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OF JOHN DEWEY

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THE PARADOX OF MAN IN THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF JOHN DEWEY

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In the study of ideas, it is necessary to remember, that insistence on hard-headed clarity issues from sentimental feelings, as it were a mist, cloaking the perplexities of fact. Insistence on clarity at all costs is based on sheer superstition as to the mode in which human intelligence functions. Our reasonings grasp at straws for premises and float on gossamers for deductions.

Alfred North Whitehead

## PREFACE

This dissertation is concerned with a paradox. It is concerned with illustrating the paradox of man in the philosophical thought of John Dewey. This is not to be taken as merely an exercise of philosophical criticism on the written ideas of Dewey, their formulations, assumptions and contradictions. Nor is it merely an effort to "read between the lines" of the written ideas in order to ascertain a hidden or implicit formulation of a theory of man which does not reflect the method and metaphysical position used by Dewey. The object here is to do both--in the light of the whole purpose of John Dewey, the man and the philosopher. It is in such a procedure that the paradox appears. One comes to ask about Dewey: is he primarily of philosopher of man, or is he basically a thinker who perpetuates a naturalistic world view, and only then focuses on the problems of men through its methods? There is, however, no clear answer.

Perhaps in no man's thought are there clear answers to such a question, for to care about man and his situation is the potential which must necessarily initiate and support the efforts of a philosopher of man. To act on such a care is to specifically define man's situation and to assume a

concrete method for his development. To act on one's care is to limit its potential of action to a specific sphere and method. Philosophy criticizes, logically, sphere and method; it can but feel and guess at man's care for man. John Dewey is criticized here in terms of sphere and method; the overall meaning of his life and work, however, must be judged by a much broader criterion.

Dewey quoted William James as saying the "every philosopher is motivated by some bogey in the background that he wants to destroy." Dewey agreed, and added that "failure to realize what it is that a philosopher feels the pressure of and wants to get rid of is one of the main sources of the infertility of philosophical controversy."<sup>1</sup> For Dewey this "bogey" was the problems of men, expressed in relation to two historical schools dealing with these problems. Dewey, as a student, first reacted to the disintegrative effect on modern civilization of fractured individualism born of the industrial age and philosophically backed by the scientific atomism of empirical philosophy which accompanied the expanding capitalistic/industrial scene. Dewey accepted an Hegelian stance of idealistic organicism to unite the atomistic elements of the empirical school, but later reacted to the idealistic scheme because of what it implied for man in relation to the greater emphasis on the universal or the Absolute. Dewey came to

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<sup>1</sup>John Dewey, "The Philosophy of William James," South-  
ern Review, Vol. II, No. 3 (Winter, 1937), p. 453.



feel that such an idealism once again lost sight of that very essence which he sought to save: the integrated, but individual human being. Only after Dewey had rejected the extremes of these two schools of thought did he take what he considered the more valuable elements of both and seek to propound a philosophy of organic naturalism.<sup>2</sup>

It was on the basis of a philosophy of organic naturalism, developed for the purpose of dealing with the problems of human beings, that Dewey called for the reconstruction of philosophy. Pre-scientific philosophies dealt with the problem of knowing Reality, of finding the eternal. Post-scientific thought dealt more with astronomy, physics, biology, anthropology and historical learning:

Nevertheless, the most striking fact about these modern philosophies is the extent in which they exhibit the influence of the postmedieval movements in politics, industry and science, but without having surrendered the old, the classic, view that the chief business of philosophy is search for a kind of Reality that is more fundamental and more ultimate than are or than can be the facts disclosed by the sciences.<sup>3</sup>

Dewey asserted that this was a "dualism" resulting in an emphasis on both the material world and on the "true" and "eternal" world of final truths. This, in turn, caused an emphasis

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<sup>2</sup>The specific development is recorded in this writer's M. A. thesis, "The Early Development of the Conceptions of Social Psychology and the Social Organism in the Philosophy of John Dewey" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>John Dewey, The Problems of Men (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 6.

on the conditions of knowing, and the problem of knowledge became the chief "problem" of philosophy.

The more actual knowings flourished, the more philosophies, mutually contradictory among themselves, occupied themselves with furnishing 'Foundations for Knowledge,' instead of employed what is known to direct it in discovering and performing its own task.<sup>4</sup>

The search for knowledge was primary, for in a dualism the problem of one element knowing about the other demands a common ground--a lack of which is precisely that which originally instituted the dualism. The immensity of the problem called for basic occupation with the conditions of knowing, and not of its consequences. Using knowledge for the intelligent conduct of the affairs of human life--wisdom slowly receded into the background of philosophical thought, Dewey asserted, and philosophy came to occupy itself with a task which is no longer humanly pertinent.<sup>5</sup> However, for him philosophy had to deal with the deeply human and moral issues of the present time--it had to deal with the consequences of knowledge and not exclusively with the conditions of it. Dewey proposed, therefore, that inquiry should devote itself to systematic investigation of the consequences of science, its state of development, and to the question about why it had not been applied to institutions which affected the conditions of human life. While science had been used for economic purposes, it had not been employed to determine freely the moral, humane

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

ends of practical conditions and the actual state of ends and values.<sup>6</sup> Why science? Dewey answered that it was the "best tested resource that inquiry has at command . . ." and that the problems of men "demand the most systematic reflective attention that can be given."<sup>7</sup> Dewey acknowledged his almost "childlike" trust in science, but considered that those who had accused him of having too much trust in it did not understand that scientific method had not even yet begun to reach its maturity--and it would not reach such maturity until it was applied to "all aspects of all matters of human concern."<sup>8</sup> Dewey was careful to point out that his use of science, under the names of pragmatism, experimentalism and instrumentalism, was different from that of other philosophies of science, and he made reference to the logical positivists. The latter believed the methods of science were the only acceptable methods, but they took such a strict view of scientific verifiability that value statements and statements of ends valuative in character were not verifiable and therefore not allowable in the process of knowledge. Dewey noted that this reduced science and its achievements to mere means for ends not reflected upon by any rational method, thus loosing devastating irresponsibility upon society.<sup>9</sup> From this criticism, one

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.      <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 11. (Emphasis added).

<sup>9</sup>Cf. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1930), pp. 257-258.

understands Dewey's emphasis on the necessity of the availability of science in the areas of human morals and values, and specifically in the "projection of liberal hypotheses as to ways in which the required social change may be brought about."<sup>10</sup> Science is responsible not only for means, but for ends as well; in fact, the definitions of ends and means become blurred by using the same empirical criterion of their verifiability.

It is this emphasis on the viability of the methods of science in the realm of human morals, values and ends, and its subsequent blurring of traditional distinctions, which becomes the focal point of the critique of Dewey's sphere and method. Applying the scientific method, even quite broadly conceived, to human morals, values and ends has the effect of "flattening" certain characteristics of the activities of man to conform with the demands of method. While Dewey was aware of this process, the full implications were not thoroughly developed. There is an example of foreboding import in Problems of Men. Dewey defended himself against the charge of "relativity" and pointed out that this was characteristic of all scientific inquiry. "For the latter also finds its only workable 'standards' are provided by the actual connections of

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<sup>10</sup> Dewey, Problems of Men, p. 11. Also cf. John Dewey, Logic, Theory of Inquiry (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 503.

things; connections which, when they are generalized, are given the name of space-time."<sup>11</sup> Dewey then wrote:

Dependence upon space-time connections now marks all the victories won by scientific inquiry. It is silly to suppose they terminate in mere particulars. On the contrary, they constantly move toward the general, provided only the generalizations have to do with wider and wider connections, so as not to swim in wordy vacuity. And so it is with a philosophy that employs the methods and conclusions of authentic inquiry as instruments for examination of values that now operate in regulation of human habits, institutions and efforts. No span of connections in space-time is too wide or too long, provided they are relevant to judgment of issues that are urgently here-and-now.<sup>12</sup>

Scientific method, no matter how broadly conceived, deals with empirical verification in the space-time world. There was an implicit assumption in Dewey that human values, moral and aesthetic, and human ends, purposes, were fully available to the space-time methods of empirical science. No matter if science is conceived experimentally and instrumentally as "our best resource for solving problems" and not an absolute in itself, it is still used as such--thus defining the objects of its use within the assumptions of its own procedure, i.e., the space-time empirical method. When one considers the naturalistic world view which Dewey assumed to support the broad claims of science, one notices how close science does come to an absolute value--the very thing which Dewey elsewhere was concerned with criticizing through the "relativist" method of science itself. It was an unfortunate choice of words in

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 13. (Emphasis added).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

this discussion in Problems of Men, where Dewey said man's "intellectual instrumentalities . . . need sterilizing," which causes one to ask just how sterile the concept of man and his value structure has become when defined solely through reference to the instruments of empirical science.<sup>13</sup>

It is the purpose of this dissertation to explore how Dewey defined the world in which man lives and how this definition reflects on man himself and on his values, morals, aesthetics and ends. Why did Dewey, whose primary care was evidently man and not cosmology, define man so far down the ladder in a cosmological model? The possibility is here explored that man, for the man John Dewey, was not merely or simply the creature defined by the method he assumed in order to solve man's problems, but that there was, indeed, a second view of man not at all presupposed by the methodological considerations. Through such a study, one begins to perceive the paradox of man in the philosophy of John Dewey.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

THE PARADOX OF MAN IN THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF JOHN DEWEY

CHAPTER I

SCIENCE AND THE CONCEPTUAL SCHEME

The distinction between science and philosophy is not a sharp one in the thought of John Dewey. "For what 'science' means is simply the most authentic knowledge of nature, man, and society that is possible at any given time by means of the methods and techniques then and there available."<sup>1</sup> Philosophy adds nothing to this; it is but another name for it, and it is relatively unimportant which name is used as long as the process is one in which the most systematic reflective attention can be given.<sup>2</sup> If any difference can be made between the two terms, it is that philosophy is concerned with "the values and ends that known facts and principles should subserve." But since this concern is only toward action in effecting the ends

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, "The Determination of Ultimate Values or Aims Through Antecedent or a Priori Speculation or Through Pragmatic or Empirical Inquiry," Thirty-seventh NSSE Yearbook, Part II, ed. by G. M. Whipple (Bloomington, Ill.: Public School Publishing Co., 1938), p. 473.

<sup>2</sup> John Dewey, "Introduction," The Problems of Men, p. 12.

and values in question and not in establishing any superior knowledge or reality, the criterion of the method of science is as relevant here as in establishing known facts and principles.<sup>3</sup>

The concern with showing the relevance of science in more areas than it has been traditionally assigned is philosophic, but the way that this is done and the criterion of success are those of science. Science and philosophy are both inquiry--inquiry concerned with ascertaining and experimentally modifying the activity of things in terms of consequences. It is not unduly concerned with the conditions of knowledge, per se,<sup>4</sup> nor is there undue stress on the conditions of the method of science itself and the scheme of the universe which supports its claim to be relevant in all physical and human conditions: the naturalistic explanatory scheme of reality.

When science is used by man to know and manipulate the physical world about him, little or no judgment is made about man himself. In such situations man is the scientist, the doer, the purposeful agent who describes the ends the means to which science provides. If science is viewed as nothing more than this, the horizon of man's meaning and activity is only partially described by empirical methods, and the possibility of other methods knowing and judging is not only left open, but

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<sup>3</sup>Dewey, "The Determination of Ultimate Values," p. 474.

<sup>4</sup>Dewey, "Introduction," Problems of Men, p. 7.



encouraged. In a situation as is thus described, the only conflict between different portions of the horizon of possibilities of man is found when one method pronounces itself adequate to the understanding of all things. It claims to be the absolute judge of reality and proceeds to define all activities on its own criteria. Unfortunately, the history of man's thought is filled with much confusion and little positive benefit for demanding existential problems. The conflict of assumed supernatural absolutes, usually in the form of religious dogma, but also in political, economic, and social dogma, has made progress in these areas of man's concern difficult, if not impossible. It has also made the possibility of such horizons existing peacefully side by side seem highly remote. If only one could be made dominant, and the others subservient, then the progress of man could be assured; but in history, such an attitude has been precisely the cause of the struggle of absolutes, not its conclusion. Furthermore, the practical results of any absolute, when given existential authority, have not been conspicuously successful in bettering the condition of man.

Such was the condition of thought which Dewey saw himself confronting. His solution rose out of the basis of practical need in the condition of man, not out of an allegiance to a historical principle for its own sake. To the questions: "Which absolute worked best in the past?" and "Which imposition of a general category proved itself most adequate for

the needs of human conditions?" Dewey did not find or seek an answer. What he did find was the crippling consequences of any supernatural absolute, in terms of theories of reality as well as in terms of methods. Generally, Dewey saw that most efforts in gaining knowledge of this world were hindered by the "necessity" of holding supernatural views about reality which were first developed because of a lack of method for the acquisition of existential knowledge, but later for some other purpose, usually the authority of custom or tradition, religious and secular.<sup>5</sup> Science, the method without absolutes or supernatural appeal, attracted Dewey because it did not propose to judge without rigid verifiability procedures based on

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<sup>5</sup>"Here is the negative fact that renders argument for the necessity of supernatural intervention to effect significant betterment only just another instance of the old, old inference to the supernatural from the basis of ignorance. We lack, for example, knowledge of the relation of life to inanimate matter. Therefore supernatural intervention is assumed to have effected the transition from brute to man. We do not know the relation of the organism--the brain and nervous system--to the occurrence of thought. Therefore, it is argued, there is a supernatural link. We do not know the relation of causes to results in social matters, and consequently we lack means of control. Therefore, it is inferred, we must resort to supernatural control. Of course, I make no claim to knowing how far intelligence may and will develop in respect to social relations. But one thing I think I do know. The needed understanding will not develop unless we strive for it. The assumption that only supernatural agencies can give control is a sure method of retarding this effort. It is as sure to be a hindering force now with respect to social intelligence, as the similar appeal was earlier an obstruction in the development of physical knowledge." John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: The Yale University Press, 1934), p. 76. Cf. John Dewey, Theory of Valuation, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, Volume II, No. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 61.

the natural situation, and because it had proved to be the one method which consistently solved the problems with which it was confronted.<sup>6</sup>

Science was a type of inquiry for Dewey; the specific procedure of the inquiry defined the method of science. This method is also named logic. By defining the method of scientific inquiry as logic, Dewey expanded the availability of science to areas beyond merely the physical sciences and the more recent social sciences. He made available to science all areas of human purpose and meaning and the valuative structures which were substantiated by them. These areas were objects of thought, and logic concerned the reasonableness of thought. It was an assumption on Dewey's part that such a logic encompassed the full realm of human valuation and purposefulness, but he made this assumption for a specific reason and on the basis of a particular world view.

Dewey denied that logic and method were two different things, but maintained that they were the same, neither presupposing the other. Some, he said, thought that a specific method had to be constructed on the basis of an already existing logic. But this was not true, just as it was not true that logic, having created a method, must then continually criticize the method on the logic's given criteria. This was but another form of absolutism. Rather, Dewey thought, the

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. Dewey, Logic, Theory of Inquiry, p. 61 et passim.

growth of logic and method was an organic process in which each created itself and the other, and criticized itself and the other.<sup>7</sup> Logic, as the scientific method of inquiry, was not imposed upon methodology from outside, a priori, but it was to be seen pragmatically, as part and parcel of the evolution of thought. The hypothesis which Dewey assumed and was concerned with proving in Logic, The Theory of Inquiry, was "that the logical principles involved in scientific method have themselves arisen in the progressive course of inquiry."<sup>8</sup>

The problematic situation was the basic explanatory scheme in Dewey's thought. It was from this situation that man's intellectual and valiative activities sprang. Dewey continually began discussions of particular activities by pointing to their origin in the problematic or doubtful situation, and the case was not different when he discussed inquiry itself: "If inquiry begins in doubt, it terminates in the institution of conditions which remove need for doubt."<sup>9</sup> The result of the inquiry was the settled condition of objective subject-matter, together with the readiness to act upon it

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7. Cf. John Dewey, How We Think (Enlarged ed.; New York: D. C. Heath & Co., 1933), for a general, less technical statement of this hypothesis and the development of the concepts upon which it is based. Dewey subtitles this revised statement of his original 1910 edition as "A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process."

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

overtly or in imagination. The result was something of warranted assertibility, not of belief, when used as a personal belief which was settled (no longer open to inquiry) or of knowledge when this term was used to mean something with its meaning apart from connection with and reference to inquiry. "The position here taken holds that since every special case of knowledge is constituted as the outcome of some special inquiry, the conception of knowledge as such can only be a generalization of the properties discovered to belong to conclusions which are the outcomes of inquiry."<sup>10</sup> Dewey thus held that there was no meaning apart from the inquiry, for such would imply a cessation of inquiry and an importation of a priori beliefs or an unwarranted absolutizing of operational knowledge. "The attainment of settled beliefs is a progressive matter; there is no belief so settled as not to be exposed to further inquiry."<sup>11</sup> Dewey held that inquiry and its methods were the primary and ultimate source of logical subject matter, an idea he attributed to C. S. Peirce.

The process of inquiry is rational as well as descriptive and empirical. Since inquiry starts in a doubtful or problematic situation, ends as well as means are automatically subject matter for consideration. That is, consequences as well as means are drawn into the scope of scientific endeavor. Therefore, "through examination of the relations which exist

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

between means (method) employed and conclusions attained as their consequence, reasons are discovered why some methods succeed and other methods fail."<sup>12</sup> Reason or rationality, then, is not an affair of fixed first principles as ultimate premises introduced from outside the basic problematic situation. "Reasonableness or rationality is, according to the position here taken, as well as in its ordinary usage, an affair of the relation of means and consequences."<sup>13</sup> Reason exists here-now in the particular relation. It is irrational, and, in moral situations, evil to choose some other means than the means which will establish the end-in-view that will consummate the problem of that situation, or to work toward some other end-in-view than the one which consummates the problematic of that situation.

The hypothesis which is generated by inquiry toward specifically defining the problem in the doubtful situation and describing a solution, is, in itself, neither true nor false. It is an ideal, and like reason, not established or judged from outside the problematic situation itself. It is rather judged upon the fruit of its consequences. "The deductive conclusion [from a principle or an hypothesis] is used to investigate and direct operations of experimental observation." Then Dewey noted that "the observable consequences of these operations in their systematic correlation with one another

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

finally determine the scientific worth of the deduced principle."<sup>14</sup> Dewey's emphasis was not on the correctness of the process of deduction, but on the scientifically observable consequences of that deduction. This is an exceedingly important point, for it defines what the characteristic of war-ranged assertibility was for Dewey: namely, empirical observation. Reason, ideal hypotheses and general principles are not denied, but in themselves they are valueless.<sup>15</sup> Only in an empirical verification of their existential consequences is their worth judged. It is important to keep in mind that this process of inquiry--the scientific method--is that which Dewey found capable of dealing with not only empirical problems, but also with social problems and the purposes and valuations of man.

Of primary importance in inquiry and the problematic situation is the theory of habit. Life is impossible without ways of action sufficiently general to be properly named habits, and every act of thought or inference is either expressing an old habit or initiating a new one.

At the outset, the habit that operates in an inference is purely biological. It operates without our being aware of it. We are aware at most of particular acts and particular consequences. Later, we are aware not only what is done from time to time but of how it is done. Attention to the way of doing is, moreover, indispensable to control of what is done.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 11.      <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 12. Cf. below pp. 109-114, et passim.

Thus Dewey, after Peirce, traced the biological origin of the theory of inquiry, first through observation of acts and consequences, then through realization of the relations between acts (means) and consequences. It is at this point that inquiry actually begins, for at this point theories or hypotheses are constructed about means/consequences and the ability to change them for varying conclusions. When those means with satisfactory consequences are generalized with regard to their form, and not the specific content, one has a general method or logic, through which further problematic situations may be handled. Logic, or method, based on empirical verification, is thus a growing, organic conception. Dewey had faith in its potential for growth. In his opinion, science and its method were still in their childhood, and their maturity depended on their being applied to all concerns, especially those of man's purposive and valiative activity.

When an organic, natural model is taken for the development of inquiry and logic, there is no ontological separation made between the form of the method, the logical, and its content, the material. Logical principles or forms are not premises from which reality is deduced; rather "they are conditions to be satisfied such that knowledge of them provides a principle of direction and of testing."<sup>17</sup> Logic is then, itself, subject to growth and change through the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 13.



empirical investigation of its consequences. Logic is the method of inquiry in a specific problem; the empirical consequences of this inquiry may and do require changes in the method of inquiry such that satisfactory consequences are more easily attainable. Any absolute principle of method would destroy the synthesis of method and consequence.

In speaking of the primary relationship of the organism to the environment, Dewey denied that, strictly speaking, the organism and the environment were "given" as independent things and that interaction was a third and dependent thing which finally intervenes. The integration of the organism and the environment is a complete thing, a whole. To speak of "integration" as an assimilation of separate entities is to confuse the subject, for Dewey described organism and environment in terms of one another. The organism is a part of the larger world and is an organism only in terms of the active connections with its environment. Environment is also characterized only as it interacts with the organism.<sup>18</sup> Thus one understands Dewey as having said that the poles of the relationship of world and organism exist only as they are integrated or related. The relations establish them both, not the other way around. The dynamic nature of things is toward reintegration as long as life continues. The same thing is said of the activity of inquiry, and provides its organic

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34.

basis. Inquiry begins only when the original integration is destroyed. Tension builds, search for new reintegration is started and consummation concludes it. Thus, inquiry has not only a biological basis in that men do it, but it also conforms to the biological form of original integration, disintegration and movement toward a new integration.<sup>19</sup> The process is continual, not merely in the sense of time taken in its process, but also the process itself--the continual transition effected in existential material toward the new integration.<sup>20</sup> The mental operations of logic as method deal both with the material and the symbols of the material, but both are to be seen in the light of the existential conditions and consequences and not in themselves.

Dewey assigned the term "naturalistic" to this approach. He noted that this means there is no breach of continuity between operations of inquiry and biological/physical operations, and that "rational operations grow out of organic activities without being identical with that from which they emerge."<sup>21</sup> These rational operations continue to be relevant only as long as they remain within the naturalistic framework, i.e., are judged consequentially by empirical observation. But "conceptions derived from a mystical faculty of intuition or anything that is so occult as not to be open to public

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 34. The analogy to Hegelian dialectic is obvious.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

inspection and verification (such as the purely psychical for example) are excluded."<sup>22</sup> One cannot overstress, in Dewey's thought, the importance of the organic basis of logic and the requirement that all thought, ideals and reason itself, be finally judged on the basis of existential activity through the verifiability criterion of empirical science.

The basic importance of logic and scientific method--that which makes logic a viable method--is that it is rooted not in intuitive, assumed absolutes, but in the conditions of life itself.

Modification of both organic and environmental energies is involved in life-activity. This organic fact foreshadows learning and discovery, with the consequent out-growth of new needs and new problematic situations. Inquiry, in settling the disturbed relation of organism-environment (which defines doubt) does not merely remove doubt by recurrence to a prior adaptive integration. It institutes new environing conditions that occasion new problems.<sup>23</sup>

The learning that takes place enables the organism to become aware of new and more complex problems. It establishes forms to handle these problems, and it continues to modify those forms as the problems demand. There is no such thing as a final settlement in such a procedure. Then,

. . . in the stage of development marked by the emergence of science, deliberate institution of problems becomes the objective of inquiry. Philosophy, in case it has not lost touch with science, may play an important role in determining formulations of these problems and in suggesting hypothetical solutions.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Dewey noted that when philosophy ceased this endeavor and proposed to find comprehensive and final solutions, it ceased to be inquiry.

Looking at the world from a naturalistic standpoint, as did Dewey with special attention to organic development, the problem of mind-body dualism does not appear. The process Dewey used to show that such a dualism in his thought was impossible is quite interesting, and becomes exceedingly relevant to later discussions. Dewey noted that the "older Greek conception that the difference [between the material and the mental] was one in the type of organization of common materials and processes, was lost from view."<sup>25</sup> Dewey attempted to regain this view by way of analyzing experience. Is experience only of empirical objects (as in scientific verification), or is it merely personal (as a mental or personal state of mine)? This becomes the problem of the relation between material that is observed and subject matter that is conceived or thought of. Is the first only empirical and the second only rational? Dewey answered that "in a proper conception of experience, inference, reasoning and conceptual structures are as experiential as is observation, and that the fixed separation between the former and the latter has no warrant beyond an episode in the history of culture."<sup>26</sup> The position which Dewey took "implies that logic is empirical

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

in that its subject-matter consists of inquiries that are publicly accessible and open to observation."<sup>27</sup>

Dewey did not consider the object experienced and the thought about that object to be anything but two parts of one process: inquiry, or logic. The object itself is secondary, the thought about the object is secondary; but, using them both to change conditions, they are judged by the value of their consequences, and are so judged empirically. Logic or inquiry is thus "experiential in the same way in which the subject-matter and conclusions of any natural science are empirical; experiential in the way any natural science is experiential, that is, as distinct from the merely speculative and from the a priori and intuitional."<sup>28</sup> The facts of the object out there, the fact of our thoughts about it, are not in themselves meaningful, but are so only insofar as they act--what they do. What they do is itself judged empirically. Thus, the fact of a consequence is judged by the same criterion as the fact of an object out there as a condition or means. Thought, too, is judged by this criterion--on material consequences.<sup>29</sup>

This point is reinforced when Dewey speaks of Pure Reason. Pure Reason, or intuition, is supranaturalistic and

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>One is inclined to ask if Dewey has solved the mind-body problem or just denied it by narrowing the concept of mind to fit empirical criteria.

thus when introduced into the field of inquiry in the naturalistic, biological situation, it destroys the continuity of what it is that man does when inquiring.<sup>30</sup> Reason, in itself, had the value for Dewey of anything else taken in itself. That is, it has no positive value. Either the value of an idea is developed out of the biological growth of the situation, or it is introduced ab extra into the situation through appeal to an absolute value or being. Reason itself, and intuition, are such ab extra additions to the problematic situation. Pure Reason is defined as mystical. Dewey seldom used the term "reason," but accepted the term "rational" or "reasonable" if the elements of a logical process were found to have existential, empirical conditions for their fulfillment to the consummation of a problematic situation.

The concept of knowledge is dealt with likewise. It is not a "thing" which exists independent of the knowing situation, but rather knowledge is grounded or verified assertion about particular parts of the environment. Knowledge is a mediated process; there is no immediate knowledge. Immediate knowledge as a concept denies, again, the process of an organic life situation. Knowledge is also "understanding" in the sense that it is a "seizing or grasping, intellectually, without questioning. But it is a product, mediated, through certain organic mechanisms of retention and habit, and it

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<sup>30</sup>Dewey, Logic, pp. 24-25. Cf. John Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Opencourt Pub., 1926), pp. 67-68, 435-36.

presupposes prior experiences and mediated conclusions drawn from them."<sup>31</sup> The specific object of attention in a situation is an object of knowledge, but it is not complete within itself without continual and final reference to the situation in which it is found. "It is only when an object of focal observation is regarded as an object of knowledge in isolation that there arises the notion that there are two kinds of knowledge, and two kinds of objects or knowledge, so opposed to each other that philosophy must either choose which is 'real' or find some way of reconciling their respective 'realities'."<sup>32</sup> Knowledge in itself, for its own sake, or introduced ab extra into a situation as a premise, just as Pure Reason in itself, was rejected by Dewey. Again, the criterion of this rejection is finally that such an introduction destroys the natural, biological continuity of the situation and provides that nonempirical facts (the existence of which Dewey did not deny) be judged on some other criteria than their arising from and being judged by empirical conditions.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

## CHAPTER II

### SCIENCE AND COMMON SENSE

Chapter I was an effort to express the basic issues in Dewey's theoretical philosophy of method found in the Logic. As the book itself is presented in a circular fashion, that is, it continually comes back to previous points to more adequately explain them on the basis of the intervening material, one here follows a similar pattern.<sup>1</sup> Using distinctions made earlier, Dewey turned his attention to one of the more revealing problems in the work: the elaboration of the difference between common sense and scientific inquiry.

