey's democratic ideal.

that "democracy is freedom."<sup>265</sup> Later, in Freedom and Culture, he states that his faith in democracy is one with his faith in man's ability to achieve freedom for every individual. It is "based on faith in the ability of human nature to achieve freedom for individuals..."<sup>266</sup> Thus, democracy is nothing without freedom. It is, indeed, freedom. And faith in democracy is one with faith in the attainment of freedom. In other words, freedom is Dewey's democratic ideal. And, as this thesis implies, it is also Dewey's educational ideal end and method. The present writer therefore posits that it is in terms of Dewey's democratic ideal of freedom that his concept of growth can be best explained. To pursue this hypothesis further, an attempt is made, in the next section, to investigate whether there is actually any evidence in Dewey to support it.

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265. Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy", in Early Works 4, p. 8-9.

266. Dewey, Freedom and Culture, p. 162. This is reaffirmed in various other works such as "The Economic Basis of the New Society", in Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 425; "Democracy in Education", in Education Today, p. 62, 73 and 363; "Academic Freedom", in Intelligence in the Modern World, p. 721-725; "The Social Significance of Academic Freedom", in Education Today, p. 322; and Democracy and Education, p. 305.

### III. Growth, Freedom and Education

In Dewey's consideration of education as growth, there is found the following rather suggestive remark: "When it is said that education is development, everything depends upon how development is conceived."<sup>267</sup> This section is therefore an attempt to indicate that there is sufficient evidence in Dewey to support the thesis that growth could be advantageously conceived as freedom, or as "growth in freedom". Findings in the previous sections are used to correlate the elements or traits of growth and those of freedom. Reference is also made to some passages from Dewey's works, which are indicative of such a close relation between his concepts of growth and freedom that they tend to justify the conception of growth as freedom. Ultimately, the aim is to resolve one of the two major problems of the thesis as stated in chapter one, namely, to verify that there is sufficient evidence in Dewey to support the thesis that growth could be advantageously conceived as freedom, interpreted as freedom, or explained in terms of freedom.

#### A. Correlative Components of Growth and Freedom

It may be noted that the two previous sections reveal almost a one-to-one correspondence between the components or traits of growth, namely, growth as intellectual, social and moral development, and those of freedom, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. Such a correspondence or correlation may be presented in tabular form as follows:

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267. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 49.

## TRAITS OF GROWTH.

I. Growth as intellectual  
Development.<sup>268</sup>

Entails:

- a) active participation, activity or action (sect. 1, p. 155-157 supra);
- b) cultivation, preservation and melioration of reflective thought, thinking or intelligence (sect. 1, p. 153-154 supra);
- c) problematic situations (sect. 1, p. 160-162 supra);
- d) formation of new purposes, or modification of existing ones (sect. 1, p. 157-158 supra);
- e) affectivity, that is, impulses, attitudes, desires, needs, and emotions (sect. 1, p. 162-164 supra).

## ASPECTS OF FREEDOM

I. Natural freedom of  
Self-Determination.<sup>269</sup>

Involves:

- a) preferential action, active participation or activity (sect. 2, p. 203-205 supra);
- b) development of thought, thinking or intelligence (sect. 2, p. 205-206, 207-209 supra);
- c) problematic situations (sect. 2, p. 206-209 supra);
- d) setting of goals, aims, ends, and purposes (sect. 2, p. 206 supra);
- e) affectivity, in terms of needs, preferences, impulses and desires (sect. 2, p. 206, 208 supra).

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268. Vide Sect. 1, p. 153-165 supra.

269. See Sect. 2, p. 203-212 supra.

## TRAITS OF GROWTH.

## ASPECTS OF FREEDOM.

II. Growth As Social Development.<sup>270</sup> II. Circumstantial Freedom of Self-realization.<sup>271</sup>

## Involves:

## Entails:

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| <p>a) emphasis on activity, a view of the individual and society as correlative to each other, and of development as occurring through interaction between the two (Sect. 1, p. 169-174 supra);</p> <p>b) development of habits of judgement, of learning from experience, that is, development of intelligence (Sect. 1, p. 166-167 supra);</p> <p>c) maintenance of balance between the individual and society (Sect. 1, p. 173-174 supra).</p> | <p>a) emphasis on action, and a conception of the individual or of man as continuous with nature, and of freedom as resulting from interaction with nature and society (Sect. 2, p. 213-221 supra);</p> <p>b) development of the habit of considering consequences, that is, development of intelligence (Sect. 2, p. 217-218 supra);</p> <p>c) adjustment in terms of a balance between the individual and his environment, both natural and social (Sect. 2, p. 213-217 supra).</p> |
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270. Vide Sect. 1, p. 166-177 supra.

271. See Sect. 2, p. 212-224 supra.

## TRAITS OF GROWTH.

III. Growth as moral  
Development.<sup>272</sup>

## Entails:

- a) interaction between individual and social elements, or interaction of the self with the environment, or of the individual with the society (Sect. 1, p. 178-189 supra);
- b) affectivity, in the sense that impulses are the raw materials for moral development (Sect. 1, p. 178-184 supra).

## ASPECTS OF FREEDOM.

III. Acquired Freedom of  
Self-Perfection.<sup>273</sup>

## Involves:

- a) interaction between choice understood as representative of what is individual, and action understood as representing social elements (Sect. 2, p. 225-233, 235-240 supra);
- b) affectivity, represented by choice as intelligent preference and as involving the sublimation of impulses, needs or desires (Sect. 2, p. 225-228 supra).

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272. Vide Sect. 1, p. 177-189 supra.

273. See Sect. 2, p. 225-242 supra.

It is apparent from the above table that the major traits, components or aspects of growth and those of freedom do correlate. Among other things, both concepts involve intelligence, knowledge, or the cultivation, preservation and melioration of reflection, reflective thought or reflective thinking; action, activity or active participation on the part of the individual; foresight and evaluation of consequences; formation of new purposes or modification of existing ones; choice; the resolution of problematic situations; affectivity, that is, impulses, attitudes, desires, needs, preferences and emotions; as well as a view of the individual and of society as correlative to, and as interacting with, each other. Such a correlation and close relation apparently warrant the interpretation; understanding, explanation or conception of growth as freedom. And since the correlation is a result of an analysis of both concepts in Dewey, it can be concluded that it indicates some evidence in ~~him~~ that supports the thesis that growth can be viewed as freedom, understood as freedom, or explained in terms of freedom. Such an evidence will be further specified by reference to Dewey's conception of growth as the end of education, as well as to his conception of educational method. It may be reiterated that the concern in this section is not so much with critical issues involved in Dewey's conception of growth as the end and method of education, as it is with indicating some evidence in such a conception, which supports the thesis that his concept of growth can, and should be, conceived as freedom.

#### B. Growth, Freedom, and the End of Education

It should be noted that Dewey offers the principles of continuity and interaction as the criteria for distinguishing between educative and

miseducative experience, the former yielding educative growth, and the latter stunting such growth.<sup>274</sup> The principle of continuity of experience

rests upon the fact of habit, which Dewey describes as follows:

The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. For it is a somewhat different person who enters into them.<sup>275</sup>

Of particular interest to the present inquiry is the concept of self-modification, that is, of forming or determining a new self, which is involved in Dewey's distinction of educative from miseducative growth. For, in discussing his conception of freedom as the natural freedom of self-determination, choice was indicated to be "the most characteristic activity of a self", revealing the existing self, and forming the future self. It was shown to be a power of self-creation or of self-determination, and therefore to justify the classification of the freedom associated with it as a natural freedom of self-determination.<sup>276</sup> Dewey's conception of educative growth as being distinguished in terms of the modification of a self, of habit or of self-creation, is apparently this capacity of a self to choose and, in choosing, to determine "what sort of being a person most wants

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274. Vide Dewey, Experience and Education, chapter 3, p. 33-50.

275. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 35.

276. Vide Sect. 2, p. 211-212 *supra*.

to become."<sup>277</sup> It is therefore to be understood as that aspect of freedom which has to do with choice. It comes through choice, which involves the reorganization, reconstruction, and the transformation of personal habits and dispositions; a transformation that yields order, unity, meanings and significances in experience, making it more valuable and more personal. As such, it is to be understood as the natural freedom of self-determination, which has been shown to be also anchored on choice.<sup>278</sup>

Dewey further maintains that habit, a factor in his concept of growth, can be acquired through repeated responses to recurrent stimuli, that is, without the individual being aware of its import, or without his knowing what he is about. Such a habit possesses, moves or controls the individual, and it is exemplified by a child who may be made to bow every time he meets a certain person by pressure being applied on his neck muscles so that bowing becomes automatic, or a habit in the sense of habituation. Dewey maintains that habit understood as habituation does not enter into his conception of educative growth: "There may be training, but there is no education."<sup>279</sup> To achieve growth, the individual must be aware of what the habit accomplishes, as well as evaluate the consequence

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277. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 317, quoted in Sect. 2, p. 211 supra.

278. Vide Sect. 2, p. 203-212 supra.

279. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 29.

of such an accomplishment. He must know what he is about, perform the act for the sake of its meaning, that is, with an end in view, and evaluate the consequences.<sup>280</sup> In other words, the active habit that yields educative growth has to do with intelligence, thought or reflection, that is, it involves the formation of intellectual dispositions: 6

A habit also marks an intellectual disposition... Modes of thought, of observation and reflection, enter as forms of skill and of desire into the habits that make a man an engineer, an architect, a physician, or a merchant. In unskilled forms of labor, the intellectual factors are at minimum precisely because the habits involved are not of a high grade. But there are habits of judging and reasoning as truly as of handling a tool, painting a picture, or conducting an experiment.<sup>281</sup>

To attain educative growth, the individual must acquire habits that involve intelligence, thought and reflection. They must be habits of judging and reasoning with respect to consequences because Dewey states specifically that "active habits involve thought, invention, and initiative in applying capacities to new aims."<sup>282</sup> Apparently, Dewey is referring, in this context, to growth as intellectual development.<sup>283</sup> And in analyzing his notion

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280. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 29-30.

281. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

282. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 52-53.

283. *Vide Sect. I*, p. 153-165 *supra*.

of freedom, choice was seen to be an intelligent preference that characterizes freedom as the natural freedom of self-determination. It was seen to be a preference that is formed after consideration of consequences,<sup>284</sup> and it was indicated that its characteristics include flexibility, anticipation of results, insight and foresight, and an active acquisition or formation of habits, which signifies the factor of individual participation.<sup>285</sup> In other words, it is characterized by the development of intelligence. And it is such choice that forms the core of Dewey's notion of freedom understood as the natural freedom of self-determination.<sup>286</sup> Since it is characterized by intelligence, just as that habit which Dewey specifies as yielding growth understood as intellectual development,<sup>287</sup> it serves as a piece of evidence that supports the interpretation of growth, understood as intellectual development, in terms of the natural freedom of self-determination. The active formation of habits, the making of intelligent preferences or choice, as well as the educational process are therefore processes

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284. See Sect. 2, p. 207 supra.

285. Vide Sect. 2, p. 206 supra.

286. See Sect. 2, p. 203-212 supra.

287. Vide p. 251-252 supra.

of "continual reorganizing, reconstructing, transforming."<sup>288</sup> There is an indication that the first process yields intellectual development understood as a trait of growth, and that the second yields the natural freedom of self-determination, but a question mark hangs over the product of the third process, that is, the educational process. The present writer maintains, however, that the discussion up to this point indicates that there is some evidence, in Dewey, which supports the viewing of the educational process as also yielding a trait of educative growth, namely, intellectual development, and which supports the conception of such growth as the natural freedom of self-determination. In other words, some evidence is found in Dewey for conceiving intellectual development, which is a trait of growth, as the natural freedom of self-determination, which is an aspect of freedom.

It should also be noted that Dewey distinguishes between the internal and the external,<sup>289</sup> or between the relatively passive and the active aspects of experience. The former "influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose", while the latter "changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had."<sup>290</sup> It is pertinent to point out that the internal aspect of experience, to which Dewey refers

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288. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 50.

289. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 39.

290. loc. cit.

in this context, corresponds with choice understood as an element in his conception of freedom as the natural freedom of self-determination. However, the present concern is with the active or the external aspect of experience, which refers to action, or to the power to act, understood as an element in Dewey's conception of freedom as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization.<sup>291</sup> Just as the active aspect of experience, which characterizes educative growth, indicates that "all human experience is ultimately social",<sup>292</sup> and changes objective conditions, so also does action indicate the "social dimension" in Dewey's conception of freedom as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and changes objective conditions if the ends, aims or purpose that are chosen, are to be realized. And this power to act, activity, active participation or action, is necessary for the actualization of the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, just as it is necessary for the attainment of growth understood as social development.<sup>293</sup> Moreover, Dewey emphasizes "control" as essential for growth.<sup>294</sup> Pointing out that a living being uses surrounding energies

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291. Vide Sect. 2, p. 212-244 supra.

292. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 38.

