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*I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by* Charles Eugene Conover

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# THE SOURCE AND VALIDITY OF MORAL OBLIGATION

## A Study of the Ethical Foundations of Western Civilization

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# INTRODUCTION

In Nazi and Fascist theory and practice we confront a clear denial of central ideals in our tradition: freedom for the individual, a limited and ethical state, and universalism. The total war in which we are engaged is, in one of its main aspects, a struggle between incompatible moral and political philosophies. But since the Nazi and Fascist threat has developed within Western civilization itself, winning the war against the Fascist nations will not suffice. We must preserve the foundations for the distinctive values of our civilization.

The modern world has been sceptical at once of the validity of moral standards, and of a source of obligation beyond society itself. An important clue to the nature of the crisis of our age lies in the forms which ethical scepticism has assumed. The first has been individual. In 1931 a discerning English writer suggested that

our moral problems came down to one simple question: "Why shouldn't I?" (1) The fact of moral obligation is implicitly recognized in the hesitancy which the question expresses; what is doubted is the authority of the obligations we do experience. This form of ethical scepticism expresses the drive for freedom to follow desire and interest. A second form of scepticism is seen in the rise of mass movements in which individuals give up their freedom for the sake of promised community and security. The willingness to relinquish individual rights and liberties is evidence at once of the disintegration of society, and of scepticism concerning the moral and religious bases of individual freedom and of a limited state. A third form of the modern revolt against traditional standards is to be seen in the conflicts between groups within nations, and between nations. Ethical scepticism in our day is expressed also in the

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1. F. R. Barry, Christianity and the New World, pp. 1, 2.

question: "Why shouldn't we?" Nation, race and class form the centers for divisive loyalties.

The internal and external threats of democracy have a common root in the scepticism which leads to rejection of universal standards and obligations, and to the affirmation of particular interests and loyalties. The interests of individuals, of groups, and of nations are sought by whatever means are found to be successful, including force. We are confronted by forms of expediency which no longer recognize moral principles as obligatory. It is not the expediency which holds that a particular exception to recognized standards is justifiable, but a relativistic expediency in which success or failure in terms of these interests is the only test of the means used to secure what is desired. If the distinctive values of our civilization are to be preserved, we must have a philosophy which refutes these forms of ethical scepticism. I do not claim that ethical scepticism is the only cause of such movements as Naziism. I do hold that there is observable evidence that such scepticism

leads to behavior which is incompatible with democracy and international order.

What are the essential ethical foundations of our civilization? The present crisis makes this question inescapable. Fundamentally different answers to it are given within the ranks of those who are now united in the struggle against Fascism. It is essential therefore that the implications of these competing philosophies be examined. In this essay I present a study of two views of the validity and source of moral obligation. My thesis is that belief in the objectivity of moral values, and a theistic source of moral obligation have been, and are, essential foundations of genuine individuality, of a just and ordered life within the nation, and of international justice and peace.

By the objectivity of moral values I mean that they are characters of reality, and not functions of our desires and interests. When we judge correctly, our moral judgments are true, and not merely expressive of interest. In our moral experience we know a moral

order which we do not create. This moral order is relevant to our human desires and interests, but is at the same time independent of them. Since there is truth to be found in value-experience, our tests of value, when we judge correctly, do not vary with our desires and interests. This does not mean that values are off in some transcendent realm; they are characters of the world as we experience it. My position that the ultimate source of moral obligation is transcendent does not involve the denial that there are sources of obligation within the life of the individual and of society. I believe that God is immanent as well as transcendent, and that this transcendent obligation is known within our common human experience.

My thesis is clearly in opposition to the naturalistic interpretation of the nature and implications of moral experience. The new naturalism is presented as an adequate answer to ethical relativism in its individual and collective forms. This claim

is to be investigated in this essay, and John Dewey has been selected as the representative of this position. I do not identify Dewey's instrumental philosophy with the expediency in individual and group and national behavior which results from the forms of ethical scepticism discussed above. I recognize that Dewey's purpose is constructive, and that he holds that his philosophy leads to objective --by which he means universal --standards. (1) The nature and consequences, rather than the intention, of Dewey's philosophy are to be critically examined. The question is this: does Dewey's philosophy provide an adequate basis for these ideals of individual freedom, a limited state, and world order which he accepts from the Western tradition?

I recognize that the problem with which I am dealing cannot be adequately treated within the limits of this essay, and that my own position in regard to many of the problems considered cannot be fully stated. I should like, therefore, at the very outset to indicate some aspects of Dewey's philosophy which I am <u>not</u> criticizing.

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1. See Chapter III, Part I. It will be noted that this meaning of the term objectivity differs from my usage of it.

I do not object to Dewey's insistence that intelligent use of the resources available through science offers untold possibilities for the future welfare of mankind; I hold that the use of these powers for the benefit of all mankind is a moral obligation. Again, I do not deny that important values have been gained since the Middle Ages in Science, in freedom, and in individuality. I am committed to democracy, and I do not propose a return to the Middle Ages. I do, however, hold that Dewey's philosophy deprives us of resources in the Western tradition which I believe to be essential to the preservation of freedom and to the establishment of world order. A word seems necessary also concerning my attitude towards empiricism. My primary objection to Dewey's philosophy is that I do not find it to include the full range of our experience and knowledge. My criticism of the new naturalism is made from three standpoints: from the ethical and religious foundations of our civilization, from our common moral experience, and from the requirements of democracy.

Chapter I of this essay is a survey of the actual historical sources of individualism, of an ethical state

and of universalism in Western civilization. The origins of the movements which now threaten these characteristics of our society are also considered. If belief in the objectivity of moral values and in a transcendent source of moral obligation are foundations of the distinctive ideals of Western civilization, and if the movements which now deny these ideals have arisen from the rejection of these foundations, these facts have an important bearing upon our inquiry. I should like to point out that specific consideration of John Dewey's form of naturalism begins in Chapter II.

Chapters II and III deal with the philosophy of John Dewey. Chapter II is a study of Dewey's general philosophical position as it bears upon his ethical doctrines. In Chapter III, Dewey's ethics and his interpretation of man are examined. The main problem is whether this account of morality protects democracy against the relativistic expediency of individual, group and national behavior which now endangers democracy. Chapter IV is an examination of the validity of moral standards, and presents evidence for belief in a moral order not made by man.

The final Chapter is concerned with naturalistic and

theistic theories of the source of moral obligation. The response of individuals and groups and nations to obligations depends in part upon the source from which they are believed to come. Both the quality and intensity of our response, and the inclusiveness of the highest object of our loyalty, depend upon the source or sources of obligation recognized; this question therefore bears incisively on the problem of international order. It is one purpose of this essay to show that the dynamic and the inclusiveness of an ethical religion which finds the source of moral obligation in the Divine Will are essential to the solution of the moral and political problems of our day.

# CHAPTER I

## THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MORALITY AND POLITICS IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Freedom for the individual, ethical and religious limitations upon the power of the state, and recognition that particular races and nations belong to the universal society of mankind, have been characteristics of Western civilization. While these ideals have been only partially realized, they have been recognized as valid standards by which to measure progress and regress. Today movements which deny these standards both in theory and in practice threaten us with tyrannical nationalistic collectivism. As Bertrand Russell has observed, we have entered a period in which the insights of the recent past are not sufficient, and in which we must study the historical foundations of our civilization if we are to understand and to preserve our distinctive heritage. (1) In this chapter I am undertaking such a study of the actual historical sources of these fundamental aspects of the Western Tradition. I wish to acknowledge particular indebtedness to one source upon which I have drawn in this survey: A History of Political Theory, by George H. Sabine. Since this writer says that he is in "general agreement with the results of Hume's

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1. Power, p. 15

criticism of natural law," (1) his recognition of the place of belief in objective moral laws, of religion, and of the Christian Church in the development of the Western Tradition carries additional weight.