In this particular development, one becomes conscious of two distinct usages of the word "science." Dewey had gone to some length in his works to note that science must be used in the social and valiative activities of man. In the Logic he was concerned to show that logic, the theory of inquiry, had grown out of the biological conditions of the organism and its activities through natural processes. The

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey himself notes the circularity of development in this work in its explanation of organic, social naturalism. He preferred to look at it as a "spiral" development, p. 20, et passim. This is not an incorrect assessment of the development of most of his works, and accounts for the equally circular or "spiral" development of this dissertation.



transformation of animal activities into intelligent behavior and the particulars of that continuing process is the study of logic. It is the activity of an organism with its environment noting the irretrievability of overt actions. When such an activity can be rehearsed in symbolic or intellectual terms, overt activity may be foregone if preview of consequences bodes ill.<sup>2</sup> As Dewey explained this process, he used exclusively the empirical verifiability principle and called the whole procedure "science." Perhaps one should be careful to call this an "application of scientific method" because here there is a very definite and limited concept of science qua science apart from the use of scientific method in other areas.

Dewey said that a man dealt in common sense when he thought and adapted his environment around him for immediate, direct involvement now--for pressing problems. On the other hand, scientific inquiry deals with knowledge for its own sake and is not directly practical, but rather is primarily theoretical. Common sense problems "on their very face . . . need to be discriminated from inquiries that are distinctively scientific or that aim at attaining confirmed facts, 'laws' and theories."<sup>3</sup> Common sense problems are such as "constantly arise in the development of the young as they learn to make their way in the physical and social environments in which

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<sup>2</sup>Dewey, Logic, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

they live; they occur and recur in the life-activity of every adult, whether farmer, artisan, professional man, law-maker or administrator; citizens of a state, husband, wife, or parent."<sup>4</sup> Dewey emphasized the ordinary affairs of common life, but equally emphasized that it implied discernment of significance, value, and had a distinctively intellectual content. The basic criterion of common sense inquiry is that it deal with "use and enjoyment." Common sense also deals with the group, the social or common problems and meanings. Common sense problems "have something of the same ultimacy in immediacy for a group that 'sensations' and 'feelings' have for an individual in his contact with surrounding objects."<sup>5</sup> Dewey emphasized the regulative and normative qualities to which common sense problems address themselves. The concern with quality in general is the concern of common sense inquiry. "It is by discernment of qualities that the fitness and capacity of things and events for use is decided . . . ."<sup>6</sup> But common sense is in relation to specific social and cultural groups and varies in content from age to nation. In the strictest sense, science qua science does not so vary, according to the principle of the community of scholars who may look at the same objects of inquiry in the same way with the same results.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

Common sense inquiries are concerned with qualitative matters and operations in distinction from strict scientific inquiries. The fundamental difference is "that between significances and meanings that are determined in reference to pretty direct existential application and those that are determined on the ground of their systematic relations of coherence and consistency with one another."<sup>7</sup> Common sense inquiry deals with the qualitative use and enjoyment of the environment. "On the other hand, both the history of science and the present state of science prove that the goal of the systematic relationship of facts and conceptions to one another is dependent upon elimination of the qualitative as such and upon reduction to nonqualitative formulation."<sup>8</sup>

If left at this, there is a definite difference between the two types of inquiry. But in the existential world of continuity, this is not the case, for scientific subject matter and methods grow out of common sense concerns in practical uses and enjoyments and then are again used in common sense inquiry "in a way that enormously refines, expands and liberates the contents and the agencies at the disposal of common sense."<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the specific and limited concept of strict science is only an intermediate, instrumental device. Problems occur in life activity and are inherently

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 65.      <sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 66. Cf, below, p. 59, this statement to that of A. N. Whitehead's description of this same process.

qualitative in nature. Movement to a satisfactory conclusion demands proper hypotheses and use of empirical fact. Science qua science provides this, but nothing more. Common sense, then, uses and enjoys the benefits of the facts and hypotheses of strict science. Nevertheless, the ambiguous usage of the term "science" is everywhere apparent for Dewey continually called for the use of "science" in human relationships; for example:

In the region of highest importance to common sense, namely, that of moral, political, economic ideas and beliefs, and the methods of forming and confirming them, science has had even less effect. Conceptions and methods in the field of human relationships are in much the same state as were the beliefs and methods of common sense in relation to physical nature before the rise of experimental science. These considerations fix the meaning of the statement that the difference that now exists between common sense and science is a social, rather than a logical, matter.<sup>10</sup>

How much difference is there, really, between the strict definition of science which Dewey proposed, and the broader science which he asserted must replace belief in irrational, absolute and a priori considerations in social life? The problem is created when one considers that Dewey proposed common sense more fully appropriate the empirical method of strict, nonqualitative science for the qualitative and practical needs of common sense. One looks to the problematic situation scheme for an answer. Any problem involves qualitative judgment, and the object of inquiry here is to change

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

the existential conditions such that the problem is consummated and life activity proceeds smoothly once again. It is a matter of empirical method that such an operation be successful, and it is judged so on the empirically verifiable consequences of the movement toward its fulfillment. This method Dewey called "science."

One of the steps of the inquiry is to ascertain just exactly what the problem is and to draw from experience of scientific law and concrete fact to establish an hypothesis. (This step is an appeal to what Dewey referred to as "strict science," in its function of dealing exclusively with the quantitative facts of existence.) Then the inquiry proceeds to use these quantitative and abstract facts and relations in a qualitative situation toward the solution of the original problem. In short, there seem to be two sorts of science or scientific method here, the one dealing with strictly quantitative material, the other with both the quantitative and qualitative. But Dewey did not really consider this a problem:

Two aspects of the disintegration which creates the semblance of complete opposition and conflict [between science and common sense] will be noted. One of them is the fact . . . that common sense is concerned with a field that is dominantly qualitative, while science is compelled by its own problem and goals to state its subject-matter in terms of magnitude and other mathematical relations which are non-qualitative. The other fact is that since common sense is concerned, directly and indirectly, with problems of use and enjoyment, it is inherently teleological. Science, on the other hand, has progressed by elimination of 'final causes' from every domain

with which it is concerned, substituting measured correspondences of change. It operates, to use the old terminology, in terms of 'efficient causation,' irrespective of ends and values. Upon the basis of the position here taken, these differences are due to the fact that different types of problems demand different modes of inquiry for their solution, not to any ultimate division in existential subject-matter.<sup>11</sup>

While Dewey nowhere denied that the existential subject matter of strict science and common sense were the same, in almost every work he affirmed that the necessary task of science was precisely in defining values, morals and purposes-- in a word, qualities. One need but take the "Introduction" to Problems of Men, as noted in the Preface here, as an example of the little patience Dewey had with a philosophy of science which proposed that science was merely a means to other method's qualitative ends.<sup>12</sup> Dewey, in rejection of such a position, noted that his own position

. . . affirms that the purpose and business of philosophy is wholly with that part of the historic tradition called search for wisdom--namely, search for the ends and values that give direction to our collective human activities. It holds that not grasp of eternal and universal Reality but use of the methods and conclusions of our best knowledge, that called scientific, provides the means for conducting this search. It holds that limitations which now exist in this use are to be removed by means of extension of the ways of tested knowing that define science from physical and physiological matters to social and distinctly human affairs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Dewey, Problems of Men, pp. 8-13, et passim. Dewey is doubtlessly referring to the logical positivists here.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

Dewey maintained the division between the two sorts of "science" throughout the Logic, despite the fact that it seemed in contradiction to the broader idea of science that he generally held. He summarized his position in the Logic by noting:

In and of itself, the existential world is such that an unlimited variety of selective discriminations is possible. A problem decides the selection which is actually instituted in any given case. In what is called common sense, the problem is that of use-enjoyment. In science the generic problem is promotion of controlled inquiry. Since the required control can be obtained only through the intermediations of abstract interrelated conceptions, inductive existential determinations are conducted with constant reference to institution and application of conceptions deductively interrelated with one another, while the conceptions are chosen and ordered with reference to ultimate existential application.<sup>14</sup>

Yet, no matter how abstract and quantitative is the strict definition of science here proposed, it too must be, finally, practical and applicable to existential conditions. There is, indeed, no inquiry whatsoever which does not involve judgments of practice, and such judgments are evaluative and therefore qualitative in nature. Dewey said that the "conduct of scientific inquiry, whether physical or mathematical, was a mode of practice; the working scientist was a practitioner above all else, and was constantly engaged in making practical judgments: decisions as to what to do and what means to employ in doing it."<sup>15</sup> Further, Dewey explicitly noted that

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<sup>14</sup> Dewey, Logic, p. 481.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

. . . judgments of practice are not a particular kind of judgment in the sense that they can be put over against other kinds, but are an inherent phase of judgment itself. . . . The identity of valuation judgment with judgments of practice is implicitly recognized in scientific inquiry in the necessity of experiment for determination of data and for the use of ideas and conceptions--including principles and laws--as directive hypotheses.<sup>16</sup>

The difference here between strict science dealing with only quantitative facts and common sense inquiry dealing with qualitative judgments is blurred by the use of a scientific method explicitly dealing with purposes, consequences, as well as means and conditions. Common sense is concerned with the quality and value of empirical facts which have also quantitative features in that they are objects available to empirical method. Science, defined strictly, deals with only the quantitative facts and relations of empirical objects, but in doing so evaluates them in terms of the purposes of the inquiry. In the final analysis, the qualitative and quantitative cannot be separated, for the naturalistic world view which Dewey accepted demands that every activity be seen in the light of existential transformation and consequence.<sup>17</sup> For this reason, throughout the remainder of this dissertation, the term "science" refers to the empirical method of warranted assertibility which is in continual growth in terms of organic development. It is that broader definition which is a direct deduction from Dewey's naturalistic world view--

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-180.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 220 fn.



in which distinctions of common sense inquiry, strict science, value, ethics and aesthetics are all drawn together in the organic, natural continuity of the world view. Thus there, theoretically, but one method inquiry: the logic which rests upon the growth of symbolic and intellectual capabilities of man through experience and verified in terms of empirical consequences of continued growth. Every part singled out for specific distinction and inquiry--as is Dewey's discussion of common sense and strict scientific inquiry--is finally but an instrumentality of the whole, and judged finally in terms of its value to the growth of the whole.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>This conclusion seems borne out by Dewey's general usage of the term "science" throughout the major works--and even in the greater part of the Logic itself. Cf. John Dewey, The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. by J. Ratner (New York: Modern Library, 1939), pp. 458-460 and especially pp. 631ff.

## CHAPTER III

### SCIENCE AND THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

To this point, little mention has been made of the social environment which Dewey considered so important as to label his system one of "cultural naturalism."<sup>1</sup> He thought that logic/inquiry/science was itself a social discipline in the sense that it was not merely a function of a reduction of human behavior to the behavior of apes, amoebas or electrons.<sup>2</sup> Man has culture--he "is naturally a being that lives in association with others in communities possessing language, and therefore enjoying a transmitted culture. Inquiry is a mode of activity that is socially conditioned and that has cultural consequences."<sup>3</sup> The importance of this position is that every inquiry grows out of the cultural background. Its effect is a modification to a greater or lesser extent of that social background. The physical interaction of an organism with the environment is part of the more inclusive whole of the social environment for intelligent directionality. "Neither inquiry nor the most abstractly formal set of symbols can escape from

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Logic, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

the cultural matrix in which they live, move and have their being."<sup>4</sup> This is why Dewey called his position "cultural naturalism."

The salient feature of this position is that all of man's methods and activities are defined as growing out of man's interaction with his environment, which is physical to be sure, but embodied in a broader cultural matrix.<sup>5</sup> Logic, the theory of scientific inquiry, is a uniquely human function, developed by man for and through his interaction with the world and other men. While it develops from unconscious reactions, it progresses to abstract formal functions with simply the purpose of better controlling the problematic environment of man. In the process of its development, it defines its creator.

Understanding the idea of culture, which was of such importance to Dewey, means understanding his concept of language which is the primary attribute of culture.

'Culture' and all that culture involves, as distinguished from 'nature,' is both a condition and a product of language. Since language is the only means of retaining and transmitting to subsequent generations acquired skills, acquired information and acquired habits, it is the latter. Since, however, meanings and the significance of events differ in different cultural groups, it is also the former.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.      <sup>5</sup>Cf. below, pp. 130-131.

<sup>6</sup>Dewey, Logic, p. 56. An explicit and extended statement of Dewey's naturalistic theory of language/communication is found in his Experience and Nature, Chapter Five.

While Dewey noted that language was one of man's cultural institutions, its basic importance was evidenced by three facts:

It is (1) the agency by which other institutions and acquired habits are transmitted, and (2) it permeates both the forms and the contents of all other cultural activities. Moreover, (3) it has its own distinctive structure which is capable of abstraction as a form.<sup>7</sup>

Without language there would be no transmission of culture, and therefore no culture save the peculiar systems of habit of each individual man. Because it permeates all cultural activity, it is the medium by which all other institutions are related into a functioning whole. Yet, unless it is also capable of abstraction as a form, language is merely the transmission and coordination of social habit.

The formal and abstractive function of language effects the "transformation of the biological into the intellectual and the potentially logical."<sup>8</sup> The logical, or scientific, is that which is common to or available to the community of scholars. So language is "common" such that it is communicable.

The importance of language as the necessary, and, in the end, sufficient condition of the existence and transmission of nonpurely organic activities and their consequences lies in the fact that, on one side, it is a strictly biological model of behavior, emerging in natural continuity from earlier organic activities, while, on the other hand, it compels an individual to take the standpoint of other individuals and to see and inquire from a standpoint that is not strictly personal but is common to them as participants or 'parties' in a conjoint existence. But is first has reference to some other person or persons with whom

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

it institutes communication--the making of something common. Hence, to that extent its reference becomes general and 'objective.'<sup>9</sup>

Thus language, too, must stand the empirical test of scientific method before it may have meaning. It must be general and objective, because its meaning does not lie in itself, but rather in the concord of consequences when acted upon by the participants.<sup>10</sup> Language is composed of physical sounds, marks, and structures, but it is not judged on the operation of these physical traits; rather, these traits stand in their "representative capacity of meaning" and this is judged only when the participants in the communication act in concordance with one another.<sup>11</sup> Agreement on the ends of action, empirically verified, is the final criterion of the cultural and intellectual meaning of language. Culture rests upon the transmittable character of language, and its growth upon the intellectual and logical character of symbolic representation. Both the transmittability and logical character themselves rest upon the criterion of the "common" which is defined as the empirically verifiable concordance of activity in reaction to the symbol.

The consequence of this discussion is that culture, the broader milieu--in which the purely physical is to be seen--is itself, just as the purely physical, judged solely

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

upon its empirically verifiable consequences. Within the final inevitable appeal to the empirical consequents, Dewey noted the fulness and richness of the possibility of language,<sup>12</sup> just as he saw the breadth of morals and aesthetics. It was through a similar approach that he theorized about man.

Dewey noted repeatedly that THE problem was the development of a method for dealing with the problems of men. The development of the theory of inquiry, logic, and the scientific method, is the development of an instrument reflective of the world view which will satisfactorily consummate problematic situations. Such situations are situations of man, not merely those of the physical sciences, but of all man's activities. Developing the method of the world-view, naturalism, in the specifically human milieu was, broadly, the chief interest of Dewey.

The subject matter of the social sciences is, like the natural sciences, existential--that is, it is in the real world and thus defined as available to empirical method. The social sciences are therefore branches of natural science. The question for Dewey was not if the social sphere as subject matter was available to scientific methodology--that was assumed. The real question is if one is allowed by the social

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<sup>12</sup> An interesting discussion of the different types of language is found in the Logic, p. 46. Cf. also John Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," in On Experience, Nature and Freedom, ed. by Richard J. Bernstein (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1960), p. 185.

situation to actually use the method of science.<sup>13</sup> Dewey noted, as often as was required, that "pre-scientific ideas and beliefs in morals and politics [the basic social situations] are . . . so deeply ingrained in tradition and habit and institutions, that the impact of scientific method is feared as something profoundly hostile to mankind's dearest and deepest interests and values."<sup>14</sup>

Unless inquiry is allowed to change the existential conditions which stand under the problematic situation which called forth inquiry in the first place, then there is no chance for science to be of value in man's situation as the criterion of valuatative, purposive behavior. Dewey believed that such a situation left the continued existence of man in the doubt of an anarchy of vying absolutes. Since all inquiry proceeds within a cultural matrix which is ultimately determined by the nature of social relations, the cultural matrix itself must be available not only to the reflection of intellect, but to its modifying activity in the form of science. Dewey noted that the

. . . special lesson which the logic of the methods of physical inquiry has to teach to social inquiry is . . . that social inquiry, as inquiry involves the necessity of operations which existentially modify actual conditions that, as they exist, are the occasions of genuine inquiry and that provide its subject-matter.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Dewey, Logic, p. 487.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 492.

Social inquiry is not a science until it establishes "methods of observing, discriminating and arranging data that evoke and test co-related ideas."<sup>16</sup> Such ideas must then be employed as hypotheses and must be of a form such as to direct and prescribe operations of existential determinations of fact. The primary and urgent problem of social science is the "institution of methods by which the material of existential situations may be converted into the prepared materials which facilitate and control inquiry."<sup>17</sup> Dewey summarized:

In fine, problems with which inquiry into social subject-matter is concerned must, if they satisfy the conditions of scientific method, (1) grow out of actual social tensions, needs, 'troubles;' (2) have their subject-matter determined by the conditions that are material means of bringing about a unified situation, and (3) be related to some hypothesis, which is a plan and policy for existential resolution of the conflicting social situation.<sup>18</sup>

One must carefully note, however, what the scientific demand on the social situation does to the definition of that situation. What happens in the social situation cannot be referred exclusively to such human factors as desires, skills or purposes. Rather, what happens is the product of the interaction of physical conditions, like soil, climate, and machinery, in all their variety, with the human factor. Dewey concluded, therefore, that "social phenomena cannot be understood except as there is prior understanding of physical conditions

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 493.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 499.



and the laws of their interactions."<sup>19</sup> Thus, social phenomena are not the direct objects of inquiry, qua social, but only qua physical. Inquiry into social phenomena "is conditioned upon extensive prior knowledge of physical phenomena and their laws."<sup>20</sup> It is because past inquiry has been based on the assumption that the social is other than the physical, that such inquiry has made a priori and absolute claims, and has not solved the problems of men. Dewey referred to the recent "sufficient" understanding of the biological and physical sciences of physical relations as the basis for providing the necessary intellectual instruments to approach social phenomena. "Without physical knowledge there are no means of analytic resolution of complex and grossly macroscopic social phenomena into simpler forms."<sup>21</sup> The social matrix, while broader than the physical, rests upon the physical and must be reduced to the physical for sake of inspection and modification. What is the effect of such a reduction? Dewey was definitely aware of the problem created when scientists did not regard the social consequences of their work.<sup>22</sup> One becomes concerned to ask if Dewey was equally aware of the social consequences of importing the methods and criteria of physical sciences into human interaction.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 492.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 489.

Dewey, it is shown, did not ask if the scientific method should be introduced into the field of human purpose and valuation--he asked how. The importation of the procedures of physical science into human relations is not in itself an experimental step; Dewey assumed it is necessary for two reasons. First, such a method had proven viable for empirical data in the past. Second, he thought he could define the activities of men as finally available empirically. What is experimental about the procedure Dewey introduced into the social sphere of man is the manner in which scientific method handles its specific subject matter: man. Dealing with the social situation and man introduces the moral consideration.<sup>23</sup>

The moral and evaluative aspect of man then comes to be treated experimentally. The traditional moral position is that moral judgment demands a specific conclusion: there is a given right and wrong, and the problem is to structure behavior in those terms. Dewey noted that such a procedure was an anathema to scientific procedure. Dewey was therefore a blatant critic of traditional views of ethics. Science must operate on the assumption of ends-in-view, as instrumentalities, and not as necessary truths. Evaluations must be made of material which is dealt with in the problematic situation. Such evaluations are made with an idea to the end-in-view, but they are not what the traditional moral stance requires.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. below, p. 125ff.

The material evaluated is not mere factual data sought out to support an already given conclusion, but rather it is evaluated with the purpose of establishing the end-in-view demanded by this man in this situation. Dewey's instincts led him correctly to a criticism of the definition of the moral character of man when subsumed under a given ideal and absolute system of morality. This was one of the main considerations when he rejected his faith in the Hegelian system. The question is, then, to survey the extent and character of his reaction.

Dewey noted that social problems tended to be interpreted in moral terms. He did not deny that the human situation was a profoundly moral one, but to solve social problems demands intelligent handling, and this demanded that the problem be realized first, then stated with an objective intellectual formulation dealing with the empirical conditions of its solution. Such a formulation requires abstainment from concepts of sin and righteousness, good and evil, which are attributed to individuals and nations and social situations. Dewey noted:

There was a time when desirable and obnoxious physical phenomena were attributed to the benevolence and malevolence of overruling powers. There was a time when diseases were attributed to the machinations of personal enemies. Spinoza's contention that the occurrence of moral evils should be treated upon the same basis and plane as the occurrence of thunderstorms is justifiable on the ground of the requirements of scientific method, independently of its context in his own philosophic system.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Dewey, Logic, pp. 494-495.

The scientific procedure was the only way Dewey felt in which social problems could be formulated objectively. Such a formulation is the only approach through which amelioration of the unsatisfactory conditions can be undertaken with accuracy. Dewey thought this approach could be made viable if man would only use it, for the "approach to human problems in terms of moral blame and moral approbation, of wickedness or righteousness, is probably the greatest single obstacle now existing to development of competent methods in the field of social subject-matter."<sup>25</sup> Moral blames and approvals are not evaluative in any logical sense of evaluation, nor are they even judgments in a logical sense, "for they rest upon some preconception of ends that should or ought to be attained. This preconception excludes ends (consequences) from the field of inquiry and reduces inquiry at its very best to the truncated and distorted business of finding out means for realizing objectives already settled upon."<sup>26</sup> Dewey held that what was truly moral was that which furthered man's attempt to solve his problems, and that this could only be accomplished through a system of dealing with existential conditions which changed them effectively to solve the problem which brought them to our attention. "Only an end-in-view that is treated as a hypothesis (by which discrimination and ordering of existential material is operatively effected) can

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 495.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 496.

by any logical possibility determine the existential materials that are means."<sup>27</sup>

Traditional views of morals are rejected because they are assumed from outside the particular social situation in which man finds himself. They are not conclusions from genuine inquiry of past events, and they are introduced ab extra to the present existential condition. The scientific procedure is inherently evaluative because it judges what is to be used and how it is to be used to solve the problematic situation. The problematic situation itself is basically evaluative, the very reason it exists is that it has forced itself upon the intellect as a valuative problem. Dewey's primary point was that the valuative aspect of the problem was inherent in the problem, and not to something else. It is in the natural situation, not brought in from elsewhere. A thing is evaluated in terms of the specific situation, not in terms of values supposed to exist in all times and in all places. This in itself, however, is not a strict limiting factor on traditional ethical positions. It could be argued that absolute moral judgments are the stuff from which situational judgments are made, and that such absolutes exist only in the specific situations. Man is therefore judged by his situational use of such a priori absolutes. But Dewey did not so argue. Rather, he took the additional step of demanding that such evaluative

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 496-497.

procedures were to be made manifest "only on the basis of the tensions, obstructions and positive potentialities that are found, by controlled observation, to exist in the actual situation."<sup>28</sup> The "situation" itself is finally judged empirically through scientific method.

The assumption that the specific situation is finally empirically available, and that any "ideal" content is in an intellectual reaction to the empirical situation, is supported and demanded by the naturalistic world view. Thus the problematic quality, and all other qualities with which the problematic social/moral situation deals, must be in one sense or another "given" in the situation. Since "social," "value" and "problematic" are not themselves quantities available to empirical observation, and are not to be brought in from outside the specific empirical situation, they must be given as already a part of the situation. They are "given" in the naturalistic world view.

Existences are immediately given in experience; that is what experience primarily is. They are not given to experience but their givenness is experience. But such immediate qualitative experience is not itself cognitive; it fulfills none of the logical conditions of knowledge and of objects qua known. . . .<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 503.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 522. Later it is found that intelligence, too, is a "given" in the situation. Cf. below, p. 135.

Such qualities in the immediate situation are "felt," "taken," "adjudged."<sup>30</sup> What exactly is this "feeling" is of importance. Dewey noted that the quality of a situation was that which made it a whole, a unique situation which was this situation rather than another. Such a qualitative whole is "sensed" or "felt;" it is not an object of discourse.

Stating that it is felt is wholly misleading if it gives the impression that the situation is a feeling or an emotion or anything mentalistic. On the contrary, feeling, sensation and emotion have themselves to be identified and described in terms of the immediate presence of a total qualitative situation.<sup>31</sup>

The concept of the givenness of quality is quite important in Dewey's theoretical concept of logic, and therefore the activity of man and finally the theoretical definition of man, because such qualitative wholes are precisely that which set the situation as problematic, which set and define the limits and ends within which any method of inquiry and activity of man must function. When the function of the concept of quality is carefully viewed, it becomes a definitive study of the assumptions Dewey had to make in his naturalistic world view. Qualities are valiative by definition. If the method used to solve the problems of man is to be strict scientific method, then value, morals, purpose, qualities and problems must be included within the naturalistic framework. Since they are not strictly the objects of an empirical investigation, they must be subsumed somewhere in order that Dewey's

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

theory not set up a dualism of method and reality. So they are "given" as pervasive in whole situations--in the natural world. Furthermore, they are prior to cognition; they are the given or the "taken" in the strict sense of that word.<sup>32</sup> They are there to be had in the relation of the human organism to its environment which is the specific situation. Since Dewey defined language as basically the transmission of meanings, and as the basis of transmitted culture, the quality immediately felt was not culturally defined--at least not in its immediate specificity. Quality is, as a whole, not open to symbolization which is a particularizing and mediating function.