293. See Sect. 1, p. 166-177 supra.

294. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 1-4.

in its own behalf, turning them into means of its own conservation, he states that,

Understanding the word "control" in this sense, it may be said that a living being is one that subjugates and controls for its own continued activity the energies that would otherwise use it up. Life is a self-renewing process through action upon the environment.<sup>295</sup>

The result of this control, which the organism exerts on its environment, is that "it grows."<sup>296</sup> It appears therefore that control is essential for growth. And with respect to freedom, control was also indicated as the characteristic of that action which yields the circumstantial freedom of self-realization.<sup>297</sup> Such an action was viewed as involving some control over man's environment, or as aiming at some control over the flux, the changes of the unstable elements in nature. And Dewey maintains that "this control is the crux of our freedom."<sup>298</sup> At the same time, it is the source of the growth of the organism, making possible the actualization of unrealized future possibilities. Since control is the crux of man's freedom, and since it yields growth, the present writer maintains that it serves

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295. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 1-2.

296. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

297. *Vide Sect. 2, p. 215-217 supra.*

298. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 311. See also sect. 2, p. 216-217 *supra*.

as an evidence, in Dewey, for conceiving of growth as freedom. Such an evidence is made more convincing by an analysis of Dewey's discussion of "Habits as Expressions of Growth".<sup>299</sup> His definition of habit, for example, indicates that it is a form of action:

A habit is a form of executive skill, of efficiency in doing. A habit means an ability to use natural conditions as means to ends. It is an active control of the organs of action.<sup>300</sup>

This definition virtually identifies habit with action. But while habit "expresses" a trait of growth, action is an element in that aspect of freedom which has been referred to as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization.<sup>301</sup> Moreover, Dewey links this definition of habit with his conception of education as growth. He writes:

Education is not infrequently defined as consisting in the acquisition of those habits that effect an adjustment of an individual and his environment. The definition expresses an essential phase of growth. But it is essential that adjustment be understood in its active sense of control of means for achieving ends.<sup>302</sup>

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299. See Dewey, Democracy and Education, chapter 4, p. 46-48.

300. id., *ibid.*, p. 46.

301. Vide sect. 2, p. 212-244 *supra*.

302. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 46.

In other words, Dewey's definition of habit, as well as this frequent definition of education, indicate that habit is action, or an active control of the environment; that education is the acquisition of such a habit, and that this definition of education expresses an essential phase of growth, namely, growth understood as social development. This, of course, is in the context of "education as growth". In the sphere of freedom, both definitions similarly indicate that action is habit, or an active control of the environment; that education is the acquisition of the power of such an action, and that this definition of education expresses an essential phase of freedom, namely, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. It can therefore be concluded that both definitions offer an evidence, in Dewey, for maintaining that his conception of education as growth, especially in the sense of growth as social development, would be best grasped if this link with his notion of freedom is maintained. They indicate that educative growth is not just an unqualified, directionless or undirected growth, but growth in the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. In other words, they indicate that Dewey provides the evidence that is needed to justify the conception of social development, which is a trait of growth, as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, which is an aspect of his notion of freedom.

Dewey further points out that the significance of "habits as expressions of growth" is not limited to action. It has also an intellectual element.<sup>303</sup> He maintains that,

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303. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Habits reduce themselves to routine ways of acting, or degenerate into ways of action to which we are enslaved just in the degree in which intelligence is disconnected from them. Routine habits are unthinking habits: "bad" habits are habits so severed from reason that they are opposed to the conclusions of conscious deliberation and decision.<sup>304</sup>

In other words, Dewey has two senses of habit, namely, habit as habituation, which is acquired through mechanical routine or repetition, and which gives the individual some external efficiency or motor skill unaccompanied by thought, reflection, deliberation or intelligence, and active habit which involves intelligence, deliberation and decision. Dewey maintains that both senses of habit are needed for a proper, full or meaningful understanding of his conception of education as growth. In his view, the one without the other "marks a deliberate closing in of surroundings upon growth."<sup>305</sup> If educative growth is to result, intelligence must be fully and persistently invoked in the process of forming habits. The active and passive or the external and internal aspects of habit must unite if education is to be defined as the acquisition of habits, and if such a definition is not to remain but a special phase of growth. If education is to be viewed as growth, habit must not be viewed as something "apart from knowledge", or from intelligence.<sup>306</sup> This reference to the necessity of knowledge

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304. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 49.

305. *loc. cit.*

306. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 339-340.

or intelligence, in the formation of habits, seems to be an apparent reminder that neither intellectual nor social development exhausts Dewey's concept of growth. It points to the need for the conception of growth as moral development, which unites the individual and the social elements of both traits of growth.<sup>307</sup> It also indicates a link or connection between Dewey's concept of growth and his conception of freedom as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. For, the active and passive or the external and internal aspects of habit, which must unite if education is to be fully understood as growth, find their correlates in the active and passive or the external and internal aspects of freedom. These active and passive aspects of freedom are action and choice, or the circumstantial freedom of self-realization and the natural freedom of self-determination, which must unite if the acquired freedom of self-perfection is to ensue.<sup>308</sup> Neither a consideration of choice nor of action individually gives a correct notion of freedom in Dewey, just as neither intellectual nor social development individually exhausts his concept of growth. Man does not grow only intellectually or socially. Similarly, he is not viewed as enjoying genuine freedom if he possesses choice without action. Genuine freedom is enjoyed only when the two unite or interact. And Dewey describes this unity or interaction as "a circle", "an enlarging circle", or as "a widening

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307. Vide Sect. I, p. 177-189 supra.

308. See Sect. 2, p. 225-242 supra.

spiral".<sup>309</sup> He also maintains that education, which he views as growth, is "by its nature an endless circle or spiral".<sup>310</sup> Moreover, he considers interaction to be the second chief principle for interpreting an experience in its educational function and force, maintaining that the word assigns equal rights to both factors in experience, namely, objective and internal conditions, and that "any normal experience is an interplay of these two sets of conditions."<sup>311</sup> It should be noted that the first chief principle, which Dewey offers, is "continuity", and that this has already been considered as it enters into the interpretation or conception of growth as freedom.<sup>312</sup> Dewey views both principles as intercepting, and as uniting, rather than as separate from each other. And it is this active union that provides "the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience".<sup>313</sup> It should be noted, in this context, that Dewey's reference to the union between the active and passive or external and internal aspects of habit,

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309. Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, p. 286. See also sect. 2, p. 227 supra.

310. Dewey, The Sources of a Science of Education, p. 77.

311. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 42.

312. See p. 249-254 supra.

313. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 44-45.

as well as to the union between his two principles or criteria of educative growth, corresponds with his emphasis on the union between choice and action as essential for the acquired freedom of self-perfection. The union between the active and passive aspects of habit yields moral development understood as a trait of growth.<sup>314</sup> Growth as moral development is distinguished by this union, which also characterizes freedom as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. As such, it must be connected with this aspect of freedom. In other words, it offers some evidence in support of the conception of moral development as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. This becomes even more convincing when it is remembered that the acquired freedom of self-perfection demands a knowledgeable, developing or growing mind, and that it is the process by which man becomes more rational, more social, and more moral.<sup>315</sup> In other words, the acquired freedom of self-perfection epitomizes growth as intellectual, social, and moral development. And if, for Dewey, education is growth, then, this interpretation provides sufficient evidence for conceiving of such growth as freedom, or for interpreting it in terms of freedom. It can be viewed as growth "in or toward" freedom. However, its conception as growth in freedom is more faithful to Dewey's philosophy in general than its conception as growth toward freedom, which can easily give

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314. See p. 260, footnote no. 307 supra.

315. Vide Sect. 2, p. 230-231 supra.

the false idea of growth as "a movement toward a fixed goal", or as "having an end, instead of being an end."<sup>316</sup> In other words, freedom understood as the principle or ideal that guides Dewey's educative growth, is not an outcome that is guaranteed in advance. Rather, it is an eventual outcome, an end that is tentative, prospective and experimental, rather than ultimate, retrospective and prescriptive. It is an achievement, rather than an innate capacity, and it is an achievement that does not occur once and for all. It is instead an ideal or an end that must be constantly rewon. As such, it involves a constant renewal or re-enactment and sheds some light on Dewey's rather puzzling remark that the value of every experience as a moving force "can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into."<sup>317</sup> For Dewey, what experience moves toward or into is not a datum. Rather, it involves a constant setting of goals, purposes, aims or ends, using impulses, instincts, needs and desires as a basis. Ends, in this sense, are more "man-made" than "natural".<sup>318</sup> They are to be "made", rather than to be "discovered". And it is in this sense of ends that the conception of educative growth as growth in freedom does not contradict Dewey's conception of the process of growth, of improvement

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316. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 50.

317. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 38.

318. Vide ch. 2, p. 102-105 supra.

and progress, rather than the static outcome and result, as becoming the significant thing, or of growth itself as being "the only moral 'end'."<sup>319</sup> Only such a conception of end does justice to Dewey's conception of growth as an educational end. And only such an understanding of end makes growth an educational end that befits his conception of a democratic society. It befits his idea of democracy because it is growth in freedom, especially as freedom is understood in its tripartite character. To him, educative growth must be viewed as "growth of individuals in the intellectual springs of freedom."<sup>320</sup> Growth, as the end of education, must be viewed as growth in freedom because Dewey states rather normatively that,

We should educate the young and the youth of the country in freedom for participation in a free society... taking steps to make our schools more completely the agents for preparation of free individuals for intelligent participation in a free society.<sup>321</sup>

When Dewey conceives of education as growth, he is therefore not simply advocating educational aimlessness. To him, education has an end even though such an end may be considered to be inadequate. It is growth,

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319. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 177. See also chapter 2, p. 90-105 *supra*, for a fuller discussion of Dewey's conception of ends.

320. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 61.

321. Dewey, "Democracy and Education in the World of Today", in Ratner (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 363.

but it is also more than an undirected or directionless growth. It is growth in freedom. In other words, Dewey provides sufficient evidence for conceiving of growth as freedom, at least in the sphere of his conception of educational ends.

### C. Growth, Freedom and Method

It should be noted that the issue of freedom in Dewey's conception of educational method is a concomitant of the conception of growth in freedom as the end of education. This is so because existent ends have to be reduced to indicative and implying means if they are to be multiplied and made secure.<sup>322</sup> Moreover, Dewey maintains that "means-consequences constitute a single undivided situation."<sup>323</sup> Any discussion of one without the other is therefore likely to involve a misconception because,

To talk about an educational aim when approximately each act of a pupil is dictated by the teacher, when the only order in the sequence of his acts is that which comes from the assignment of lessons and the giving of<sup>324</sup> directions by another, is to talk nonsense.

If any talk about growth in freedom as an educational aim is to be meaningful, then, some room must be left for freedom in educational method. In other words, any method that is to be used must be such that it can most

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322. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 131.

323. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 397.

324. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 101-102.

effectively and efficiently attain growth in freedom. It must involve the learner in actively exercising choice and action, which are the two vital components of freedom. It must be a method that takes into account the three vital aspects of Dewey's notion of freedom, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection.

With respect to the natural freedom of self-determination, Dewey delineates some fourfold impulses or interests which must be taken hold of, directed and organized in order to obtain valuable results, instead of allowing them to scatter or express themselves only impulsively. These include "the interest in conversation or communication; in inquiry, or finding out things; in making things, or construction; and in artistic expression."<sup>325</sup> He gives as an example of such an organization of interests, the case of a child who wants to make a box. Dewey maintains that what is involved in this example, is the making of the child's idea definite, making it a plan of action, as well as choosing the right kind of wood so that he gains discipline and perseverance, exercises effort in overcoming obstacles, and gains information.<sup>326</sup> Another example of this organization is that of the child who would like to cook. Dewey maintains that this

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<sup>325</sup>. Dewey, "The School and the Life of the Child", in Dewey on Education, ed. by Dworkin, p. 61

<sup>326</sup>. id., *ibid.*, p. 55.

is at first merely a desire to "mess around", perhaps just imitating adults. Thus, a child gets impatient, for example, at having to experiment, rather than simply following a recipe in a cook-book probably as some adults do. Dewey maintains that the role of the teacher in such a case would be to explain that it is not enough to cook, but also necessary to understand the principle that is involved in the cooking. And such an understanding cannot be achieved by simply following a recipe in a cook-book. In other words, the child has "to realize his own impulse by recognizing the facts, material and conditions involved, and then to regulate his impulse through that recognition."<sup>327</sup> A third example of the organization of interests concerns a child who wants to express in picturesque form his conception of the primitive conditions of social life when people lived in caves. Dewey states that his picture depicts "the conventional tree of childhood; a vertical line with horizontal branches on each side."<sup>328</sup> In his view, a child who is allowed to continue with such drawings would merely indulge his instinct or impulse, rather than exercise it. He therefore suggests that the child should be advised to observe actual trees, and to compare them with that of his picture. Dewey maintains that such advice would enable the child to make a better

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327. Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

328. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 57.

drawing from combined observation, memory and imagination. He even maintains that this method, which utilizes the impulses, instincts or needs of the learner, changes the recitation from an examination of knowledge already acquired to the free play of the learner's communicative instinct.<sup>329</sup> In his view, such a change facilitates, for example, the teaching of language. But above all, the examples of the organization of interests or instincts, which Dewey gives, indicate that,

It is possible to lay hold upon the rudimentary instincts of human nature, and, by supplying a proper medium, so control their expression as not only to facilitate and enrich the growth of the individual child, but also to supply the results, and far more, of technical information and discipline that have<sup>330</sup> been the ideals of education in the past.

In other words, attending to the impulses, instincts and needs of the learner, as well as helping them to develop fully, pay dividends in terms of the learner acquiring the discipline, information and culture of adult life.<sup>331</sup> In Experience and Education, Dewey reiterates this point, even though in a slightly different manner. He maintains that any subject-matter must fall within the sphere of experience of the learner so that the method of education becomes the method of progressively developing

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329. Dewey, op. cit., p. 65.