In the Greek city-state the city was the source of the meaning and value of all lesser groups. Art, religion, ethics, economics, politics--all centered in the city. The emphasis was not upon the individual, but upon giving the individual, in whatever station of society he belonged, the place in the common life which was his due. It was not necessary to stress the obligation of the citizen to his city, for participation in the common life was accepted as the supreme good.

There was, however, a basis for freedom in the Greek city-state. While no institution reached beyond loyalty to the state, there was a recognition of an obligation binding upon the city itself. It was believed that law is obligatory because it is right, and that it is valid for all states, not merely one's own. Because the citizen has the rational capacity to understand, accept and respect the law, and to participate in government, this belief in objectively valid moral and political standards

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1. P, viii.

provided a basis for a just and ordered life within the state, and for an ethical relationship of the ruler to his people. Known in modern philosophy as the Law of Nature, this doctrine has been a basic ethical postulate in Western society.

In the period preceding Plato and Aristotle, far-reaching economic and political changes were accompanied by intense discussion of ethical and political theory. One of the fundamental issues was a conflict between rich and poor. The center of intellectual interest turned from the study of physical nature to psychology, logic, ethics, politics and religion. As in our own day, this was a phase of a sceptical attitude towards the older belief in objectively valid knowledge. The Sophists occupied a place analogous to that of Hume in the modern period; they, too, were at once epistemologically and ethically sceptical. In their search for something permanent in the midst of changing and varied customs, the Greeks contrasted nature with custom. But, as in the modern era, scepticism undermined belief in an objective law of justice and right, and led to a view of man as an essentially egoistic being in a non-moral world. The result, as in our own day, was an expediency

in conduct which made necessary a new search for the bases of an ordered and free society.

The rational foundations of metaphysics as well as ethics and politics in Western civilization were developed in the answers given by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle to the ethical and epistemological relativism of the Sophists. The early Greek philosophers had identified knowledge and being; Socrates took the further step of identifying knowledge and virtue: virtue consists in knowledge of the good. The Greeks were rationalists in metaphysics and in ethics, but it is to be noted that the rule of reason did not--as in later forms of rationalism in Western ethics--mean faith in reason alone as a sufficient basis for ethics and politics. Socrates recognized an inner and divine voice, his "daimonium", which guided him when knowledge failed. Plato saw the importance of the attitudes of his philosopher-kings, and Aristotle stressed character, developed by habituation, as a basis for the right use of reason.

Plato's answer to the scepticism and social disintegration of his day has important relationships to medieval society and to modern communism. He rejected

the relativism which declared that "justice is nothing else than that which is advantageous to the stronger". Preserving a permanently valid insight of the city-state, he considered first of all the ideal city. It is not enough to answer from the standpoint of the individual the assertion that "the life of the unjust man is superior to that of the just man". (1) The good life for the individual should be determined in the light of knowledge of what a worthy society requires, and of what lies beyond society as a transcendent obligation. These are necessary checks upon individualism, whether in Plato's day or our own.

Plato was a collectivist. Looking at the divisions in the city-state, he saw in disunity the chief evil to be overcome.

> Can we mention any greater evil to a city than that which rends it asunder and makes it not one city but many, or any greater good than that which binds it together and makes it one? (2)

The goal of an organically united society stands above the desires of the individual. The end is justice--a harmony in which each class in society makes its own contri-

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1. Republic, B. I, pp. 338, 347.

2. Ibid., B. V, p. 462.

bution to the common life.

Plato recognized a transcendent obligation which is to become effective not through an institution, but through a class within society. Philosophers are to be kings because they know what justice is, and apply that knowledge to the art and science of politics. (1) In addition to reason, a deeply moral and religious attitude is required, for "the lover of learning must from his earliest years strive with all his heart after all truth." (2) The rule of disinterested reason was Plato's answer to social disintegration; order descends into the common life through aristocratic rulers who have the total organization of the state at their disposal. But there are serious objections to his theory. Is ethical knowledge in fact limited to a small group? Can the Form of the Good be known by the philosopher so completely that he should be given absolute political power? And can even the disinterested philosopher be trusted to govern without external checks upon his power?

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1. Republic, B. VI, p. 485.
2. Ibid., B. V, p. 479.

Aristotle, also, found the basis at once of individual morality and of an ethical and ordered state in an objectively valid morality, known by reason as it is developed in the life of the practically wise and good man. Intellectual and moral virtue are both necessary for the knowledge of what is by nature good. In contrast to plato's approach to ethics through the search for the ideal Form of the Good, Aristotle began with a careful analysis of actual ethical judgments and actual forms of government, and proceeds to wise and balanced conclusions. His view of the state, with its ethical purpose--"Political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not mere companionship" (1)-, its balance between classes, and its concern for individual virtue and well-being, has made important contributions to democratic political theory.

> Governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms; but those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and perverted forms, whereas a state is a community of freemen. (2)

It is a strange fact that, as Sabine puts it, the phil-

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1. Politica, B. III, 9, 1281a

2. Ibid., B. III, 6, 1279a

osophy of Plato and Aristotle was totally inapplicable within a generation after they wrote their great treatises on the city-state. Because it did not include enough of its population in the privileged class of citizens, and because it could not solve the problem of the relations between the cities, the city-state failed. The result was the development of individuals and of empires.

> Man as a political animal, a fraction of the polis or self-governing city-state, had ended with Aristotle; with Alexander begins man as an individual. (1)

This statement by W. W. Tarns is an exaggeration, for man remained a political animal when he became an individual; but it does indicate the revolutionary character of the change. Men had to learn to live as individuals within much larger and more impersonal social systems, and they found their ethical and religious problems profoundly changed.

In this new impersonal world Epicurus advised the wise man to withdraw from political life to pursue pleasure. Obligation in this political theory is reduced chiefly to the individual's own good, and the government aims only at the security of the individual. With the denial of rational

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1. W. W. Tarns, Hellenistic Civilization, quoted by Sabine, op. cit., p. 141.

and religious doctrines of community, a contract theory of the state appears.

> Let not yourself be deceived, O men, nor be misled, nor imposed upon ! There is not--believe me !--any natural community for thinking men. Whoever says otherwise, deceives and cheats you. (1)

The Cynics carried individualism to the point of seeking complete self-sufficience for the wise man. But in Stoicism the wise man seeks independence of the world, yet finds that the same endowment of reason which makes self-mastery possible also unites him in a community with other men.

Universality, another distinctive ethical concept in the Western world, appeared with individuality in the political thought of this period of transition. The break-up of communities left man as an individual, with a private life; and the loss of the particularizing characteristics of these smaller political units left him a member of the human race, with certain universal qualities. However, only the setting for these developments was provided by the disintegration of the old social life, for man requires a basis both for individuality and for universal brotherhood. This basis was provided by the philosophical, moral and religious resources of the Greek and

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1. Epict. diss. II. xx. 6, quoted by J. P. Mayer, Political Thought, p. 47

of the Jewish-Christian traditions. "What threatened to be a disaster to civilization became a fresh starting-point", writes Professor Sabine. An examination of these bases for community and for individual integrity and worth which made possible the development of the medieval world out of the collapse of the ancient world throws light upon our needs today. For the resources of both philosophy and religion were required.