As has been said, a qualitative and qualifying situation is present as the background and the control of every experience. . . . Such qualities as are designated by 'distressing,' 'cheerful,' etc., are general, while the quality of distress and cheer that marks an existent situation is not general but is unique and inexpressible in words.<sup>33</sup>

Parts of the quality may be singled out, and are when they are felt important. These then become the facts with which science deals through symbolization, hypothesis and empirical verification. But they remain, in their wholeness, simply had qualities, prior to any generalization or symbolization. They are unique and individual. They are prior to culture and reflection, they are the creator of the problematic situation and thus stand under any projection of purpose and evaluation. It

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 70.



should be noted that even in Dewey's formulation of the theory of the pervasive, ineffable whole of quality there is nothing which requires the naturalistic world view or empirical method. The latter were assumed for the prior purpose, in Dewey's mind, of developing a systematic framework inclusive of all activity and capable of defining such activity through the method of science, in terms both of means and purposes.<sup>34</sup>

The theory of organic, social naturalism through scientific method was proposed by Dewey for the fulfillment of man in the existential world. It rests on a faith in--but is not deducible from--the incommensurable, inexpressible qualitative whole of reality. Far from denying this, Dewey made it the central theme of A Common Faith.<sup>35</sup> It is, perhaps, Dewey's acknowledgment of a metaphysical (ontological) stance. One thus should note that there are two important implications to be dealt with in the theory outlined in the first three chapters: first, the metaphysical position which Dewey took, and second, the implied position of man in such a metaphysics.

But Dewey denied "metaphysics" altogether. Its denial is, in principle, the same as his denial of Pure Reason or absolute ethics. Dewey first defined metaphysics as absolute, a priori sets of propositions from which the world, reality

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<sup>34</sup>A critical study of Dewey's concept of quality is to be found below, Chapter VI.

<sup>35</sup>Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 18-19, et passim.

and truth had to be deduced. Then he noted that it was therefore not related to the specific existential situation at all--except by a misdirected, fantasizing intellect. Consequently, for Dewey, the term "metaphysical" came to refer to anything which did not rest on empirical evidence.<sup>36</sup> Dewey asserted that reality had to be approached through logical thinking in which logical forms accrue through man's use of thought reaching warrantably assertible conclusions in the existential world. Such a thesis asserts that at first, there is a mere noting of consequences, but this grows to formation of a process of controlling conditions such that consequences are favorable. Then symbolization accrues, greater and greater modes and degrees of abstraction are attained, and a greater degree of control over consequences is progressively achieved through continually modifying the method itself. Such is what Dewey meant by "accruing." This is a natural process, growing naturally out of the organic/biological condition of man. It is, simply, reflective thought, if thought is continually defined as resting on empirical evidence. It is inquiry, it is logic, it is the method of science itself--if it is always

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<sup>36</sup>Cf. Dewey, Logic, p. 475. The more traditional use of the term, defined as the study of being as such, not in its particularity but as first principles of the natural order of reality, was not used by Dewey. He described metaphysics in the secondary meaning as anything concerned with the supra-physical. Dewey used the term "ontology" (traditionally synonymous with metaphysics) for the study of being qua being. Thus, for Dewey, ontology could be subject matter for science, but metaphysics could not be, for the latter stood contradictory to all scientific endeavor.

true to empirical evidence. Dewey noted the continual development of the theory as inquiry adjusted itself to actual conditions through continually working in those conditions to modify them. Logic, when it inquires into inquiry is itself such a circular or spiral process: "It does not depend upon anything extraneous to inquiry."<sup>37</sup> Dewey was saying that inquiry, correctly conceived, was sufficient unto itself for both dealing with the world, and continually recreating itself to better deal with the world. Thus, Dewey thought, "it precludes resting logic upon metaphysical and epistemological assumptions and presuppositions."<sup>38</sup> Assumptions and presuppositions themselves "are to be determined, if at all, by means of what is disclosed as the outcome of inquiry; they are not to be shoved under inquiry as its 'foundations'!"<sup>39</sup> There is but one order of being, and that is the environment in which we find ourselves. It can be, to a degree, changed to better suit our needs. To change it, one must deal with the physical reality of it, and but one method has proven pre-eminently successful: empirical science. Therefore, if all inquiry and activity is finally based upon what is empirically verifiable, then one cannot misdirect his efforts to some world of wish gone absolute, i.e., "metaphysics." Thought is to direct our actions in the environment. It has to direct our actions when we cannot naturally or habitually deal with the environment. Man

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

is a creature of habit, not reason,<sup>40</sup> but man can assume rationality. Yet such reason--as is habit, as is the world in all its profusion and particularity, and as is man--is finally defined by the criterion of the naturalistic view of existence: empirical verifiability of its consequences.

Such is the basic outline of Dewey's theoretical position of the actuality of the world, of knowledge and of the process of organisms dealing in the world. It is from such a framework that one must deduce the specific theoretical definition of man in the philosophy of John Dewey.

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<sup>40</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 125.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCIENCE AND METAPHYSICS

Throughout Logic, Dewey referred to Charles S. Peirce, who was one of his teachers at Johns Hopkins University in the early 1880's, as the originator of many of the most important concepts of the theoretical scheme which resulted in Dewey's pragmatic or instrumental philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Dewey probably could not acknowledge fully enough his indebtedness to Peirce's philosophic insight. In reference, however, to metaphysics, there is a definite emphasis on the subject in Peirce's thought which is missing in Dewey's, although the latter did appropriate much of Peirce's language and criticism of traditional metaphysics.<sup>2</sup>

Peirce asserted that the "common opinion has been that Metaphysics is backward because it is intrinsically beyond the reach of human cognition. But that, I think I can clearly

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. my "The Early Development of the Conceptions of Social Psychology and the Social Organism in the Philosophy of John Dewey," passim.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Peirce's arguments in "The Fixation of Belief" and "The Essentials of Pragmatism" in The Philosophy of Peirce, ed. by Justus Buchler (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1940), pp. 5-22, 259-60.

discern, is a complete mistake."<sup>3</sup> It was precisely Dewey's position, however, that metaphysics was beyond human cognition in that the latter is defined through empirical verifiability and the former is supernatural. Peirce continued:

But it will be said that metaphysics is inscrutable because its objects are not open to observation. This is doubtless true of some systems of metaphysics, though not to the extent it is supposed to be true. The things that any science discovers are beyond the reach of direct observation.<sup>4</sup>

Peirce saw metaphysics as another abstract science, such as is logic, dealing with the theory of the most general features of reality and real objects.<sup>5</sup> Metaphysics, like all sciences, is based ultimately upon observation. Thus it is not supernatural, although Peirce acknowledged that over the centuries it had come to have supernatural encrustations because, more often than not, "its leading professors have been theologians."<sup>6</sup> Peirce summarized the position of metaphysics in this thought:

We should expect to find metaphysics, judging from its position in the scheme of the sciences, to be somewhat more difficult than logic, but still on the whole one of the simplest of sciences, as it is one whose main principles must be settled before very much progress can be gained either in psychics or in physics.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup>C. S. Peirce, "The Approach to Metaphysics" in The Philosophy of Peirce, p. 310.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. Peirce felt the more abstract the science, the simpler it was, not having to deal with the welter of facts of the subjectively observed world. Simplicity should not, however, be confused with easiness. That metaphysical principles need be settled upon prior to progress in other sciences is echoed by A. N. Whitehead below, p. 53.

Whether or not one agrees specifically with Peirce, there is no doubt that he realized the existence of a theory of reality--a metaphysics--which was presupposed by science.<sup>8</sup> Dewey, on the other hand, saw metaphysics, absolute idealisms and theologies alike, all dealing with nonnatural phenomena. Alike, he threw them all out, their "relevance" lying only in their unsatisfactory consequences in the history of man. For Dewey, the problem was to get rid of such a dependence on ideas and supernatural ideal systems which were not the direct result of man's interaction with his environment.<sup>9</sup> Dewey proposed a naturalistic view of reality which was required by the belief in the universality of scientific method, but did not specifically acknowledge the metaphysical position this assumes. Whether Peirce himself, finally, also made this

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 313. Cf. also Manley Thompson, The Pragmatic Philosophy of C. S. Peirce (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 137-144.

<sup>9</sup> "The issue may be more definitely stated. The extreme position on one side is that apart from relation to the supernatural, man is morally on a level with the brutes. The other position is that all significant ends and all securities for stability and peace have grown up in the matrix of human relations, and that the values given a supernatural locus are in fact products of an idealizing imagination that has laid hold of natural goods. There ensues a second contrast. On the one hand, it is held that relation to the supernatural is the only finally dependable source of motive power; that directly and indirectly it has animated every serious effort for the guidance and rectification of man's life on earth. The other position is that goods actually experienced in the concrete relations of family, neighborhood, citizenship, pursuit of art and science, are what men actually depend upon for guidance and support, and that their reference to a supernatural and other-worldly locus has obscured their real nature and has weakened their force." Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 70-71.

error, despite his awareness of the problem, is another question; but at least there is the acknowledgement that a study of such metaphysical presuppositions is a prerequisite to any advancement of the particular sciences. A striking example of this awareness is found in Peirce's article "How to Make Our Ideas Clear." Here Peirce, to his own satisfaction, developed a theory of reality based on empirical verification. Yet he refused to label it "a metaphysical theory of existence for universal acceptance among those who employ the scientific method for fixing belief" because "metaphysics is a subject much more curious than useful, the knowledge of which, like that of a sunken reef, serves chiefly to enable us to keep clear of it. . . ."<sup>10</sup> He meant here that to assume a metaphysical position for a scientific process is more than that process could, by its own definitions, sustain. Metaphysics concerns itself first with principles of reality and therefore is concerned with more than merely the usefulness of a particular method. Making metaphysical assumptions for scientific method is liable to result in an inadequate metaphysics. The latter would then defeat the advance of the former. Thus Peirce would not make, in this article, the metaphysical claim, and he noted that one had to be aware of the position of the metaphysical claim in general so that he did not come to grief because of it.

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<sup>10</sup>C. S. Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in The Philosophy of Peirce, p. 40.



Peirce specifically warned that inadequate perusal or awareness of one's metaphysical position was precisely that which crippled one's other positions. It is this warning which Dewey might have better heeded:

Find a scientific man who proposes to get along without any metaphysics--not by any means every man who holds the ordinary reasonings of metaphysicians in scorn--and you have found one whose doctrines are thoroughly vitiated by the crude and uncriticized metaphysics with which they are packed. We must philosophize, said the great naturalist Aristotle--if only to avoid philosophizing (Metaphysics, bk I, 982b-3a). Every one of us has a metaphysics, and has to have one; and it will influence his life greatly. Far better, then, that that metaphysics should be criticized and not be allowed to run loose. A man may say "I will content myself with common sense." I, for one, am with him there, in the main. . . . But the difficulty is to determine what really is and what is not the authoritative decision of common sense and what is merely obiter dictum. In short, there is no escape from the need of a critical examination of "first principles."<sup>11</sup>

Insofar as Dewey specifically emphasized the consequences, empirically defined, of human and natural activities, and not the originating conditions and principles presupposed by them, he did attempt to escape from the need of a critical examination of metaphysics. It is the purpose of the dissertation to ascertain what remains of the concept of man once the study of metaphysics or any theory which is not ultimately reducible to empirical analysis is rejected outright.

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<sup>11</sup>C. S. Peirce, "Laboratory and Seminary Philosophies" from "Introduction showing the point of view from which Philosophy appears to the author to be an interesting subject to a man of common-sense" in the notebook, "Sketch of Some Proposed Chapters on the Sect of Philosophy Called Pragmatism," in the Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. I, ed. by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 50.

In addition to Peirce, another thinker who emphasized the metaphysical endeavor was Alfred North Whitehead who, in his philosophy of process, held many ideas in common with Dewey's organic naturalism.<sup>12</sup> Both based their organic thought on a high respect for the physical sciences and the value of logical analysis. Their views are generally close concerning the human condition and the process of common sense, through reflection and inquiry, to consummation in the development of the human capacity to come to terms with environment. Both acknowledged the other as a kindred spirit in the organic emphasis of their philosophies and the importance of its theme to the modern world. Their remarks on social conditions, the criticism of educational systems and their religious views are striking in their similarity. The purpose of outlining such similarities is to call attention to a striking dissimilarity in their thought, namely, the insistence of Whitehead<sup>13</sup> that there is definite metaphysical (ontological)

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. the discussion in Whitehead on the philosophy of organism and its conception of the world in Science and the Modern World (New York: New American Library, n.d., originally published by The Macmillan Company, 1925), pp. 134-141, et passim.

<sup>13</sup>"The point is, that speculative extension beyond direct observation spells some trust in metaphysics, however vaguely these metaphysical notions may be entertained in explicit thought. Our metaphysical knowledge is light, superficial, and incomplete. Thus errors creep in. But, such as it is, metaphysical understanding guides imagination and justifies purpose. Apart from metaphysical presupposition there can be no civilization." A. N. Whitehead, Adventures of Ideas (New York: The Free Press, 1967, first published by The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 128.

content in the process of science and on the necessity of making this content perfectly clear, concise and relevant.

Whitehead noted that even if science were devoid of all types of judgment of values, it would still include ontology or metaphysics, the determination of the nature of what truly exists.<sup>14</sup> Metaphysics has been, by its nature, bitterly controversial. No one seems to stand in agreement about its specific qualities, so scientists have shunned it to deal primarily with what can be agreed upon: certain methods, procedures and consequences. Thus the history of Western thought has been divided between those who dealt with the nature of reality without much reference to methods and procedures of the world, and those, more recently, who deal with methods and procedures alone. There has been little or no agreement between the groups. But the basic problem, as Whitehead saw it, still remained: "How can mankind agree about science without a preliminary determination of what really is?"<sup>15</sup> Having gone no further than this, and from the analysis in the preceding chapter, one may tentatively place Dewey in this dilemma. In Logic, which has been presumed here to be the primary theoretical work, Dewey was concerned with showing how the method and procedures of science have

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<sup>14</sup>A. N. Whitehead, "The Anatomy of Some Scientific Ideas," in The Aims of Education (New York: The Free Press, 1967), p. 121.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 122. (Emphasis added.)

grown naturally out of the given environment. There is no study specifically about what really is. Logic studies merely the activity of the organism in its environment: one starts with reality. The simple development of the natural activity results in method, and method judges activity. Activity is naturally empirically verifiable, and reflection, desire, wish, and reason--while themselves not empirically observable--must be in reaction to and then in projection of empirically observable activity. If this was not the case, Dewey believed, then one had to refer to something not finally empirically observable, and this was not in accordance with the experience we have of what naturally happens in the world. In Dewey, that which is really real is the activity which results in method. Such is to say that the question of "what really is" and the resultant metaphysical inquiry is all beside the point, or, at best, is itself merely one of the questions brought up by the method, the scientific inquiry itself and thereby judged on the basis of the assumed theory of reality of the latter.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, it is to be noted that Dewey was firmly affixed to one horn of the dilemma Whitehead defined. Dewey opted for science, the method and procedure of "this world." What needs most definitely to be understood is that "this world" and its character is itself the effective

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<sup>16</sup>One would note that there is actually no logical reason for asking the metaphysical question from simply the basis of empirical science. Cf. below, p. 186.

pronouncement of "what really is" by an unexamined metaphysics. And this is exactly the point which Peirce and Whitehead attempted to make.<sup>17</sup>

Whitehead was concerned with illustrating the common sense assumptions on which science developed. He noted that science was the whole of sense perceptions of physical experience and consciousness of them: it is a way of thinking.

Now science aims at harmonising our reflective and derivative thoughts with the primary thoughts involved in the immediate apprehension of sense-presentation. It also aims at producing such derivative thoughts, logically knit together. This is scientific theory; and the harmony to be achieved is the agreement of theory with observation, which is the apprehension of sense-presentation.<sup>18</sup>

Whitehead showed, in the remainder of the article, "The Anatomy of Some Scientific Ideas," the very intricacy of the assumptions and conditions upon which such scientific thought rested, and he was concerned with showing that such an analysis itself rested on certain metaphysical principles. He illustrated that judgments of worth, which had no part in the texture of science, were part of the motive of the production

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<sup>17</sup> Whitehead comments on this point: "In its use of this method [the development of empirically based generalizations], natural science has shown a curious mixture of rationalism and irrationalism. Its prevalent tone of thought has been ardently rationalistic within its own borders, and dogmatically irrational beyond those borders. In practice such an attitude tends to become a dogmatic denial that there are any factors in the world not fully expressible in terms of its own primary notions devoid of further generalization. Such a denial is the self-denial of thought." A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Whitehead, "Anatomy," p. 124.

of scientific thought. Such motives involve innumerable judgments of value and are the reason the "whole edifice of science" has been raised in the first place. Furthermore, the "conscious selection of the parts of the scientific field to be cultivated . . . involves judgments of value." Whitehead noted that whatever the motive for the production of scientific thought, "without judgments of value there would have been no science."<sup>19</sup>

Dewey would agree with this summary, for valuation is a specific part of his theory of scientific method. But insofar as Whitehead held that such a theory of value belonged to a metaphysical scheme which, as a whole, supported not only a scientific view, but also other positions not explicitly related to science (not available to scientific method), Dewey would disagree. Reality is exactly that with which science deals, and it deals with all facets of reality. Whitehead held that metaphysical or ontological presuppositions were there in every act of life--and not every act was a proper object of scientific method.<sup>20</sup> Science does not diminish the need of metaphysical study; indeed, it increases it, for science, in Whitehead as in Dewey, is conceived as a possibility

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>20</sup> "The field of a special science is confined to one genus of facts, in the sense that no statements are made respecting facts which lie outside that genus." "The one genus of facts which constitutes the field of some special science requires some common metaphysical presupposition respecting the universe." Whitehead, Process and Reality, pp. 14 and 17.

for continued advance. But an actuality underlies such possibility, and it must be studied, known, in order that the possibility be given scope and direction. A theory of reality is presupposed by the particular events, inferences, elements, relations, perceptions, methods and facts of science, and its analysis must proceed toward reality itself and not merely to the specifics of the science which it happens to support. Thus metaphysics is a broader study than science: it places science in the world, and it places ethics, valuations, purposes and aesthetics there also. It is not, cannot, be restricted to the methods of any one of the specific fields or disciplines it supports.<sup>21</sup> Dewey, on the other hand, allowed science to support and define, through its methods, the other fields--specifically fields of human endeavor. Whitehead, however, did not demand an absolute stance for such metaphysical theory--a notion which Dewey calmly assumed all metaphysics and metaphysicians had to by their very nature do. Rather, Whitehead noted:

Physical science is based on elements of thought, such as judgments registering actual perceptions, and judgments registering hypothetical perceptions which under certain circumstances would be realized. These elements form the agreed content of the apparatus of commonsense thought. They require metaphysical analysis; but they are among the data from which metaphysics starts. A metaphysics which rejects them has failed,

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<sup>21</sup>Cf. A. N. Whitehead, Modes of Thought (New York: The Free Press, 1968), the entire discussion in Chapter 8, "Nature Alive," pp. 148-169.

in the same way as physical science has failed when it is unable to harmonize them into its theory.<sup>22</sup>

Dewey believed that metaphysics and ontology, if they had to be spoken of, were themselves functions of and based on the elements of scientific thought. He did not accept the second part of Whitehead's analysis, that science was only among those elements which metaphysics developed and was developed from. Indeed, science played a part in metaphysics, but only a part, according to Whitehead. It contributes the "exposition of the fact that our experience of sensible apparent things is capable of being analyzed into a scientific theory, a theory not indeed complete, but giving every promise of indefinite expansion."<sup>23</sup> Whitehead also noted the intimate relation of science to logic, the very same analysis upon which Dewey built his whole logic as the theory of scientific inquiry.

In concluding his essay, Whitehead said that in the past, false science had been the reason for bad metaphysics. Dewey turned this analysis around to assert that bad metaphysics--anything that assumed absolute values and facts--had been the cause of bad science and that science did not begin to really develop until such metaphysical wraps had been completely thrown off. Whitehead would deny such an analysis. He would assert that, indeed, science is definitely based on

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<sup>22</sup>Whitehead, "Anatomy," p. 153.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



metaphysics--on a theory, expressed or not, of what is real. A rigorous study of this metaphysics is of the utmost importance for science, but science itself is only a part, "one part of the whole evidence from which metaphysicians deduce their conclusions."<sup>24</sup> Metaphysics is a search for reality; it does not or should not assume an already given reality.

There is an interesting illustration of the exact difference between Dewey and Whitehead on this point. In Process and Reality, Whitehead called metaphysics the true method of discovery controlled by the requirements of coherence and logic. He said it was like the flight of an airplane in that

. . . it starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation. The reason for the success of this method of imaginative rationalization is that, when the method of difference fails, factors which are constantly present may yet be observed under the influence of imaginative thought. Such thought supplies the difference which direct observation lacks.<sup>25</sup>

Dewey used a similar analogy in Logic.<sup>26</sup> Imagination or thought starts with the problematic situation, empirically defined. It soars to understanding and hypothetical solutions based on logic. But the criterion of the logic, as of all thinking, lies in the empirical verification it can receive. The criterion of the flight is given prior to the flight, discovery is merely reintegration of empirical data. In

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.      <sup>25</sup>Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Dewey, Logic, p. 66ff.

Whitehead, the object of the flight is not only to understand the problem and note solutions of specific empirical nature, but also to understand the reality upon which empirical judgments and the problems themselves stand. This distinction between the two men is the difference between working from a given toward new solutions, and working on the given itself to find its reality and criteria, so that the work toward new solutions will be assured of fulfilling the whole possibility and not just the part.

Metaphysics uses the facts of the various elements of existence. By so using them it is limited by their totality, and at the same time, because it works toward the definition of the real, it defines them and effectively makes them real insofar as it has itself approached an adequate world view. As a metaphysics works toward a more comprehensive understanding of reality, and insofar as this reality itself, through the adequate development of metaphysics, becomes more comprehensive, so those specific elements which it supports and draws from become fuller in their comprehension and expression. But each element stays within the definition of itself. Whitehead and Dewey both acclaimed the "promise of indefinite expansion" of science. Yet science is just this: the study of the physical properties of reality. Only Dewey made the error of translating the indefinite possibilities of science itself into that which was the criterion for all existence. It is in this sense that Dewey's concept of science

is not only shown to be based on an unexamined metaphysics, but has actually taken over the functions of a metaphysics and insofar as its basis is painfully narrow, it is a painfully bad metaphysics.<sup>27</sup> Science, qua science, is one view of reality. It deals with one aspect of reality. Its findings, taken in themselves, are an abstraction from reality. Its method, taken in itself, deals with but a single, specific element of reality. To generalize science as alone relevant to the whole of reality, finally, and to generalize its method as applicable to all of existence, is to commit what Whitehead called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. That is, it takes a part of the whole, abstracts it from the whole, then treats the abstraction as the whole.<sup>28</sup>

It is the contention of this dissertation that Dewey did this absolutizing of science and the scientific method, and that no matter how broadly he conceived science, it was still appropos of but a part of existence. That Dewey had done this specifically for a purpose, and a good purpose, is not denied. Further, it is not denied that he logically and explicitly followed out the implications of this assumption. It is to be shown that the consequences of defining and judging "fact" and "reality" through science and empirical method

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Whitehead's illustration of the narrow base of purely scientifically defined metaphysics in Science and the Modern World, p. 24.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p. 11, and Science and the Modern World, Chapter 3, passim.

are carefully drawn, but that even while doing so, Dewey continually tried to broaden the effect on the definition of man and his activities which science and the naturalistic world view require.<sup>29</sup>

One must explore the specific consequences of the naturalistic world view on the concept of man for the purpose of evaluating Dewey's contribution to the philosophy of man. The logical starting point of such a discussion is where Dewey specifically transposed the criterion of science and the scientific method of inquiry to the peculiar evaluative and purposive character of man in his social activity. This is done explicitly in the fully mature thought of Dewey in his short work Theory of Valuation, published in 1939 shortly after Logic.

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<sup>29</sup> This is most specifically illustrated here in Chapters 9 and 10.

## CHAPTER V

### SCIENCE AND HUMAN VALUES

The Theory of Valuation is, as is the Logic, not a new statement of Dewey's position, rather it is an explicit and tightly reasoned summary of the conclusions of his mature thought on the ideas associated with valuation and its place in the business of inquiry into the human situation.

If the propositions of the method of physical sciences are concerned with matters of fact and the relations between them, can such a method ever deal with the unique human problem of the idea of "should?" That is, can the method of science deal with the problem of value? If it can, precisely how? Dewey said this is the question of the Theory of Valuation. He noted that value problems dropped out of the physical sciences when teleology went, thus freeing these sciences to accomplish what they have. The question of ends, purposes, and value are still, however, very much the issue in human science. Does this mean that science cannot be used in social matters unless teleology and directionality are denied in human existence?<sup>1</sup> No, Dewey thought that the methods of the

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Theory of Valuation, p. 3.

physical sciences could be used in the direction and valuation of human activity, and he began his defense of this thesis by noting that his use of the term "valuation" would be discussed in the light of three meanings: namely, those of prizing, appraising and enjoying.<sup>2</sup> Two further distinctions were made in the concept of valuation, (1) that of liking/disliking, and (2) the relation of valuations to things as means-ends.<sup>3</sup> Dewey then introduced a term whose specific use rested at the heart of his entire argument: desire.

Because valuations in the sense of prizing and caring for occur only when it is necessary to bring something into existence which is lacking, or to conserve in existence something which is menaced by outside conditions, valuations involves desiring. The latter is to be distinguished from mere wishing in the sense in which wishes occur in the absense of effort.<sup>4</sup>

Desire is thus linked with specific existential, empirical conditions resulting from the situation itself, and are, according to the Deweyan analysis, open to public observation. Dewey thus defined desire in such a way that it could be made into a proposition testable by empirical method as to its adequacy.<sup>5</sup> A desire is an interest in a course of events leading to one result rather than another; and it is judged upon how it changes the course of events such that the desired conclusion is attained.

But the connection of values with interests is only a starting point. Dewey asserted that the statement "values

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

sprang from the immediate and inexplicable reaction of vital impulse and from the irrational part of our nature" was correct only if vital impulse was seen as the sine qua non of values and not as values themselves. If vital impulse, the nonreflective immediate reaction of organism in its environment, habit or immediate disposition,<sup>6</sup> is itself valuative, then any connection between value and desire or interest is denied. "Desire" would then be taken at large, and it would mean that any movement of organic impulse is valuative. Dewey considered this unacceptable. Vital impulses are a causal condition for the existence of desires and interests, but the latter "include foreseen consequences along with ideas in the form of signs of the measures (involving expenditures of energy) required to bring the ends into existence."<sup>7</sup> Thus Dewey saw desires and interests as having their roots in the organic interaction with environment which is empirically observable, and he defined them as truly valuative when the end result of such desires and interests was once again judged in terms of change in organic interaction with environment which was, again, empirically observable. "Since desires and interests are activities which take place in the world and which have effects in the world, they are observable in themselves and in connection with their observed effects."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Cf. discussion of "habit," Human Nature and Conduct, Part I, passim.