330. id., ibid., p. 68.

331. id., op. cit., p. 69.

what is thus experienced. In such a conception of method, the teacher is assigned the task of selecting, within such an experience, things that stimulate new ways of observation and judgement.<sup>332</sup> What this implies is made more explicit in Dewey's discussion of the meaning of purpose.

To him,

A purpose differs from an original impulse and desire through its translation into a plan and method of action based upon foresight of the consequences of acting under given observed conditions in a certain way.<sup>333</sup>

Educational method, in this view, entails the guiding of the learner to frame or form purposes, and to successfully execute such purposes. The teacher has to be aware of the instincts, impulses and needs of the learner, and to make suggestions concerning how they could be developed into purposes that can be intelligently executed. Dewey delineates three conditions that are essential for this transformation of impulses into purposes. One of these conditions is the observation of surrounding conditions, which the learner can do under the guidance of the teacher. The second condition is some knowledge of past similar occurrences. Dewey maintains that the learner obtains this knowledge by recollection and by information, as well as through the advice and warning of the teacher who has had a wider experience. The third condition is judgement about what is observed and recalled, and this constitutes the significance of both observation

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332. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 73 and 75.

333. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 69.

and recollection, in terms of the consequences that will result if what is observed is acted upon. It should be noted that this whole discussion, together with the examples that Dewey gives, indicates that Dewey's educational method involves the guidance of the learner in the framing of purposes, using his instincts, impulses and needs, and in successfully executing such purposes. It should also be noted that such a conception of method is very closely linked with Dewey's conception of freedom as the natural freedom of self-determination. It has been indicated that this aspect of freedom involves the transformation of impulses, needs and desires into purposes, aims, goals or ends.<sup>334</sup> Educational method, according to Dewey, therefore appears to be the method of attaining the natural freedom of self-determination. Apparently, it is a method that emphasizes the element of choice, especially as choice has to do with man's affective dimensions. And since these dimensions are equally emphasized in the attainment of growth as intellectual development,<sup>335</sup> the method of attaining growth as intellectual development can be viewed also as the method of attaining the natural freedom of self-determination. In other words, Dewey's conception of educational method provides some evidence for viewing intellectual development, which is a trait of growth, as the natural freedom of self-determination, which is an aspect of freedom.

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334. Vide Sect. 2, p. 204-209 supra.

335. See Sect. 1, p. 162-164 supra.

It has also been observed that Dewey's educational method emphasizes action, activity, doing or work. This seems to be the main point of his story concerning his search for desks and chairs that are suited to the needs of children. The search is for something at which the children may work, but Dewey finds that what is available is made for listening or for simply studying lessons out of a book.<sup>336</sup> This is reiterated in Dewey's story about the woman who searches the schools in order to see if she can find a school where the child initiates some activity that precedes or calls for some information from the teacher. Dewey maintains that she could find only one, after visiting twenty-four different schools.<sup>337</sup> In other words, the other twenty-three schools adopt an educational method that emphasizes passivity, listening or absorption, rather than activity, doing or work. This implies that their method places the teacher and the text-book, rather than the child, at the centre of the educational process. Dewey's method contrasts rather sharply with such a method because it emphasizes activity, work or doing, and shifts the centre of the educational process to the child and his immediate instincts, impulses, needs and activities. His ideal school seems to be derived from the organization and the generalization of what obtains in an ideal home. In his view, the ideal home would have a workshop and a miniature laboratory, and would extend the child's

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336. Dewey, "The School and the Life of the Child", in Dworkin, op. cit., p. 50-51.

337. id., *ibid.*, p. 51.

life outdoors into the garden, surrounding fields and forests. Besides, the child's participation in household occupations or tasks offers him an opportunity for gaining knowledge, as well as for developing the habits of industry, order and respect for the rights and ideas of others. The method of the ideal school therefore involves "doing systematically and in a large, intelligent, and competent way what for various reasons can be done in most households only in a comparatively meager and haphazard manner."<sup>338</sup> It would entail the provision of a workshop, laboratory, materials and tools with which the child can construct, create and actively inquire, while participating in conjoint, common, community or communal activities. It must be noted that the emphasis is on action or doing as an essential aspect of Dewey's method of education. Indeed, Dewey maintains that even language can be taught or developed as a consequence of experimental work that involves active participation on the part of the learner. He refers, for example, to some work that starts as a simple experiment, and which involves the child in the keeping of daily and weekly records. The language that the child uses to record his final findings is described by Dewey as "vivid", "poetic" and "scientific". He maintains that the child's language is vivid, poetic and scientific because he has "a vivid experience" of what he is describing, or because of "a personal realization which compels its own appropriate expression".<sup>339</sup>

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338. Dewey, op. cit., p. 53.

339. id., ibid., p. 67.

In other words, an active participation by the child, as exemplified by his keeping of daily and weekly records, facilitates the vivid use of language. His action, activity, work or doing makes possible such a vivid use, which would not have been achieved by merely listening to his teacher. Moreover, his activity does not only develop his use of language, but it also leads him gradually into geological and geographical study. Dewey gives another example of this broadening of horizons, or of how a beginning with very simple material things leads on to larger fields of investigation. It is the account of an experiment in which children make precipitated chalk that is used for polishing metals, by using a simple apparatus that consists of a tumbler, lime water and a glass tube. Dewey maintains that the experiment leads the children into larger horizons, such as,

A study of the processes by which rocks of various sorts, igneous, sedimentary, etc., had been formed on the surface of the earth and the places they occupy; then to points in the geography of the United States, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico; to the effects of these various bodies of rocks, in their various configurations, upon the human occupations; so that this geological record finally rounded itself out into the life of man at the present time.<sup>340</sup>

The implication seems to be that almost anything can be taught through a simple experiment that calls for the child's active participation, or that demands action, activity, doing or work on his part. It indicates, in its own way, the emphasis on action, activity, work or doing that characterizes Dewey's educational method. As a matter of fact, Dewey maintains that

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340. Dewey, op. cit., p. 68.

discipline, order or control ensues from such an active participation in conjoint activities. In his view, control over individual impulses and actions is exercised by the participation of the individual in communal projects, or "by the whole situation in which individuals are involved, in which they share and of which they are co-operative or interacting parts."<sup>341</sup> Order, control or discipline is not maintained or established by the teacher exercising authority in a rather personal way, or by his will or desire, but by "the moving spirit of the whole group."<sup>342</sup> The teacher speaks and acts firmly, or he exercises authority, if at all, "in behalf of the interest of the group, not as an exhibition of personal power."<sup>343</sup> In short, participation in common activities provides the control or the order that constitutes discipline. And the emphasis, in this context, is on action, activity, work or doing as a vital aspect of Dewey's educational method.<sup>344</sup> Since action also forms the core of Dewey's conception of

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341. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 53.

342. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 54

343. *loc. cit.*

344. This emphasis on action, activity or doing in method is a concomitant or a corollary of Dewey's emphasis on action, activity or doing in his theory of knowledge (vide ch. 2, p. 65-72 *supra*).

freedom as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization,<sup>345</sup> which is sometimes referred to as freedom of action,<sup>346</sup> his educational method can be considered to be the method of attaining this circumstantial freedom of self-realization. Moreover, it has been indicated that action or activity forms an important part of his conception of growth as intellectual development.<sup>347</sup> And since his educational method equally emphasizes action or activity, such a method can be considered to be the method of attaining growth as intellectual development. Thus, the method for attaining growth as intellectual development is also the method for attaining the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. And this can be viewed as an evidence, in Dewey, for conceiving of intellectual development, which is a trait of growth, as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, which is an aspect of freedom. In other words, some evidence is found, in Dewey, for the conception of growth as freedom, in the sphere of his educational method.

However, neither the element of choice nor of action alone sufficiently explains Dewey's conception of educational method. He maintains, for example, that action may be no more than an outward expression

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345. Vide Sect. 2, p. 212-244 supra.

346. See sect. 2, p. 221 supra.

347. Vide Sect. I, p. 155-157 supra.

of the child's impulses or instincts toward saying, making, finding out and creating. In his view, "the real child lives in the world of imaginative values, and ideas which find only imperfect outward embodiment."<sup>348</sup>

It is pertinent to note that this world of imaginative values is the sphere of choice, or of the natural freedom of self-determination. Dewey's full, complete or integrated educational method therefore calls for a union of choice and action, which constitutes his conception of freedom as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. He gives two examples that explain this union. The first example is connected with sewing and weaving. Dewey states that the children make a type of primitive Indian loom, and wish to use it in producing something else. They are therefore shown some blankets woven by the Indians so that each child can make a similar design. Dewey maintains that the work "involved not merely discipline and information of both a historical sort and the elements of technical design, but also something of the spirit of art in adequately conveying an idea."<sup>349</sup> In his view, this indicates the connection of the art instinct with the constructive instinct. Such a connection apparently finds its correlate in the union of choice and action which characterizes the acquired freedom of self-perfection. The second example of this union refers to a picture of one of the children spinning, the picture being drawn

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348. Dewey, "The School and the Life of the Child", in Dworkin, op. cit., p. 69.

349. id., *ibid.*, p. 60.

by one of the younger children. Dewey states that this happens in the course of the children studying "primitive spinning and carding."<sup>350</sup> And the conclusion he draws from it is that,

Where we now see only the outward doing and the outward product, there, behind all visible results, is the re-adjustment of mental attitude, the enlarged and sympathetic vision, the sense of growing power, and the willing ability to identify both insight and capacity with the interests of the world and man.<sup>351</sup>

It seems apparent therefore that Dewey's educational method, which involves the union of choice and action, is the method of attaining the acquired freedom of self-perfection, which depends on the successful execution of chosen aims, goals or ends, and which therefore involves a union of choice and action.<sup>352</sup> It can also be considered to be the method of attaining growth as moral development, which similarly demands a union of individual and social elements.<sup>353</sup> Such a conception of method therefore contributes to the evidence that is found in Dewey for conceiving of growth as freedom.

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350. id., op. cit., p. 61.

351. id., *ibid.*, p. 70. See also Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 79.

352. Vide Sect. 2, p. 225-242 *supra*.

353. See Sect. I, p. 177-189 *supra*.

In summary of this section, Dewey's educational method is a concomitant of his educational aim. It is adapted to what he views as the end of education, and can therefore be considered to be the method of attaining growth in freedom. Such freedom is to be understood in its tripartite character as comprising the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. Dewey's educational method shares in this tripartite character, involving choice, action and a union of the two, which constitutes a full, complete and effective educational method. In terms of growth, it reflects the three traits of growth. It is the method of attaining growth understood as having three traits, namely, intellectual development, social development and moral development, which involves a union of individual and social elements. In other words, the method of attaining growth is also the method of attaining freedom. And such a method offers evidence, in the realm of Dewey's educational method, for conceiving of growth as freedom.

## SUMMARY

Dewey's concept of educative growth has three main traits, namely, growth as intellectual development, growth as social development, and growth as moral development. The three traits are closely related, and are separated in this exposition for heuristic purposes. Similarly, his concept of freedom has three major aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. These closely interrelated aspects are separated in the present discussion mainly for the purpose of explanation.

The three main traits of growth do correlate with the three major aspects of freedom, and this is taken as some evidence that is found in Dewey in support of the conception of growth as freedom. Such a conception is further supported by an analysis of Dewey's conception of growth as an educational end, as well as of his conception of educational method. The analysis indicates that in both his conception of educational end and method, Dewey offers sufficient evidence in support of the thesis that growth should be conceived as freedom, understood as freedom, or interpreted and explained in terms of freedom. This apparently raises the question whether the concept of growth implies the concept of freedom, or whether it is coextensive or synonymous with the concept of freedom. In other words, is it sufficient to merely substitute the concept of freedom for the concept of growth, or are there any advantages in conceiving of growth as freedom? In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to answer this question, and to indicate what such advantages may be.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF GROWTH AS FREEDOM

This chapter is an attempt to appraise the finding of the previous chapter, namely, that Dewey's concept of educative growth can be advantageously viewed as growth in freedom. It investigates the explicative value of such a conception for an understanding of the concept of growth. Does it at least diminish, for example, the ambiguities that becloud the concept? Or, has it any particular advantage over the explanation of the concept in terms of intellectual development, social development, moral development or self-development?

The second section of the chapter is devoted to some critical reflections on the consistency of the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom, with Dewey's philosophy in general. It is indicated that the conception of growth as freedom is not intended to solve all the problems that are associated with the concept of growth, especially those that can be considered to be inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. Rather, it is a mark of its consistency with Dewey's philosophy in general, that the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom reflects, specifies, or even makes more obvious those problems, difficulties and ambiguities that can be considered to be inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general.

#### I. Appraisal of Main Findings

It has been affirmed, in the previous chapter, that there is sufficient evidence in Dewey to support the thesis that growth can, and probably should,

be conceived as freedom. This raises the question whether growth therefore implies freedom, is co-extensive with freedom, or is synonymous with freedom. The present writer maintains that the conception of growth as freedom, or as growth in freedom, entails more than a mere substitution of one word or term for another. It is hypothesized that the conception is more explicit than the idea of growth leading simply to more growth, and that it has more explicative value than the attempts to explain the concept of growth in terms of its traits only, that is, in terms of intellectual development, social development or moral development. To clarify and confirm this hypothesis, it is necessary to recapitulate on the various issues and problems raised in chapter one in connection with these attempts, and to indicate how the conception of growth as freedom, or as growth in freedom, resolves some of these problems.