The potentially universal doctrines of Plato and Aristotle became formative factors in the new civilization through Stoicism. The rational, or wise, man is self-sufficient, and therefore independent of the world. This wisdom which is at the same time virtue, is essentially imperturbability attained through rational control of feelings and passions. The impulsive aspects of human nature--including the social impulses--are outside the sphere of morality. The positive contribution of this dualistic view of human nature, and this monistic organization of life by reason, is its insistence that the integrity and dignity of the personality are within the power of the individual. This constitutes a real advance in the development of independent personality.

Stoicism interprets reason as essentially social. In the form given it by Chrysippus, Stoicism returned to the ideal of the city-state and widened it into a world-state. The Stoic is impressed by reason as it is revealed in just political institutions. And, in contrast to Plato's class-structure erected upon supposed distinctions in rational endowment, Stoicism stresses the equality, and equal divinity, of men. Conceiving the essential nature both of man and of the universe to be reason, the Stoics worked out their system of duties and their political theories in terms of harmony with nature as reason. Both gods and men are citizens of this universal state, whose constitution is right reason, the law of nature and the law of God. Here, potentially at least, was the basis for a city in which citizenship was open to all, and a basis for the criticism of the customs of a particular state.

The Stoics discovered the rational ideal of universal harmony and order, and believed that it is not only an ideal, but a requirement of nature. Through Roman law, this view influenced the modern mind, and gave us

the important conception of Natural Law in the spheres of morals and politics. This doctrine, as Cicero stated it, gave an objective criterion for human legislation; no statute contrary to Natural Law is valid, for a ruler and a people cannot make wrong right. It is also the basis for human equality, since before the eternal and universal law, known by reason, all men are equal. Recognition of an objective moral order gives a basis for an ethical state, since the state is subject to a law beyond its own interests; it gives the individual an independent integrity and moral value, because he recognizes and accepts freely the law to which he and the State are subject, and it places the authority of the state in the collective powers of the citizens.

Stoicism carried into Western thought and life both a direct and individual relationship to a transcendent source of moral obligation, and a basis for valid moral obligations. A distinctive note of Western morality is present in Stoicism. Windelband finds the heart of this ethic in the thought that

> life according to Nature and according to reason is a duty which the wise man has to fulfill, a law to which he has to subject himself in opposition to his sensuous inclinations. And this <u>feeling of responsibility</u>, this strict consciousness of the "ought", this recognition of a higher

> order, gives to their doctrine, as to their life, backbone and marrow. (1)

Stoicism is one source of the individual sense of duty, recognized as more than the obligation to society, which has characterized the ethos of Western civilization.

Stoicism alone, however, was not a sufficient basis for the transition to Western civilization. Its emphasis upon the ideal and spiritual world-state kept its followers from vigorous participation in actual political life. Its rationalistic doctrine that the world is to be overcome by overcoming our own impulses lost the dynamic aspects of human creativity. Its pantheistic view of the world weakened the critical function of reason in society, for the "natural" ambiguously includes reason as actually embodied in existing political organizations, and reason as the but partially realized ideal harmony. And it failed to provide either deliverance to the individual or a community-forming impulse to society.

Religion made possible the development of both the individuality and the universality underlying Western civilization. Henri Bergson observes that if the Stoics did "not succeed in drawing humanity after them, it is

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1. History of Philosophy, p. 172.

because Stoicism is essentially a philosophy". (1) Ethics and philosppphy alone did not meet individual and social needs in the period of transition. It is important to analyze the contributions of religion to the development of Western civilization, for there are significant parallels between the disintegration of the city-state and the problems of the modern world. Both have left the individual very much alone, with ultimate questions and needs to be faced--questions and needs which are religious as well as philosophical and ethical and political.

Individual and social life are always organized around loyalties. It is significant that religion offered a new basis for community when the old civic religion disappeared. The new empires compensated for their impersonality by presenting the ruler as an object of loyalty and source of moral obligation. Because he personalized the moral law which men do not make, emporer worship was possible without obsequiousness. However, emporer worship did not long endure, for the Christian religion

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1. The Two Sources of Religion and Morality, p. 52.

provided a new and personal relationship to the divine order in which both the Greek and the Hebrew believed. The dominant movement in the transition to the modern world was the Christian religion.

Established upon a covenant between Israel and Yahweh, the Jewish religion is inherently ethical. Moses recognized at once the religious obligation to worship Yahweh alone as God, and the moral obligation of obedience to His will, interpreted largely in terms of social morality. The theocratic strain in Western civilization clearly traces to the Old Testament. The basis of Jewish theism is not, as with the Greeks of the classical period, speculative reason, but the experience of a Reality known primarily in the moral and religious aspects of history. Amos (about 750 B.C.), the first prophet to challenge a national community with the threat of destruction because of its sins, reached a practical monotheism through the insight that all men know the moral law, and that the implications of that law are the same everywhere.

> Not because Yahweh is almighty, not because He is the one great Cause behind the phenomena of the world, but because He is righteous and visits un-

> righteousness everywhere, did He come to be regarded as the one God. (1)

A few years later Hosea, out of his own sorrow, saw Israel's relationship to Yahweh under the analogy of marriage, and added another central insight of the Hebrew tradition: God's faithful and redemptive love.

The Christian religion rests upon a relationship to God in which the individual person finds both his own integrity and strength and his relationship to his fellow man. In contrast to Stoic self-protective imperturbability, Jesus exemplified, and required of others, the unity of a personality devoted at once to a personal and universal God, and to man. The relationships of the individual to others and to God are personal, for the family, the most personal social unit, is universalized, with a resulting emphasis upon the equality of all human beings in the sight of God the Father. In contrast to rationalism, Christian love is a community-building force. Professor John Macmurray has called our attention to the brotherhood actually achieved through Christianity in the medieval world.

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1. Julius Bewer, The Literature of the Old Testament, p. 93.

> For the first time in human history a human society was constructed by men on a basis which was not a basis of blood and soil; which did not rest upon organic impulse, but was the fruit of a religious belief in the spiritual brotherhood of man. The universality of the Roman Empire happened as a by-product of activities which had another objective. Medieval Christianity was intentionally and deliberately planned by men in whom the Christian understanding of life was active. (1)

The fact that this theistic religion provided the basis for a spiritual brotherhood of man needs full recognition in a day when the divisive loyalties of blood and soil are once more dominant.

The Christian religion gave to Western civilization its distinctive conception and valuation of personality. Ernst Troeltsch thus concluded his study of the influence of Christianity in the development of individualism:

> Whatever the Ancient World and the Renaissance may have done for the intensification of individuality, Christianity, which indeed, always included within itself both Stoicism and Neo-platonism, has always been the strongest influence of all, and the really permanent attainment of individualism was due to a religious, and not a secular movement, to the Reformation and not to the Renaissance. (2)

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1. The Clue to History, p. 146. Macmurray does not hold that the Christian intention was fully, or successfully, achieved.

2. The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, Vol.I, p. 328.

Medieval Christianity nurtured the individualism which created new forms in the modern world. It provided for the recognition of the independent ~~value of the individual~~ value of the individual through

> the idea of an objective fellowship with absolute values and truth.....It was only the Church which practically effected a combination which first of all united the fellowship in absolute spiritual values, and through the very share of the individual in these personal values gave to the individual his own independent value. In this particular, Liberalism perpetuates in a secular form an idea which had first been realized by the Church, and it is very doubtful how far this ideal can be maintained without any religious support at all.(1)

It is interesting that Troeltsch wrote this passage before the first World War.