<sup>7</sup>Dewey, Valuation, pp. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

Value propositions may be tested as matters of fact in this world, and the argument is developed on the premise that behavior of human beings is open to empirical observation.<sup>9</sup> That which is not publicly observable is excluded from the thesis. It was on the basis of the empirically observable character of value that Dewey could accept it as an actual "fact" in the world. This is not a strict materialism, but it is a strict adherence to a naturalistic stance whose only resource to defining reality is the observation of activity through scientific, empirical method. Thus, early in Theory of Valuation, Dewey expanded the specific method of the physical sciences into the realm of the valuative, purposive endeavors of human beings. It was through precisely the same argument elsewhere that Dewey asserted the methods of physical sciences to be applicable to morals, ideals, reason and aesthetics. The heart of this expansion of the scope of scientific method is the definition of nonphysically observable entities as their public, empirically observable consequences. The result of this expansion is the flattening of the meanings of valuative statements--good, bad, evil, right, wrong, rational, irrational, beautiful and ugly, into just one meaning: the fulfillment or lack of fulfillment of an interest, expectation or desire for an end, available to empirical warranted assertibility. One might respond, "But it is the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 20.



specific situation which defines which of the terms shall be used, and which would be meaningless." That would be true, except that if the final criterion of each situation is that of empirical consequence, then the differences in each situation must be, finally, in terms of quantity and not quality. The ethical situation does not differ fundamentally from the rational, nor the rational from the aesthetic in terms of dealing with them through empirical method. What Dewey did acknowledge as being different, and consequently being inef-fable, was the individual human being's realization of the problematic situation through the feeling of the quality of the situation as a whole. But this is immediate, personal and--most importantly--simply "given." It is not the object of scientific method, but that upon which such a method stands, from which it originates, and upon whose particulars it operates. The question then becomes: does this "given" quality of the situation actually and meaningfully define real differences in the types of valutive judgments? Are there really ethical judgments, rational judgments and aesthetic judgments which have exclusive meanings and values for human beings? But this is precisely the question which Dewey's scientific method cannot answer. The method deals only with the empiri-cally verifiable consequences of activities, and for the purpose of making this method universal and coherent, the various conditions of valuation must be seen as merely the reaction of biological organism to environment on the basis of

vital impulse or habit. Dewey did, in fact, write as if there were actual differences between morals and reason, aesthetics and purposefulness: he used the different words. It is shown that such meanings are finally the same when forced into the mold of empirical verifiability.

Dewey, in dealing with the concept of valuation, was concerned with freeing man and his activities from traditional absolutes--customs, beliefs, uncriticized authority--and so he substituted the method of science with its experimental basis which demanded continual review of everything it did, even of the method itself. Dewey noted:

The existence of rules for valuation of modes of behavior in different fields as wise or unwise, economical or extravagant, effective or futile, cannot be denied. The problem concerns not their existence as general propositions (since every rule of action is general) but whether they express only custom, convention, tradition, or are capable of stating relations between things as means and other things as consequences, which relations are themselves grounded in empirically ascertained and tested existential relations which are usually termed those of cause and effect.<sup>10</sup>

Dewey asserted that judging the wiseness of such rules was to check off their consequences against acknowledged physical laws, and not merely the personal opinions or whims of those who held such rules. Empirical propositions used in determining such wiseness or ignorance are themselves neither good nor bad, they become valuative when used in respect of their serviceability to already given ends-in-view, the object of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

desire. Ends-in-view themselves are judged upon their serviceability in the successful fulfillment of the original problematic situation. Thus the valuative content of an act or proposition is judged as it "services" or is successful to the fulfillment of an end-in-view. The end-in-view has valuative content as an act or proposition only if, in its empirical consequences, it fulfills the problem set up in the original problematic situation. Dewey used the term "appraised."<sup>11</sup> Such values of means and ends are appraised as to their probability of success in fulfilling the activity which had to be fulfilled to solve the problem. Thus ends and means have been judged on the same criterion, and Dewey was always at pains to note this, for it was important in the theory of continuity. A means is an end insofar as it must be itself successfully concluded prior to its being a condition for an end. The end also is the means for successful satisfaction of the problematic situation and it must be available as a means for further ends. But one must note that the real problem of the conditions of valuation has just been pushed back into the original problematic situation of organism in a thwarted habitual reaction to environmental

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<sup>11</sup> The term "enjoying" (as well as "liking-disliking") connotes immediate fulfillment without endeavor or judgment of conditions or consequences, and is not of significance to this discussion.

conditions.<sup>12</sup> The notion of judging value on the basis of appraisal is that of judging value in terms of specific facts and propositions actually working both as ends-in-view and means toward those ends. Such an emphasis on valuation of ends-means does not touch the process of valuation in the problematic situation. This difficulty may be expressed in another manner.

Dewey asked: "Are desires and interests, which directly effect an institution of end-values, independent of the appraisal of things as means or are they ultimately influenced by this appraisal?"<sup>13</sup> He answered that they were so influenced. He noted that no end-in-view was held to without reference to the means to attain it, and if means were not available, the end-in-view was changed so that means might be found.

For what is deliberation except weighing of various alternative desires (and hence end-values) in terms of the conditions that are the means of their execution, and which, as means, determine the consequences actually arrived at. There can be no control of the operation of foreseeing consequences (and hence of forming ends-in-view) save in terms of conditions that operate as the causal conditions of their attainment. The proposition in which any object adopted as an end-in-view is statable (or explicitly stated) is warranted in just the degree to which existing conditions have been surveyed and appraised in their capacity as means. The sole alternative to this statement is that no deliberation whatsoever occurs, no ends-in-view are formed, but a person acts

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. the explicit formulation of this process, Human Nature and Conduct, Part I, passim.

<sup>13</sup> Dewey, Valuation, p. 25.

directly upon whatever impulse happens to present itself.<sup>14</sup>

This is an important statement in that it reflects the requirements of the scientific method on the definition of a problematic situation. Dewey has said here that "there can be no control of the operation of foreseeing consequences (and hence of forming ends-in-view) save in terms of conditions that operate as the causal conditions of their attainment." The criterion of attainment in empirical consequences is put temporally ahead of the process of forming ends-in-view which such attainment brings about. The question is then: which comes first, the choosing of ends or the choosing of means? In common sense, and in seeming contradiction to Dewey (at least here), it is the ends, because the end-in-view is the substance of the hypothesis which results from the factual data evaluated for that purpose--that is, for the purpose of that end-in-view--in the problematic situation. Therefore, the end is stated at first in terms of the problem of the situation felt immediately (which Dewey later called the "desired"), and not in terms of the means to its attainment. One cannot, of course, state means without reference to an end. But then Dewey said that a warranted end (later called the "desirable") was one whose means were appraised as having the capacity to reach it. Means must be appraised in terms of their capacity to attain that end, and not the other way

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

around. Dewey attempted to hold both positions: first, that numerous ends were "had" with the problem, so that at least there was some kind of ends in mind prior to empirical investigation; second, that the only "real" end was one which was warranted by the existential conditions or means for its fulfillment. Thus Dewey held that the only "real" end was a product of the empirical search for proper conditions as well as the fact that it had to satisfy the original problematic situation if fulfilled. But it is throughout apparent that this warranted end-in-view rests as much upon the possible (imagined, desired) ends immediately given in the situation which preceeded the search for warrantability as upon the empirical verification of conditions. Thus the criterion of warrantability through empirical verification does not, in itself, create or project that end-in-view which is finally judged warranted or unwarranted by empirical conditions. Such a critique does not deny the validity and necessity of finding existential conditions for projected ends-in-view, but it is concerned to find from whence such ends-in-view originate. They may be "appraised" as valuable in that they satisfy the problematic situation through having existential conditions available, but what valiative judgment established them in the first place? Then further, what is the status of this prior valiative act?

The end-in-view is, consequently, not merely established in terms of conditions that are a means of its

execution, as Dewey seems here to have held, but rather the imagined end--the immediately desired, which is formed through emotional reaction to the given problematic situation--is seen to be the basis upon which scientific hypothesis and subsequent empirical investigation of conditions is conducted. The primary valuation is, then, in terms of ends, whether attainable or not, which present themselves through the apprehension of the specific given quality of the specific given problematic situation. Thus the question of basic conditions of valuation is evidently not solved by the scientific method. It then follows that the question of human purpose and valuation is not within the purview of the scientific method as Dewey asserted. Science is thereby reduced to the function of establishing and verifying means, not ends--THE fundamental assertion Dewey was at pains to refute.

A second problem arises from Dewey's formulation. If warranted ends-in-view are established only through reference to existing or capable of existing means, then what guarantee does one have that the end-in-view finally selected in fact satisfies the original problematic situation? None, unless each of the possible ends-in-view have been previously guaranteed to fulfill the problematic situation, and then one must ask on what grounds came that prior guarantee. Ultimately, the response from Dewey had to be that it was merely a function of the given quality of the situation. Thus it is established, against Dewey, that any end-in-view must be finally

judged on the given quality of the situation, and not only or finally on its capacity of existential verification. Dewey himself acknowledged this in two ways: (1) in judging the consequences of the actually deployed warranted end-in-view, at least one of them had to satisfy that original problematic situation; and (2) in establishing the hypotheses upon reflective reaction to the felt problematic situation, the hypothesis was supposed to have two functions, to define clearly the felt problem and to project clearly an end-in-view based on its satisfaction (as well as the availability of existential conditions). Neither of these criteria is finally based on the scientific method's verification of existential conditions, but they are based on continual reference to the given quality of the situation. It is the original problem which sets the limits within which the end-in-view must be found, not merely the ability of existential conditions to fulfill it. An analysis such as this separates the concepts of ends and means more than Dewey would care to, and he noted that "ends framed in separation from consideration of things as means are foolish to the point of irrationality."<sup>15</sup> One would, of course, not disagree with this, but it must be noted that the purpose which lies beneath the framing of ends is something other than a consideration of means. Dewey had to hold that the valuation of ends was the same as the

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



valuation of means, so that the empirical "appraisal" of both through scientific method might be maintained. If it is not so maintained, then the continuity of the universality of the method is broken, two separate theories of valuations must be introduced, and a dualism is created which is insoluble as are all other historical dualisms. Dewey escaped the need for considering such a dualism by showing how all valuations might be made in terms of appraisal or the judgment of existential conditions and consequences. He did this, however, at the expense of considering the original condition of the formation of ends as merely a given quality in the complexities of the naturalistic, organic situation. But one must ask: what makes a problematic situation problematic? What makes a quality that specific quality? Can these questions be answered by the concept of empirical method? Has Dewey, in fact, merely pushed the problem of human value and purpose back into the "given" quality of the situation in the naturalistic conceptual scheme? Such questions demand a clear insight into Dewey's theory of quality.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE QUALITATIVE ENVIRONMENT

In Dewey's analysis, man lives in the world immediately and quality pervades it: man acts and reacts in relation to the qualitative judgments made therein. "This world forms the field of characteristic modes of thinking, characteristic in that thought is definitely regulated by qualitative considerations."<sup>1</sup> Thought--not as an object but as the present act of thinking--is qualitatively regulated by what the thinker immediately experiences of a given situation in the wholeness of the interaction between environment and subject. The given situation and its quality are composed of the thinker and the environment. The thinker experiences and reacts to himself in relation to the situation; he reacts to himself as well as to natural environment. Man reacts in a situation composed of himself and other; he reacts to the quality of the situation and creates the quality of the situation. Dewey emphasized both organism and environment, neither to the exclusion of the other. He did not think he emphasized the contribution of the environment to the exclusion of the

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, "Qualitative Thought" in On Experience. Nature and Freedom, p. 177.

ethical responsibility of the thinker in the situation which he, in part, created.

Quality is the color, weight, feeling, and emotion of the whole. It is gut level experience which can also be appraised by rational or logical endeavor, but never exists in whole as the object of a reflective act. It is experienced in its nonreflective, active doing. A reflective act also has quality, but not as the object of that reflective act. Any object is torn from its quality (its own unique character of movement of experience) by the very fact of its objectification. This is, in itself, not unfortunate--but it is necessary to realize the character of the process so as not to confuse the object of thought with the process and quality of the thought experience itself. It is of the greatest importance to Dewey that one should not confuse the immediate world in which we live with the abstract world about which we think and ontologize.

Dewey pointed out that one should not confuse the mediated object of thought with the immediate being-now-in-the-act of thinking--the former does not reflect its whole qualitative environment while the latter does.<sup>2</sup> Such a confusion about the whole quality of an object (the object of a thought experience being itself an abstraction from its own full qualitative situation) results in the "contextual

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

fallacy" of seeing such an object of thought as a thing in itself and then intellectually relating it to some other abstraction which is also outside its peculiar qualitative situation--to the end result that the conclusion of such a thought scheme has little or no valid relation to the original situation from which premises are abstracted.<sup>3</sup> Such was where logicians had to watch themselves, Dewey thought, for logic should be built on a knowledge of the role quality plays in direct experience:

Now my point is that unless such underlying and pervasive qualitative determinations are acknowledged in a distinct logical formulation, one or the other of two results is bound to follow. Either thought is denied to the subject matter in question and the phenomena are attributed to 'intuition' or 'genius' or 'impulse' or 'personality' as ultimate and un-analyzable entities; or, worse yet, intellectual analysis is reduced to a mechanical enumeration of isolated terms or 'properties.'<sup>4</sup>

And further:

As a matter of fact, such intellectual definiteness and coherence as the objects and criticisms of esthetic and moral subjects possess is due to their being controlled by the quality of subject matter as a whole. Consideration of the meaning of regulation by an underlying and pervasive quality is the theme of this article.<sup>5</sup>

The argument for cognizance of the importance of quality in the situation was thus summarized by Dewey:

What is intended may be indicated by drawing a distinction between something called a 'situation' and something termed an 'object.' By the term 'situation' in this connection is signified the fact that the

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<sup>3</sup>One notes that Dewey's "contextual fallacy" is closely related to Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

<sup>4</sup>Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," p. 180.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

subject matter ultimately referred to in existential propositions is a complex existence that is held together, in spite of its internal complexity, by the fact that it is dominated and characterized throughout by a single quality. By 'object' is meant some element in the complex whole that is defined in abstraction from the whole of which it is a distinction. The special point made is that the selective determination and relation of objects in thought is controlled by reference to a situation--to that which is constituted by a pervasive and internally integrating quality, so that failure to acknowledge the situation leaves, in the end, the logical force of objects and their relations inexplicable.<sup>6</sup>

The question is, of course: if that quality which holds together the various parts of the situation is itself inexplicable, how far has Dewey advanced the solution of the logical force of objects and their relation? The question asked in another manner is this: if the pervasive quality itself is not the object of inquiry, and Dewey explicitly noted that it was not, then to what extent is thought itself responsible for its valuative content and the ends it seeks?

Dewey went on to point out that the situation, in its wholeness, was not and could not be fully stated. Rather, it is "understood" as the background of any of the particular objects which are singled out for attention within it. "The situation controls the terms of thought, for they are its distinctions, and the applicability to it is the ultimate test of their validity."<sup>7</sup> This is the ultimate test of pragmatism, the very substance of the Deweyan analysis.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

The parts of any situation are held together by the immediately experienced quality without which all would fall apart in meaningless atomism. Quality is a function of the whole situation, and not analyzable for that reason, but its presence must be recognized in dealing with particular parts which are abstractions and are not themselves immediately experienced. They are objects of reflection in particular categories (logical, esthetic, etc.) and are mediated by the tools of such categories.

Thus quality enables us to keep thinking about one problem without having constantly to stop to ask ourselves what it is after all that we are thinking about. We are aware of it not by itself but as the background, the thread, and the directive clue in what we do expressly think of.<sup>8</sup>

What we think of are the relations and distinctions of the quality of the situation. Dewey had, however, trouble in trying to convey just exactly what he wanted to mean by the direct experience, and well he might, as language, by its nature (according to Dewey), automatically objectified (mediated) the experience which he tried to communicate. The words themselves are symbolic abstractions of the event, and not the event itself. Dewey tried, nevertheless, and noted his agreement with Bergson's theory of intuition:

The word 'intuition' has many meanings. But in its popular, as distinct from refined philosophical usage, it is closely connected with the single qualitative-ness underlying all the details of explicit reasoning. It may be relatively dumb and inarticulate and yet

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid. (Emphasis added).

penetrating; unexpressed in definite ideas which form reasons and justifications and yet profoundly right. To my mind, Bergson's contention that intuition precedes conception and goes deeper is correct. Reflection and rational elaboration spring from and make explicit a prior intuition.<sup>9</sup>

Immediate experience directly intuits the quality of a situation. The quality determines the objects of reflective thought as well as how and why they are thought and, later, how they will be judged as fulfilling the demands of the problematic situation. One may question, here, if man is active or passive in relation to quality. Both. Man has had a hand in developing the quality which now, in the new situation, determines the "which" and the "how" of specific objects within it. The quality is itself the relation of man to environment, neither one alone is meaningful outside the relation between them which defines both of them. But the exceedingly important question is here: what are the characters of the poles of this relation? On the one hand is the physical/social environment, on the other, the individual organism, man. Dewey left no doubt as to the qualitative definition of the environment, but in what manner does the organism contribute to the qualitative whole? If the qualitative whole is immediate, intuited and felt--as it is--and if it is not the object of a reflective act of inquiry--which it is not--then the organism contributed to any new situation as he comes to it, namely, in the natural active, habitual and nonreflective state. Only

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

the quality itself calls for or creates thought, reflection. Thought does not call for or create quality insofar as it is preceded by it in any already given qualitative whole. Thus while man is actively a participant in the whole of the qualitative situation, his activity is natural habitual activity, not purposive, conscious activity. Man may be active in the development of the qualitative whole, but not man as conscious, reflective, imaginative and purposive. It is important for the remainder of the discussion to keep in mind the peculiarly narrow definition of man as contributor to the pervasive quality which is the originating condition of all acts of conscious and unconscious endeavor.

In Dewey's analysis, man is not self-directing, the environment is not directive: both are poles of directionality. Both are the givers and receivers of directionality. This is an ontology of relation, with the pervasive quality of the relation given as a beginning point for active endeavor.

Concerning the movement from the directly or immediately experienced to the abstracted object of the mediating experience (which is itself, of course, immediate), Dewey said:

The underlying pervasive quality in the last instance [Dewey has here used as an example the proposition 'that men die'], when it is put in words, involves care or concern for human destiny. But we must remember that this exists as a dumb quality until it is symbolized in an intellectual and propositional form. Out of this quality there emerges the idea of man and of mortality and of their existential connection with each other. No one of them has any



meaning apart from the others, neither the distinctions, the terms, nor their relation, the predication. All the difficulties that attend the problem of predication spring from supposing that we can take the terms and their connection as having meaning by themselves. The sole alternative to this supposition is the recognition that the object of thought, designated propositionally, is a quality that is first directly and unreflectively experienced or had.<sup>10</sup>

One would hasten to add that this quality itself is not had as the object of reflective thought. It is experienced directly first in its own experience, and not as the object of another experience. Quality, now as object, is part of another relation pervaded by another quality being now experienced immediately. Quality as object of experience is mediated by the very stance or purpose for which it is now an object, namely, the quality of the now-going-on act of its mediation. The act of mediation is itself immediate. Perhaps it was for this reason that Dewey referred in Human Nature and Conduct to the "habit of knowing"<sup>11</sup> while elsewhere quite explicitly recognizing that habit "does not, of itself, know, for it does not of itself stop to think observe or remember."<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the discussion here, reference is continually made to the "givenness" of the quality of the situation. One might ask if this "given" is itself only that which a conscious being wants to include for his purposes in an

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>11</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 186. Also cf. p. 209 and p. 269, et passim.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

ontological framework; that is, is the "given" a result of or a cause of directionality? From the analysis here, it is obvious that the given of a situation, the pervasive quality, is the cause of directionality. Evidently Dewey was aware of the difficulties which might arise from a theory which merely puts facts for which it cannot account into the "given" with which it starts. Dewey said on this point:

The only thing that is unqualifiedly given is the total pervasive quality; and the objection to calling it 'given' is that the word suggests something to which it is given, mind or thought or consciousness or whatever, as well possibly as something that gives. In truth 'given' in this connection signifies only that the quality immediately exists, or is brutally there. In this capacity, it forms that to which all objects of thought refer, although, as we have noticed, it is never part of the manifest subject matter of thought. In itself, it is the big, buzzing, blooming confusion of which James wrote. . . . There is, however, no articulate quality which is merely buzzing and blooming. It buzzes to some effect; it blooms toward some fruitage. That is, the quality, although dumb, has as a part of its complex quality a movement or transition in some direction. It can, therefore, be intellectually symbolized and converted into an object of thought. This is done by statement of limit and of direction of transition between them. 'That' and 'sweet' define the limits of the moving quality, the copula 'tastes' (the real force of 'is') defines the direction of movement between these limits. Putting the nature of the two limits briefly and without any attempt to justify the statement here, the subject represents the pervasive quality as means or conditions and the predicate represents it as outcome or end.<sup>13</sup>

The point here is that inquiry or logic works with propositions which are the symbolized facts and process in a situation, the quality of which is just there to be had, defining

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<sup>13</sup>Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," pp. 189-190.

the relations of those parts within the situation. That quality, brutally given, is what all conclusions must finally validly be caused by and related to. In the quotation, though, Dewey failed to mention that the symbolized propositions and conclusions were no longer in the qualitative situational whole from which they were abstracted, but were then in a wholly new qualitative experience--the act of thinking logically. Thus one might get the impression that the quality can, as a whole, become the object of another experience--an idea which Dewey was at pains to deny.

If Dewey was aware of the problem of merely putting facts for which he could not account in his system and its method into the primordial "given" from which he started, it is evident that he did not get around it. C. S. Peirce had previously seen this quandry clearly:

Every unidealistic philosophy supposes some absolutely inexplicable, unanalyzable ultimate; in short, something resulting from mediation itself not susceptible of mediation. Now that anything is thus inexplicable can only be known by reasoning from signs. But the only justification of an inference from signs is that the conclusion explains the fact. To suppose the fact absolutely inexplicable, is not to explain it, and hence this supposition is never allowable.<sup>14</sup>

This is exactly the problem of the brutally given 'quality' in the problematic situation scheme of John Dewey. It is precisely the result of the inadequacy of empirical method to deal with primary purpose and evaluation which forced Dewey

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<sup>14</sup> C. S. Peirce, "Some Consequences of Four Incapacities," The Philosophy of Peirce, p. 229.

to attribute that which made the problematic situation problematic to the unanalyzable, pervasive quality. The implicit metaphysical structure of the 'quality' of the situation, as well as the situation as a whole, guides the activity and structure of the whole naturalistic world view, man included, yet it is not the proper object of the only way of knowing Dewey attributed to man--scientific method. The excessive limiting factor of this unanalyzable, brutally given metaphysics on the concept of the nature of man is to be well noted. Also, as a result of this structure is the assumption that what is analyzable is so only through empirical method, to the ultimate flattening of the fundamental difference between specific valuative statements on ethics, purposiveness and aesthetics. There simply is little real difference between the concepts of good, value, morals, and aesthetics if they are all judged empirically on their satisfaction of a problematic situation, also defined empirically. The consequences of such flattening of important valuative and moral distinctions through exclusive use of scientific method is illustrated clearly in a return to the analysis in Theory of Valuation.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN DESIRE

In Theory of Valuation, Dewey argued that valuation was a function of the relation of an object to the other objects of a situation where it had to be appraised in terms of its success in satisfying problematic situations. Value is not extrinsic, but intrinsic to the function of subjects in an existential situation. It is judged on the basis of empirical fact, not upon religious or cultural norms absolutized over centuries of custom. Value is intrinsic to an active situation judged empirically. It does not exist intrinsically to a subject through reference to some outside force or norm, but only in the empirical judgment of its function in a situation. Dewey summarized a point made broadly earlier, but here with interesting implications:

An end as an actual consequence, as an existing outcome, is, like any other occurrence which is scientifically analyzed, nothing but the interaction of the conditions that bring it to pass. Hence it follows necessarily that the idea of the object of desire and interest, the end-in-view as distinct from the end or outcome actually effected, is warranted in the precise degree in which it is formed in terms of these operative conditions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Valuation, p. 29.

To what degree, then, is human endeavor involved in this procedure? Is a man responsible for creating the idea of the end-in-view as expressing his desire to remove the obstacles which have caused a problematic situation? Yes, man as reflective creates hypotheses in reaction to ambiguous problematic situations. But is the creation of such ideal ends-in-view an evaluative and purposive procedure? In Dewey's analysis, one "prizes" his end, but prizing is the immediate thought of the enjoyment of an end, without existential effort for its realization. Man does not participate in a truly evaluative procedure unless he weighs his idealized end-in-view against empirical, existential conditions for its fulfillment as well as the empirical, existential consequences of such a fulfillment. This is the application of the strict scientific method. The ends-in-view are evaluated by means of empirical method as to the empirical conditions for their fulfillment. Appraisal of ends-in-view is in terms of empirical evaluation of the conditions of consequences and consequences themselves, and it is only after the subsequent empirical testing that an ideal end-in-view may become valuable (warranted). In short, the physical existence of the conditions for the desired consequence is responsible for judgment of value, not the unique character of man in the problematic situation. Man is responsible only insofar as he is true to scientific method, and the method only insofar as it is true to empirical fact. What is not considered is the valuative

and purposive content in the "given" of the original problematic situation which has a great deal of effect on the judgment of value in the continuing solution of that problem. Dewey affirmed the valuative content of the quality of the problematic situation, but it too was seen only in terms of empirical conditions for consequences. After all, part of the given situation is the organism's old habits which are themselves conclusions of previous empirically evaluated procedures. The concept of the thinking man in the problematic situation lies in his reaction to and judgment of empirical fact. Man is not the evaluator of fact; rather, his activity is evaluated by empirical fact. Man is not a judge; he is--in his peculiar activity as man--the judged. In Dewey's theory, he is evaluated by the assumptions of empirical method and the naturalistic world view. Man himself is "appraised," not "prized." His activities are judged (appraised) empirically; he is not valued (prized) in and for himself. But, of course, this is just what must occur to the subject matter of a scientific endeavor. Such is not, then, a philosophy of man; rather, it is a philosophy of science. Kant's ethical dictum<sup>2</sup> is violated, and implications about Dewey's theoretical concept of man begin to form.

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<sup>2</sup> "Now I say that man, and in general every rational being, exists as end in himself, not merely as a means for arbitrary use by this or that will: he must in all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be viewed at the same time as an end." Immanuel Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, trans. by H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row Torchbooks, 1964), p. 95. Cf. below, p. 148, Dewey's implicit awareness of this principle.

The question may here be raised: just what is the meaning of "human desire" if it is evaluated in terms of empirical conditions for its fulfillment? The discussion of the problem is pivotal. Dewey reexamined the problematic situation to find the method in which "desires, and interests arose and functioned, and in which end-objects, ends-in-view, acquired their actual contents."<sup>3</sup> The problematic situation, immediate and felt per se, is to be the object of "an empirical investigation of the actual conditions" of that situation.<sup>4</sup> The problem itself arises when there is something the matter of when there is trouble in the existing conditions such that one cannot just naturally or habitually, without thought or reflection, continue with his activity. "Something the matter" creates a want or desire for the consummation of a solution. If one acts merely through impulse or habit, what is done is not done through reflection, and is not valuative in nature.