In reviewing the literature devoted to an explanation of the concept of growth in terms of intellectual, social and moral development, a number of questions were raised as pointing to the need for some unity and focus for understanding the concept of growth, as well as to the need for some ideal according to which an individual can be said to grow educationally<sup>1</sup>. A review of the literature concerning the concept of growth as self-development also points to such a need.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the conception of growth as freedom includes intellectual, social and moral development, as well as

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1. Vide chapter 1, p. 5-13 supra.

2. See chapter 1, p. 13-20 supra.

self-development. The natural freedom of self-determination, which is an aspect of Dewey's notion of freedom, for example, has mainly intellectual connotations. The emphasis, in this conception of freedom, is on the development of intelligence in terms of converting blind, impulsive and animal-like preferences into choices understood as intelligent preferences. It involves the transformation of instincts, impulses, desires and needs into purposes so that an otherwise blind action is made more intelligent and more purposive.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the natural freedom of self-determination correlates with intellectual development understood as a trait of growth. The circumstantial freedom of self-realization, on the other hand, mainly has social connotations. It emphasizes interaction between the individual and the society, and involves the interiorization of the laws of the society by the individual. It entails, more or less, the development of the social potentialities of the individual, that is, a gradual development of the individual as a social being.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization includes social development, which is a trait of Dewey's concept of growth. The acquired freedom of self-perfection, in turn, involves both moral development and self-development, which are also traits of growth. Like moral development, the acquired freedom of self-perfection has individual and social elements, and demands interaction between the two.<sup>5</sup> Its classification

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3. Vide ch. 3, sect. 2, p. 203-212 supra.

4. Ch. 3, sect. 2, p. 212-224 supra.

5. Chapter 3, sect. 2, p. 225-242 supra.

as the freedom of self-perfection, on the other hand, implies that it involves self-development. In summary, the various traits of Dewey's concept of growth, namely, intellectual, social and moral development, find a place in Dewey's conception of freedom as consisting of three aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. In other words, the notion of freedom unites all the traits of Dewey's concept of growth. The conception of growth as freedom therefore provides the unity and focus, which are suggested by the literature concerning the concept of growth as essential for understanding the concept. However, it might seem superfluous to locate in freedom, the unity and focus for understanding Dewey's concept of growth, whereas the concept of growth, itself, provides the needed unity and focus. Apparently, the concept of growth comprises all these various traits, and therefore unites them. But it is pertinent to note that the demand for unity entails more than just the whole being equal to the sum of its parts. What is needed is a unifying principle that can also function as an ideal according to which an individual can be said to grow educationally, and it should be an ideal that does not involve the ambiguity and vacuity of growth leading simply to more growth. The conception of growth as freedom entails such an ideal because freedom turns out to be Dewey's democratic ideal.<sup>6</sup> Given his emphasis on democracy as the type of society that education should

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6. See chapter 2, p. 120-139 *supra*, and p. 319-327 *infra*.

help to perpetuate itself,<sup>7</sup> as well as his emphasis on freedom as characterizing that society, especially in its educational aspects,<sup>8</sup> it should not be preposterous to conclude that the conception of growth as freedom does not only unite the various traits of growth, but also provides the ideal according to which an individual can be said to grow educationally. In other words, educative growth, according to Dewey, is growth in accordance with his democratic ideal of freedom, that is to say, freedom constitutes the ideal end and method of education that befits his conception of democracy as the ideal society, or as the ideal way of life. Growth, as Dewey's educational ideal, does not therefore lead simply to more growth, and so on ad infinitum. It can only be understood as leading to more growth if such an understanding means that the attainment of growth understood as the natural freedom of self-determination can facilitate the attainment of growth understood as the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. But it has been indicated that both the natural freedom of self-determination, and the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, are merely aspects of Dewey's conception of freedom.<sup>9</sup> Genuine freedom, on the other hand, is attained when both of these aspects are combined in the acquired freedom of self-perfection. In other words, even if growth understood as

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7. Vide p. 319-320 *infra*; Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. iii; and chapter 2, p. 120-139 *supra*.

8. See p. 325-327 *infra*.

9. See ch. 3, Sect. 2, p. 225-242 *supra*.

one aspect of freedom can facilitate the attainment of growth understood as another aspect of freedom, Dewey still has an ideal in terms of which an individual could be said to grow fully. That ideal is freedom understood as comprising all its interrelated aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. There are stages of growth which can be discerned by reference to this ideal. One grows partially, for example, by attaining the natural freedom of self-determination. As a matter of fact, it might be maintained that growth in or through the various aspects of freedom is sequential, so that an individual first attains the natural freedom of self-determination, which then facilitates the attainment of the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and both of them in turn facilitate the attainment of the acquired freedom of self-perfection. There are, however, no clear-cut lines of demarcation. The transition from one stage to the other may not be as open to observation as this discussion implies. Nevertheless, it seems that educative growth is growth in freedom, as well as towards freedom, despite Dewey's objection to its conception as a movement toward a later result. Growth in freedom refers to the continuous striving to pass through the various stages, or to attain the various aspects, of freedom. Growth towards freedom, on the other hand, emphasizes the ideal function of freedom in sustaining the striving. Although Dewey, himself, would object to this description or interpretation, it is apparent that there is this tension, in his conception of growth as the end of education, between emphasizing growth as a continuous process and indicating some ideal that sustains the process. His emphasis on growth as a continuous process blurs the indication of this ideal of growth,

or makes it merely implicit. The conception of growth as freedom does not only maintain this emphasis on growth as a continuous process, but it also makes more explicit the implied ideal of growth. Growth in freedom is a continuous process mainly for two reasons. It is the sequential process of attaining the various aspects of freedom, the attainment of one aspect facilitating the attainment of the other. And the attainment of one aspect is always a matter of degree. The transformation of preferences into choice, which characterizes the natural freedom of self-determination, for example, could be considered to be so graded that there is always room for some improvement. And, if this is true of the various aspects, then it is much more true of the ideal of freedom taken in its total tripartite character. The attainment of freedom becomes a life-time affair in which growth, development or movement through each of the various aspects is sustained by having an eye on the total picture or "gestalt", that is, on freedom taken in its tripartite character. Thus, the conception of growth as freedom, or as growth in freedom, does not only unite the various traits of growth, but also gives a more explicit and precise content to Dewey's educational ideal of growth.

It seems apparent that since Dewey views growth as a moral concept, any other concept in terms of which it is to be explained must, itself, be a moral one. The conception of growth as freedom also meets this demand because freedom turns out to be a moral concept. It involves, among other things, the conception of growth as moral development.<sup>10</sup> It has not only

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10. See chapter 3, sect. 2, p. 225-242 supra.

descriptive, but also normative, connotations. Growth in freedom is not just the end of education. It should be the end of education. In other words, it is the ideal end and method of education. The conception of growth in freedom as the end of education thus provides both the unity and the ideal, which the various attempts that have been made to explain the concept of growth in terms of its traits suggest as essential for understanding the concept.<sup>11</sup> It has been indicated that Emerson is representative of the best, the most relevant and the latest of these attempts.<sup>12</sup> And he maintains that "the overriding and unifying trait" of growth "is self-realization", and that self-realization finds its guiding principles in "Dewey's traits of social, moral and intellectual growth."<sup>13</sup> This interpretation is rather restrictive because self-realization is, even according to Emerson, only a trait of growth. By contrast, the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom is apparently more inclusive because freedom is a category that includes self-realization as one of its aspects.<sup>14</sup> The conception of growth as freedom is a rather holistic conception that reflects Dewey's rather gestalt approach.

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11. Vide chapter 1, p. 5-20; and p. 281-283 supra.

12. See chapter 3, sect. 1, p. 148 supra.

13. Goldwin James Emerson, John Dewey's Concept of Growth in Education. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1975.

14. Vide ch. 3, sect. 2, p. 212-224 supra.

As such, it provides a better unity for the various traits of growth, and a better focus for understanding the concept, than do the interpretations, such as those of Emerson and Roth,<sup>15</sup> which see only one trait of growth, namely, self-realization as providing such a unity and focus. Moreover, such interpretations do suggest, but do not provide, the ideal of growth, or the ideal according to which an individual can be said to grow educationally. Apparently, this problem may be inherent to Dewey's concept of growth. But a thorough analysis of the concept reveals that it is closely linked with Dewey's conception of democracy as an ideal society, and that growth or development should be in accordance with the dominant ideal of such a society.<sup>16</sup> That dominant ideal turns out to be freedom.<sup>17</sup> And the present writer maintains that it is the ideal according to which an individual can be said to grow educationally, and that the concept of growth can therefore be advantageously explained in terms of it. Although it may not solve all the problems associated with Dewey's concept of growth, nevertheless the conception of growth as freedom, in which freedom is viewed as the ideal

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15. Robert J. Roth, John Dewey and Self-Realization. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962. vii and 152 p.

16. Vide chapter 3, sect. 1, p. 170-174 supra. See also ch. 2, p. 120-139 supra, for Dewey on Democracy.

17. Vide p. 319-327 infra.

in terms of which an individual can be said to grow educationally, goes further than the interpretations, such as those of Emerson and Roth, which do not make such an ideal apparent in Dewey's philosophy of education. It can therefore be considered to go at least a step further than the rather ambiguous and vacuous conception of growth as leading simply to more growth, or as having no ideal or guiding principles. The interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom therefore entails more than a mere substitution of the concept of freedom for the concept of growth, reduces the ambiguities that becloud Dewey's concept of growth, and has more explicative value than the various attempts that have been made to explain the concept in terms of its traits, such as intellectual, social and moral development, as well as self-development.

Such advantages and advancement notwithstanding, it should be noted that the conception of growth as freedom does not solve, and is not intended to solve, all the problems and difficulties that are associated with Dewey's concept of growth, especially those that can be considered to be inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. On the contrary, and especially if the thesis that growth should be conceived as freedom is consistent with Dewey's philosophy, it should make these inherent problems and difficulties more specific, precise, or more obvious. It is in this light that the conception of growth as freedom should be understood as reflecting most, even if not all, of the problems associated with the concept of growth.<sup>18</sup> For example,

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18. Vide ch. 3, p. 194-199 supra.

it shares in the difficulty posed by the volume and time-span of Dewey's works. This problem is evident in a consideration of Dewey's notion of freedom, which reveals that Dewey emphasizes one aspect of freedom at one time, another aspect at some other time, and even all the aspects together at yet another time. This emphasis often borders on a rather confusing, apparently contradictory and incompatible definitions of freedom in Dewey<sup>19</sup>. Needless to say, this difficulty is made no less glaring by Dewey's characteristic imprecise writing-style, which usually opens crucial passages to several rather plausible interpretations. His notion of freedom, in terms of which growth is to be explained, could therefore be easily misunderstood or misinterpreted. The problem of meaning and definition also rears its ugly head in a consideration of Dewey's notion of freedom understood as the acquired freedom of self-perfection. It is not at all easy to understand what Dewey means specifically by the "self", or by the "individual", which constitutes the principle of freedom. The burden is made no lighter by Dewey's appeal to the principles of continuity and interaction in his attempt to maintain an antidualistic position with respect to the relation between the self and its environment, or between the individual and the society. The principles tend to be so omnipotent and omni-present that it empties the self, individual and the society of any identity and meaningful content.

The conception of growth as freedom also reflects the problems associated with Dewey's metaphysics, his theory of knowledge, his conception

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19. Cf. ch. 3, p. 200-202 supra.

of democracy, as well as his theory of values. It is pertinent to note that his rather descriptive, empirical and non-Aristotelian metaphysics<sup>20</sup> leaves no room for absolute ends, values and principles, and that his theory of knowledge emphasizes method, or the means by which one knows, learns or finds the truth, at the expense of ends, goals or aims. Sometimes, ends and means are fused, confused, or are rid of their individual logical meanings. Growth can therefore be only growth in freedom, rather than toward freedom. In other words, it is a tentative end, goal or aim. Similarly, his values and principles are empirical, that is, they are spun out of the web of "experience". And yet, they imply a hierarchy of values, especially in the conception of the acquired freedom of self-perfection as the process by which man becomes more rational, social and moral.<sup>21</sup> This implication is also evident in his reference to what is right,<sup>22</sup> or to a better or higher self.<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that both the conception, as well as the references, are not inherently opposed

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20. See ch. 3, Sect. 1, p. 142-147 supra for the non-Aristotelian character of Dewey's metaphysics, and ch. 2, p. 90-114 supra for his metaphysical postulates.

21. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics. Revised edition. New York: Holt, c 1932, p. 7.

22. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 9

23. See ch. 3, Sect. 2, p. 242 supra.

to the conception of absolute ends, values or principles. But having started with a metaphysics that vows from the beginning not to admit them, or having destroyed the Aristotelian scheme that formed the basis of a meaningful or tenable conception of growth, he cannot but have a rather vacuous, ambiguous and tautological conception of growth as leading simply to more growth. This problem that arises from his metaphysics is also reflected by the conception of growth as freedom, so that the ideal end of education is growth in freedom, rather than growth toward freedom; because freedom, itself, is a tentative end. It is also an empirical ideal, namely, the ideal of democracy, which is derived from an empirical analysis of societies that actually exist, and by searching for a society that will serve as a model in terms of its maintaining an harmonious, mutual and interactional relationship between the individual and the society.<sup>24</sup> But such a mutual relationship presupposes an ideal or perfect coincidence of individual and social interests, which is lacking in any society that actually exists. The search for ideals, or for ideal models, in societies that actually exist is therefore likely to be a futile one. Besides, it seems to beg the question. For, it can also be asked from where such an exemplary society derived its own ideals. The appeal to experience, understood as generating its own guiding principles, norms, values, ends or ideals, is not as convincing as Dewey makes it to appear. Experience, if the term is to be used at all, is too open-ended, and turns out good and bad indifferently.

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24. Cf. John Dewey, Democracy and Education. New York: Free Press, c 1944, repr. 1966, 1968, p. 99.

It therefore demands some guiding principle, within or outside such an experience, that can enable an individual to sort out the good from the bad within it. It could also be asked what criteria are used to determine what is "more", "right", "better" or "higher" in a given circumstance. In other words, experience, like other Deweyan concepts such as growth, education and freedom, remains so open-ended that it can hardly be recognized, graded, or measured. It cannot therefore generate guiding principles that can be used to determine the ideal society. In short, the conception of growth as freedom reflects most of the problems, difficulties and ambiguities that can be considered to be inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general, and which becloud his concept of growth in particular. One of such inherent problems and difficulties, which the conception of growth as freedom reflects and makes more obvious, is the rather dualistic tension between facts and values, and between the individual and the society, which cannot be ignored in view of Dewey's general, antidualistic philosophical outlook.

## 2. Anti-dualism and Growth As Freedom

Dewey has persistently objected to dualisms, whether they appear in morals, metaphysics, theory of knowledge, or in the philosophy of education. These objections, as well as the solutions to the problem of dualism which are suggested by him, form a part of his major works, and thereby reflect Hegel's influence on his thinking.<sup>25</sup> In Democracy and Education, for example, Dewey objects to at least thirty-five forms of dualism, although some of

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25. Vide ch. 2, p. 33-36 supra.

them are reformulations of the others. These include forms of dualism that can be classified as moral, metaphysical, epistemological or educational, although each has implications for the others.

In the sphere of morals, he objects to the separation of human nature, in its moral aspects, from the rest of nature. He rejects the conception of the world as composed of the actual and the ideal spheres, or of the human and the physical spheres, each sphere in both pairs being unrelated to the other sphere.<sup>26</sup> Dewey rests his objection on the fact that such a conception of the world forms the basis for conceiving morals as a purely subjective affair, and for setting up "a solitary self without objective ties and sustenance".<sup>27</sup> He similarly objects to the separation between habit and thought which, in his view, is the basis for conceiving habit as habituation, that is, as something acquired by the frequent repetition of some mechanical exercises that produce skill apart from thought, rather than its being conceived as an intelligent affair. The division between work and leisure, or between practical and intellectual activity, is equally abhorrent to him because it forms the basis of the dualism between freedom and social control.<sup>28</sup> To him, freedom should not necessarily

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26. Vide John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct. New York: Modern Library, c 1930, p. 8, 12.

27. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 55.

28. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 262, 291, 323.

exclude social control. In a similar vein, he attacks what he refers to as "our customary dualism between two separate kinds of value, one intrinsically higher and one inherently lower."<sup>29</sup> Probably, the words "intrinsically" and "inherently" are meant to whittle down the implied lack of hierarchy of values, which would be inconsistent with Dewey's practice of speaking, for example, of a higher or better self.<sup>30</sup> It also supports his objection to absolute ends, values and principles. Dewey also rejects the division of activity into an inner and an outer, or into spiritual and physical which, in his view, leads to the conception of morality as either an inner state of mind, or as an outer act and results.<sup>31</sup> But above all, he considers the dualism between the moral and the non-moral as a serious philosophical blunder that relegates some acts perpetually to the moral domain and others forever outside it.<sup>32</sup> More specifically, this is the division between moral and natural science to which Dewey attributes all "social deficiencies".<sup>33</sup> And in the metaphysical realm,

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29. John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty: a study of the relation of knowledge and action. New York: Minton, Balch, 1929, p. 32.

30. Cf. chapter 3, p. 233 and 242 supra.

31. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 347.

32. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 40.

33. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy. New York: Holt, 1920, p. 173.

he objects to such dualisms as the separation of means from end, the conception of nature as mechanical, that is, as wholly fixed or determined in opposition to the conception of mind as wholly open or indeterminate, the separation between contingency and necessity,<sup>34</sup> as well as the dualism between man and nature.<sup>35</sup> In the sphere of knowledge, Dewey rejects the separation of doing, activity or practice from knowing,<sup>36</sup> as well as some educational theories such as the Lockean, which involves what Dewey views as an unnecessary dualism between method and the curriculum.<sup>37</sup> In his view, there is no separation between the end, method and the curriculum in education.<sup>38</sup>

In summary, Dewey objects to all forms of dualisms, searching instead for a philosophy whose principles can be so formulated and interpreted that

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34. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 275, 309; John Dewey, Experience and Nature. New York: Dover, 1958; also La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1958 (c 1929), p. 56, 58.

35. Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 393; Democracy and Education, p. 291, 334.

36. John Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization. New York: Capricorn, 1963 (c 1931), also Gloucester: P. Smith, 1968 (c 1931), p. 233; Democracy and Education, p. 262, 291-292, 334-336.

37. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 65.

38. id., ibid., p. 334-336, 291.

they can be convertible, inclusive rather than exclusive of one another, and therefore capable of being used interchangeably. In his view, the solution to philosophical dualisms can be found by instituting a new philosophy, or by reconstructing old existing philosophies.<sup>39</sup> He maintains that such a philosophy or reconstruction must involve conceptions that are based on the principles of continuity and interaction.<sup>40</sup> It should, for example, conceive of mind as continuous with nature, and as participating in its ongoing events, the evidence for such a continuity and interaction being found in what Dewey refers to as the advance or development of physiology, psychology, biology and the experimental method.<sup>41</sup> It should not limit the scientific experimental method to the physical sciences, but should extend it into the realm of morals in particular, and of philosophy in general. It is pertinent to point out that this brief analysis is not so much an extensive critical analysis of Dewey's concern with philosophical dualisms, as it is an indication of his antidualistic philosophical outlook, which therefore raises the question whether the conception of growth as freedom is consistent with such an outlook. It has already been indicated that Dewey's conception of growth as resulting from an interaction

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39. The title of one of his books, Reconstruction in Philosophy, is almost self-explanatory in this regard.

40. See, for example, Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 323.

41. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 336-338.

between the individual and the society can be construed as an attempt to use the concept of growth to bridge the gap between fact and value,<sup>42</sup> a purpose which the concept served rather effectively in the Aristotelian scheme of things.<sup>43</sup> It should be noted, however, that Dewey tries to bridge the gap by uprooting or transplanting the concept of growth from the Aristotelian, or even the Hegelian, metaphysical, transcendent context to a predominantly biological, psychological and "natural" context. Apparently, he presumes that such a transplantation refutes the theologico-intuitional conception of values as not being a part of nature, and therefore of man as not having a direct intuition of them. In his view, values belong to, or are within the natural order, and this natural order of values is discovered only if there are free agents, such as human beings. The growth of the organism, as a value, is therefore as natural a fact as Darwinian evolution.<sup>44</sup> And Dewey apparently presumes that such a conception of growth marries fact and value, reconciling the tenets of transcendentalism with those of naturalism. However, a close examination or analysis of his concept of growth reveals that there is a tension, even if it is rather dialectic, between the biological and the rational nature

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42. Vide chapter 3, p. 193-194 supra.

43. See chapter 3, p. 142-147 supra.

44. Vide chapter 2, p. 50-57 supra, for the relation between Dewey's philosophy and his interpretation of Darwinian evolution.

of man, the free agent whose presence is necessary for the discovery of the natural order of values. His concept of growth, as well as its interpretation in terms of freedom, emphasize the development of the rational, rather than of the biological nature of man.<sup>45</sup> There remains, therefore, a dualistic tension between the biological and the rational nature of man, or between facts and values, which Dewey's transplantation of the concept of growth does not seem to resolve. It appears that in order to consistently maintain his general, antidualistic philosophical position, Dewey would have to adopt the Aristotelian world-view, in which growth is the characteristic motion, change or development of living things or animate substances, in which the growth of the human being goes beyond the merely biological growth of plants and animals to include functions that are related to rational knowledge and cognition, and in which fact is married to value because both belong to the natural order.<sup>46</sup> The other

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45. Dewey's concepts of growth and freedom both emphasize the development of intelligence, or the transformation of impulses, needs and desires into purposes, aims or goals (vide chapter 3, section 2, p. 203-212 supra).

46. Vide ch. 3, p. 142-147 supra, for the conception of growth in the Aristotelian scheme; p. 147 for some of the differences between this Aristotelian scheme and that of Dewey; p. 145 for the difficulty associated with an attempt to maintain the idea of growth in the absence of the Aristotelian scheme; and p. 196-199 supra for the problems and difficulties specifically associated with Dewey's attempt to maintain the idea of growth after having destroyed this Aristotelian basis of the concept.

alternative seems to be that he should keep apart to some extent, fact and value, or the biological and the rational nature of man, and thereby maintain the dualistic tension between the two. This alternative would, of course, be inconsistent with Dewey's apparent antidualistic philosophical outlook. And both alternatives indicate that despite the advantages of the conception of growth as freedom, the conception is mainly palliative, and cannot therefore compensate Dewey's failure to bring fact and value together, to marry the biological and the rational nature of man, and to give the concept of growth a natural root. In other words, the conception of growth as freedom reflects the dualistic tension between fact and value, which is inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general.

It is also pertinent to note that the issue of freedom, in terms of which the present writer maintains that growth can be advantageously explained, often arises in a context where the individual is considered vis-à-vis other individuals or the society at large. In such a context, the individual seems to contrast with the larger society to which he belongs. His rights, interests and needs seem to be in opposition to those of the society as a whole. If a government is faced with the need to salvage a sagging economy, for example, should the individual be denied his right to material well-being? Should a system of taxation, designed to curb the intemperance of the rich, be enforced? Does this constitute a deprivation, or at best a limitation of individual freedom? Conversely, because each individual conscience should be respected, must society be left in a state of anarchy? These, and similar questions, indicate that the notion of freedom involves some clash or opposition between individual

needs, rights and interests and those of the society at large. It tends to imply a confrontation, division, separation or a dualism often expressed as "individual versus society", or "freedom versus social control". This is also evident in Dewey's notion of freedom because freedom begins with something in the individual (choice as an intrinsic individual capacity), and attains something (self-determination, self-realization and self-perfection) for him. It therefore seems to emphasize individual needs, rights and interests, at the expense of those of the society. Freedom of action, for example, implies a negative aspect expressed as "freedom from", that is, freedom of the individual from unnecessary interference and demands on the part of the society. Freedom of choice, on the other hand, gives the impression that the individual has his fate in his hands, determining what he wants to be, do or become, so that the society should not interfere in this decision. Moreover, Dewey clearly emphasizes the individuality of the child in his analysis of the role of thinking in education. He maintains, for example, that the child must do his own thinking, solve his own problems or find his own way out, rather than depend on the teacher.<sup>47</sup> It should be noted that there is, in all these examples, some dualistic tension between the individual and the society, which seems to raise the question of Dewey's consistency in advocating freedom, while at the same time trying to maintain an antidualistic outlook.

Dewey, himself, seems to have been aware of this tension, and therefore refers to the principles of continuity and interaction in his attempt to resolve the dilemma. His concept of freedom involves, for example, the idea of the control

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47. Vide Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 160.

of nature understood as bringing several natural factors into associated behavior, and as transforming them "into instrumentalities of action, into means for securing ends."<sup>48</sup> Dewey maintains that such a conception of control indicates that freedom is not an individual isolated affair, but implies instead a continuity and interaction between man and nature. In other words, man attains his freedom through interaction with nature, and he can interact with nature because he is continuous with it. A similar reference to the principles of continuity and interaction is presumed by Dewey to resolve the dualistic tension between the individual and the society, which the concept of freedom otherwise implies. He insists that the attainment of growth or freedom presupposes a social setting because "the power to grow depends upon need for others."<sup>49</sup> In other words, the attainment of growth in freedom understood as the end of education, is a product of interaction between the native impulses and tendencies of the learner and the customs and traditions of the community to which he belongs.<sup>50</sup> Freedom is therefore not only an individual affair. Rather, Dewey maintains that it involves an interaction in which there is such a perfect or ideal coincidence of individual and social interests, rights

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48. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 36.

49. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 52. It should be noted that "the power to grow" is what Dewey refers to as "plasticity" (*loc. cit.*).