Two other important sources of modern individualism in the Christianity of the Middle Ages, as Troeltsch summarized them, are "the ethical demand for the freedom of the individual," (2) and "an increasing inwardness and subjectivity of the emotional life, a personalizing of all the relationships of life", which came through the education "of the nations of Europe by the powerful unity

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1. Troeltsch, Op. cit., Vol.I, p. 325.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 326.

of the Church." (1) While he does not claim that Christianity is the sole source of the movement for the freedom of the individual, Troeltsch writes that

> we may say that the increasing modification of slavery, the weakening of the system of serfdom, the development of civic freedom out of the subject peoples collected in the towns, and thus the tendency towards the free industry of the guilds, together with the whole concentration of a nascent Capitalism on the organization of free labour, were at least partly conditioned by the religious ideal of personality and its practical realization in law. (2)

This brief and partial summary of Troeltsch's masterly treatment of the results of Christian ideas and the Christian spirit and the Christian Church indicates the debt of our secular liberal culture to an age in which religion was a primary determining influence. We find it necessary today to preserve individual rights and liberties, genuinely individual--yet socialized--personality, and an ethical doctrine of the state, against movements which seek to bring the entire life of the individual under political control. It is important evidence for

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1. Troeltsch, Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 327

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 326.

our day that the Christian religion was the dominant force in the development of our civilization, and that it provided bases both for individuality and for universality.

It is necessary not only to give full recognition to the contributions of the Christian religion, but also to the essential place occupied by the Christian church in the development of our civilization. It is the judgment of Professor Sabine that the rise of the Christian Church

> as a distinct institution entitled to govern the spiritual concerns of mankind in independence of the state, may not unreasonably be described as the most revolutionary event in the history of Western Europe, in respect both to politics and to political philospphy. (1)

Developed by Paul from what seemed to many to be merely another Jewish cult into an independent and universal, not Jewish but human, institution, the Christian Church survived the collapse of the Roman empire, and gave to Western civilization its distinctive political, as well as moral and religious, character. For Western man has acknowledged two loyalties.

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1. A History of Political Theory, p. 180.

In one sense Christianity did not involve a great change in attitude toward political rulers, for the church stressed the obligation of civil obedience. It did, however, find the ultimate source of authority in God rather than in the state. It was no longer believed that the obligation to God was adequately met by political obedience, or by a political religion; man's relationship to God required an independent religious institution. In the resulting distinction between spiritual and temporal concerns lay the implication of rights not subject to the state, and the problem of church and state arose in Western society. Because this is one of the major issues in our own day, I quote at length Professor Sabine's excellent summary of the political implications of the rise of the Christian Church.

> For the pagan the highest duties of morality and religion met in the state, symbolically in the person of the emporer, who was at once the supreme civil authority and a divinity. For the Christian, the duties of religion were a supreme obligation, owed directly to God, and the outgrowth of a relationship between a spiritual deity and the spiritual essence in human nature. The interference of an earthly force in this relationship was something which in principle a Christian could not admit, and for this reason the quite formal ceremony of paying religious honor to the emporer's genius

> was a requirement which he must refuse. An institution which had in its keeping this higher relationship and which existed to provide the medium for the communication of the soul with God, must claim to be distinguished from, and in some degree to be independent of those secular institutions which existed to provide the means of bodily and earthly existence. For this reason Christianity raised a problem which the ancient world had not known--the problem of church and state--and implied a diversity of loyalties and an internality of judgment not included in the ancient idea of citizenship. It is hard to imagine that liberty could have played the part it did in European political thought, if ethical and religious institutions had not been conceived to be broadly independent of, and superior in importance to, the state and legal enforcement. (1)

Liberty in the Western tradition developed in the lives of individuals who acknowledged two loyalties, and participated in two authoritative institutions. Freedom was granted by the state because the individual was believed to owe an obligation, and to have a destiny, beyond the political sphere. The individual possessed rights because he had an independent value, and personal responsibilities. To the law of nature as a check upon the state, and to the Christian's insistence that "We

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1. Op. cit., p. 185.

must obey God rather than men", (1) the Christian Church added an institutional balance against the power, and against the totalitarian claims, of the state. Between these dual loyalties and obligations, the individual found a place for his own judgment; and eventually a fuller freedom in both politics and religion was won.

Ernst Troeltsch points to relations of the Christian Church to the Greek, as well as the Jewish-Christian, traditions.

> The Middle Ages witnessed the expansion of the church to a comprehensive, unifying and reconciling whole, which included both the sociological circle of religion itself and the politico-social organizations. In its own way, therefore, it realized in practice the ideal of the Republic of Plato, conceived as an individual state--that is, a rule of wise and God-fearing men over a unified society, built up organically in ranks, and also the ideal of the Stoics, whose universal commonwealth was to embrace the whole of mankind, without distinction, in one universal ethical kingdon. (2)

The results of absolutism in the church indicate the importance of the questions I have already raised concerning Plato's Republic. (3) Should absolute power be given even

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1. The Acts of the Apostles, 5:29.
2. Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 203.
3. See above, p. 14.

to the prelates of the church? My own answer is in the negative. But recognition that reform of the church was necessary, and that freedom in religion as well as in other spheres is essential, need not blind us either to the historical or the contemporary importance of the Church. We do not reject the state because we object to its totalitarian forms, but seek political forms which will preserve both freedom and effective government. The same logic holds for the church in its own sphere. (1)

Modern history substantiates the position that the Church is an essential institution. Positive evidence is seen in the fact that today the Church is the center of the only widespread open resistance within the totalitarian state. In pointing to this fact I do not mean to suggest that the church is free from blame for the rise

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1. The limits of this dissertation prevent the development of the writer's conception of the Church. It may be pointed out, however, that his doctrine of values is realistic, and that he holds that values are known by intuitive reason. He does not, therefore, hold that values depend upon the "protection" of the Church--though the Church does help us to recognize the objective existence of the moral order and of God. Nor does he believe that the Church is the only

of these mass movements which are religious as well as political in character. But I do hold that it is observably a bulwark against totalitarianism, and a positive source of the spirit and ideals of universal brotherhood.

Negative evidence of the importance of the Church is to be found in developments in the modern world which we are now to consider. As the medieval order disintegrated, individualism and nationalism developed as dynamic forces. In contrast to the universalism of Stoicism and Christianity, these modern movements are particular. Unless they are balanced by some universal force, they are disintegrative. And in the modern conflict between individualism and nationalism, the individual is losing the day. It is an ironic development that individualism, in weakening

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essential international institution. He does believe that to the extent that religion is right in its devotion to God and to man, and its recognition that ultimate authority lies beyond man and his societies, the Church is not just an important institutional check on absolute claims by the Church, but is an essential source of the spirit--at once individual and universal--which made possible the development of Western civilization and which can also meet the crisis of our age.

the Church and the influence of universal religion, prepared the way for the nationalism which now threatens both individualism and universalism.

> The Middle Ages fashioned Greek antiquity, Roman universalism, and Christianity into a unified form of culture for the west. The individual was as yet hidden within the organism of the social structure. His appearance marked the beginning of a new epoch, whose distinguishing features were to be capitalism, dynamic rationalism, progress, and nationalism. When this occurred the universality of the Church was to be shattered and the national State was to take its place. (1)

National patriotism has increasingly displaced universal religion as the loyalty around which communities are formed. And it has become increasingly clear that the enfeeblement of Christianity and the Church has not ended absolutism. It has, however, prepared the way for absolute claims on the part of individuals, groups and nations. The problem therefore leads towards a study of human nature.