But if and when desire and an end-in-view intervene between the occurrence of a vital impulse or a habitual tendency and the execution of activity, then the impulse or tendency is to some degree modified and transformed: a statement which is purely tautological, since the occurrence of a desire related to an end-in-view is a transformation of a prior impulse or routine habit. It is only in such cases that valuation occurs.<sup>5</sup>

Valuation is a function of a problematic situation, one in which there is something the matter, a lack, a deficiency, a

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<sup>3</sup>Dewey, Valuation. p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 34.



contradiction or privation to be made good, solved, or fulfilled by changing the existing conditions of the organic interaction with environment. Since the change of such conditions involves inquiry, or scientific method, valuation has an intellectual content, "for the end-in-view is formed and projected as that which, if acted upon, will supply the existing need or lack and resolve the existing conflict."<sup>6</sup>

The immediate, felt problem is an awareness that something is the matter. It is so felt precisely because vital impulse or habitual activity is thwarted and cannot here keep life activity in smooth continuity. The feeling of this creates desire to continue the smooth flow of activity, the latter being the immediately prized end. It is here that the intellectual factor implements the method which requires an objective, empirical investigation of that situation which, heretofore, has acted in an immediate, radically subjective condition. The subject matter of such an investigation is facts about the problematic situation abstracted from their "natural" place, and is used as facts for the construction of an hypothesis which outlines specifically the cause of the felt problem, and which points to an end-in-view which, given existential conditions for its fulfillment, will solve the felt problem, if put into effect. For Dewey, the emphasis was on finding these existential conditions for the end-in-view rather

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

than on analyzing the conditions of the given quality from which such an end-in-view was projected. The end-in-view is judged valuable on the availability of existential conditions for its fulfillment and its existential consequences. According to this scheme, one would assume that "desire" has only the function of prizing an end, then turning over the problem to science. Dewey, of course, did not agree, for to do so would be to destroy the link between man's comprehension of the problematic situation and his ability to continue with the creation of a science of inquiry to progressively be able to solve the problems there. In this naturalistic concept of the organic growth of the inquiry which defines man as different from animals, the development must be smooth without recourse to appeal to an outside (nonnatural) power or idea. Thus desire does not only prize an end, for ends can be

. . . foreseen as ends or outcomes only in terms of the conditions by which they are brought into existence. It is simply impossible to have an end-in-view or to anticipate the consequences of any proposed line of action save upon the basis of some, however slight, consideration of the means by which it can be brought into existence, otherwise, there is<sup>7</sup> no genuine desire but an idle fantasy, a futile wish.

Desire must also, therefore, consider physical conditions for its end, and not merely that end by itself. It is in this context that Dewey made an exceedingly enlightening statement:

The likelihood of the occurrence of failure in attaining desired ends is in direct ratio to failure to form desires and interests (and the objects they involve)

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

on the basis of conditions that operate either as obstacles (negatively valued) or as positive resources. The difference between reasonable desire and unreasonable desire . . . is precisely the difference between those which arise casually and are not reconstituted through consideration of the conditions that will actually decide the outcome and those which are formed on the basis of existing liabilities and potential resources.<sup>8</sup>

First, it is to be noted that Dewey next demanded that desires be formed on the basis of existential conditions for their fulfillment. This is not the desire for a prized end which is the immediate reaction to the felt problem. Dewey specifically rejected those theories which related desire to impulses as they happened to occur, for this meant that immediate, nonreflective impulse was that which was responsible for valuation. Dewey's theory holds, of course, that valuation is a function of the existential conditions to support a problem solving end-in-view. Dewey asserted that desire, correctly taken, was

. . . a modification of a raw impulse through foresight of its outcome . . . the whole difference between impulse and desire is made by the presence in desire of an end-in-view, of objects as foreseen consequences. The foresight will be dependable in the degree in which it is constituted by examination of the conditions that will in fact decide the outcome.<sup>9</sup>

It can but be noted that describing "desire" in terms of foresight of consequences and empirical examination of conditions affecting those consequences is to describe "desire" precisely as Dewey defined logic, inquiry, the scientific method, and

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 29. (Emphases added.)

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

reason! Indeed, this is why Dewey could talk about "reasonable and unreasonable" desire.

Did Dewey then drop the distinction between the two sorts of desires and affirm only the definition of desire which included foresight of conditions and consequences? No, he maintained them both in order to retain that which was specifically human in the evaluative process: emotion (raw impulse). He distinguished between them by calling the object which presented itself first through the mechanism of impulses as the "desired." Then, the "object of desire which emerges as a revision of the first appearing impulse, after the latter is critically judged in reference to the conditions which will decide the actual result . . ." is the "desirable."<sup>10</sup> It is on the basis of the "desirable" that valuations and judgments of "should" are to be formed. Dewey said that the distinction was not introduced a priori, but merely "points to the difference between the operation and consequences of unexamined impulses and those of desires and interests that are the product of investigation of conditions and consequences."<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to note that this concept of the "should" which derives from the desirable, is not based on a traditional moral theory, but from "the conditions which will decide the actual result." It becomes evident, however, that while Dewey rejected traditional moral theory and accepted only

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-32.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

that which was a working factor in the problematic situation, the assumptions of the specific character and method of the problematic situation itself forms a moral theory along traditional lines in terms of absolute assumptions. Dewey believed the existential situation--naturalistically described--was the only environment of morals.

The desirable is the ideal in the process of solving a problematic situation. Dewey was careful to note that this was not an arbitrary ideal such as he thought all traditional moral and value theories imposed on existential situations. An ideal becomes arbitrary, he thought, "in the degree in which it is not connected with things which exist and is not related to concrete existential requirements."<sup>12</sup> Thus Dewey once again emphasized that an ideal, the desirable, or the end-in-view, should be judged on its reasonableness as against its arbitrariness on the grounds of its function, of what it does, not on the grounds of its origin. If an ideal does function for human needs, it is called reasonable and not arbitrary. Dewey, of course, did not consider the assumption of the emphasis on function, conditions and consequences of projected ends-in-view, and the empirical method itself as arbitrary or anything but concrete. But he did, arbitrarily, fix his attention on the empirical mode and on the conditions of and consequences of projected ends-in-view (empirically

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

defined) to problematic situations. Prior conditions of the problems themselves are referred merely to the given quality of the immediately felt situation. Yet is it not also necessary to find what it is about man that he can be in a problematic situation to begin with? Does an inadequacy of existential conditions make a situation problematic, as Dewey held, or does the concept of inadequacy itself define existential conditions as problematic? The question then is whether it is sufficient to base a whole system of thought, and the definition of man along with it, on types of reactions to given situations, or whether it is necessary to open up the "given" to find how and why it is simply "given."

Dewey noted that the "desired" was merely an end-in-itself, and like all merely ideal ends, would--if acted upon--break down the continuity of inquiry and contradict the organic basis of ongoing activity. Dewey held that nothing happened as final in that there was nothing which was not part of an ongoing stream of events. This is scientific, organic analysis applied to human activity. It follows that the distinction between ends and means is temporal and relational. Not only the desirable end-in-view of a problematic situation, but also "every condition that has to be brought into existence in order to serve as means is, in that connection, an object of desire and an end-in-view, while the end actually reached is a means to future ends as well as a test

of valuations previously made."<sup>13</sup> The importance of this is how Dewey made the analysis. He began it by asserting that "in all the physical sciences (using 'physical' here as a synonym for nonhuman) it is now taken for granted that all 'effects' are also 'causes.'"<sup>14</sup> The point is that Dewey has taken what is of value in the physical sciences, purposely nonhuman, and directly transplanted it to the specifically human situation:

If the notion of some objects as ends-in-themselves were abandoned, not merely in words but in all practical implications, human beings would for the first time in history be in a position to frame ends-in-view and form desires on the basis of empirically grounded propositions on the temporal relations of events to one another.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, Dewey explicitly proposed that man, in his relations and activities, would not be truly free until he used himself and his activities, aims and values as inputs to the empirically verifiable scientific method. Freeing man from such arbitrary value systems as religion and social custom is a function of setting man and his activity as another subject matter for science.<sup>16</sup> Thus man must be defined within the scope of the method of science, i.e., finally empirically. Science evaluates man. If man is not the evaluator of ends--Dewey said method and scientific fact are--then one must think that man must be seen as the creator of ends. But in Dewey's

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> This is the basic subject matter of A Common Faith. cf. pp. 56-57, 66, 72-73, 86, et passim.

analysis what actually belongs alone to man is found to be merely a nonvaluative exercise in reaction, the forming of the "desired." Man, according to Dewey, as a reflective creature is responsible only for the desired ends which form the basis of an hypothesis of an end-in-view through scientific method. Such a hypothetical end-in-view is experimental and nonvaluative until proven "real" ( warranted as valuable) by empirical means. But the last steps are not the unique function of man, only the blind reaction to the quality of the situation is. Is man, in his activity of reflection--of being rational--only hypothetical in character? Dewey's view of science demands this. Hence the developer of ideals, nonvaluative in themselves, is a neutral being, experimental, and hypothetical. Is man really so? If Dewey was to be consistent with his expressed world view, man simply had to be so.

It further follows that if human ends are judged solely in terms of the conditions necessary to their fulfillment and their consequences empirically defined, such ends are defined as means as well as ends. The effect, which Dewey purposely endorsed, is to deny a fundamental difference between ends and means so that organic continuity may persist. Dewey felt he had to do this to discredit the continued belief in 'ends-in-themselves' as solely and finally legitimate kinds of ends.<sup>17</sup> The result is the severe limiting of the

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<sup>17</sup> Dewey, Valuation, p. 40.



scope of specifically human activity. Denied is man's role in developing the criteria upon which his aims and projections, in terms of ends-in-view, are finally judged valuable--for the empirical method, while continually refined by man, was assumed by Dewey as the natural development of the empirically defined naturalistic world view. On the other hand, the hypothesis formed in the thinking process of man is strictly a reaction to the problematic situation, which is so precisely through the givenness of its quality. In Dewey's formulation, only between the given of the problem and the given of the mode in which the solution is to be evaluated does man himself play his role. The severity of the limitation is illustrated by noting that actually the only step in the whole process which can be deduced from Dewey's theory is man's emotive reaction to the problem and therefore the positing of an immediate desire for solution. All other factors of the problematic situation are not concerned about the unique position of man, but rather are deducible from the assumed naturalistic position: the quality of the given situation, the given mode of solution and verification. The whole of man's own activity--in the problematic situation--that which is unique to him and which therefore must be that which sets him off from the rest of the universe--is the positing of the "desired." The analysis here shows that, for Dewey, it was a strictly nonvaluative, nonmoral, nonintellectual procedure.

It is precisely here, then, that one must reevaluate the meaning of some of the steps and terms Dewey used. Beginning with the process of establishing the desired, one should note that the desired end is an ideal--a quite arbitrary ideal--with its content coming from the given whole of the problematic situation. What causes it? Specifically, the human need in the situation. Thus one has an arbitrary ideal caused by a need in the situation. Yet this arbitrary ideal, contra Dewey's position on arbitrariness, is not at all ab extra to the situation.<sup>18</sup> Next, and equally important, the end posited by such an arbitrary ideal is, in fact, an end-in-itself (a point which Dewey acknowledged, but for different reasons, namely, because there was no consideration of empirical means to its attainment). It is the first projection of an end which, no matter how much it is to be seen in terms of the existential conditions for its fulfillment (and thus changed into the "desirable"), must always be seen as an end, the end or purpose of this problematic situation, here and now for this man. Such an arbitrary end-in-itself is a function of the conditions of the problem (whatever further analysis shows this to be), and not of the empirical conditions for fulfillment. If all judgment is based on the latter, as Dewey seemed to propose, then the criteria of both the ends and means are empirical availability. But means, no matter

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<sup>18</sup>Cf. above, pp. 95-96.

how much they may need to be empirically available, must be previously defined by the end for which they are means; such ends, no matter how much they also may need to be empirically available, must be ends which are seen in themselves and thus have their own value based upon the conditions of the original quality of the problematic situation prior to their evaluation in terms of the existential conditions for their fulfillment. To suppose that this entails a manipulated abstraction of the facts of the concrete situation, and not the facts themselves--as Dewey explicitly argued<sup>19</sup>--assumes that scientific analysis of fact is the only analysis of fact. Thus the result is the failure to pay attention to the more comprehensive human situation. Whitehead's fallacy of misplaced concreteness never had a more cogent and flagrant example.<sup>20</sup>

To propose what is here being proposed is to assume there is a real value in the idea of desire prior to its being defined in terms of scientific method. This is to assert that desire, in positing the ends which Dewey called the "desired," has a purposive and valiative function, and that this, at least in part, is a consequence of valiative conditions in man prior to the judgment and function of scientific method and the explanatory scheme of the naturalistic universe. Oddly enough, though Dewey had to thoroughly disagree with

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<sup>19</sup> Dewey, Valuation, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Nor, for that matter, has Dewey's own "contextual fallacy" seen such an example.

this criticism theoretically, he seemed to attempt to vitiate its effect by agreeing that man did, in fact, bring something uniquely his own to the scientific analysis of reality, and that this uniqueness was valuable and had to be saved from being obscured by the scientific method. In the closing analysis of Theory of Valuation, Dewey dealt with the place of the emotive--the "desired"--in man's inquiry and evaluative procedures. He criticized the past for following only the demands of the emotive, while paying little or no attention to precepts of rational reflection, appraisal and the "desirable":

The split which exists in present social life between ideas and emotions, especially between ideas that have scientific warrant and uncontrolled emotions that dominate practice, the split between the affections and the cognitive, is probably one of the chief sources of the maladjustments and unendurable strains from which the world is suffering. . . . We are living in a period in which emotional loyalties and attachments are centered on objects that no longer command that intellectual loyalty which has the sanction of the methods which attain valid conclusions in scientific inquiry while ideas that have their origin in the rationale of inquiry have not as yet succeeded in acquiring the force that only emotional ardor provides. The practical problem that has to be faced is the establishment of cultural conditions that will support the kinds of behavior in which emotions and ideas, desires and appraisals, are integrated.<sup>21</sup>

The important phrase here is that "emotions and ideas, desires [in terms of the emotive "desired"] and appraisals, are integrated." Dewey did not want emotion deleted, even though his analysis points out that, theoretically, it is nonvaluative in nature. Dewey continued:

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<sup>21</sup>Dewey, Valuation, p. 65.

In fact and in net outcome, the previous discussion does not point in the least to supersession of the emotive by the intellectual. Its only and complete import is the need for their integration in behavior--behavior in which, according to common speech, the head and the heart work together, in which, to use more technical language,<sup>22</sup> prizing and appraising unite in direction of action.

But what does the unification or integration of the nonvaluative and valuative achieve? In Dewey's analysis, it achieves the valuative, which is simply to say, that Dewey did not integrate or unite these two "sides" of desire--the nonvaluative "desired" and the valuative "desirable." He chose the latter no matter how important he felt it was to keep the former within the framework of his system. He elaborated: "The operation of desire in producing the valuations that influence human action will also be liberated when they, too, are ordered by verifiable propositions regarding matters-of-fact."<sup>23</sup> Desire, thus "liberated" from emotion, custom, authority, appeals to absolutes and ancient traditions is, in fact, reason or the rational, according to the rest of Dewey's analysis. Desire "liberated" from the emotive, nonvaluative, is not unifiable or capable of integration with desire as emotive. The latter is immediate to the situation, and it is not unifiable with desire as rational precisely because of the care which Dewey has taken to liberate desire from the immediate and the emotional. On the one hand he spoke of integration, on the other--and in the next sentence--he spoke of liberation from

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

such an integration. This seems simply a contradiction. Why? Because Dewey realized the quandary his theoretical analysis had left him: If one takes away the concept of emotion from the basic human endeavor of acting purposefully in the world, then one has effectively taken the humanness out of being human.<sup>24</sup> Dewey thought the emotional part of human nature was so important that he attributed the popularity of totalitarian dictatorships, even, to "the split between the affectional and the cognitive . . . the strain produced by separation of the intellectual and the emotional is so intolerable that human beings are willing to pay almost any price for the semblance of even its temporary annihilation."<sup>25</sup> Dewey was aware of the problem, and he cared. There can be no doubt about that. But look at the theoretical solution: If man is torn between emotion and the rational, define desire (emotion toward ends) as empirical rationality; then define all value and valuation as the successful fulfillment of such empirical rationality; then note that science, and its naturalistic world view, is all that really defines "fact." This done, the problems of man can quite handily be solved. Dewey thought this was so: "The science that is put to distinctively human use is that in which warranted ideas about the nonhuman world are integrated with emotion as human traits."<sup>26</sup> Only,

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<sup>24</sup>Cf. Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 79-80, also, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 258.

<sup>25</sup>Dewey, Valuation, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

one sees what such "integration" means: just as the "desired" and the "desirable" are integrated to get the "desirable," so "science and the nonhuman world" are integrated with "emotion as human trait" to get "science and the nonhuman world."

Dewey concluded his book by reaffirming this point:

In this integration not only is science itself a value (since it is the expression and the fulfillment of a special human desire and interest) but it is the supreme means of the valid determination of all valuations in all aspects of human and social life.<sup>27</sup>

Can there be any doubt as to the theoretical definition of man in the philosophy of John Dewey? He asserted that "knowledge of the human condition is psychological science," and that "the propositions which have resulted and which now form the substantial content of physics, of chemistry, and, to a growing extent, of biology, provide the very means by which the change which is required can be introduced into beliefs and ideas purporting to deal with human and social phenomena."<sup>28</sup>

Can there be any doubt that, theoretically, man has become merely and simply the empirical subject matter of an empirical science based on an empirical definition of valuation in an empirically defined naturalistic scheme of the universe?

Provided that man is, indeed, definable wholly within the scope of empirical science, Dewey's proposed solution to the problems of man seems indeed valuable. One of the keys

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 62 and p. 63.

to such an interpretation of man is the advances Dewey felt biology had made:

A grounded theory of the phenomena of human behavior is as much a prerequisite of a theory of valuation as is a theory of the behavior of physical (in the sense of nonhuman) things. The development of a science of the phenomena of living creatures was an unqualified prerequisite of the development of a sound psychology. Until biology supplied the material facts which lie between the nonhuman and the human, the apparent traits of the latter were so different from those of the former that the doctrine of a complete gulf between the two seemed to be the only plausible one. The missing link in the chain of knowledge that terminates in grounded valuation propositions is the biological. As that link is in process of forging, we may expect the time soon to arrive in which the obstacles to development of an empirical theory of valuation will be those habits and traditions that flow from institutional and class interests rather than from intellectual deficiencies.<sup>29</sup>

The crux of the matter lies in the ability of biology to successfully define man in such a way as to deny the necessity of a difference between the treatment of man and the treatment of rocks and amoebas as subject matter of the physical sciences. For the purposes of science, which are, in Dewey's theoretical account, the only purposes, there is no difference between the nonhuman and the human. Few would deny that physical science may treat of man as physical object just as any other physical object. But to generalize from this that science is "the supreme means of the valid determination of all valuations in all aspects of human and social life" demands just what Dewey has been consistent enough to propose: namely, the flattening

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 63.



of the definition of man such that it may become the subject matter, and only the subject matter of empirical method. Truly, Dewey was willing to pay almost any price for the temporary semblance of the annihilation of the split between the affectional and the cognitive and for a successful method for dealing with the problems of men. There is no doubt that Dewey defined man in this manner because he thought he had successfully kept the human in the situation through affirmation of human emotion. Analysis shows, however, that such an affirmation still does not draw what is specifically human into the evaluative process. Affirmation of the emotive by an empirical method itself viable only insofar as it denies the emotive is contradictory. Man, as feeling, loving, caring, valuing, and purposing--man as a creature of pathos in the arbitrary, ethical immediate now-world--is, in the Deweyan theoretical scheme, simply a blind, reactionary, hypothetical, nonvaluative, amoral and ignorant creature. Only when subsumed under empirical criteria and judged upon empirical conditions for consequences do his activities become moral and valuative, and even then only upon the judgment of the majority of interested empirical investigators whose conclusions can forever be only tentative. There is no comprehensive concept of man, even in Dewey's definition of the human being-in-emotion, in the final nonemotive evaluation of man from the empirical standpoint. And through his emotions, the man John Dewey knew this, for it was precisely the reason he spent

seventy years of his life devoted to man--man as whole human being, not as physical subject matter for empirical science.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THEORY OF MAN IN HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT

In another basically theoretical work on the nature of man, Human Nature and Conduct, 1922, Dewey viewed a broader spectrum of human life than in the Theory of Valuation. The basic position is the same, but the additional breadth allows further critical analysis of Dewey's position.

Dewey's concern in Human Nature and Conduct is basically "morals," which he defined as "all the subjects of distinctively human import, all of the social disciplines as far as they are intimately connected with the life of man and as they bear upon the interests of humanity."<sup>1</sup> Since what Dewey here attempted to do was to study human nature in terms of the scientific knowledge of his day, he saw his attempt as from the standpoint of a psychology in its broader sense, that is, as it purported to have something relevant to say about all of human activity. The purpose then, is

. . . that a knowledge of human nature provides a map or chart of all humane and social subjects, and that with this chart in our possession we can find our way intelligently about through all the complexities of

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. v.

the phenomena of economics, politics, religious beliefs, etc.<sup>2</sup>

Such human nature is a contributing factor to the form of natural science, much like any other possible subject matter of science, and Dewey disagreed with Hume that human nature, in particular, was the key to the content of natural science. This is, of course, in keeping with Dewey's position that man is another natural part of the universe--with all others, but another subject matter of the universal inquiry of science.

Dewey concluded the introduction by noting that while this was not a strictly psychological text, it did treat the idea of habit which was the key to social psychology. The operations of impulse and intelligence were the keys to individualized mental activity, he thought, but "they are secondary to habit so that mind can be understood in the concrete only as a system of beliefs, desires and purposes which are formed in the interaction of biological aptitudes with a social environment."<sup>3</sup> The interaction of organism with environment is judged as ethical, and change to institute the ethical is "involved in positive respect for human nature when the latter is associated with scientific knowledge."<sup>4</sup> Evil is the severing of morals from the findings of science about human nature, the "actualities of human physiology and psychology."<sup>5</sup> Thus Dewey, at the very outset of the book, left no

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Preface to the first edition.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

doubt how human nature was to be defined, and how actuality was found. It remains but to note some of the consequences of the development of the argument.

The emphasis of this book lies in the discussion of human nature for the purpose of defining moral activity. Moral activity, the same as evaluative activity in Theory of Valuation, is discovered through tracing the problematic situation to its conclusion. The latter, judged on its empirically verifiable consequences, is good or bad, moral or immoral, on the basis of how successful it is in satisfying the original problem. In the original life activity of the organism, stimulus and response are mechanically linked together in an unbroken chain. It is the path of unconscious least resistance which is neither good nor bad, but merely the ongoing activity based on natural and habitual responses to the world. Dewey called this "ruthless and dull efficiency" and noted that, fortunately, nature put obstacles in the way of complete acceptance of such a life. Such obstacles recall consciousness to the task of carrying the organisms past them, and Dewey was careful to note that this was the only reason that consciousness was called into operation.<sup>6</sup> The ongoing activity itself is composed of habits and natural activities of the organism. Habits are secondary and acquired, not native and original, and are outgrowths of unlearned activities

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

which are part of man's endowment at birth.<sup>7</sup> Dewey asserted that these unlearned activities had meaning which was acquired in the social situation, and this was why they contributed to formation of habit. Habit is routine; it is the nonreflective interaction with the environment, and is as much conditioned by the environment as by the organism itself. Habit is a repeated pattern of action with the environment in response to certain stimuli. It is not simply a repeated function, but a given response to a given stimulus. In social terms, it is strict custom. A habit is originally formed as a successful response to a new stimulus, and continues until it no longer has conditions available for its success. The sum of the interpenetration of habit in the organism is its character.<sup>8</sup> The activity of character is will.<sup>9</sup>

When the ongoing activity of organic habit is thwarted or impeded by circumstances, the organism does not consciously will to change, for will is blind response. Rather, the organism has a natural impulse--on "instinct"--to activity in reaction to the new situation, the novel stimulus which old habit cannot respond to satisfactorily. If habitual response does not fulfill the need, then this impulse strikes out, demanding activity, demanding satisfaction of the new stimulus. In this way, impulse is the release from old habit and custom;

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 89, also cf. p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

it affords the opportunity of imagination and invention. In short, it demands new ends, new purposes, at the same time releasing the organism from the absolute clutches of habit and custom. As such, it calls forth intellect, not merely immediate activity, "but reflection upon the way in which to use impulse to renew dispositions and old habit."<sup>10</sup>

Impulse is needed to arouse thought, incite reflection and enliven belief. But only thought notes obstructions, invents tools, conceives aims, directs technique, and thus converts impulse into an art which lives in objects. Thought is born as the twin of impulse in every moment of impeded habit.<sup>11</sup>

Dewey later described "desire" in the same way: "Desire is the forward urge of living creatures. When the push and drive of life meets no obstacles, there is nothing which we call desire."<sup>12</sup> Desire is the surging forth of the organism to break through the obstacle which dams up its ongoing activity. The end of such desire, the end of such impulse, is not necessarily to be seen as the end of the reflective thought and it definitely is not to be seen as the actual outcome of the process of resolving the obstacle of the problematic situation. It is to be noted here that the ends of impulse and desire are that "desired" of which Dewey spoke in Theory of Valuation. Basically, there are no differences in the analyses, but there are some differences in the manners in which they are carried

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 170, also cf. p. 177.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 171-172. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

out. In Human Nature and Conduct there is a definite sense in which thought, reflection or deliberation assigns value, or moral content, to possible ends-in-view prior to their actual use in the empirical situation, and prior to their judgment on that use.<sup>13</sup> In Theory of Valuation such ideations or ideal ends-in-view are judged strictly on their existential conditions and consequences through empirical verification. It is a difference of particular emphasis, and not of the basic analysis.

In both works there is an ambiguity in the analysis as to just where thought starts. In Theory of Valuation the "desired" and the "desirable" are both ends of desire, but the former is of the desire of immediate reaction to the problem, while the latter incorporates reflection on the existential conditions necessary for its fulfillment. It was noted that the process of determining the "desirable" was that of thought, of inquiry, and of reason. In Human Nature and Conduct, in the passage quoted above,<sup>14</sup> Dewey noted that "thought is born as the twin of impulse in every moment of impeded habit." Why include "impulse" at all, then? What value has it if it is simultaneous with thought? But in the later formulation in which Dewey used "desire," it was put this way: "The 'object' which then presents itself in thought as the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-192, p. 208, et passim.

<sup>14</sup> Above, p. 97.



goal of desire is the object of the environment which, if it were present, would secure a reunification of activity and the restoration of its ongoing activity."<sup>15</sup> This implies that the original immediate desire has defined an end which thought then works upon in terms of projected existential conditions empirically defined.<sup>16</sup> This is the more likely formulation in both works, but then it runs, again, into the difficulty that the formulation of ends is necessarily evaluative, and such evaluation precedes logically and temporally the judgment of evaluation on empirical grounds. Once again this is to suggest a hidden criterion of valuation (morals, aesthetics, etc.) prior to the engagement of the processes of the empirical investigation.

Thought, itself, is reflection upon the problematic situation through a deliberative process which notes the "facts" of the situation as they pertain to the problem, then establishes hypotheses. Such hypotheses both more clearly define the problem and suggest solutions. "During this search, old habit supplies content, filling, definite, recognizable, subject-matter."<sup>17</sup> It is imagination projecting ends based upon what the organism already knows, namely, the past

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<sup>15</sup> Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 249-250.