50. Vide Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 295, and John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed" in *Dewey on Education; selections*, ed. by Martin S. Dworkin, New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967 (c 1959), p. 19.

and needs that the realization of those of the individual necessarily coincides with the realization of those of the society. Although this is more of an assumption than a reality, Dewey maintains that it yields the conception of the relation between the individual and the society as a circle, spiral, or as a widening spiral, rather than as involving a division, separation or a dualism.<sup>51</sup> The implication seems to be that his notion of freedom, and therefore the conception of growth as freedom, is antidualistic, and therefore is consistent with his general, antidualistic philosophical outlook. It may be noted, however, that his principles of continuity and interaction are rather so omnipresent and omnipotent that it becomes almost an insurmountable task to specify what exactly he means by the self, the individual, or the society. The principles are used in such a manner that they empty the self, the individual, and the society of whatever content or meaning Dewey might have intended for them. The terms therefore become rather slippery, elusive and lacking in precise meaning, content and definition.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Dewey's conception of society seems to be a rather peculiar one. Most individuals tend to think of society as substantial, that is, as a body of institutions from which laws, norms, rules and regulations are derived. But Dewey views it instead as a process, namely, "the process of associating in such ways that experiences, ideas, emotions, values are transmitted and made common."<sup>53</sup> Society thus

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51. See Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 207-208, and Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed", in Dworkin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 22.

52. Cf. ch. 3, p. 195 *supra*.

53. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 209.

becomes an interaction between individuals, including the interaction that exists in marriage between a man and a woman,<sup>54</sup> and reflecting Dewey's conception of democracy as a way of life, rather than as a form of government.<sup>55</sup>

But this leaves the concept of society so open-ended that it can hardly be specified what it means to Dewey. And this difficulty is by no means mitigated by his reference to the principles of continuity and interaction, especially as such a reference is based on the assumption of an ideal or perfect correspondence or reciprocity between individual and social needs and interests, which hardly exists in reality. In other words, Dewey has not successfully resolved the dualistic tension between the individual and the society, which his notion of freedom seems to involve. If he attempts to resolve the tension by reference to the principles of continuity and interaction, the terms "individual" and "social" are emptied or deprived of any meaningful, specifiable or specific content and definition. If he leaves the dualistic tension unresolved, he makes himself susceptible of the accusation of inconsistency *vis-à-vis* his general, antidualistic philosophical outlook. Both positions seem to indicate the rather palliative nature of the conception of growth as freedom. In other words, the conception does not solve, and probably cannot solve, all the problems and difficulties that are associated with Dewey's concept of growth, especially those that are inherent to his philosophy in general. On the contrary, and because the conception of growth as freedom is consistent with Dewey's philosophy

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54. Cf. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 56.

55. Vide ch. 2, p. 120-139 supra.

in general, it reflects and even makes more obvious these inherent problems and difficulties. It should also be noted that the conception of growth as freedom entails more than a scientific conception of nature, despite Dewey's emphasis on science and the scientific method in his conception of growth. The question is therefore raised whether the conception of growth as freedom, which seems to go beyond science and the scientific method, is consistent with Dewey's apparent emphasis on science and the scientific method.

### 3. Growth As Freedom and Dewey's Conception of Science

If Dewey's philosophy in general, and the conception of growth as freedom in particular, were to be nicknamed, it would probably be most appropriate to dub them an encomium, eulogy or an ode to science and the scientific experimental method. For, such an ode seems to take various forms in most of his writings. In Intelligence in the Modern World, for example, Dewey maintains that "the entire modern industrial development is the fruit of the technological applications of science", and that "the economic changes of recent centuries have been parasitic upon the advances made in natural science".<sup>56</sup> In his view, historic liberalism, which aimed at securing and protecting individual freedom, erred because it did not "recognize that the true and final source of change has been, and now is, the corporate intelligence embodied in science".<sup>57</sup> One of such changes, which science is to effect, is to make nature a friend and ally of man, rather than his

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56. Dewey, "Science and the Future of Society", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 360.

57. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 361.

grim foe.<sup>58</sup> Leaving this sphere of man-nature relations for that of inter-human relations, Dewey views science as one of the major sources of moral theory, which provides moral theory with "a body of dependable data, and a set of intelligible working hypotheses".<sup>59</sup> He continues this eulogy to science in Democracy and Education,<sup>60</sup> in which science is viewed as the agency of progress that has broken down physical barriers, widened the area of intercourse, brought about interdependence of interests, as well as control of nature in the interests of mankind. The advance of science is viewed as coinciding with "the ideal of progress" because science subjugates disease and abolishes poverty, using past experiences as the servant, rather than as the master of mind. It is "experience becoming rational", or "an indispensable factor in social progress". Representing the office of intelligence pursued systematically and intentionally, science is "the sole instrumentality of conscious, as distinct from accidental, progress".<sup>61</sup> Moreover, "our important social concerns" are viewed as being directly dependent upon the methods and the results of natural science.<sup>62</sup> For example, in order to find out the facts of

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58. Dewey, "Socializing Intelligence", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 458.

59. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 190 and 191-192.

60. See Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 223-228.

61. id., op. cit., p. 228.

62. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 285.

the world, man must go to the sciences, which alone will "say what generalizations are tenable about the world and what they specifically are."<sup>63</sup> Dewey condemns theories of knowledge for not providing dependable aids like the sciences, for example, the efficient use of its technical names, which gives the scientific investigator the ability to know what is properly named both in his investigation, as well as in the discussion with fellow scientists.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, Dewey seems to have gone so far in his ode to science that he reinstates contemplative knowledge or "pure" knowing, as well as the dualism between common sense knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance, that is, the practical knowledge needed for carrying on the necessary affairs of everyday life, and scientific or pure knowing, which is necessary for "advancing the systems of knowings and knowns".<sup>65</sup> He maintains that science is concerned with "the conduct of inquiry as inquiry", that is, "the conduct of knowing as its own end and proper terminus".<sup>66</sup> Such knowing is "pure", or is free from alien concerns and interests:

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63. *id.*, op. cit., p. 325.

64. John Dewey and A. F. Bentley, Knowing and the Known. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1975 (c 1949), p. 47.

65. Dewey and Bentley, *ibid.*, p. 281

66. *id.*, op. cit. p. 283.

Scientific knowing is that particular form of practical human activity which is concerned with the advancement of knowing apart from concern with other practical affairs. The adjective often affixed to knowing of this kind is "pure".<sup>67</sup>

Could this be a reinstatement of contemplative knowledge, which Dewey so much decries? Or, is it justified simply because it serves as an ode to science? Probably, Dewey thinks that it is justified. After all, he uses "science, scientific", in his eulogy, "to designate the most advanced stage of specification of our times—the 'best knowledge' by the tests of employment and indicated growth."<sup>68</sup> He therefore admonishes philosophy which, in his view, claims to be contemplative or "pure" knowing, to learn from the sciences:

Philosophy must go to school to the sciences; must have no data save such as it receives at their hands; and be hospitable to no method of inquiry or reflection not akin to those in daily use among the sciences.<sup>69</sup>

To Dewey, science is the exemplar of all intelligent endeavours, or the paradigm of all human concerns.

Specifically relevant to the present inquiry is his conception of science as the only warrant of individual freedom. Discussing "the place of science in education", he states that "actively to participate in the making of knowledge

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67. id., *ibid.*, p. 282.

68. Dewey and Bentley, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

69. John Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965 (c 1910), p. 269.

(which, in his view, is what happens in scientific inquiry) is the highest prerogative of man and the only warrant of his freedom".<sup>70</sup> The continuous, regulated and self-corrective process of inquiry, which enables an individual to grow in freedom, is considered by Dewey to be best exemplified in the scientific experimental method. And those who struggle to extend its application to the larger field of human relations are viewed by him as exemplifying one of the first principles of the method of scientific intelligence, namely, the principle of "projecting into events a large and comprehensive idea by experimental methods that correct and mature the method and the idea in the very process of trial."<sup>71</sup> Dewey also maintains that a record of the advances in science would be a record of the process of inquiry, by which an individual grows in freedom:

The record would be an account of a vast multitude of cooperative efforts, in which one individual uses the results provided for him by a countless number of other individuals, and uses them so as to add to the common and public store.<sup>72</sup>

In both quotations, Dewey is apparently referring to inquiry understood as the process by which an individual grows in freedom. In Democracy and Education,

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70. Dewey, "Science and the Education of Man", in Characters and Events, vol. 2, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 775.

71. Dewey, "Science and the Future of Society", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Ratner, p. 362-363

72. Dewey, "Socializing Intelligence", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 457.

he states that "science...aims to free an experience from all which is purely personal and strictly immediate".<sup>73</sup> However, his most copious expression concerning science as the only warrant of freedom is found in Knowing and the Known, in which he views science as "the example, par excellence, of the liberative effect of abstraction."<sup>74</sup> He writes:

The liberative outcome of the abstraction that is supremely manifested in scientific activity is the transformation of the affairs of common sense concern which has come about through the vast return wave of the methods and conclusions of scientific concern into the uses and enjoyments (and sufferings) of everyday affairs; together with an accompanying transformation of judgement and of the emotional affections, preferences, and aversions of everyday human beings.<sup>75</sup>

But, Dewey does not only maintain that science is man's only warrant of freedom, he also views it as eliminating or "dissolving" the dualism between the individual and the society, or between freedom and authority, a dualism which often bedevils the discussion of freedom. In his view, "the operation of cooperative intelligence as displayed in science is a working model of the union of freedom and authority".<sup>76</sup> The emergence of the experimental method of science means that man can no longer cling to the idea of an inherent opposition between emotion and intelligence. Rather, science eliminates such a dualism by intimately uniting ideas with

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73. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 226.

74. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 282.

75. loc. cit.

76. Dewey, "Science and the Future of Society", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Ratner, p. 360.

action.<sup>77</sup> Dewey tries to explain how science attains this feat of dissolving unnecessary dualisms, and of serving as a working model. He states that although scientific advances have been initiated by individuals who freed themselves from the bonds of tradition and custom, yet "the authority of science issues from and is based upon collective activity, cooperatively organized."<sup>78</sup> The development of science depends upon individual initiative, invention and enterprise. But the method used is public and open, and individual contributions are collectively tested, developed and, if confirmed, becomes a common fund, namely, the funding of meanings and significances which Dewey refers to as intelligence. He therefore concludes that science eliminates the dualism between freedom and authority, the individual and the society, or between emotion and intelligence:

What is pertinent, what is deeply significant to the theme of the relation between collective authority and freedom, is that the progress of intelligence—as exemplified in this summary story of scientific advance—exhibits their organic, effective union.

Since science is such a working model for the dissolution of dualisms, Dewey decries the limited or total lack of participation of the sciences in the formation of social and moral ideals. He views scientific progress as being, to a considerable extent, only technical. Science provides the means for satisfying ends, for example, without modifying the quality of such ends.<sup>80</sup> He refers to the warship as an example

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77. Dewey, "Socializing Intelligence", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 464.

78. Dewey, "Science and the Future of Society", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 359.

79. id., *ibid.*, p. 358.

80. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 224.

of the position of science in this regard, maintaining that the warship could not exist without science. However, science does little or nothing apropos of the aims or ideals in whose service the warship is used. From this follows the general statement that "science has as yet had next to nothing to do with forming the social and moral ideals for the sake of which she is used."<sup>81</sup> Since this seems to ridicule Dewey's ode to science, he advocates the active participation of science in the determination of social and moral ideals: "if ever we are to be governed by intelligence, not by things and by words, science must have something to say about what we do, and not merely about how we may do it most easily and economically."<sup>82</sup> Science and scientific experimental method have to be extended into the sphere of the human sciences, determining ends as well as the methods by which they are to be realized. After all, "scientific method...represents the only method of thinking that has proved fruitful in any subject",<sup>83</sup> rather than being pursued in a specific realm for purely technical reasons. It should, therefore, be applied to human relations in their political, economic and moral manifestations, rather than being restricted to the technical realm of the natural sciences. Indeed, Dewey maintains that such an application "would mean nothing less than a revolutionary change in morals, religion, politics and industry."<sup>84</sup> And

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81. id., "Science and the Education of Man", in Characters and Events, vol. 2, ed. by Ratner, p. 775.

82. loc. cit.

83. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 774.

84. Dewey, "Socializing Intelligence", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Ratner, p. 459; Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 375-376.

the application is possible because there is no gulf dividing non-moral knowledge from that which is truly moral. As a matter of fact, "the great need of the present time is that the traditional barriers between scientific and moral knowledge be broken down".<sup>85</sup> In short, because man is a part of nature, he should be investigated just like any other part of nature, using the experimental method of the sciences.<sup>86</sup> Since man has been blessed with such an effective or fruitful method, he can no longer live with "social deficiencies", which the separation of natural and moral science has bequeathed us.<sup>87</sup>

In summary, Dewey's philosophy offers sufficient evidence in support of its being viewed as some form of ode to science, and to scientific experimental method. Science is viewed as the agency of conscious, rather than of accidental, progress. It is experience becoming rational. It is "pure" knowing, as well as the only warrant of freedom. The ideal of progress coincides with its advance, and it changes man's dream of subjugating disease, and of abolishing poverty, into a reality. It gives man the facts of the world as they specifically are. Indeed, it is the best knowledge, as well as a working model for the elimination of dualisms. Its method, the scientific experimental method, must therefore be applied to every sphere of study. It has already

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85. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 313. See also *ibid.*, p. 312.