Machiavelli, writing in Italy in the 16th Century, presented a theory of the national state which has become dominant in the modern world, though qualified thus far by the existence of the church, by the insistence of individuals upon their rights, and by the recognition of a univer-

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1. J. P. Mayer, Political Thought: The European Tradition, p. 23.

sal moral law. His theory is the first example in modern times of a realm of life which claims complete freedom from moral and religious control. He sees men as egoistic individuals; only the power of the state can hold them together. The aim of the ruler is effective power. The primary requisites for the ruler are accordingly a knowledge of the art of war, and a disciplined and loyal army, as means for the advancement of his interests.

> A prince should . . . . have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organization and discipline, for that is the only art that is necessary to one who commands.....The chief cause of the loss of states, is the contempt of this art, and the way to acquire them is to be well versed in the same. (1)

The ruler's only concern with morality is that it must be inculcated in his subjects to enforce social unity. It is instructive that a theory of the state which recognizes no ethical or religious obligations beyond its interests, as the ruler interprets them, relies on force in its external relationships, and sees religion and morality as means by which the individual citizen can be controlled.

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1. The Prince, Chapter XIV, p. 65.

We are beginning to realize what the Machiavellian state means. In nations today in which the hitherto somewhat independent areas of education, the press and radio, the economic order, and the church become simply functions of the state, the individual, too, becomes a function of the state. The fundamental question arises, as to what answer can be given to the Machiavellian theory, which derives its chief characteristic from its disregard of ethical standards. It is based negatively on a scepticism concerning the independence of moral principles, and positively upon the convictions that only the interests of the particular state are to be considered and that only the method of reliance upon armed force works; it denies that there are universal obligations either for the state or for the individual; it recognizes no independent and inalienable rights of the individual citizen. The Western heritage of individualism and of universalism is rejected in this philosophy.

In the period between Machiavelli and Hitler, while nationalism has been a continuous force, ethical and political thought have been chiefly concerned with the individual. In contrast to the emphasis upon tradition and

authoritative institutions in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, Capitalism, Democracy, and Modern Science have been, in varying ways, individualistic. Modern individualism has become increasingly secular in its aims, and naturalistic in its philosophy. The value-theory which is basic in naturalistic philosophies, whether individualistic or nationalistic in ethics and politics, was stated by Hobbes.

> But whatsoever is the object of any man's Appetite or Desire; that is it, which he for his part calleth good: and the object of His Hate, and Aversion, Evil . . . . .(1)

Hobbes, living in a time of insecurity, argued for absolute rule by the state as the only alternative to social anarchy. Hume and his successors have held, in opposition to Hobbes, that men are basically social, and therefore that the interests pursued will be compatible with social harmony.

In order to preserve the Western heritage of freedom for the individual, we must discover why nationalism is winning the day over individualism in so many nations. I have already pointed out that ethical scepticism is a

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1. Leviathan, P. I, Chapter VI, p. 24.

common root of both the individual and collective revolts against the standards of our civilization. (1) This root is apparent in Machiavellian nationalism. The naturalistic forms of individualism are not to be equated unqualifiedly with ethical scepticism; there are various positions to be distinguished, and John Dewey's form of naturalism is to be examined later. It is further to be recognized that the individualistic and nationalistic forms of naturalism are in fundamental opposition in political theory. But it is essential to note at this point that naturalism in all of its forms rejects ethical foundations which we have seen to have been essential in the development of our civilization: belief in a moral order, known by reason, and independent of, though relevant to, desire and interest; the source in devotion to God of both individual integrity and love for all mankind; and the Church which at once brings universal religion effectively into the life of the nation, and stands as an institutional bulwark against absolute claims by the state. It is also to be noted that both individual and

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1. In the introduction, p. 2.

collective forms of naturalism find the basis of ethics in interest though they disagree as to what interests are to be dominant. It is therefore necessary to ask this question: is the individualistic form of naturalism an adequate answer to nationalism?

The question can be stated in terms of the crisis in our own nation. Democracy, as we have known it in the United States, achieved a new balance between the individual and the nation. In The Course of American Democratic Thought, An Intellectual History Since 1815, Professor Ralph H. Gabriel of Harvard University shows at once the dependence of our democracy upon the Western tradition, and the nature of the present crisis. The American democratic faith rests upon three doctrines. The first is that there is a moral order which is not the creation of man, and before which all men stand on a footing of equality. This doctrine was expressed in the Declaration of Independence in terms of Locke's Natural Rights. In the nineteenth century the doctrine of the moral law was for the majority of Americans expressed in terms of Christianity, and for a minority in terms of eighteenth century deism. The important

point is the agreement that the moral order is not made by man. The second doctrine, which depends upon the first, was that of the free individual. This second doctrine

> contained a theory of liberty and of the relation of the individual to the State which he ultimately governed. The doctrine was derived from that of the moral order. The path which led from the one to the other was a philosophy of progress. This philosophy affirmed that the advance of civilization is measured by the progress of men in apprehending and translating into individual and social action the eternal principles which comprise the moral law.....Out of this concept that civilized man is the virtuous man and this hopeful philosophy that mankind is on the march toward a better world came the nineteenth century theory of liberty. As men became more nearly perfect in obedience to the fundamental moral law ....they needed less the external control of manmade laws." (1)

There are two essential relationships between these two doctrines of the moral order and the free individual. The first is that the American doctrine of freedom is a moral doctrine: freedom is for the virtuous man. Freedom became an end in itself, and a test of progress, because the virtuous man can be trusted, and ought to be free. The second relationship is that the moral law,

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1. Page 19.

along with our geographical isolation and our abundant resources, has been a source of security. Our own history corroborates the evidence in present-day Europe that freedom requires security as one of its bases.

> The doctrine of the moral law gave to the men of the Middle Period a sense of stability and security in a world of change. The American philosophy of liberty....when it reached its maturity with the belief that liberty is an end in itself.....rested squarely upon a universal sense of security. When the traditional foundations of a culture crumble, as we are seeing them do today in the United States and in the western world.....the preoccupation with liberty as an end in itself is replaced by a new search for security.....In the Middle Period, when Americans felt safe, they elaborated their doctrine of the free individual. (1)

Belief in a moral order not made by man gave both social and intellectual security. It provided a logic of democracy within which discussion and action could be carried on, and within which progress could be measured.

> Traditionally the democratic faith has been a cluster of ideals providing standards of value against which to measure the realistic democracy of the polling place and the legislative chamber. (2)

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1. Ibid., p. 22

2. Ibid., p. 381.

The third principal doctrine of the American faith is that of the mission of America. Our nationalism has been at once a source of inner unity, and a belief in a destiny of significance to all mankind. It is clear that this nationalism has been qualified by the moral law and by the free individual. It has also been limited by the dominance of a theistic religion, even though Christianity has not always been clearly distinguished from the culture religion of the American democratic faith. Nationalism in its American form has been interpreted as a loyalty having a subsidiary place within the universal requirements of morality and of religion.

The balance achieved in American democracy rests upon the fundamental tenets of the Western tradition. The moral law provides the setting for the relations of individuals and groups within the nation, and for international relations.