<sup>16</sup> "Impulse determine the direction of movement. . . . Impulse defines the peering, the search, the inquiry." Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

activities of its history and the habits formed in such activity. When this imagination works, it

. . . reinforces, inhibits, redirects habits already working or stirs up others which had not previously actively entered in. In thought as well as in overt action, the objects experienced in following out a course of action attract, repel, satisfy, annoy, promote and retard.<sup>18</sup>

And so deliberation proceeds, and when it ceases, choice of an end has taken place. What is such a choice? It is "simply hitting in imagination upon an object which furnishes an adequate stimulus to the recovery of overt action."<sup>19</sup> "All deliberation is a search for a way to act, not for a final terminus. Its office is to facilitate stimulation."<sup>20</sup> In this formulation, Dewey emphasized the process of imagination's figuring ways to solve the dilemma. When a proper solution is reached, the deliberative process is over and action results. Here reasonableness is taking all points into consideration prior to action. If error in action occurs, "it comes from lack of data, not from ineptitude in handling them."<sup>21</sup> While it later becomes evident that the data is empirically defined, the emphasis here is on the concept of reasonableness as deliberative process correctly enacted rather than its empirical verification.

But reasonableness is in fact a quality of an effective relationship among desires rather than a thing opposed to desire. It signifies the order,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

perspective, proportion which is achieved, during deliberation, out of a diversity of earlier incompatible preferences. Choice is reasonable when it induces us to act reasonably: that is, with regard to the claims of each of the competing habits and impulses.<sup>22</sup>

Taken in itself, in merely this formulation, one would have to ascribe a different criterion to reason (or reasonableness) than strict obedience to empirical verifiability. But Dewey emphasized the attainment of such ends-in-view, and it is only in the attainment, empirically verifiable, that the reasonably arrived at end-in-view is, in fact, reasonable.<sup>23</sup> Actual operation of the conclusion or choice is the criterion which defines it as the choice and as reasonable. Deliberation projects about this operation in reaction to present operations and memory of past operations. Dewey did not deny that such projections might be wrong, but it was because they were of empirical events and of reactions to them that they may be tested by empirical investigations. Reason is defined as dealing with empirical situations in such a way as to be verifiable by empirical method. What was reasonable in the past may not be so now or in the future, but if the projections of past reasonableness are based on empirical data, they are now and continually available to empirical verification. If the data are insufficient or wrong, it is the fault of the data, and not of the empirical process, i.e., reason or logic. The very fact that deliberation occurs, according to Dewey's

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 194-195.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 251ff.

formulation, is that empirical data has changed and what was valuable in the past in dealing with it is not valuable now: this is the cause of the problematic situation. The projective deliberation is simply a way of creating new habits for new or different empirical data, and this is an experimental process. In any specific case, insufficiency of data does not deny the reasonableness of the method; it actually affirms it. It is when the method is not applied to empirical facticity that it becomes unreasonable, for Dewey thought that insofar as one was not true to empirical fact, he would be lost and confused in activity.

When a choice is made and activity replaces deliberation, a new habit is formed which is good, valuable and moral as it actually satisfies the requirements of the original problematic situation. There is, in Dewey, some sense in which the good, moral or valuable is itself not an object of reflective thought, and is therefore not realizable as such. For example, Dewey was careful to note that "habit, does not, of itself, know, or it does not of itself stop to think, to observe or remember."<sup>24</sup> If a solution is projected in terms of both satisfying the problem and as having existential conditions for its fulfillment, it is projected as a good or a value. But judgment of it as such is upon its actual fulfillment. Of course, if this fulfillment is wholly satisfactory

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

with no bad existential consequences, what obstruction is there presented for consciousness and deliberation to review it and judge it as good? None, evidently. Only objects of negative value are the objects of conscious reflection. Only if a projection is inadequate is it the subject matter of further intellectual, empirical investigation. Scientific method projects, but it knows only the past. It is put into operation only in response to inadequacy, not adequacy, for the latter is a function of habit which "knows" not itself nor anything else.<sup>25</sup> This objection may be answerable in the following terms, according to Dewey's formulation: Past successful activities which are now habits, are the subject matter for present difficulties, and as such, they are reflected upon as possible solutions of a present problematic situation which has been initiated by a blockage which did not affect the other habit. In this case, the other habit is finally judged as adequate, as good. Such an answer is only partially successful, however. The present situation is always different from any other. If that other successful habit is called upon in the present situation, it cannot be judged good until it has proven itself again in a new situation, and one arrives again at the old dilemma: how is it known as good if reflection is always based on inadequacy? This has relevance in the concept of responsibility for moral activity as well as in itself as a

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<sup>25</sup> John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 148.

criticism of the problematic situation conceptual scheme. It also introduces the concept of the continuity of the thinking process.

Dewey noted that "in every waking moment, the complete balance of the organism and its environment is constantly interfered with and as constantly restored."<sup>26</sup> Consequently a concept of a stream of consciousness results. Life is a series of interruptions and recoveries, rhythmic in quality. But "continuous interruption is not possible in the activities of an individual."<sup>27</sup> The point of this position is that one does not think all the time, but periodically, in response to blockage of the habitual ongoing activity which does go on all the time. When Dewey said that man was naturally active, it was this habitual biological function to which he had reference, and not mental activity. Consciousness is a "stream" only when its continuity with natural events is strongly emphasized. It is a stream in the sense of constant availability. If it were in constant activity, that would mean the organism was in continual disturbance and in such a circumstance, Dewey said the self would go to pieces.<sup>28</sup> The sum of this discussion is that if moral and evaluative procedure is judgment based on empirical data, ideas of goodness and morality are not continuous, but merely available. Their availability

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<sup>26</sup> Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 178-179.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

itself is only experimental in that they must be tested anew for each specific situation. The consequence of this position is that morality and values are strictly relative to here-now consideration. Dewey was at pains to illustrate this very point because it was his position against a priori, idealized, absolute moral laws. The latter, he believed, were responsible for man's inability to act on the moral plateaus which he had established for himself, and therefore acted on no moral basis at all.

From this detailed sketch of the basic problematic situation produced in Human Nature and Conduct, specific areas of human behavior are defined and analyzed. Most important for the discussion at hand in broadening the implications of the concept of man found in the Theory of Valuation are those of human moral responsibility, creativity, religion and the social situation. Critical discussion involves the interpenetration of all these concepts, so it is only an arbitrary choice to begin with an evaluation of moral responsibility in this theoretical scheme.

Dewey asserted that it was the responsibility of the mature, upon discovering the use of intelligence to modify the environment for problem solving, to observe, to recall and to forecast.<sup>29</sup> Intelligence is an experiment about problem solving ends which "is carried on by tentative rehearsals

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

in thought which do not affect physical facts outside the body."<sup>30</sup> A physical act overtly tried out is irrevocable, as are its consequences and also, presumably, the responsibility for it. Dewey said that man using intelligence in the problematic situation constructed an hypothesis based on past activity, empirical conditions for the end-in-view it espoused, and its consequences as a means of solving the problem. Such an hypothesis is a principle on which a man acts. It is because man can recognize and construct principles, moral principles, that he is responsible for his acts. By equating moral principles with hypothetical thought, Dewey emphasized the experimental character of moral endeavor, for "principles are methods of inquiry and forecast which require verification by the event. . . . Principles exist as hypotheses with which to experiment."<sup>31</sup> How does one experiment with an hypothesis? First he forecasts its consequences hypothetically, but only in actual physical activity through the method of empirical verification--science--is the truth (warrantability) of such an hypothesis confirmed. And if the hypothesis is incorrect? The scientific method requires as a primary part of its own definition, continual reaffirmation of the physically observable consequence of an hypothesis in the same given conditions for the whole community of those scientists interested. This

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 239.



was specifically affirmed by Dewey of C. S. Peirce in his  
<sup>32</sup>  
Logic.

What of man in a moral situation? If he does not wish to act merely on cultural or traditional principles, he must, as Dewey suggested, project possible consequences. Is this process hypothetical? Yes, it is the abstract, imaginative function of mind. If a man acts on the basis of the hypothetical principle, is this act hypothetical? No, and Dewey pointed this out. No act, as physical act in the world, is hypothetical; it is irrevocable, as are its consequences. Which process, then--according to the Deweyan formulation--has value in terms of being the subject matter for evaluation? Only the physical act--only it is available to scientific verification. The construction of principles and hypotheses is nonvaluative. They are but ideations; they are neither good nor bad. Only physical acts based upon them may be so judged. What is the criterion for the goodness or badness of physical activity? Is it man's hypothetical principle, or is it the empirical method of the naturalistic world view? It is the latter, according to Dewey. Only empirical method may define what actually are the consequences, and if those consequences satisfy the original problem. Dewey noted that man was responsible for thinking, for using intelligence to guide himself. But, according to the explanatory scheme presented

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<sup>32</sup>  
 Dewey, Logic, pp. 13-14, and p. 14n.

by Dewey, such thinking is only hypothetical in nature, not actual and evaluative. Does intelligence guide man then? If it is not moral or evaluative, how can it? Furthermore, if intelligence, thought or consciousness is only and merely in reaction to "given" qualitative situations, in what sense could the term "guidance" really be used? If one "guides" himself to solve a given problem, but the problem is not his (not of his making, but only given by the quality of the situation), in what sense does he "guide" himself? He merely "guides" the solution of some one or something else's problem. What does this say of ethical man? What does this say of moral responsibility? Is it not the empirical method and the "given" empirical facts of the environment which are actually responsible for ends, purposes and moral endeavor, and not man? One may then conclude that there is no sense in which the theoretical description of man in Dewey is moral or evaluative in nature. Man is reactive and hypothetical in nature. He is known by science only as a past empirical act.

Dewey noted that "what a man is doing limits both his direct control and his responsibility."<sup>33</sup> What man "is doing" is defined in empirical terms, and to what extent this posits limitations on the responsibility and control in the theoretical definition of man, Dewey evidently does not note. It is the activity of Dewey the man which denies his theoretical

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<sup>33</sup> Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 269.

concept of man. It is the pathos of man to which Dewey as human being reacted. This reaction shows him that "our choice is between the development of a technique by which intelligence will become an intervening partner and a continuation of a regime of accident, waste and distress."<sup>34</sup> But at what price is this "technique" bought? Dewey said:

The good, satisfaction, 'end,' of growth of present action in shades and scope of meaning is the only good within our control, and the only one, accordingly, for which responsibility exists.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, one is forced to ask: just who or what is it that is actually responsible for such control? Man, according to the theoretical scheme here, is intelligent and therefore moral, but intelligence and its morals are shown to be both hypothetical and not individual in character. Man is physical and active, and as such he is real. If man is responsible--and Dewey said he was--and if he is real physically--as he can only be if such is judged empirically--then his real moral responsibility is judged through empirical verifiability. One must ask what sort of moral judgment is made empirically.

Discussion of man in his social setting has not been the object of a great deal of attention to this point. But Dewey lays great stress on the social situation of man, quite in agreement with Aristotle. Ethics "is social, whether bad or good."<sup>36</sup> Man, in every activity, every habit, every

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 280-281.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 17, also cf. p. 316 and 319.

responsibility is social in character. All of man's activities "are working adaptations of personal capacities with environing forces."<sup>37</sup> This is necessarily so in Dewey's position, for social conditions fade into environing conditions in that both are characterized by being subject matter available to scientific analysis. Immediately then, while noting that man is a social creature, and that society is not itself a physical thing, the social is judged actual on its empirically available activities.<sup>38</sup> What is not thus verifiable of society are the customs and traditions themselves. These exist as, again, hypotheses or principles of action, just as ideations of human intelligence. They are good and true, moral and valuable only insofar as they are adequate stimuli for successfully satisfying the empirically defined active requirements in the world. They are bad insofar as they do not do so, and in the writings of Dewey as a whole, they are generally bad, for they are more likely "what was sometime rational, possibly in some prior experience of one's own, but more probably in the experience of some one else which is now blindly set up as final authority."<sup>39</sup> The necessity of such

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>38</sup> "Social pressure is but a name for the interactions which are always going on and in which we participate, living so far as we partake and dying so far as we do not. The pressure is not ideal but empirical, yet empirical here means only actual." Ibid., p. 327. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

social custom and authority is affirmed, for it is as necessary as the intellectual function of man and the physical environment. The important point is that it, too, be subject to the rational criterion of these other two, namely, that of empirical science. Dewey summarizes this point:

Human interaction and ties are there, are operative in any case. But they can be regulated, employed in an orderly way for good only as we know how to observe them. And they cannot be observed aright, they cannot be understood and utilized, when the mind is left to itself to work without the aid of science. For the natural unaided mind means precisely the habits of belief, thought and desire which have been accidentally generated and confirmed by social institutions or customs. But with the admixture of accident and reasonableness we have at least reached a point where social conditions create a mind capable of scientific outlook and inquiry. To foster and develop this spirit is the social obligation of the present because it is its urgent need.<sup>40</sup>

This is, of course, the main plea in the philosophy of John Dewey: to impress the proven methods of physical science onto the social sciences so that man as social creature may order and control himself as the physical sciences have ordered and controlled physical nature.

Insofar as Dewey reduced the criterion of social existence in the same manner as he reduced the function of intelligence in the individual man, the former was open to the same criticism here put forward of the latter. Man reacts to problematic situations, and these situations consist of habitual activity and the physical environment. Habitual

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 329.

activity is where the social function is important, for habits are formed originally through meaning given to instinctual (or impulsive) activity. Such meaning is given by parents and others in the social realm.<sup>41</sup> "When a child acts, those about him react. They shower encouragement upon him, visit him with approval, or they bestow frowns and rebuke."<sup>42</sup> Act and consequence--the awareness of the satisfactory or unsatisfactory consequence--develops and changes the hypothesis or principle upon which the first act was based. The older the child, the more reflective and aware he becomes of possible consequences, social or strictly physical. It is the basis upon which science, the theory of inquiry, stands, and it is the basis on which Dewey proposed social transaction stand. And this is possible precisely insofar as social activity is available to empirical method. Once so defined, the problem of solving social problems is solved; all that remains is the task of doing it. Dewey did not suggest that this "doing" would be easy, but he did propose that this is the manner in which it had to be done, for judging or evaluating on previous moral rules, on blame and approbation was more emotional than intellectual:

It is guided by custom, personal convenience and resentment rather than by insight into causes and consequences. It makes toward reducing moral instruction, the educative influence of social opinion, to an

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp. 89-90.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

immediate personal matter, that is to say, to an adjustment of personal likes and dislikes.<sup>43</sup>

Once again, this is an endeavor on the part of Dewey to disvalue the immediate and strictly personal end, the "desired." He emphasized that such "desireds" were merely old custom/habit, and generally resulted in social chaos if carried out. But one wonders that if morals are not "an immediate personal matter," what are they? The "development . . . of a more adequate science of human nature"<sup>44</sup> which Dewey proposed, asserts what is needed in a moral situation, namely, "an impersonal impartial habit of observation" so that moral situations can be seen for what they "really amount to."<sup>45</sup> Such an impersonal treatment of the concrete moral situation in Dewey's theory results in the criticisms presented above in which human moral responsibility is negated, personal valuation is rejected, and only the method and conceptual scheme seem to stand as responsible.<sup>46</sup>

It is the "enormous role played in popular morals by appeal to the supernatural and quasi-magical" against which Dewey reacted.<sup>47</sup> His analysis of human behavior and the historical consequences of the appeal to absolute and magical forces is vital and important. Custom, tradition and

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 320-321.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. above, p. 124.

<sup>47</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 323. Cf. also, Dewey, A Common Faith, p. 46, et passim.

conservative clinging to passionately held to (but unreasonable) authoritarian institutions is doubtless one of the roots of present problems. The reaction to nonempirical philosophical stances does not, however, logically entail their total dismissal nor the total acceptance of their opposite, the strictly empirical. Dewey was perfectly aware of this sort of overreaction and overacceptance: He called it the philosophical fallacy to suppose "that whatever is found true under certain conditions may forthwith be asserted universally or without limits and conditions."<sup>48</sup> Dewey did not escape his own good sense. One need but show where, sooner or later, what Dewey held theoretically true, but which was, on the whole, unacceptable, Dewey himself simply ignored. Where specific criticism is lacking, the very mode of Dewey's human activity and accomplishment fulfills the same purpose.

Nevertheless, Dewey called for a strictly empirical scientific approach to human relations:

It is a commonplace that modern industry and commerce are conditioned upon a control of physical energies due to proper methods of physical inquiry and analysis. We have no social arts which are comparable because we have so nearly nothing in the way of psychological science. Yet through the development of physical science, and especially of chemistry, biology, physiology, medicine and anthropology we now have the basis for the development of such a science of man.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 175.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 324.



Social and intellectual, moral and hypothetical, evaluative and aesthetical are all actual, not ideal; but actuality means the empirical, and thus empirical method is the universal method.<sup>50</sup>

If man is a social as well as a physical creature, but these terms are flattened into one empirical meaning, and if intellect and morals/evaluation are likewise given only empirical meaning, what happens to the traditional human characteristics of creativity and religion?<sup>51</sup> Dewey said that "activity is creative insofar as it moves to its own enrichment as activity, that is, bringing along with itself a release of further activities."<sup>52</sup> Any activity can be creative, but only if its fulfillment opens further activity to higher and broader scope. Tangible products of creative activity are not necessary, but are not derogatory to creative activity either, and Dewey pointed out that architecture is probably more creative than dancing.<sup>53</sup> But when man merely reacts to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>51</sup> Dewey, himself, did not think he had, by denying the overweening importance and belief in the nonnatural or supernatural, absolutely affirmed the merely empirical. He felt he had saved that which was valuable of the emotional and ideal. He thought he had done this through inserting them into the naturalistic framework. The contention of this dissertation is that what he actually did by such an insertion, is to define the nonempirical by the methods of the empirical itself. Such is merely to deny the nonempirical altogether. So while he did not affirm that everything is empirical, he in effect did just that through the effective denial of everything else.

<sup>52</sup> Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 143.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

a given end or purpose (Dewey used the example of a man tending a machine), there is no creativity, no insight, no affection and no growth.<sup>54</sup> To increase a creative phase of human activity, directing impulse and habit through thought, is an affair of modifying the social conditions which reward or deny native activities. How is this done?

The first step in dealing with it is to increase our detailed scientific knowledge. We need to know exactly the selective and directive force of each social situation; exactly how each tendency is promoted and retarded. Command of the physical environment on a large and deliberate scale did not begin until belief in gross forces and entities was abandoned. Control of physical energies is due to inquiry which establishes specific correlations between minute elements. It will not be otherwise with social control and adjustment. Having the knowledge we may set hopefully at work upon a course of social invention and experimental engineering.<sup>55</sup>

There is no doubt, at least in this definition of creativity, that it is just another subject matter of empirical method, for it is defined as successful empirical activity, in any field, for practically any purpose. In fact, creating conditions for creativity is a product of "experimental engineering." But even the way this summary statement is worded implies that the idea of creativity, if not creativity itself, precedes logically and temporally the movement toward it. Dewey here thought that a scientific analysis of the exact properties of the social situation would allow man to better recreate those situations where creativity was most displayed.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

But since the sine qua non of the intellectual, scientific movement is the indefinable, immediate and unspeakable problematic situation, intellectual and scientific method can be only partially adequate for the job.<sup>56</sup> What is not the object, but rather the cause of scientific method in the problematic situation is ineffable. In Dewey's own explanatory scheme, then, there is some question that both creativity and the method which is to describe and extend its conditions spring from the same conditions. Dewey, in that he felt all things sprang from naturalistic conditions, would not be at pains to deny this. If, however, naturalistic conditions are not adequate in themselves for these two processes, then there is a problem. The criticism here asserts that such a naturalistic base cripples the concept of man in that it does affirm that naturalistic conditions are adequate.

For this--and for other reasons mentioned--the metaphysics which supports the naturalistic position is inadequate. Indeed, just in this short discussion of creativity it becomes evident that the method to discover and enhance creativity presumes the idea and process of that very creativity. Dewey denied that this was circular; it is merely the spiral concept of organic, natural development. Nevertheless, he did start with the idea of creativity, a fact which in this analysis cannot be denied unless he confused

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 264, et passim.

psychological with logical priority. In fact, Dewey might not even deny that, but he would, then, explain that creativity, being "natural" and being a feature of the "given" problematic situation, operates all the while, but man comes to realize it only through growth and the ability to inquire, through scientific method.

Dewey's discussion of man in the empirical world affirms real change in the empirical world. He assumes this change is progressive and creative: "Variability, initiative, innovation, departure from routine, experimentation are empirically the manifestation of a genuine *nisus* in things."<sup>57</sup> The life of man "seems in these respects as in others to express a culmination of facts in nature."<sup>58</sup> Man is the receptor of these natural "things" and part of the creator of them only insofar as he too is a natural part of the empirical environment, for they are all "given" in a particular situation.

So, again, the question must be raised: What IS man? Dewey noted that "man is a creature of habit, not of reason nor yet of instinct."<sup>59</sup> Yet man thinks, when he has to work through problems which mere habit will not solve. When he has a given situation which is unfavorable (because the givens are in conflict), he reacts with the impulse to find conditions which will resolve the conflict. The given character of the conflict establishes the perimeter within which the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

solution may be found. An end-in-view is projected, and it either works or not; if it does, it is a new habit, if it does not, the process is repeated. The problem comes about by change in the relations of givens in the natural environment; its solution is appropriated by finding and using possible empirical conditions. The process is intelligence. Insofar as man uses intelligence, he is a human being, different from a simple animal and morally responsible for his activity.

The process is intelligence, but is man intelligent? No, Dewey very specifically and consistently denied that individual man is intelligent. He "appropriates" intelligence:

Intelligence becomes ours in the degree in which we use it and accept responsibility for consequences. It is not ours originally or by production. 'It thinks' is a truer psychological statement than 'I think.' Thoughts sprout and vegetate; ideas proliferate. They come from deep unconscious sources. 'I think' is a statement about voluntary action. Some suggestion surges from the unknown. Our active body of habits appropriates it. The suggestion then becomes an assertion. It no longer merely comes to us. It is accepted and uttered by us. We act upon it and thereby assume, by implication, its consequences. The stuff of belief and proposition is not originated by us. It comes to us from others, but education, tradition and the suggestion of the environment. Our intelligence is bound up, so far as its materials are concerned, with the community life of which we are a part. We know what it communicates to us, and know according to habits it forms in us. Science is an affair of civilization not of individual intellect.<sup>60</sup>

Within such a formulation, where IS the man Dewey sought to save? What has he done to man by attempting to

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 314. (Emphasis added.)

save him? It is apparent that what there is left of man is what is given him by the naturalistic world view--strictly given. This is perfectly clear by the definition of man's responsibility as "implication." Man is implicated in his acceptance of intellectual consequences precisely as he is implicated by burning his hand in a fire. It simply happens to him. The indictment against man is self defined. Furthermore, how can a man accept responsibility for intelligent action without that being a process of thought through which he has already, by some prior act accepted its responsibility, and so forth?

Dewey's theory of the naturalistic universe, as seen through its implications in the theory of man, does not solve problems of the human condition. It solves all the problems which are set up within the naturalistic universe itself (at least, it has not yet been conclusively proven not to do this), but since man is not wholly there, man's problems continue to proliferate. The more so, in fact, because the effective masking of the real problems through a one-sided definition of them only makes them the more difficult. Problems and their conditions are not put into the human realm of activity--nor are they solved. They are merely pushed back into the realm of the given, or denied to be within the human condition whatsoever:

We are not the creators of heaven and earth; we have no responsibility for their operations save as their motions are altered by our movements. Our concern

is with the significance of that slight fraction of total activity which starts from ourselves.<sup>61</sup>

But then, later, Dewey admitted that that very function which defined man from other creatures of nature, intelligence, did not start from man. Finally nothing save blind emotive reaction is unique to man. As are the grains of sand on a beach, man is forever washed about by the waves of a universe of motion and empirical fact.

Yet if even this is the case, who notes it? Who sees it? Who feels it and defines it and hypothesizes about it, and who absolutizes about it and creates gods from it? What about the creature who does these things? Is it a creature defined by a given world view, or is it man who defines the world view and himself? It is, indeed, man. It was John Dewey, forever the standing contradiction of every bit of his theoretical definition of man. It was John Dewey, the full participant in the expanse of creation, who could turn upon himself and say that man was petty in comparison with the totality of natural events; who could say that man was merely connected with an infinity of empirical events that sustain and support his activity. It was John Dewey who could define the created universe as available to empirical verification and assert that such verification comprehends its full reality, then note that it was the office of religion to promote the awareness, appreciation and significance of this universe

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

because such cognizance was incapable of objective presentation.<sup>62</sup> It was the man John Dewey who, as strict scientist, turned to religion and noted that "the religious experience is a reality insofar as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole."<sup>63</sup> It was the man John Dewey who, as a philosopher, created an intellectual system into which he would define everything, then stepped out of it just long enough to note that there was a point in every intellectual activity where effort ceased and where striving and doing fall back on a course of events which effort and reflection cannot touch.

It is the paradox of man in the philosophy of John Dewey which is illustrated when he as a feeling, religious and intelligent man, dedicated to the problems of man in this world, created an absolute, crippled scheme in the naturalistic world view to solve those problems. The space-time concept of man thus created contrasts sharply with the man who created it as well as the concept of man for whom it was created.

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<sup>62</sup>Cf. Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 18-19, et passim.

<sup>63</sup>Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct, p. 264, also cf. p. 261ff.



## CHAPTER IX

### DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

Democracy and Education is one of Dewey's better known books. Even though Dewey was 56 when he wrote it, it may be considered one of the earlier major works. Written in 1916, it preceded Human Nature and Conduct by eight years and Logic, Theory of Inquiry by 22 years. If it is considered one of the earlier major works, one must yet realize that Dewey had been writing and publishing since 1882. While the earliest efforts were Hegelian in outlook, Dewey had by 1900 begun to reach the basics of the instrumental or pragmatic position which he was to defend throughout his mature years. Most of the major elements of the instrumental position were clearly defined in the little work How We Think, published in 1910.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the positions taken by Dewey in Democracy and Education represent a summary form of the instrumental position developed to that date in its relevance to education. That Dewey continued to develop this position for

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Morton G. White, The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 152. White places the development of Dewey's own instrumental thought with Studies in Logical Theory, 1903, and he thinks that by 1904 most of the idealist ties had been broken when instrumental logic was affirmed.

another 34 years is a note not only on longevity, but also on the basic faith in the pragmatic or instrumental position.

As Dewey remarked about his own position in the Preface to the enlarged edition of How We Think in 1933,<sup>2</sup> so one can here remark that few if any basic positions change in Dewey's thought through the years, but all positions undergo continual scrutiny and minor modifications, more often than not, in the terms used to express them. With such a premise in mind, one may approach Democracy and Education through the insight gained by close inspection of the theoretical scheme in the later works. Indeed, it is most advantageous to approach Democracy and Education in such a fashion because of its summary statements dealing with the philosophic position which supports the criticism and suggested reform of education in a democratic system. Some fundamental naturalistic issues are not altogether clear in the work and much of the theoretical basis is not always explicit or is merely sketched in, still to be the subject of continual reworking. Making the fundamental philosophic position clear, through use of an analysis of the later works, clarifies the argument and brings forth with singular clarity the paradox in the concept of man.