86. Cf. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 79.

87. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 173. Compare Dewey's own attempt to marry natural and moral science, or fact and value, through the use of the concept of growth in education (vide chapter 3, p. 198-199 *supra*).

been indicated that it is considered by Dewey as the ideal method for solving problems, and therefore for attaining growth as intellectual development.<sup>88</sup> But he is not naive enough to view the concept of growth as a scientific concept, rather than as a moral or philosophical concept. Instead, Dewey has a philosophy that includes a theory of knowledge, a metaphysics, a theory of values, as well as logic. As a matter of fact, he even gives the impression that philosophy is "beyond science" in terms of its comprehensiveness and generality, and in terms of its determining the ideals that should guide the conduct of science. In a typical passage, he assigns to philosophy the task of investigating what scientific knowledge about nature implies and entails "with respect to the guidance of our emotional and volitional life",<sup>89</sup> as this is exhibited in desires, affections, preferences, needs and interests. As regards morals, Dewey maintains that science is amoral or indifferent as far as values are concerned. It can be of military value, of technological, commercial, philanthropic or just of conventional value.<sup>90</sup> While science enables man to predict and control the occurrence of events, it ignores the qualities of such events, even if it does not exclude them from reality.<sup>91</sup> And Dewey views these qualities, which science ignores, as "what is most interesting and most important to mankind."<sup>92</sup>

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88. Vide ch. 3, p. 160-162 supra.

89. Dewey, The Quest for Certainty, p. 44.

90. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 240.

91. id., *ibid.*, p. 284.

92. id., *op. cit.*, p. 285.

In other words, science ignores precisely those things that are of utmost interest and importance to man. If it tries to dabble in such a realm, "it merges into philosophy".<sup>93</sup> A rather lengthy passage in Knowing and the Known seems to be worth quoting in order to reveal Dewey's concessions to philosophy, when he is not singing his ode to science:

A reference to the return of scientific method and conclusions into the concerns of daily life is purely factual, descriptive. It contains no implication of anything honorific or intrinsically desirable. There is plenty of evidence that the outcome of the return... is a mixture of things approvable and to be condemned; of the desirable and the undesirable. The problem, then, concerns the possibility of giving direction to this return-wave so as to minimize evil consequences and to intensify and extend good consequences, and, if it is possible, to find out how such return is to be accomplished.

Whether the problem is called that of philosophy or not is in some respects a matter of names. But the problem is here whatever name be given... If philosophy surrenders concern with pursuit of Reality... it is hard to see what concern it can take for its distinctive care and occupation save that of an attempt to meet the need just indicated.<sup>94</sup>

Although Dewey reduces philosophy, in this passage, to no more than morals,<sup>95</sup> it is pertinent to note that he admits "the complexity of moral situations", which contrast with scientific situations. Moreover, he does not limit philosophy, in practice, to morals. Instead, he has a metaphysical conception of nature as an intricate mixture of the certain and the uncertain, the necessary and

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93. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 324, 325, 329.

94. Dewey and Bentley, Knowing and the Known, p. 284-285.

95. Dewey and Tufts, Ethics, p. 192.

the contingent, the determinate and the indeterminate, and of man as continuous with nature, and in interaction or transaction with it. In nature, itself, he considers every existent to be an event. And such postulates constitute the underlying metaphysics of his notion of freedom, in terms of which his concept of growth is interpreted.<sup>96</sup> Growth, understood as growth in freedom, is not attained because there is Being or Becoming, but because Being becomes.<sup>97</sup> The attainment of growth, understood as freedom, demands the principles of continuity and interaction because there must be Being if there is to be Becoming, just as there must be Becoming if Being is not to remain but a dead or inert mass. In other words, the attempt to specify Dewey's educational ideal, by conceiving of growth as freedom, makes more explicit the metaphysics which otherwise remains merely implicit in Dewey's conception of growth as the ideal end of education. The conception of growth as freedom therefore makes more apparent Dewey's recognition and use of what can be referred to as something other than science, more complex than science, or even beyond science, namely, metaphysics. In other words, it reflects and makes more obvious the tension, inherent in Dewey's philosophy, between his recognition and use of metaphysics, which is beyond and more complex than science, and his eulogizing of science as the paradigm of all human endeavours. It seems that Dewey is conceiving science too broadly and philosophy too narrowly, or that he is going overboard in his attempt to make philosophy as narrowly

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96. Vide ch. 2, p. 90-120 supra.

97. See ch. 3, sect. 2, p. 235 and 236 supra.

or technologically "useful" as the sciences. In either case, his achievement seems to be contrary to his intention. For, given his world-view in which multiplicity and change predominate, or in which transaction and continuity are key principles, it seems that his basic aim is to emphasize the interrelation between the various disciplines, such as the natural and the social sciences. Such an emphasis is not compatible with the subordination of one discipline to another. Rather, it goes hand in hand with the advocacy of a relation of mutual respect, help, and cooperative effort in the great task of improving the lot of mankind by freeing man from false beliefs, conduct and practice. If Dewey intends anything other than this by his ode to science, he is merely demanding of science and its experimental method more than they can afford to offer. If the extension of scientific method into the sphere of morals would be revolutionary, as Dewey presumes that it would be, it should probably be pointed out that it would be no more than a revolution of confusion, disarray and disaster. Dewey, himself, admits to the comparatively more complex character of moral situations, which he assigns to the philosophical realm. At the same time, however, he suggests that science should usurp philosophical powers, and should intrude into the sphere of social and moral ideals. If he were to be consistent, he would have realized that the complexity of the situation would render such an intrusion nothing but a moral blunder. It is one thing to drag a horse to water, and another thing to make it drink. Science can, and often does, try to intrude into philosophical realms. But the result is usually a blunder, from which arises neither science nor philosophy. It seems to entail a demanding of science more than it is equipped to offer. And this

rather dialectic tension between science and metaphysics, which is made more explicit in the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom, contributes in no small way to the ambiguities and difficulties that becloud Dewey's concept of growth. For example, since science thrives on tentative ends, Dewey is apparently tempted to maintain that philosophy has no need for ultimate ends. Rather, it should go to school to the sciences, and learn from them the big lesson that success lies in dealing with tentative ends. Scientific, cumulative or progressive achievements must have suggested to Dewey how growth leads to more growth.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Dewey was not unaware of the scientific demand for an accurate and detailed description of the method by which the conclusions or findings of a scientific experiment are reached, so that any other scientist can repeat the experiment using such a description, and can compare his findings with those claimed. This apparently indicates the scientific emphasis on method as justifying conclusions, findings or ends attained. In order to confirm or refute the conclusions or findings of any scientist, all that is needed is to repeat the experiment as strictly as he describes it. The emphasis is apparently on method. And if Dewey views science as the paradigm of all human endeavours, it should not be surprising that he often fuses and confuses means and ends. In his view, therefore, growth is both an end and a process, or a goal and a means, a conception that turns out to be one of the sources of the difficulties which is encountered in the attempt to understand his concept of growth. In other words, the interpretation

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98. Probably, the idea can be likened to the aphorism that nothing succeeds like success.

of the concept of growth in terms of freedom does not only reflect the tension, inherent in Dewey's philosophy, between his recognition and use of a metaphysics and his eulogy to science and the scientific experimental method, but it also indicates that this tension is one of the sources of the problems, difficulties and ambiguities that becloud his concept of growth. It also emphasizes the properly metaphysical components of Dewey's philosophy, which help to identify him truly as a philosopher. But despite the advantages of conceiving growth as freedom, and in spite of its consistency with Dewey's philosophy in general, it could be asked whether the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of another Deweyan concept, such as democracy, may not have similar advantages, and whether it may not also be consistent with Dewey's philosophy in general. If this is so, why then should anyone insist on interpreting the concept of growth in terms of freedom, rather than in terms of some other Deweyan concept such as democracy?

#### 4. Freedom or Democracy?

Given Dewey's emphasis on democracy as the type of society that education should help to perpetuate, an emphasis exemplified by the title of one of his most authoritative books on the philosophy of education, and summarized in the preface therein,<sup>99</sup> it might be wondered whether his concept of educative growth would not be better explained in terms of democracy, rather than in terms of freedom. If his rather complex conception of democracy as a way of life is operative in his philosophy of education, what justification,

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99. See Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. iii.

if any, is there for the attempt to explain his concept of educative growth in terms of freedom, even if it is democratic freedom, rather than in terms of democracy as a way of life? Callan, in his study of Dewey's concept of growth, seems to raise such a question in his reference to Scheffler's observation that criticism of Dewey as an educationist has tended to take two contradictory directions: "he has been castigated as an apostle of conformity who did not value individuality, and he has been renounced as the champion of permissiveness in the classroom."<sup>100</sup> Callan upholds both criticisms as valid, indicating however that "each is based on an incomplete picture of Dewey's educational thought since one focuses on the idea of democratic socialization while the other concentrates on the abstract idea of education as growth."<sup>101</sup> In his view, a complete picture of Dewey's educational thought can be had by building "the democratic ideal into his growth theory".<sup>102</sup> However, he does not clearly specify what that democratic ideal might be for Dewey. But a clue to such a specification can be found in his belief that emphasizing "the process of democratic socialization" will reconcile "the constrictive ideal of the democratic problem-solver" with "a view of the educational process (viz., the growth theory) which often appears excessively liberal."<sup>103</sup> Although the democratic ideal seems to remain elusive, there is some indication that Dewey's concept

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100. Eammon Callan, "Dewey's Conception of Education as Growth", in *Educational Theory*, vol. 32, No. 1, Winter 1982, p. 26, quoting from Israel Scheffler, *Four Pragmatists*, N.Y.: Humanities Press, 1974, p. 248.

101. loc. cit.

102. loc. cit.

103. loc. cit. Underlining mine.

of growth could be advantageously explained by reference to, or in terms of democracy, or by emphasizing the process of democratic socialization, which involves the acquiring of scientific intelligence. Apparently, an article such as Callan's, which emphasizes the importance of the democratic ideal for understanding Dewey's concept of growth, but which does not clearly specify such an ideal, raises the issue of the relation between freedom and democracy, especially in the context of the present investigation. Moreover, in comparing and contrasting aristocracy and democracy, Dewey himself states that,

- There is an individualism in democracy which there is not in aristocracy; but it is an ethical, not a numerical individualism; it is an individualism of freedom, of responsibility, of initiative to and for the ethical ideal, not an individualism of lawlessness.<sup>104</sup>

If Dewey's democratic individualism is an individualism of freedom, or of responsibility and initiative to and for the ethical ideal, could such an ethical ideal be considered to be freedom? When Dewey maintains that "the democratic ideal includes liberty" because without liberty democracy "is nothing",<sup>105</sup> could this be interpreted as meaning that freedom or liberty is Dewey's democratic or ethical ideal? In other words, is the democratic or ethical ideal, which is to function as Dewey's educational ideal, democracy or is it freedom? Or,

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104. Dewey, "The Ethics of Democracy", in *The Early Works of John Dewey*, vol. I, ed. by Jo Ann Boydston, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1967-1972 (5 vol.), p. 243-244.

105. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 245.

is it both of them together so that they could be used interchangeably, especially when Dewey states that "democracy is freedom"?<sup>106</sup> Moreover, Dewey indicates the intimate connection between freedom and democracy in a number of his works. In Freedom and Culture, for example, he maintains that the conception of democracy as a way of life is "moral because based on faith in the ability of human nature to achieve freedom for individuals".<sup>107</sup> As a moral concept, it involves the role of war or peace among nations, as well as the role of economic relations understood as factors that can contribute to the realization of either "human freedom or human subjection".<sup>108</sup> Although the chapter is titled "Democracy and America", Dewey states that it could probably be maintained "that all past history has been a movement, at first unconscious and then conscious, to attain freedom".<sup>109</sup> In Intelligence in the Modern World, he refers to "the urgent and central question at the present time", namely, whether socio-economic changes will preserve and develop or just destroy at least for some time,

All that was best worth conserving in older  
democratic ideas and ideals: intellectual and

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106. John Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy", in The Early Works, vol. 4, p. 8-9.

107. John Dewey, Freedom and Culture. New York: Capricorn, 1963 (c 1939), p. 162.

108. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 165.

109. *id.*, *op. cit.*, chapter 7, p. 173.

moral freedom; freedom of inquiry and expression;  
 freedom of association in work, recreation  
 and for religious purposes; the freedom of  
 intercourse among nations....<sup>110</sup>

This passage indicates still more clearly the intimate relation between democracy and freedom. It indicates, for example, that freedom may be, after all, the core and life-wire of democracy. For, "all that was best worth conserving in older democratic ideas and ideals" turns out to be but a series or various forms of freedom. However, it does not specify whether democracy or freedom is Dewey's educational ideal, that is, the ideal end of education. This notwithstanding, the intimate relation between democracy and freedom is again emphasized in various articles in Education Today. Dewey states, for example, that "we naturally associate democracy, to be sure, with freedom of action, but freedom of action without freed capacity of thought behind it is only chaos".<sup>111</sup> He advocates the establishment of the democratic principle or meaning in education,<sup>112</sup> and seems to specify this principle or meaning

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<sup>110</sup> John Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society", in Intelligence in the Modern World; John Dewey's Philosophy, ed. by Joseph Ratner. New York: The Modern Library, 1939, p. 425.

<sup>111</sup> John Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in Education Today, ed. by Joseph Ratner, New York: Greenwood, 1969, p. 62. See also Dewey, "Democracy and Educational Administration", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 341, reprinted in Joseph Ratner (ed.), Intelligence in the Modern World; John Dewey's Philosophy. New York: the Modern Library, 1939, p. 404.