> The democratic faith is the fruit of an effort to harmonize the potentially antagonistic doctrines of the fundamental law, the free individual, and nationalism. When the doctrine of the fundamental law is carried to the extreme, the result is a fatalistic determinism denying individual liberty. Individual liberty, pushed to its logical end, becomes anarchy. Extreme nationalism produces the deadening regimentation

> of totalitarianism. The American democratic faith is a system of checks and balances in the realm of ideals. It asserts the possibility of a balance between liberty and authority, between the self-expression of the free individual and the necessary coercion of the organized group. The democratic faith is, then, in essence, a philosophy of the mean. It proclaims that, within broad limits of an ordered nature, man is the master of his destiny. (1)

The balance achieved in America is now threatened. In the "strange and hostile" world confronting the democratic faith, nationalism is magnified, while the doctrines of the moral order, the free individual, and universal obligations are denied. In this crisis the democratic faith is in conflict with an ethical relativism which Professor Gabriel calls "pragmatic expediency".

> In the twentieth century the ethics of expediency and force dominate in the realm of international affairs. To a greater or less degree expediency and force have controlled the course of domestic affairs in every great nation. The central problem in post-Versailles America is to achieve a definition of the good. (2)

By "pragmatic expediency" Professor Gabriel means an ethic which is the opposite of the democratic faith.

> The democratic faith has from the beginning been a cluster of ideals which would serve as

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1. Ibid., p. 418

2. Ibid., p. 384

> standards with which to measure conduct. Imbedded in the doctrine of the fundamental law has been the ideal that it is possible for men to govern their lives by stable ethical principles. It is the opposite of an ethic of mere expediency or of force. (1)

This ethical relativism in which interest, rather than a moral order not made by man, furnishes the only standards, and in which force is used where it promises success, is observable in behavior within nations, and in the behavior of nations. When it is adopted by the citizens of a nation, it leads to insecurity, and eventually to the relinquishment of freedom. For nationalism, in contrast to the moral order, "is the security formula of the twentieth century." (2) Nationalism, using the same ethic, leads to international anarchy and total war. The free individual within the nation and international order disappear together.

Professor Gabriel traces the fundamental differences between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to science, which has replaced religion as the frame of reference for modern American thought. (3) The conflicts of thought to-

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1. Op. cit., p. 385.
2. Ibid., p. 417.
3. Ibid., p. 373.

day are between science and social beliefs, with also the re-assertion of Christian orthodoxy as a factor. The pragmatic aspect of "pragmatic expediency" had one of its sources in William James, who held that the validity of the beliefs upon which we act depends upon the results produced. William Graham Sumner made the relativism complete.

> James insisted that truth happens to an idea; that what was true yesterday may be false today. Sumner added that the mores can make any type of behavior right or wrong. Royce believed with nineteenth century Americans in a fundamental moral law; James had no use for such a law, and Sumner looked upon it as one of the phantasms of theology. From James and Sumner stemmed the post-Versailles American ethics of pragmatic expediency. (1)

To the evidence in the development of our civilization that belief in a moral order not made by man, and belief in a theistic source of obligation, have been essential foundations of freedom, a just and ordered state, and of international order, we have now added observable results in the modern world of an expediency which denies both foundations. This is not theoretical evidence. What we observe is that men who accept the

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1. Op. cit., p. 288.

ethics of pragmatic expediency behave as Gabriel has reported in his study of the American and world scene.

The pragmatic philosophy is an important source of the pragmatic expediency which is clearly incompatible with democracy. But since it does not accept the full relativism of Sumner, and since it has been modified by Dewey, it must be examined in the following Chapters. Does the new naturalism have an adequate answer to the expediency which threatens democracy both from within and from without? Instrumentalists of the school of John Dewey maintain that their philosophy leads neither to social disintegration nor to totalitarian nationalism, and claim to present a thoroughly democratic theory based upon scientific method. His pervasive influence in contemporary American thought and life in itself justifies the selection of John Dewey as the representative of "the new naturalism". His philosophy, claiming the authority of scientific method and the spirit of democracy, draws optimistic conclusions from naturalistic premises.

The evidence considered in this Chapter, however, leads towards the conclusion that belief in a moral order

not made by man, and in a divine Source of moral obligation and Object of religious devotion are essential foundations of individual freedom, a limited state, and universal order. For we have found that these rational and religious foundations were essential to the development of these distinctive characteristics of Western civilization. And we have seen the results of their rejection in the modern world. The presumption is against the adequacy of a philosophy which rejects these foundations and which is an important component of the pragmatic expediency which we now confront.

Another conclusion to be drawn from the evidence now before us is that the denial of the truth of theistic religion has resulted on the one hand in the dominance of divisive particular loyalties of nation and race and class, and on the other in a changed valuation of the individual person. Man's life is based upon loyalties, and partial loyalties have replaced the supreme loyalty to God. The individual was granted freedom by the state because he was believed to be more than a "political animal". Today both the individual's willingness to give up his freedom, and the state's use of the individual as means, are

evidences of a changed attitude towards man. These results of the decline in the influence of theistic religion require an analysis of the solution offered in the new naturalism.

# CHAPTER II

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF INSTRUMENTALISM

John Dewey's interpretation of the nature of our crisis agrees with the analysis given in the previous chapter in this, that there is a tension between the traditional philosophy of our civilization, and our actual life today. This tension, he holds, exists because our beliefs about the world are now determined by science, and our life is chiefly concerned with natural objects and goods, while our beliefs about the values and purposes which should direct our conduct are still largely in terms of ultimate and eternal values. (1) Believing that our dual allegiance results in a divorce of thought and action, and therefore in a failure to make full use of science for the solution of our problems, Dewey advocates the integration of thought and life around science. Methods and beliefs and institutions must now be made consistent with science.

> I believe that the method of empirical naturalism.... provides the way, and the only way...by which one can freely accept the standpoint and conclusions of modern science; the way in which we can be genuinely naturalistic and yet maintain cherished values, pro-

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1. See John Dewey, Quest for Certainty, pp. 76,ff.,254ff.

> vided they are critically clarified and reinforced. (1)

The analysis of our crisis presented in the previous chapter points to the dangerous expediency in the behavior of individuals, groups and nations where the Western tradition is not now effective in our life. This investigation of Dewey's philosophy, which reinterprets the Western tradition within the categories of science, is therefore to be undertaken from the standpoints of the fidelity of this philosophy to the experience we do have, and of its answer to the moral and religious problems which we confront.

The most important problem for Dewey results from his two interests: scientific knowledge and control, and the practical guidance of individual and social conduct. What is the relation between scientific knowledge and value-experience? If, as Dewey holds, ultimate and eternal values are inconsistent with the results of science, then the reality of values is endangered. Dewey solves the problem by maintaining that we do not need the kind of validity which attaches knowledge and values to "antecedent existences or Being". (2) What we need is the

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1. John Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 11.