One of the basic themes of Dewey's instrumentalism, developed from organic, biological ideas, is that the continuity of life means a continual readaptation of the environment

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<sup>2</sup>Dewey, How We Think, p. iii.

to the needs of living organisms--social and physical continuity. The renewal and continuity of experience, in its broadest sense--the continuity and renewal of man through and in society--is the overall definition of education.<sup>3</sup> The agency or activity of education is the study and learning of the modes of social continuity and growth. It is thus, as Dewey often pointed out, one phase, and perhaps the most important phase, of philosophy in general. "For education, when it is genuinely education, brings about not only acquisition of knowledge and skills, but it forms also attitudes and dispositions that direct the uses to which acquired information and skill are put."<sup>4</sup> Education is a result, then, of all true experience of organism in relation to both the physical and social environment. Education is the theory of inquiry, it is science, and it is art and music: It is the growing awareness of the world about the organism, the broader and more open, more purposeful relationships one may attain through developing expanded horizons of common life.<sup>5</sup>

More narrowly speaking, education is the guiding of the experience of the young so that the goals and aims of society might become theirs, that their experience become

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<sup>3</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Dewey, "The Determination of Ultimate Values or Aims Through Antecedent or a Priori Speculation or Through Pragmatic or Empirical Inquiry," p. 475.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950), pp. 26-30, et passim.

ordered and communicable so that they might broaden the basis of like-mindedness. The conscious assumption of the aims of society makes the individual a part of the society, frees him to grow, to continue to find more in common with the social environment, and widen his possibilities. Society itself consists of an immense complex of social groups, each with its own purposes, and the job of education is to adapt the natural responses of the young to the aims of an ever increasing number of these individual, but integrated aims and purposes. The more the single individual can have in common with the greater number of groups within society, the wider his outlook, the more varied his experience, the broader his response ability, the freer he is to think, to define purpose, to create ends, and to advance society through being a full member--contributing member--in that society. So far as the society opens itself to the growing fulfillment of the individual member, so far as it promotes the common end through freedom of interaction among the diverse groups which compose it, it is a democratic society.<sup>6</sup> Education is the opening process, the process of making common. The common is that which enables the community to exist through communication of ends and methods of the attainment of those ends. Democracy is that which promotes the atmosphere of the common, that which expands the common basis of endeavor such that it may be common to more people

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: Beacon Press, 1948), pp. 185-186, also Chapter VIII, "Reconstruction as Affecting Social Philosophy," pp. 187-213.

and more groups, toward the common end. Education is the providing of instruments and methods of guiding the young to the formation of the social disposition most valuable to the society, and thus to the individual himself. Democracy is the providing of the basic situation in which this can be accomplished, and for which it can be accomplished. In Dewey's definition of education and democracy, the two are inseparable. Both terms may be taken as broadly or as narrowly as the situation demands; both provide the means and the goals of the other. Without the open society, the society of an expanding basis of common ends and common care, education would be a servile training of muscles to the ends of other men. Without education, democracy would be a figment of man's imagination in the savage world of blind action/reaction.

The interdependent concepts of democracy and education proposed by Dewey must stand at the heights of his achievement. It is in this context that Dewey's insight to the meaning of man is most evident. Beginning with the assertion that humanity had to recognize that the ultimate effect of every institution was its distinctively human effect, Dewey noted that no institution was a true social group if "individuals use one another so as to get desired results, without reference to the emotional and intellectual disposition and consent of those used."<sup>7</sup> Dewey laid strong emphasis on shared activity

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<sup>7</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 5.

and experience, which means, as well, shared or common ends of activity. It was in such a manner that Dewey based his distinction of training from education. Training consists of molding behavior to secure habits which are useful through reward and punishment. The latter are the ends of the activity of training, not the goals toward which the useful habits are valuable. On the other hand, true education, Dewey thought, was a function of securing such habits when the individual "really shares or participates in the common activity."<sup>8</sup>

Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure, is the completing step. As soon as he is possessed by the emotional attitude of the group, he will be alert to recognize the special ends at which it aims and the means employed to secure success.<sup>9</sup>

While the methods, physiological and psychological, are the same in training and in education, the purposes and ethical content are not. Dewey required that the value of the individual be observed. A human being must be directed by his own ends, not directed by others. When one acts to others' ends, he is not participating in shared or common activity and experience. Communication and true social ties are impossible, because without common ends, and the activities of language and community, individual man is truly "individual" in the totally fractured and alienated sense of that term.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

Man would thus have truly become an object of simple manipulation, not a participant in the ends of his own activities.

This concept of the "shared" or the "common" has the greatest significance in this theory. It is the basic principle in Democracy and Education. Without common interest, without endeavor toward a truly shared and common goal, activity of two or more individuals, even if toward the same goal, is merely a juxtaposition, and not shared activity.<sup>10</sup> Without conscious envelopment in a common end, there is no community. Without community there is no education or democracy. There is, there can only be, training and the total autocratic state.

Dewey asserted that true society, then, existed only in communication, in the transmission of shared interests and activities. "Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common."<sup>11</sup> It is important to note that Dewey used the term "common" to mean that activity and purpose which is shared. The common does not demand "sameness." He also uses the term "like-mindedness," which does not demand the same thoughts. Both the common and like-mindedness denote shared aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge and understanding. It is a question of each person knowing what others are doing and referring his own activity

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

and aims to the others.<sup>12</sup> In like-mindedness, meanings are shared, experience is shared, though no two persons' experiences are the same. It is a concept of man with man, through knowledge of the common end. With such a concept, Dewey then felt man would promote the interests of others, since they shared many of the same goals through the society to which they belong. To grow is to come to share more and more activity and experience. To grow is to come to see the other person more fully through more fully sharing his experience, through more fully communicating through the common in their endeavor. The broader one's horizons are through the common or shared experience, the more free one is. The broader the common interests become, the more respect for the others holding those common interests, and the more common interests there are. The basis of democracy, according to Dewey, is this expansion of freedom of endeavor through awareness of the common among all people. Truly shared experience rules out the use by one individual of others for his own purpose: One does not have his purpose defined solely in terms of himself; one has purpose in community with others, for this is the only true meaning of purpose--it being a human activity, human activity being social, and social being defined in terms of common or shared activity.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 30.



It was on this basis that Dewey attacked extreme individualism and pointed out that "there is always a danger that increased personal independence will decrease the social capacity of an individual."<sup>13</sup> Independence is always in shared relation through the expansion of it, not in severing shared relation altogether. Thus true individuality lies in relation, and not in personal independence from relation. Dewey was aware, however, that danger lay in overemphasizing the content of the relation itself, as he felt Hegel had done. Here the relation of man to man in society is not the fulfillment of the individual man, but only of a concept of the state in its unfolding of the Absolute. If the fulfillment of an abstract Absolute is the purpose of human relation, "the conscious ideas and preference of individuals are impotent."<sup>14</sup> Once again man becomes a means to the realization of something else, and true community and relation is fractured--destroyed. The middle path between extreme fractured individualism and the moribund demand of extreme social compliance must be maintained. It is the purpose of Dewey's philosophic endeavor to assure such a balance.

Because of Dewey's emphasis on the destructive results of the use of one man by another without shared or common purpose, criticism of existing economic conditions occupied much of his attention. His attacks on economic servitude

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

are to be found in many of the major as well as minor works. There can be no doubt that here Dewey, in his defense of the intrinsic value of man himself, was aware of Kant's moral dictum.<sup>15</sup> The economic remarks, and much of the theory of freedom and democracy, depend upon an approach similar to that of Kant. In any event, the social criticisms of Dewey have been well noted in academic circles, but that they are often contingent upon and developed with the economic criticism seems not to be so fully recognized.<sup>16</sup> Awareness of the economic problem stems from the awareness of the unique, intrinsic value of the human being in the economic process. It was for this reason that Dewey criticized the use of science to streamline and make more efficient production. The use of science in industry to promote production is the use of science as a means, and not as cognizant as well of ends, to the ultimate lack of a well-balanced social concept, and to the neglect of human factors.<sup>17</sup> The result of one-sided interests in industry through history has produced class structures and severe limits to the promotion of shared experience. Upon the limitation of shared experience and continuity of growth, one finds the limitation of the advance of society. If economic factors hinder such growth, they are to be reviewed,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>16</sup>Lloyd P. Williams, "A Liberal's Perspective on the Dismal Science: John Dewey's View of Economic Theory and Practice," Proceedings, Southwestern Philosophy of Education Society, 1968.

<sup>17</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 85.

readapted, and reconstructed, to more fully serve the interests of human development. It is in this light that one finds Dewey's economic analysis. It cannot be said to be an economic theory in its own right, but rather a call for greater emphasis in economic reconstruction for purposes of human growth.

Each human being was original in his own existence, Dewey affirmed--he was in his individuality incommensurable.<sup>18</sup> His aims and goals in common with others, are his own. An individual man acts in his originality. Not acting in his own originality, he is not acting for his own purpose and is merely a means to the ends dictated by something or some one else.<sup>19</sup> One's own appropriation of the correct method for activity in the problematic situation is also original to the individual. While in common with the method of social acceptance and endeavor, one's own method remains the "personal concern, approach, and attack of an individual, and no catalogue can ever exhaust their diversity of form and tint."<sup>20</sup> It is on such a basis that man's moral responsibility for his own actions rests, although this topic is not emphasized in Democracy and Education.<sup>21</sup> Man is thus seen as a personal

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

<sup>21</sup> In fact, the whole concept of moral responsibility is conspicuous by its absence in Democracy and Education--an extremely interesting omission considering the moral emphasis of the work as a whole.

creature, aware of and responsible for himself. He comes to be in the social situation, not out of it, and he comes to be valuable in himself in the social situation, and not merely for the social situation.

Man is free when he freely participates in the meaning and care for the end toward which he endeavors, but he is not to be defined merely in this endeavor. Man is a multiplicity of acts: he is many-sided, many-purposed. He is fully man in that he has these many facets of existence going in him at all times: man is truly a complex, just as is society. In fact, in the Deweyan analysis, the more complex he is, the more he has in common with the greater number of people and groups, the more free he is, and the more he participates and creates the democratic society. For the purposes of education, it is mandatory to be aware that "no one is just an artist and nothing else, and insofar as one approximates that condition, he is so much the less developed human being; he is a kind of monstrosity."<sup>22</sup> To educate a man to be one thing, in disregard for that which he holds in common with all men, is merely to train him for purposes ultimately not his own. Purposes are social in character, for man is social, and to neglect the full man in education is not to educate him at all. A narrowly educated man is not a man educated to participate fully into the society into which he was born.

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<sup>22</sup> Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 307.

He is trained for the society, not educated into it. He was a slave, Dewey pointed out, not a free man.<sup>23</sup> In short, Dewey said a man had to live. Man lives only insofar as he creates and recreates, constructs and reconstructs the environment to his own purposes, and insofar as he participates in the society such that he may learn and partake in constructive purposes. Man lives only insofar as he uses intelligence to direct his activity and to realize the social meaning of his act or projected act.<sup>24</sup> Hence Dewey rejected an educational system based on teaching only skills and technical method:

. . . it is not the business of education to foster this tendency, but rather to safeguard against it, so that the scientific inquirer shall not be merely the scientist, the teacher merely the pedagogue, the clergyman merely one who wears the cloth, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

The emphasis on the depth and breadth of man is nowhere more evident in Dewey. Man is a very complex, deep and broad creature, and the primary purpose of man is to become more complex that he may become even deeper and broader. Man is open-ended in his ontological character. Purpose is within the ongoing open-endedness which Dewey assumed for man. Goals, specific ends, are not the main purpose. Growth is the main purpose. It is the end-in-itself, the only one, in Dewey's conceptual scheme. It is an end-in-itself which requires that no specific end be only an end, and not also a new, fresh beginning. To the critics who note that growth as an end is no

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

end--and thus note the philosophy of Dewey is basically purposeless--one must remark that indeed, growth is no end. But it was just because of this concept of growth that Dewey found ultimate justification for man's being the purposive being that he was in all the variety and endless specific purposes that he might need and develop in his existential life. For Dewey, the concept of growth was precisely the open-ended frame necessary so that man might come to have specific purposes and goals. Without a concept of open-ended growth, specific purposes are not ends for man at all; they are merely absolute dictates to a nonpurposive and nonresponsible creature, but not a human being. Education in both the broad and narrow meanings is the movement of man toward becoming a fully purposive human being through participation in his own objectives, and the concept of growth is what guarantees him unlimited possibilities in terms of both means and ends.

Dewey observed that there was a saying which noted, in effect, that for man to be good, he had to be good for something. He continued:

The something for which a man must be good is capacity to live as a social member so that what he gets from living with others balances with what he contributes. What he gets and gives as a human being, a being with desires, emotions, and ideas, is not external possessions, but a widening and deepening of conscious life--a more intense, disciplined, and expanding realization of meanings. What he materially receives and gives is at most opportunities and means for the evolution of conscious life. Otherwise, it is neither giving nor

taking, but a shifting about of the position of things in space, like the stirring of water and sand with a stick.<sup>26</sup>

Dewey's statements on man reflect an acute awareness of critical problems which confront man's attempt to become and remain human in his social and self-directive character.' Dewey saw the subservient and nonparticipatory position of man in specifically economic situations, and generalized this to similar problems in all social life. He was, in Democracy and Education, particularly aware that man had come to exist in a world where his own ends were not realized in the economic activities which he was forced to endure in order to survive. The means to man's survival are not his own ends, nor in his own control. He is neither concerned with nor cares about the ends for which he trains and at which he spends most of his waking hours. Dewey has aware of the dehumanizing effect, and realized that continued emphasis on such a system robbed man of fully participating in his own life and his own goals even during his off hours. The fullness and richness of life has been blurred by continued emphasis on activity without the conscious sharing of ends by those working toward those ends. Such brutalizing of human endeavor, such narrowing, begins in school where from the first the young are not allowed to realize and participate purposively in the goals set for them by others. Dewey noted that this

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 359. Cf. above, p. 137, then p. 130.

dictation by--instead of participation in--the social realm was further emphasized by the continual pressure to train students for future economic purposes. When they graduate, they immediately find themselves once again working toward distant goals provided for them, dictated to them, in which they neither share nor care. The whole emphasis in Democracy and Education is to expose this sort of narrowness in our society and our schools, and to propose adaptation of a particular philosophical position which provides for the emancipation of man from the sort of fractured individualism caused by emphasis on self-activity, self-fulfillment, self-purposiveness and freedom of the self from the encroachment of others, and also from the sort of individualism caused by the destruction of participatory human relations through overemphasis on the value of the society as a whole, or an abstract ideal end of society in which man does not fully share qua individual human being. The main line of argument in the whole work lies about the concept of the common or shared experience--or like-mindedness. It is this concept which allows for communication (language/symbolization) and the social community itself. Community begins with that which is shared, that which is had in common among the participants, namely, the meanings of value, the worth of certain goals, and the knowledge of methods of their attainment.

Dewey asked, then, what it was that guaranteed that such a concept of community would continue to exist so that



the fulness of the human beings within it might be maintained and expanded. Dewey answered that the use of intelligence had allowed civilization to advance to where it then was, and that the lack of intelligence had allowed civilization to create some of the dehumanizing problems which he noted. Consequently, Dewey proposed that the method of intelligence be brought to bear on the human problems of the world just as it had been brought to bear on the physical world. What is the method of intelligence which he promoted? Science, he asserted. It is the most advanced method for dealing with the world as it really is experienced which man has yet developed. It was the philosophy of naturalism which Dewey turned to--the connection of organic nature with human affairs, the substitution of experience and experiment for those absolute ideal givens which have in the past and still do block the way to realizing the world for what it really is. Such a position is not a sheer empiricism; the type of mechanistic empiricism which free man to increase his power over nature, but which "reduced the world to a barren and monotonous redistribution of matter in space."<sup>27</sup> Rather, it is the scientific, organic world view which sees man at home in nature, with his purposes and aims dependent for execution upon natural conditions. Such a nature is one of activity, a nissus of things with purposes which direct the natural order of organic growth.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

This philosophy is vouched for by the doctrine of biological development which shows that man is continuous with nature, not an alien entering her processes from without. It is reenforced by the experimental method of science which shows that knowledge accrues in virtue of an attempt to direct physical energies in accord with ideas suggested in dealing with natural objects in behalf of social uses.<sup>28</sup>

The problem then becomes how such a naturalistic world view does in fact support and promote the continuity of full human activity in shared experience in the social environment. Is Dewey's definition of being human in all its depth and scope provided for by viewing man through the science which he recommended as the method of the world in which man was found? The analysis of this problem has been the concern of this dissertation; its results provide the clue to the paradox of man in the philosophy of John Dewey.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

## CHAPTER X

### AMBIGUITY OF THE COMMON IN DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

Dewey, in the Preface to Democracy and Education noted that:

. . . the philosophy stated in this book connects the growth of democracy with the development of the experimental method in the sciences, evolutionary ideas in the biological sciences, and the industrial reorganizations, and is concerned to point out the changes in subject matter and method of education indicated by these developments.<sup>1</sup>

Dewey later illustrated this when he introduced the democratic ideal in terms of the concept of the common or shared experience. One might think it is by deliberation and conscious effort that man increases his scope of common interests and goals with fellow man, thereby creating freedom and the foundations of the democratic society. Dewey emphasized, however, that this was not the case:

On the contrary, they were caused by the development of modes of manufacture and commerce, travel, migration, and intercommunication which flowed from the command of science over natural energy.<sup>2</sup>

While Dewey affirmed that it remained to the intellect and desire to fully appropriate what science had given the social

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. iii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

realm, it is Dewey's naturalistic position which asserts that man's ability to extend his shared or common experience is based on physical proximity, the "physical annihilation of space."<sup>3</sup> What brings man together with man is the physical domination of the existing features of nature such that individuals are brought into relation with one another either physically or through reference to other physical objects and their abstractions which form a common or agreed upon and therefore "shared" experience. Dewey specifically asserted that after the "community of interest" and the individualization of man had come into existence, then it was a matter of deliberate effort by men to sustain and extend them.<sup>4</sup> But the community of interest and man's individualization are not a product of man's purpose or intent at all; they are a given product of physical proximity. They are, in a word, given by the nature of the situation. Man, very clearly and explicitly in this statement on the democratic ideal, intellectualizes and emotionalizes the empirical, naturalistic given in such a way as to "internalize" it and become responsible for maintaining it. One then asks what sort of purpose encouraged the prior scientific discoveries which created the situation of increased physical proximity. If man does not consciously or purposely or deliberately create the conditions of shared experience, of common interest, does one then assert that

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

they are the purposive goal of science? Why, if science did create the conditions for freedom and democracy, should it do so at all? Are the ends of empirical science human freedom and growth? But what science or theory of science maintains such a concept? None.

Did Dewey, then, mean to assert that freedom and democracy were mere chance--purposeless accident? If such is the case, in what sense is man responsible for this accident of chance? One must then ask: In what sense can anyone promote the value or method of education in such a scheme?

Dewey, of course, did not consider democracy and freedom a pure accident of chance. The difficulty arose when he attempted to provide a world view and a method for promoting the insight he had into the problems of human existence. Dewey, for all the reasons developed in this dissertation, accepted and promoted science as he knew it through the broadest definition he could give it. Yet it is still upon the particular empirical sciences which the instrumental philosophy is constructed, and it was the physical sciences to which Dewey turned for insight into the difficulties of the social situation:

Every step forward in the social sciences--the studies termed history, economics, politics, sociology--shows that social questions are capable of being intelligently coped with only in the degree in which we employ the method of collected data, forming hypotheses, and testing them in action which is characteristic of natural science, and in the degree in which we utilize in

behalf of the promotion of social welfare the technical knowledge ascertained by physics and chemistry.<sup>5</sup>

If it can be accepted that man is himself the naturalistic object of scientific endeavor, then it can be asserted that the ends and projects of man's participation in the world, physical and social, are within the scope of scientific method and purpose. This was precisely the theoretical position which Dewey held. He maintained that if such a position could not be held and proven, then man was reduced to the circumstance of moral and intellectual bondage either under the absolute claims of ideal and supernatural entities wholly outside the purposive and realizable character of man, or under the blind stimulus/response cycle of nonpurposive empiricism. For Dewey, man had to actively and consciously participate in the purpose of his existence; he had to continually expand the shared and common experience with man and the world. Man must be in the world; he must be a full participant in the motives, activities, purposes and knowledge of his social situation. Only thus is he morally responsible, intellectual, and complete within himself and for others. Only thus is he free to continually expand his shared experience, his common basis with other men in the social sphere, in the subsequent democratic society. And only thus is there reason for and method to education for these goals. This view of man is a broad one; the theory of man implied is meaningful and speaks eloquently

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

for Dewey's insight into the human situation. Yet one must be satisfied that such a man is himself the naturalistic object of scientific endeavor and that it can be asserted that the ends and projects of man's participation in the world, physical and social, are within the scope of scientific method and purpose.

In Dewey's analysis, man is an active organism; he is in continual, active relation with his environment. As he experiences, he notes consequences of activities, physical and social. He creates habits and dispositions to cope with the world about him. In short, man comes to have a "mind"--an organization of habits of intelligent response.<sup>6</sup> Man is controlled in his activities by the sorts of habits he establishes. Such habits are developed through positive reinforcement by the physical and social situation into which the organism is born. Education has to do with the specific sort of habit learned in and for a specific social situation in a particular culture. Dewey noted that mind was, in this sense, the method of social control which the society developed in the individual. In any given social situation, man acts. Dewey regarded the potential for all sorts of response to stimuli to be inherent in man through his biological make-up. The specific social situation in which these responses are manifested judges which are satisfactory to the ends and purposes of the social

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

group, and positively affirms those, disapproving of all others. Through the continual application of this method, the growing organism comes to realize, that is, understand, the goals and purposes of the social group of which he is a part. The sum of his habits thus learned, the meaning of their purposes and their moral and social content, is what Dewey called mind. Only when an organism comes to understand the goals and purposes of his specific social group, do those goals become his. Only when they are consciously his, does he have a common basis for sharing in the activity toward those goals. The organism thus becomes truly social, and he becomes truly man. Dewey could therefore say, as he did, that social control was not personal, but intellectual.<sup>7</sup> The quality of mind, the habits of understanding the goals and methods of the social group, are given to the individual as he grows. He assumes the quality of mind demanded by the social group; he assumes and becomes responsible for the intellectual developments of the social group.<sup>8</sup> For Dewey, man became man through the assumption of these qualities and traits from the social group; man did not acquire them from some a priori source outside the social reference. Man does not choose them within society either. Rather, he learns them, and his mind is a reflection of the intellect of the society.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. above, p. 125ff.



It is here that Dewey has been criticized for defining the human being only in terms of the mandates of the social group, that man is totally other-directed by the social forces around him.<sup>9</sup> There is validity in this criticism. When Dewey's theory says that "human beings control animals by controlling the natural stimuli which influence them; by creating a certain environment in other words,"<sup>10</sup> then asserts that "human actions are modified in a like fashion" by the social group,<sup>11</sup> one cannot but continue and draw the inference that man is, indeed, seen in the same other-directed explanatory scheme as Dewey outlined for the training of animals. When his theory asserts that social relations are not "personal" relations, one may well question what sort of man is found in such a concept of the social.<sup>12</sup> Or when Dewey's philosophy says that "social organization means utilization of the specific and variable qualities of individuals,"<sup>13</sup> does not one ask: for whose utility or purpose is man finally seen, his own or society's? When man's freedom is a function of democracy, and democracy is denied as a conscious projection

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<sup>9</sup>Cf. Paul E. Pfuetze, Self, Society, Existence (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961). Pfuetze criticizes George H. Mead along such lines. The similarity of Mead and Dewey in this area is attested to by both men. Pfuetze's work is an interesting study of the naturalist's concept of man.

<sup>10</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 13.      <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 33 and p. 39.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-91, cf. also pp. 118-119.

of man's purpose, and when intelligence is denied as being a part of man's nature, instead only a borrowing he makes use of through the social whole (through understanding the goals and methods of the social whole), then where does one find much scope and value in the peculiarly human? When purpose and goals are learned as the purposes and goals of the social group, and become one's own only when one fully understands and appropriates them, in what sense is man participatory in his own goals rather than the goals of another?

Indeed, there is some basis for the criticism of Dewey's concept of the relation of the growing organism to the social environment into which he was born. But if the criticism is left at merely the enumerating of visible difficulties, one is left simply with two contradictory concepts of man in Democracy and Education (and elsewhere). One concept of the nature of man, as noted above in Chapter 9, seems to imply a definite awareness of the depth and responsibility of being human. The second concept of the nature of man, from the same work, indicates an exceedingly truncated view wherein man is totally submerged in factors and purposes in no sense of his own making. There is a reason for this dichotomy: One must know how it came about.

The criticism of the other-directedness of man in the theoretical social concept of Dewey must go on to carefully define the method which Dewey took to the definition of social activity in the first place. The method by which knowledge of

the social is approached is derived from the definition of the social realm. This definition is a reflection of the organic, biological, and naturalistic world view whose implicit assumptions comprised the metaphysical position from which Dewey operated. Specifically, then, Dewey viewed the empirically verifiable results of overt physical activity to define that which can be known of the social situation. What else there may be of the world is ideal dream unfounded--or else ideal dream verified by scientific analysis, by which means it is called a scientific hypothesis. This having been verified, is considered a law or principle valuable until proven inadequate. From the basis of known evidence, the biological and evolutionary principles of organic activity form the basis for the social views which Dewey held. The development of this argument is circular, a fact which Dewey not only did not deny, but affirmed in that such circularity represented and proved the worth of itself in the evolutionary development of inquiry.

It is, therefore, science, empirical method, through which the activities of social life must be studied, judged and evaluated. Knowledge of man and society is, as all knowledge is, empirically grounded. Such is science.<sup>14</sup> The final, the ultimate criterion of the method which Dewey incorporated to solve the problems of man, to define man, society and the

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

role of education with society, is empirical. The primary question then becomes: what does this empirical criterion mean to the concept of the shared, the common, upon which the whole edifice of democracy, education, and freedom--consequently the meaning of man--is raised?

Since Dewey's thesis is that what is shared by the individuals of a social group is based on the degree to which the group has mastered the forces of nature,<sup>15</sup> and that civilization has advanced through the growth of that mastery (science), the method of science is precisely that method which the young must come to realize in the social group. The knowledge of purposes and ends, and its empirical method, is the hallmark of the progressive civilization. This is what education must do: teach the most progressive method of dealing with ends and problems which the civilization has yet found. It is on the broadening effect of establishing the common, the shared experience, method and purpose, that society becomes progressively more free and democratic, and man becomes more human. Thus for Dewey, science was not only a means for taming the forces of nature, but also was intrinsic in the growth of civilization. Science is not merely a product of civilization; it is a cause of civilization, and it continues to grow as the youth of a civilization are trained to better use it not only as method, but also as structure of ends and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 224-225, also cf. p. iii.

purposes. Furthermore, as a youth is educated into this method of knowledge, old customs, old absolutes, and old traditions having no basis within the scopes and aims of science, are thrown out. Thus the inflexible and conservative of the older civilization is removed, and the flexible and more shared society slowly comes into existence.