<sup>112</sup> John Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in Education Today, ed. by Ratner, p. 73. See also, Dewey, "Democracy and Education in the World of Today", in Ratner (ed.), op. cit., p. 363.

when he states that America cannot endure half free and half slave politically, and therefore she should not perpetuate "dependence upon external authority" in the educational sphere.<sup>113</sup> He maintains that democratic education should be education "in freedom for participation in a free society", or the "preparation of free individuals for intelligent participation in a free society."<sup>114</sup>

In summary, various passages from works by Dewey indicate an intimate relation between democracy and freedom. They therefore indicate that if educative growth is to be explained in terms of freedom at all, it must be in terms of democratic freedom understood as distinguished from the "noble idea of freedom embodied, both openly and disguisedly, in classic philosophies".<sup>115</sup> Dewey maintains that the idea of freedom embodied in classic philosophies is consistent with various forms of absolutism, materialistic or idealistic, and not with democracy. It is an idea of freedom that works for, defends or promotes the principle of authority and of the absolute.<sup>116</sup> This contrast between Dewey's idea of democratic freedom and the idea of freedom that is embodied in classic philosophies does not, however, resolve the problem of determining whether the concept of growth should be explained in terms

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113. Dewey, "Democracy in Education", in Ratner (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 73.

114. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 363.

115. John Dewey, "Philosophy and Democracy", in Characters and Events, ed. by Joseph Ratner, New York: Octagon, 1970 (c 1957), vol. 2, p. 851.

116. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 853.

of freedom or of democracy. It only indicates the intimate connection between democracy and freedom, and distinguishes the kind of freedom that is so related. In order to determine whether the concept of growth should be explained in terms of freedom or of democracy, it would be more appropriate to specify the discussion by locating the intimate relation between democracy and freedom in the context of Dewey's conception of education. And it should be noted from the outset that, within the educational context, Dewey again emphasizes the intimate connection between freedom and democracy,<sup>117</sup> stating that "the American faith in education has been grounded in the belief...that of all the guarantees of free development, education is the surest and the most effective".<sup>118</sup> Grouping together the various forms of freedom that characterize democracy under the title of "intellectual freedom" or "moral freedom", he maintains that "the ultimate stay and support of these liberties are the schools".<sup>119</sup> He expects the schools to turn out individuals "who will stand actively and aggressively for the cause of free intelligence in meeting social problems and attaining the goal of freedom."<sup>120</sup> The schools should promote

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117. Vide John Dewey, "Academic Freedom", in Intelligence in the Modern World, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 721.

118. Dewey, *ibid.*, p. 722.

119. *id.*, *op. cit.*, p. 723.

120. *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 724.

a liberation that does not only take the form of "economic freedom", but also of "cultural freedom".<sup>121</sup> Finally, Dewey lists the role or advantages of freedom in realizing individual potentialities for the attainment of social progress, and states that "the schools should be the ceaseless guardians and creators" of eternal vigilance, which "is the price of the conservation and extension of freedom".<sup>122</sup> In his view, intellectual servility or subjection befits authoritarian non-democratic societies. The democratic society, by contrast, must aim at, allow and defend intellectual freedom in its philosophy of education.<sup>123</sup> As a matter of fact, Dewey states more explicitly that "since freedom of mind and freedom of expression are the root of all freedom, to deny freedom in education is a crime against democracy."<sup>124</sup> It seems apparent, therefore, that Dewey emphasizes freedom as both the ideal end and method of education. It is the ethical ideal, the democratic ideal, as well as the educational ideal, that is, the ideal end that guides the process of education as well as the method of education. But it has to be viewed as an ideal within the context of democracy understood as a way of life. For, it is within such a context that it aids and furthers the conception of growth as freedom. It is pertinent to note that this conception of growth as freedom goes further

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121. loc. cit.

122. Dewey, op. cit., p. 725.

123. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 305.

124. John Dewey, "The Social Significance of Academic Freedom", in Education Today, ed. by Joseph Ratner, p. 322.

than Callan's attempt to "explicitly build the democratic ideal into his (Dewey's) growth theory".<sup>125</sup> For, the democratic ideal of freedom is not only or merely inserted or built into Dewey's concept of growth, but the concept of growth is actually viewed as freedom, interpreted in terms of freedom, or is understood as freedom, rather than just by reference to freedom or democracy.

In summary of this chapter, the conception of growth as freedom apparently has certain advantages over other attempts that have been made to explain the concept. With respect to Emerson and Roth, for example, who emphasize self-development, self-realization or self-perfection as providing a focus and unity for understanding the concept of growth, it has the advantage of being a more inclusive category because self-realization, self-perfection or self-development turns out to be just one aspect of freedom. Moreover, the conception of growth as freedom specifies and clarifies the ideal, even if an unsatisfactory one, in terms of which an individual could be said to grow educationally. In other words, it specifies the ideal of growth, which is lacking in the other attempts to clarify Dewey's concept of growth. That ideal, as the present investigation has shown, is freedom understood as consisting of three aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. Nevertheless, the conception of growth as freedom does not purport to have solved all the problems, difficulties and ambiguities that are associated with Dewey's concept of growth; especially those that can be considered to be

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125. Callan, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. On the contrary, and especially because the conception is consistent with Dewey's philosophy in general, it reflects and makes more specific, precise, or more obvious such inherent problems, difficulties and ambiguities. For example, it reflects and makes more obvious the rather dualistic tension between fact and value, the individual and the society, and between Dewey's use of a metaphysics and his ode to science, which are all inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. Indeed, the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom emphasizes the properly metaphysical, logical, epistemological and axiological components of Dewey's philosophy, and thereby helps to identify Dewey as a true philosopher.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The ambiguities, problems and difficulties that obscure Dewey's concept of growth have led to several complaints, as well as to several attempts to determine how the concept should be interpreted or understood. Some writers maintain that the concept is severally explicated in Dewey's statements concerning intellectual, social and moral development, as well as self-development. They also maintain that some unity and focus are needed for understanding the concept, and that some ideal must be specified as guiding the process of growth, or as the ideal in terms of which an individual can be considered to grow educationally. Other writers indicate indirectly that there is a close relation between Dewey's concept of growth and his notion of freedom, and thereby imply that the concept of growth can probably be advantageously explained in terms of freedom. The present writer investigates this hypothesis by first expounding briefly Dewey's basic philosophy as the framework within which this interpretation of the concept of growth is to be effected. The implications of Dewey's theory of knowledge, logic and metaphysics for the interpretation of the concept of growth in terms of freedom, are indicated. An analysis is then carried out, of Dewey's concepts of growth and freedom respectively. It is indicated that the concept of growth has three main traits, namely, intellectual development, social development, and moral development. The concept of freedom also consists of three major aspects, namely, the natural freedom of self-determination, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization, and the acquired freedom of self-perfection. The three traits of growth and the three aspects of freedom are correlative. Thus, intellectual development correlates with the natural freedom of self-determination

because both emphasize the development of intelligence. Social development correlates with the circumstantial freedom of self-realization mainly because both focus on interaction between the individual and his environment, whether natural, cultural or both. Moral development and the acquired freedom of self-perfection, on the other hand, are correlative mainly because they emphasize unity, interaction or the maintenance of a balance between individual and social elements. Since this correlation between the traits of growth and the aspects of freedom is the result of an analysis of Dewey's concepts of growth and freedom respectively, the present writer maintains that it serves as an evidence, which is found in Dewey, in support of the thesis that his concept of growth can indeed be interpreted in terms of freedom. A similar evidence is derived from putting together Dewey's statements concerning growth with his statements concerning freedom, especially as these statements relate to his conception of the end and method of education. This approach indicates that in both his conception of the end and method of education, Dewey provides sufficient evidence in support of the thesis that his concept of growth can indeed be interpreted in terms of freedom. Such an evidence raises the question whether the concept of growth is, therefore, merely synonymous or coextensive with the concept of freedom, or whether the conception of growth as freedom has any advantages over the various attempts that have been made to explain the concept of growth in terms of its traits, that is, in terms of intellectual, social and moral development.

The present writer posits that it is more advantageous to explain the concept of growth in terms of freedom, than to explain it in terms of its traits alone. It is indicated, for example, that the conception of growth as freedom provides

the unity and focus, which the various attempts to explain the concept in terms of its traits suggest as essential for understanding the concept. The unity and focus are found in the fact that freedom comprises three aspects, which include all the three traits of growth. In this regard, it is pertinent to note that self-realization, which both Roth and Emerson consider as providing the needed unity and focus, is only an aspect of freedom, namely, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. The conception of growth as freedom is therefore more inclusive, and provides a better unity and focus for understanding the concept of growth, than does self-realization or any other trait of growth. Moreover, the conception of growth as freedom does not only provide the unity and focus that are needed for understanding the concept of growth, but it also provides the ideal that guides the process of growth, an ideal which the various attempts that have been made to explain the concept of growth in terms of its traits also suggest as essential for understanding the concept. That ideal is freedom understood as consisting of three main aspects.

In view of Dewey's emphasis that his conception of education does not benefit just any society, but only democracy understood more as a way of life than as a form of government, freedom is delineated as his democratic ideal, and therefore as the ideal of education that befits his conception of democracy. Further evidence in support of this ideal is found in various statements by Dewey concerning democracy, education and freedom. In other words, sufficient evidence is deduced from Dewey to support the conception of freedom as his democratic ideal, as his ethical ideal, and as his educational ideal, that is, as the ideal according to which an individual can be considered to grow educationally.

The conception of growth as freedom therefore gives a more precise or explicit content to Dewey's educational ideal of growth. Moreover, the interpretation of Dewey's concept of growth in terms of freedom, indicates that one of the major sources of the ambiguities and difficulties that becloud the concept, is Dewey's attempt to transplant the concept of growth from an Aristotelian, metaphysical and rather transcendent framework, in which ultimate ends and values find their appropriate place, to a predominantly biological, psychological or scientific framework, in which ends, values and principles are tentative. This creates, for Dewey, the problem of reconciling fact and value, which the concept of growth had helped to solve in the Aristotelian framework.

However, the delineation of the advantages that are derived from the interpretation of Dewey's concept of growth in terms of freedom, does not necessarily mean that all the problems that are associated with the concept have been resolved, especially those that can be considered to be inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. On the contrary, and especially because the conception of growth as freedom is consistent with Dewey's philosophy in general, it reflects and makes more precise, specific, or more obvious these inherent problems and difficulties. For example, it reflects and makes more obvious the rather dualistic tension between fact and value, the individual and the society, and between Dewey's use of a metaphysics, theory of knowledge, logic, an axiology and a social and political philosophy, and his apparent ode to science and to the scientific experimental method. It is pertinent to point out that these rather dualistic tensions indicate the need for some further research if suitable solutions are to be found to these problems, difficulties and ambiguities that are inherent

to Dewey's philosophy in general. It is also pertinent to point out that the conception of growth as freedom shifts the emphasis from the characterization of Dewey as a philosopher or an advocate of education for growth, to a characterization of him as a philosopher or an advocate of education for freedom. Such a shift of emphasis demands some further research, which can delineate Dewey's distinctive contribution to the understanding of the concept of freedom understood as an educational end or ideal. He could, for example, be compared and contrasted with other philosophers or advocates of education for freedom, such as Jacques Maritain or Boyd H. Bode.

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis interpreted Dewey's concept of growth in terms of freedom in the hope that such an interpretation would provide the unity, focus and ideal that the literature on the concept suggests as essential for understanding it. In order to provide the framework within which the interpretation was carried out, Dewey's basic philosophy was expounded, and its implications for the interpretation were indicated. His concepts of growth and freedom were then individually analyzed, and their various traits or aspects were shown to be correlative. Such a correlation was taken as an evidence, which is deduced from Dewey, in support of the thesis that his concept of growth can indeed be interpreted in terms of freedom. Further evidence was deduced by putting together Dewey's statements concerning growth and freedom, especially as these statements relate to his conception of the end and method of education. However, the evidence raises the question whether the concept of growth is, therefore, merely synonymous or coextensive with the concept of freedom, or whether the conception of growth as freedom has any specific advantages over the various attempts that have been made to explain the concept of growth in terms of its traits, that is, in terms of intellectual, social and moral development. The writer posited that the conception of growth as freedom provides the unity, focus and ideal that the literature on the concept of growth suggests as essential for understanding the concept. Freedom was specified as Dewey's democratic ideal, and therefore as the educational ideal that befits his conception

of democracy. In other words, freedom was indicated as the ideal according to which an individual can be considered to grow educationally. Unity and focus were found, on the other hand, in the fact that freedom consists of three main aspects, which include the three traits of growth. For example, self-realization which Roth and Emerson consider as providing the needed unity and focus, was shown to be only an aspect of freedom, namely, the circumstantial freedom of self-realization. The conception of growth as freedom was therefore indicated as being more inclusive, and as providing a better unity and focus for understanding the concept of growth, than does self-realization or any other trait of growth.

It was suggested, however, that some further research is needed in order to reconcile the dualistic tension between fact and value, the individual and the society, and between Dewey's use of metaphysics and his ode to science, which the interpretation reveals as inherent to Dewey's philosophy in general. Some further research was also suggested as necessary to compare and contrast Dewey with other philosophers or advocates of education for freedom, in order to delineate his distinctive contribution to the understanding of the concept of freedom understood as an educational end or ideal. This was considered to be necessary because the conception of growth as freedom shifts the emphasis from the characterization of Dewey as a philosopher or an advocate of education for growth, to a characterization of him as a philosopher or an advocate of education for freedom.