2. The Quest for Certainty, Chapter II.

practical validity which knowledge and valuation can demonstrably add to our every-day life. We do not need certainty; we do need beliefs about existence and beliefs about values which will work successfully in solving the problems experience presents to us. We do not need to know a causal order or a moral order; we do need practical guidance. Furthermore, science, in its own field, has given us the means for transforming the environment; its method promises to be of service in every field. What is needed is to forget about antecedent existence and ultimate Being, and to concentrate on the contributions knowledge and valuation can make to every-day experience. This is an attractive doctrine in its insistence that the practical problems are the real problems, and in its earnest concern for human betterment. The issue is clearly joined with the Western tradition. This is a "Copernican revolution", in which

> the standard of judgment has been transferred from antecedents to consequents, from inert dependence upon the past to intentional construction of a future . . . .The old center was mind knowing by means of an equipment of powers complete within itself, and merely exercised upon an antecedent external material equally complete in itself. The new center is indefinite interactions taking place within a course of nature which is not fixed and

> complete, but which is capable of direction to new and different results through the mediation of intentional operations. Neither self nor world, neither soul nor nature (in the sense of something isolated and finished in its isolation) is the center . . . .There is a moving whole of interacting parts; a center emerges wherever there is effort to change them in a particular direction. (1)

If Dewey's concern is with practical problems, his philosophy is nevertheless complex and difficult; it is apparent that the problems of philosophy are real problems. And some consideration of Dewey's general philosophy is necessary before we turn to his ethics. In Experience and Nature Dewey describes his position as empirical naturalism, or naturalistic empiricism, or naturalistic humanism. (2) Naturalistic empiricism is contrasted with philosophies which separate nature and experience, or which take some aspect of experience, such as cognition, as more privileged than other aspects. However, whether or not scientific knowing has a privileged place in Dewey's philosophy, it determines the method of philosophy, and the interpretation of experience. The setting of this doctrine of experience is the

> acknowledgment of the standpoint and conclusions of scientific biology and cultural anthropology

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1. The Quest for Certainty, pp. 290, 1.

2. Experience and Nature, p. 1a.

> and of the import of experimental method in knowing. (1)

Important negative implications follow from Dewey's empiricism. Naturalistic empiricism holds that the empirical method, limited to publicly observable and verifiable facts, not only gives knowledge but is the only way to reliable knowledge. It therefore makes this assumption which cannot be verified by its own method: that no reality is excluded by this method. To the objection that the question is begged in the adoption of the empirical method, Dewey replies that only the method is begged, and that thereafter the method proves itself by its results. (2) What is begged, however, is also a view of the nature of reality. We must therefore ask whether the experience we do have is fully recognized and grounded in this new naturalism.

According to naturalistic empiricism our primary experience is that of organisms in interaction with the environment. Experience is an interaction within nature. In experience we experience <u>things,</u> not sense-date. Yet

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1. John Dewey, <u>The philosophy of John Dewey</u>, edited by Paul A. Schilpp, p. 524.

2. Joseph Ratner, <u>The Philosophy of John Dewey,</u> p. 53

experience, while it is had by organisms in interaction with the environment, is held to be essentially objective and public. It is a way in which things interact, and nature is not complete apart from experience.

> Experience is <u>of</u> as well as <u>in</u> nature. It is not experience which is experienced, but nature . . . Things interacting in certain ways <u>are</u> experience; they are what is experienced. Linked in certain other ways with another natural object--the human organism--they are <u>how</u> things are experienced as well. Experience thus reaches down into nature; it has depth. It also has breadth and to an indefinitely elastic extent. It stretches. That stretch constitutes inference. (1)

This description is given in an attempt to avoid distinguishing between the process and the content of experience, through the method of placing both within nature.

Dewey believes that he has eliminated the stock problems of modern epistemology.

> Some of the gratuitous dualisms done away with, I have argued, are those of the objective and subjective, the real and apparent, the mental and physical, scientific physical objects and objects of perception, things of experience and things-in-themselves concealed behind experience, the latter being an impenetrable veil which prevents cognitive access to the things of nature. (2)

Dewey's proposed solution eliminates from consideration an

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 4a.

2. In <u>The Philosophy of John Dewey</u>, p. 524.

essential aspect of our actual experience. I agree in large part with his realism: existence is given in knowledge; and I agree also that continuities are given in experience: relations belong to reality. But I must add to this behavioristic account of experience the fact of experience that knowledge rests upon a subject-object relation. My experience is my experience; it is experience had by a subject which knows itself to exist as a unified subject, and to be distinguishable from the object. This subject is one condition of knowledge. Experience is grounded both in natural events and in the knowing self. While it may not be explicitly present in a particular experience, self-consciousness can be brought to light in any experience by reflection. (1) Existence is given in self-knowledge as well as in knowledge of objects.

Dewey's attitude towards common experience is paradoxical. Starting with the subject-matter of every-day experience, the empiricist reflects upon the problems there presented, and brings the results of the reflective process back to regulate and enrich common experience.

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1. See Sorley, Moral Values and the Idea of God, pp.194-205.

In opposition to all philosophies which consider knowledge, or ideas, as more reliable than ordinary experience, Dewey holds that philosophical ideas "are what they contribute to the common experience of man". (1) The products of reflection, being secondary, are to be tested in primary experience. This he calls the "denotative" method. The negative implication is the denial of the reality of universals.

> Any idea as such designates an operation that <u>may</u> be performed, not something in actual existence. (2)

Yet, while direct experience is of and in nature, it does not give knowledge. The empirical view of experience must be carefully distinguished from empirical method. Knowledge, in Dewey's usage, has to do only with things as signifying other things, with inference and its validity. Experience gives bare events as apprehended, and their intrinsic nature as felt, but it does not give <u>what</u> events are. Knowledge is gained only indirectly, and only by the experimental method.

Nature, according to Dewey, has two fundamental

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1. <u>Experience and Nature</u>, p. 19.
2. <u>The Quest for Certainty</u>, p. 159.

characteristics, the first of which is continuity. The "continuity of historical process"--including nature within history--is an axiom in Dewey's philosophy. (1) Support for this axiom is found in the "temporal continuum constituting life-experience", and the concatenated, or over-lapping, character of experiences. (2) The second characteristic is discreteness, for the continuity of nature is described as an unbroken succession of "the miscellaneous and uncoordinated plurals of our actual world". (3) Dewey objects to previous philosophies of change on the ground that they have not made it clear that the world is genuinely uncertain and hazardous. The bases of this axiom in experience are the "pluralistic and individualized character of situations", and their "precarious" nature for "the persistence of life-activity" of an organism. (4) It should be noted that Dewey's use of the general ideas of

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 273.
2. See John Dewey, in The Philosophy of John Dewey, pp. 545,6.
3. Experience and Nature, p. 49.
4. See The Quest for Certainty, pp. 232,f.

continuity and discreteness to describe reality as a whole goes beyond his operational definition of ideas, since they describe reality as an existence. (1)

Dewey believes that a metaphysical system in the sense of a theory of the structure and meaning of reality as a whole is neither necessary nor possible. Nature needs no explanation; it is what it is experienced to be. Theistic and mechanistic views are both mistaken in believing that causes are superior to effects; causes and effects are simply distinguishable aspects of a particular process within the continuity of processes we call nature. Causality "consists in the sequential order itself". (2) Since causality is simply the sequential order, there is no causal order; there is simply the ongoing process of nature itself. Taken from another point of view, causes become means, and effects ends; ends and causes have no superiority as interpretative principles.

But continuity is not all that we mean by, or experience of, order. Santayana has asked why "every natural fact becomes in (Dewey's) hands so strangely unseizable

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1. See page 57.

2. Experience and Nature, p. 99.

and perplexing". (1) The answer is that we find neither abiding substance nor order in this philosophy. All existences are "events", and are undergoing change. (2) Structure is slower, and process faster, change. Matter is "a character in operation", a rhythmic order, and not an entity. Mind is another character of natural events. Causation is sequential order. The order known by science is limited to the formulation of connections existing in the immediate situation. (3) It is a revealing fact that a philosophy which bases itself upon science reduces the order known by science to connections existing in immediate situations. Our experience of order is not so limited. As Charles Sanders Peirce maintained in his version of pragmatism, laws and general types are objectively real. His metaphysical category of thirdness rests upon the fact that we make predictions which have a decided tendency to be fulfilled.

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1. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 251.
2. Experience and Nature, pp. 70 ff.
3. The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 538.