What is the criterion of the common or the shared according to the scientific method which Dewey proposed? The criterion is the subject matter of intelligence. The subject matter of thinking is abstraction, that which is common to past activity or habit and which may be relevant and useful to the present and future activity of the organism. Verified abstractions are the intelligence of the social group, culture or civilization which Dewey (often at some length) pointed out that man drew from and consciously became responsible for when he chose to use it. Verified abstraction is, of course, just another way of saying "science," which

. . . aims to free an experience from all which is purely personal and strictly immediate; it aims to detach whatever it has in common with the subject matter of other experiences, and which, being common, may be saved for further use. It is, thus, an indispensable factor in social progress.<sup>16</sup>

The aim of science is to deal with the common, that which is open to public observation and open to the community of scholars for empirical investigation indefinitely. That which is thus open is available to being shared in experience;

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

it is the very definition of the "common." It will be noted, then, that the definition of the common in science is identical to that which Dewey used to support the concept of the shared in social endeavor. That is, the empirical availability of subject matter of science is also that which is empirically available in social intercourse, thus creating the common about which and through which the social situation is built. Both science and society evolve through the same processes, according to Dewey. In fact, as in all other flattenings of meanings demanded by adherence to strict scientific criteria, the terms "science" and "society" come to have much of the same, if not exactly the same meaning. In fact, Dewey's concept of democracy is precisely the community of scholars busily engaged in dealing with a commonly defined subject matter, through common methods, thus using the same language in communicating about their common objectives. Dewey noted the incredible advance of science over the last couple of centuries through the development of shared experience through common means, ends, and language. He noted the broadening of scope and method through this use of the common, and he noticed that the common criteria of reality and purpose put scientists, qua scientists upon equal footing which demanded respect for what the other is doing, through the fact that both are engaged in the promotion of a common end. Dewey noticed that personal bias had to be discarded; personal attractions to absolute criteria which were not allowable

through the common of scientific procedure had to be tossed out, and the method of proof by experiment and freedom of actual doing required that no scientist dominate or dictate to another. Dewey noted that the further one was allowed to experiment, the more one opened up the common through which all could grow--as long as the criterion was always the empirical method as a basis upon which all could agree. In a word, freedom and democracy are the actual results and processes of the scientific method.<sup>17</sup>

Dewey then generalized this concept to all social relations, all civilization. The common of science must then be the common of society. This is the basic assumption of Democracy and Education. The common of scientific subject matter is the same as the common of social interaction, for social interaction, through the naturalistic world view, is finally defined empirically, through chemistry, physics and biology. The same criterion of the common which creates the open-ended scientific attitude and the community and communication of scholars also creates the democratic open-ended society of community and communication that is necessary for the progress of man. Yet there is a foreboding emphasis in Dewey's analysis of the common in scientific endeavor: The

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<sup>17</sup> Note the extremely idealized concept of capabilities of scientific method which Dewey held. Has the continued use of scientific method, however, actually united the various disciplines and sciences, or do the separate disciplines using such method actually draw further apart in terms both of subject matter and common language?

common in science is the abstract. It is that which has been found common precisely through the elimination of all which is strictly personal and immediate to experience. Dewey asserted that from the standpoint of science, "what may be of precious import to the individual implicated in the experience, the peculiar and unreduplicable" is beside the point.<sup>18</sup> Rather, "this material is accidental, while the features which are widely shared are essential."<sup>19</sup> Precisely what is personal in the incommensurable human being<sup>20</sup> is that which is not essential to the scientific development of the concept of the common in social life. Whatever is unique in the individual is not available to other, according to such an analysis. Only that which is available to others may be symbolized and communicated. Indeed, Dewey said that practically all that which was of value in a personal experience was that which could be so shared.<sup>21</sup> Is it to be deduced from this formulation that what is social about man is exactly that part of him which is not personal? It must be so for the subject matter of science, for here man is subject matter only insofar as he is common, that he does have shared characteristics and not simply shared characteristics, but only those available to empirical method. What is common to mankind is not found in his concrete activity as man, but in the reflected

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<sup>18</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 226.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.      <sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 121.      <sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 226.



abstraction of his empirical qualities--and Dewey says that only through this latter is he a social creature! It is only from the generalization of such abstract qualities that social progress is to be made, for generalization is the extension of such abstractions to clarify and direct new social situations.<sup>22</sup> Dewey noted that "scientific abstraction and generalization are equivalent to taking the point of view of any man [or, in other words, of no particular, concrete man], whatever his location in time and space."<sup>23</sup> Dewey affirmed the abstractness and remoteness of this position, but required that social progress had to be built upon it. He assumed that concrete activity based on such abstract views justified the abstraction and put it back into the "real" world. Yet when one considers the narrow metaphysical position supporting the criterion of such activity--that of naturalism--one questions both its concreteness and the "realness" of the world to which it supposedly refers. In truth, the "real" world is not touched upon in Dewey's procedure. "Any" man acts in the world; the act and the world are both defined empirically. There is no sense of the concrete human being in his incommensurable, individual being. Insofar as man acts only on what he knows for himself (although knowing-for-oneself is strictly impossible in Dewey's conceptual framework), it is merely "personal, untransferable, and, as it

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

were, instinctive."<sup>24</sup> It is interesting that a creative act thus must also be defined as fitting into a prior framework of the common in order to be, in the first place, transferable and communicable--a fact which strictly limits the definition of creativity and the new.<sup>25</sup>

Where, then, in the scientific formulation of the common, is the concrete, valuable in himself and responsible to himself human being which is so deeply felt in this very work? Where is the concrete human being who is himself human only insofar as he is not merely the means for another's consideration? Where is man's purpose if he, as an individual, personal human being, is only the abstraction of himself in the common knowledge of methods and ends of the society which is defined by the scientific analysis of the social situation?

Simply, there is, in Democracy and Education, a very basic ambiguity in the concept of the "common." The ambiguity of the treatment of man in this work, as expressed in these last two chapters, is precisely the reflection of the ambiguity of the sorts of shared experience real concrete man has--which Dewey in his broad insight to the pathos of man has explicitly and with great depth of feeling expressed--and the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> There may be implicit here a strict limitation, also, of the concept of progress, if each step of the progressive must be communicable in terms of past knowledge, or the common. Progress must be shared progress in Dewey's sense. And yet, in a very real way, these terms are contradictory in Dewey's analysis.

shared experience found in a concept of common subject matter required by science as an abstraction of concrete, personal activity. Upon this basis, Democracy and Education is divisible into two distinct works of philosophy: One, the propagation of scientific analysis and the naturalistic world view; the second, an appeal to man to be fully human in a world dominated by lack of humane care and shared experiences of the common good.

The concept of the common in the appeal to fuller humanity is, while not altogether explicit, based on interpersonal relationships, on the realization of the self in relation to others, both as individuals and as groups. One does not interact with the purpose of another person or group, but rather with that concrete person, or the persons of that concrete group. In fact, the position Dewey held here implies man having as his own purpose interaction with another in a concrete relation. In Dewey's formulation of the socializing, educative activity, activity itself is initiated by the individual in his own interests, and the response to this activity is both social and physical.<sup>26</sup> The social response is affirmative or negative insofar as the means and purpose of the individual's act are in harmony--or in common--with the individuals of the social group. Their response, conditioned as

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<sup>26</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 35. Note that such individual interests implies purpose--or an idea of it--prior to consciousness of the social or group purpose.

it is by knowledge (conscious or unconscious) of means and goals acceptable to the group as a whole, sets the situation in which the new member comes to realize the uniqueness of the activity and goals of the other. "The whole situation requires that each should adapt his action in view of what the other person has done and is to do."<sup>27</sup> But the point is that the new individual comes to the group with his own interests, or else he would not come to the group at all. What he interacts with is not the abstract common of the group, but the concrete individuals of the group as persons other than himself. He becomes human, not by accepting the dictates of the other, but by his growth in realizing them as other, and now as his. To the degree which Dewey emphasized the importance of the other, the analysis is weak. But he did, in fact, make an analysis of the confrontation of one with another, as well as the growth of man in the confrontation of one with another, and noted the growth of man in view of man's relation with man, not man's relation with the abstract "common."<sup>28</sup> The common, as scientific knowledge, is always of the past, of an event known and verified. It is not the process of here/now confrontation, the interpersonal relation of two men meeting and sharing, one with the other. The metaphysics of this position is not developed at all in Dewey's thought; most importantly to this discussion, it is

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-36, et passim.

not at all deducible from the instrumental, naturalistic position. Such a hint of a more comprehensive metaphysics of man does exist in Dewey's thought, and insofar as it does, it allows him the fuller definition of man which one is constantly reminded of throughout his works.

The metaphysics of Dewey's scientific philosophy, on the other hand, is not worked out either; in fact, as noted in Chapter IV, they are denied altogether. Yet the assumptions Dewey made about reality and its method of apprehension are clearly evident in the analysis of the development of Democracy and Education and in the continuation of its emphasis throughout the remainder of his life. There is, then, a juxtaposition of two implied metaphysics when one deals with the concept of man in the philosophy of John Dewey. His continuing ambiguity of his treatment of man. The result is-- if one attempts to make a unified whole of Dewey's thoughts on the subject of man--a paradoxical theory of what it means to be a human being.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

The contention of this dissertation has been that there is a very real paradox in the concept of what it means to be a human being in the philosophy of John Dewey. It has been shown that the evidence strongly points to the fact that the problems of men were the basic motivation of Dewey's concern with philosophy. The history of his philosophic endeavor shows that his "bogey"--as William James would have said--was a demand for a philosophy supporting a complete, concrete human existence. This led Dewey, in his early thought, to the Hegelian idealism of G. S. Morris, but later he found much the same negation of man in absolute idealism as he found in mechanistic, atomistic empiricism. Retaining the concept of the organic unity of society, but supporting it on a theory of science based on a social and biological naturalism rather than on absolute idealism, Dewey developed a position in which he thought he could expound a theory of man in its fullest and most concrete form, and yet retain a method true to the most efficient system of dealing with the natural world which had been developed. He called his system social naturalism, instrumentalism, or pragmatism; its method, the

scientific method, applied to human ends and affairs. The first part of this dissertation was concerned with illustrating the major tenents and assumptions of the naturalistic world view, and the particular features of its method--empirical science--as a mode of existential verifiability.

Yet, between the concept of the concrete human being with which he was throughout concerned, and the consequences of a metaphysics of naturalism and its empirical method on the theory of man, there appears a fundamental contradiction. While Dewey reacted to idealism for submerging the intrinsic value of man in favor of an absolute given end in history, it seems evident that he did much the same thing by defining man in the absolute given of the naturalistic situation, with which and from which man started. The limitation of the intrinsic value of man as well as his responsibility for fixing and fulfilling ends are as evident in one case as they are in the other; only the directionality of the emphasis has been changed.

The description of the consequences of the naturalistic world view, as Dewey understood it, on the concept of man has been the basic concern here. There is no lack of direct admissions by Dewey of the logical implications of the naturalistic position which he accepted. Dewey thought, however, that he had successfully integrated the feeling and idealizing human being with a creature defined wholly within the empirical, naturalistic world view. The basic point has been

to show that this is a false and unaccomplished integration-- that, in fact, as is illustrated so clearly in Theory of Valuation, such integration is itself defined on empirical criteria and therefore the conclusion is always in empirical terms. Desire and rationality were integrated to get empirical rationality; spiritual, moral man was integrated with empirically defined man to get empirical man. The allusion to Hegelian dialectics fails; the synthesis is not reached because the criterion of its attainment is strictly that of one of its two conditions.

The final two chapters illustrate the paradox in the major work, Democracy and Education. Here Dewey's exhortations about the concrete, integrated human being are the most clear and the most compelling. There can be little doubt of the insight into the human condition that Dewey displayed and acted upon during his entire life. It was shown that the metaphysics of this "felt" position were barely hinted at, but that they are indeed discernable, and that they are not deducible from the standard naturalistic position which is proposed as supporting this insight into real human conditions. In Democracy and Education, the paradox of man is clearly developed, step by step as Dewey pleaded for the conditions of society--democracy and education--which would produce the human being responsible in the promotions of his own ends and fully developed within and through the social situation. The concept of man thus proposed varies between the desired



integrated concept of being human and the truncated, other-directed creature deducible from the naturalistic definition of the social structure. The paradox in Democracy and Education rests quite clearly on the ambiguity of the concept of the "common." In one sense it is the full, inter-personal relation of concrete human beings in realization of the difference of the other; in the second sense, it is the nonpersonal abstraction of what is knowable to any person and communicable in like-mindedness. It is shown that Dewey built his theory of society on the second meaning of the term "common" although the argument of this dissertation is that the concept of man deducible from only this approach is painfully inadequate.

The explanation here advanced for the major dichotomy in the theory of man is that the inadequacy of Dewey's naturalistic position is a result of his refusal to grant that there was a metaphysical position involved which required a great deal of investigation. Here it has been pointed out that Dewey failed to investigate his metaphysical assumptions even though his definition and development of the naturalistic world view itself may be seen as consisting of almost an explicit metaphysical pronouncement. Had Dewey emphasized the investigation of the conditions of the naturalistic world view as thoroughly as he did the consequences of it, it might well have been developed into a very adequate metaphysics. But he did not do this, for, of course, one of the provisions of the naturalistic world view, as he understood it, was an

emphasis on consequences and not upon conditions. It is here concluded that one of the primary reasons for the lack of depth in the theoretical definition of man is the exceedingly narrow naturalistic metaphysics upon which it is unwittingly based.

Dewey's ultimate faith in science is one of the more interesting, yet ultimately detractive elements of his thought. The history of science and its growth was, for Dewey, the history of civilization because the history of science stood under the development of economic history which was of the most basic importance. The results of science were not civilization, but there could be no civilization without them, he asserted.<sup>1</sup> Dewey in 1916, during the writing of Democracy and Education was enthusiastic about what science has done:

Every domesticated plant and animal, every tool, every utensil, every appliance, every manufactured article, every aesthetic decoration, every work of art means a transformation of conditions once hostile or indifferent to characteristic human activities into friendly and favoring conditions.<sup>2</sup>

By 1946 and the Preface to Problems of Men, Dewey was aware of science's ability to destroy the world through atomic weapons, yet he still held firmly to the idea that through the application of scientific method to the aims, purposes, and aspirations of specifically human endeavor, the problems of men might yet be solved. The optimism is shaken, but the faith in science as method remains. Science had surely

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

promoted the quantity of social life, had extended the physical sphere of activity, and had given man a control over his environment never dreamed of in previous ages. But had science improved the quality of life? As far as is here discerned, Dewey did not really ask this question. He did not fully ask the final question relevant to his philosophy of science: "Is science applicable to the human situation? Dewey simply assumed this to be the case. It seems, though, to be evident that science as method contributes to human purpose only accidentally and that science as criterion of human purpose is just not warranted. Bertrand Russell admitted that the logic of science and the analysis and definition of reality through its principles was difficult to argue against philosophically--except that there was one perplexing problem: namely, one could not live by the precepts of such an analysis. Human purpose must stand outside the scope of empirical method, but this consideration was rejected by Dewey. Yet one must note that the continued appeal to the narrow base of science for the solution to the broader human and social problem only hinders the beginning of the search for understanding of human relations--for space-time relations, it is here held, do not exhaust human relations.

The paradox of man in the thought of John Dewey is on the one side illustrated by his seventy year quest in and for man, and on the other by the development of a crippling theory of man based on scientific, empirical, method. In that Dewey

is no longer questioning, and it is to those of the present to act in and for the condition of man, the question follows: may one safely follow Dewey's principles? The conclusion here reached is that insofar as Dewey's concern for man and his activity and courage in man's behalf is a reflection of his principles, one would do well to act upon them.<sup>3</sup> But insofar as the principles acted upon are reflective of the theoretical position--the metaphysics of naturalism--activity upon these principles must not only be disregarded, but actively rejected, for Dewey's position has done a great deal to create and develop the myth of science as the savior of man and his world. Science as means (seen in its cloak of technology) has done wonders in moving toward the domination of man's natural environment. But far from making that environment friendly for human growth, the evidence seems to indicate such science has substituted an environment more hostile and infinitely more dangerous than any man has known in his history. Science as evaluator and formulator of human purposes has not proven viable because inherently and metaphysically it does not, cannot, point to the ends of a being not defined within its scope and method. Science and an empirically grounded world view cannot point to ultimate ends-in-themselves, and cannot point to human ends infinitely more complex and integrated

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<sup>3</sup> George S. Counts relates a story about the time Dewey, demonstrating for woman suffrage in a New York City street, held in his hand a sign declaring "My husband can vote--Why can't I?"

than those science admits of; because of these facts, to promote the role of science in structuring the ends of man is to promote not only an erroneous irrelevance, but a positive evil. It detracts man from his one and only goal: being human.<sup>4</sup>

Dewey, in promoting the naturalistic world view, held an implicit metaphysical position. He either denied it or its importance--in any case he did not make it an object of

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. John Dewey, "Reconstruction as Seen Twenty-five Years Later," Introduction to the 1948 edition of Reconstruction in Philosophy. Dewey defended his position against precisely the criticism of science as evaluator of man put forth here. The object of philosophy is to take science to the distinctly human realm, he again asserted, and to note the destructive capability of science--specifically nuclear weapons--is no criticism of science itself, but rather of the nonscientific social institutions which have forced science to use its wares in a destructive manner. "The institutional conditions into which it enters and which determines its human consequences have not as yet been subjected to any serious, systematic inquiry worthy of being designated scientific." (p. xxv.) That such human conditions as cause the destructive use of science are themselves available to scientific endeavor always was--and continued to be--Dewey's belief: "From the position here taken, reconstruction can be nothing less than the work of developing, of forming, of producing (in the literal sense of that word) the intellectual instrumentalities which will progressively direct inquiry into the deeply and inclusively human--that is to say, moral--facts of the present scene and situation." (p. xxvii.) The first step, Dewey asserted, in such a development, was to recognize that the present human situation "has its origin in physical inquiry." (p. xxviii.) Dewey concluded by once again noting the immature state of science--having still to be regarded as the evaluator of human processes, not merely those of the physical world. There simply exists no doubt in the works of John Dewey that science is as applicable to a human being as it is to any other "natural" (i.e., available fully to empirical methods) object. The ironic point is the question as to whether science itself is even finally capable of knowing natural objects fully, much less the full scope of human beings.

scholarly research. He did not, therefore, see the possible consequences of it nor did he judge its rationality or coherence. He took it for granted that the world was as he found it, and as it made sense to him. He took the method of the physical world which was most explanatory and successful, and he dealt with the activities of the social world on this basis. His metaphysics lies under the givens of this position, of the acceptance of "this world"--the empirical and existential conditions of the naturalistic world. The metaphysics is there. However, the system of basic assumptions--the metaphysics--is inadequate insofar, at least, as it treats of man. The inadequate metaphysics vitiates the results of the naturalistic world view.

Dewey created and worked his instrumental philosophy fifty or more years without regard to the metaphysical assumptions. The system is adequate, of course, as it looks at itself, but it is not the only one looking at it. Man looks at it. Not in the terms of the system, but in the terms of man. Man does this through living the consequences of belief in the system, then through understanding the basis upon which the system is built, its metaphysics--its assumption of the meaning and existence of reality. Man brings his reality to the system, and judges the system on that basis. To allow the naturalistic system of Dewey to judge man on naturalistic assumptions may not only be inadequate, but it is to judge man created as posterior logically to it and not morally

responsible for it. Rather, man brings his reality to the system by judging its reality, by assuming for himself the consequences of the theory of reality upon which naturalism rests. Final judgment of any system cannot be made on the basis of its own criterion, for that criterion is already determined by the theory of reality upon which it is based. One must judge the metaphysics of naturalism from the viewpoint of a metaphysics of man. One must judge the reality of naturalism by its promotion or its hinderance of the reality of man.

This is where Dewey's theoretical system fails. Not because it is inadequate to its own ends--any logical system should be thus adequate--but because it is limited by the scope of its metaphysical position: in Dewey, the metaphysics of naturalistic, biological empiricism. One does not finally ask how the system limits reality, but how the assumptions of reality limit the system.

One must then ask of the theory of reality, as precisely Dewey did not, how its reality complements the reality of man; that is the question of man. One asks of Dewey: "How does the metaphysics of the position limit what I am?" Yet is it not a fact that Dewey's implicit metaphysics denies man the ability to even ask this question? If the position maintains, as this dissertation has described it as maintaining, that the activity of man is in reaction to the reality posited by the naturalistic world view and is then finally

evaluated by the empirical criteria of the naturalistic world view, then indeed man cannot, would not even ask the metaphysical question. But more than that, man could not even create the naturalistic world view which Dewey developed! For Dewey, one does not create reality, one reacts to it, and one cannot even know reality but tentatively and relatively.

The requirements of the definition of man through the implicit metaphysical position of Dewey are quite clear. It defines man as less than what one is here doing in asking these questions. It demands that if such questions are asked, they are asked by a fantasizing mind. But it is not really the system itself which demands such a conclusion, it is the metaphysics of that position. The system and man within the system merely work with the "given" facts. And the facts of man and his position in the naturalistically defined world view are mostly "given" because the metaphysics assumed is so narrow. With a more adequate metaphysics, the facts which cannot be explained through the system and its method, and which are therefore attributed merely to the naturalistic world through faith, could be accounted for. And they probably would be accounted for through giving man more relevance in their creation and development.

In Dewey's philosophy it is the metaphysics which is inadequate for the reality which man brings to the naturalistic world view. It is so precisely because Dewey did not care to require of the metaphysics that they be adequate, only the



system. And surely the system was adequate--adequate insofar as it solved the problems of the man defined by its metaphysics. But real man and his problems are not there.

Thus one can act without reflection on the metaphysical assumptions made by that activity. But what one does is strictly limited by those assumptions. Not to know what it is that one is limited by is to be not a self-directive, purposeful human being.

It is, in fact, through a metaphysics such as Dewey assumed, that computer machines may be described. Computers are judged on their consequences, by their successful activities within the quality of the problematic situation given them, within the space-time world of their naturalistic environment. Thus would a computer describe itself: "Given natural forces and objects, given natural laws of space-time, given the empirical world order, given a problem, given the tools to solve it, given a spark of electricity to shove me toward a conclusion, I am as valuable as my consequences, empirically verified. Indeed, that is what I am." But cannot a computer grow in order to grow? Cannot a computer take steps as means to given ends, and given ends as means to further steps and ends? But wherein is final purpose; wherein is the end-in-itself for which the computer is what it is? There is no such thing. Final ends are not a function of either the computer or the empirical environment in which it is constructed. But it does not follow, therefore, that

final ends are nonexistent. To describe them as such is to take the world of the computer, and of the naturalistic system, as the world, to assume this abstraction as the final, real reality. To do so is to commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. But this is only obvious to one who views the limited world of the computer and the naturalistic system from an understanding of the theory of reality which creates and supports them.

Dewey demanded, though, that man had to participate in the ends of his activity through real purpose--unlike a computer--for such participation was really that which defined him as man. Dewey was very insistent on this point, but is this demand deducible from the naturalistic metaphysics? It is the view here that it is not. Naturalism implies, but its metaphysics does not account for, one very important factor: man--and specifically, John Dewey--who has defined naturalism in its very limitation, who has, in fact, himself created that world view which sees existence in faintly empirical terms. But a creature of the naturalistic world view could not define his limitation. He could not feel his inadequacy in it. All this requires a broader stance. It requires a theory of reality broader than the theory of reality which Dewey assumed through his instrumental philosophy. And one of Dewey's theories of man has here been shown to require

such a broader metaphysical basis.<sup>5</sup> Dewey's human insight, as is expressed in Democracy and Education, will not be forced into, nor can it be deduced from the explanatory scheme through which he defined the real world.

The problems of men is Dewey's own bete noire--his own final end-in-itself. This care is an arbitrary absolute, just like the essentials of every man's existence in the world through his purpose and his moral responsibility. Social and physical reality is arbitrary, not relative. The method by which Dewey chose to view the world is the relative consideration, and as it is the relative, so it is the abstract

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gustav E. Mueller, "John Dewey's Aesthetics," in The John Dewey Centennial Celebration (Norman, Oklahoma, 1959), pp. 17-25. Professor Mueller sees the dichotomy of man in the aesthetics of Dewey much as this dissertation find it in the social and educational thought: "Let me state at the outset my major criticism: his aesthetics is much better than his metaphysical naturalism would permit it to be. His naturalistic intention fails; but he is nevertheless so true to aesthetic experience that his metaphysical bias does not mar the result. He is right when he insists that the aesthetic function of human existence is essential and not acquired, primary and not secondary or artificial; but he is wrong when he confuses this with natural or ordinary experience, by which he means survival of organisms. An unavowed double meaning in the term "human organism"--a quaternio terminorum--results in an unrecognized contradiction later." (p. 20.) That man himself stands prior to the mere reaction of the organism in the problematic situation also is affirmed by Professor Mueller: "Dewey's ambiguity, then, lies in this: if immediate vital experience is transformed by man into the appearing spectacle enjoyed as the image of a concrete unity of opposed energies, evident to an imaginative beholder as a rhythmically ordered whole or as cosmos, then the human function of an aesthetic world-view making this transfiguration possible is already in operation and presupposed; it is not derived from the immediate experience." (p. 21.)

consideration. The concrete fact which eludes the naturalistic explanatory scheme is that reality and man's real participation in it is absolute and is arbitrary. But such is not to say that the world is determined. It is rather to allow man, his thinking, imagining and valuation, into the concrete world. Man should be seen as opening himself to various conditions of reality and thereby defining it for himself. Such an act is arbitrary, for it defines not only reality, but man himself. It is arbitrary because it is concrete (quite contrary to Dewey's analysis). It is absolute because it is this, here and now--and not another, nor relative in its meaning to another. It is man, in and for himself. But to suppose that any absolute and arbitrary condition or situation is final in itself, is to close man up within that condition. It would be, as Dewey well noted, to break the continuity of nature, to fracture man from meaning in the world. Nevertheless, such a position does not require, as Dewey's did, that the only non-relative fact is man's belief in the metaphysics of naturalism and its subsequent theory of relativism. It does require that man be defined within the fully concrete world so that the relations through which he comes to expand his definition of reality are real relations, not based on the abstract, non-personal "common" by means of which Dewey constructed (or reconstructed) the social group.

Dewey, in assuming a theory of man, described man's position within the empirical world order by construction of

a theory of reality which presupposed just that: An empirically defined world order. But his act of choosing this particular scheme of reality was a function of his evaluative character prior to the position into which he defined himself as human being. The naturalistic world view presupposes its creator and his full character as a human being. Dewey's act of defining the world as empirical is not reducible to empirical terms. Such a criticism of Dewey's assumption that reality is reducible to space-time relations alone is an act which the metaphysics of Dewey's position cannot allow. But this criticism affirms the position that one is as much as his metaphysics allows him to be. Insofar as the breadth of such a metaphysics is sufficiently great, so is man. Therefore let it be seen that man is morally responsible for that which he is as well as that which he has mistakenly defined himself as not being. Let man define himself fully as man; let him create no gods, especially no crippled gods under which man himself is crippled. Let man--not an abstract world view or its limited metaphysics--be the judge of reality. Let man, finally, give reality, in its absolute arbitrariness, his arbitration.

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