> This mode of being which consists, mind my word if you please, the mode of being which consists in the fact that future facts of Secondness (actuality) will take on a determinate general character, I call a Thirdness. (1)

Our observation and thought are subject to the compulsion of truth resting upon independent reality. The problem of the metaphysical status of laws and of types is not met by saying that we experience continuity; the order which we experience is characterized by general laws and types, which we discover, rather than produce.

Humanism is the third term used by Dewey in describing his philosophy. Optimistic conclusions are drawn from the denial of the truth of theism, and from the hazardous nature of the world. The explicit premise is that science has made control of the environment possible; the implicit premise is faith in man who uses science. This philosophy expresses the exultation of man with his new powers. Theism and an ordered nature are not only unnecessary; they are undesirable.

> The effective condition of the integration of all divided purposes and conflicts of belief is the realization that intelligent action is the sole ultimate resource of mankind in every field whatsoever. (2).

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1. Collected Papers, Vol. I, p. 8.

2. The Quest for Certainty, p. 252.

The dangerous environment offers intelligence its opportunity: it can be a determining factor in events. Growth takes place in such a world. This confident humanism assumes that intelligent change will mean progress, or rather that particular progresses will mean progress in the general sense of the term.

In contrast to the Western tradition, however, this is naturalistic humanism. Men are events within nature, and intelligence arises within the interaction which we call experience. We are acting beings before we are thinking beings. We think, when activity is frustrated, in order to return to activity. Intelligence arises in response to doubtful situations, and it is a method of dealing with frustrations. Ideas and ideals are tools, or plans of action; they are instrumental to our reconstruction of the environment. Intelligence, Dewey writes, is born when an active individual sets out to "remake conditions in accord with desire." (1)

> "Thought", reason, intelligence, whatever word we choose to use, is existentially an adjective (or better an adverb), not a noun. It is a disposition of activity, a quality of that conduct which foresees consequences of existing events, and which uses what is foreseen as a plan and method of ad-

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 245.

ministering affairs. (1)

It is clear that Dewey wants intelligence in action; it is not clear that if intelligence is only what Dewey describes it to be we should put faith in its disinterestedness.

Dewey is right that our experience is of things--qualitative things which we like or dislike, enjoy or suffer. If these experiences are final, meaning unproblematical, Dewey calls them esthetic. But if they are uncertain--and uncertainty is ascribed to situations, not organisms--inferences must be made, and knowledge is called for. It is the situation, not a proposition, which is the primary matter for inquiry. The proposition, which is a belief or hypothesis that the problem can be solved in a particular way, has meaning in so far as it is experimentally verifiable. The pragmatic definition of truth as warranted assertibility, and the logic of probability, are essential aspects of this theory of knowledge. The test of consequences in particular situations is to be applied to all beliefs and ideas.

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 158.

Inquiry is not separated from action; it is itself intelligent or experimental action. Dewey believes that this theory overcomes the dualism between philosophy and every day life. Knowing depends upon doing; it is an art.

> We know an object when we know how it is made, and we know how it is made in the degree in which we ourselves make it. (1)

Yet it is not strictly speaking the object which is known in science, as Dewey interprets it, but the relations of events underlying the qualitative object of immediate experience.

> .....the knowledge of the relations between changes which enable us to connect things as antecedents and consequences <u>is</u> science. (2)

The scientific object is an abstraction; it is an "anatomized epitome of just and only those traits which are of indicative or instrumental import". (3) The scientific object is not in any exclusive sense the real object, and Dewey holds that his view preserves the reality of the qualitative object. (4)

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1. <u>Experience and Nature</u>, p. 428.
2. <u>The Quest for Certainty</u>, p. 274.
3. <u>Experience and Nature</u>, p. 129.
4. See <u>The Philosophy of John Dewey</u>, p. 536.

In inquiry, as Dewey describes it, there is clearly a recognition of the importance of seeing what is *there.* The scientific phase of knowing, while it is concerned with what is only of instrumental import, is an objective study of the objective situation. Dewey accepts from Peirce a definition of truth as progressive approximation to reality. (1) Furthermore, he asks for "a purgation of personal desire and preference", and for a devotion to truth in every inquiry, which seems to imply an absolute ethic. (2) Since instrumentalism derives the cognitive aspect of man from the conative aspect (3); since it clearly states the relativity of the perspective of the individual in his intentional operations (4); and since the purgation of preference is for the sake of the best resolution of a problematical situation rather than for the sake of truth *per se*, I conclude that no basis for an absolute ethic of truth is apparent in Dewey's philosophy.

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1. See *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 572.
2. *The Quest for Certainty*, p. 68.
3. See above, p. 62.
4. See above, p. 52.

Having denied reference to a real causal order, Dewey says that the "ultimate objects of science are guided processes of change". (1) He objects to the question as to whether scientific objects are existential or operational.

> For in my view they are existential <u>because</u> they formulate operations which actually take place. (2)

But if science deals with relations, then the ultimate objects of science should be the relations which are found to be true. As we have already seen, Dewey adopts the empirical method because it is consistent with the "method and conclusions" of science (See above, p. 50). But an operational definition of the scientific object does not ground the general validity of the body of scientific knowledge. What we need to know if scientific knowledge is valid in general is not simply that a particular operation succeeds, but that through it we know facts and types and laws which are true of reality, and on the basis of which we can predict and control nature.

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1. <u>Experience and Nature</u>, p. 160.
2. In <u>The Philosophy of John Dewey</u>, p. 578.

It is not necessary to deny this in order to affirm the reality of qualitative experience. Furthermore, it is apparent that Dewey really does not restrict science to the field of relations. Is the scientific knowledge of human nature on which he wants to base his ethics simply a knowledge of connections? (1)

The knowledge in which Dewey is primarily interested concerns the consequences of intentional operations instead of the scientific object, and social situations instead of natural science.

> If we see that knowing is not the act of an outside spectator but of a participator inside the natural and social scene, then the true object of knowledge resides in the consequences of directed action . . . .On this basis there will be as many kinds of known objects as there are kinds of effectively conducted operations of inquiry which result in the consequences intended.
>
> The result of one operation will be as good and true an object as is any other, provided it is good at all: provided, that is, it satisfies the conditions which induced the inquiry.
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> We know whenever we do know; that is, whenever our inquiry leads to conclusions which settle the problem out of which it grew. (2)

We know when the situation is resolved, and unimpeded activity is resumed. Knowledge in this sense is defined

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1. See Introduction to Human Nature and Conduct.

2. The Quest for Certainty, pp. 196,7,8.

in terms of getting intended results, and it is the consequences which are known. The term satisfaction is therefore an important element in the doctrine of knowledge.

Dewey writes that the satisfaction involved in knowledge is that which comes from solving the problem. (1) However, since in instrumentalism the problem arises in a situation which is precarious for the organism, and since knowledge begins in a belief which is held because it promises satisfaction, (2) it is hardly possible that the satisfaction of restored activity can be otherwise than an important factor in the tests by which, in the wider field of practical knowledge, the consequences are judged as intended or unintended. For the intention is in terms of satisfaction; in other words, the test includes the interest. The disinterested side of Dewey's doctrine of knowledge lies in the strictly scientific analysis of natural objects. The

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1. See The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 572.
2. See Experience and Nature, p. 404.

method of scientific knowing is applied in other fields without full consideration of differences such as those I have just indicated. J. H. Randall,Jr., concludes that an important element is lacking in this philosophy. Dewey's experimentalism is

> the experimentalism of the anthropologist, of the student of human institutions and cultures, impressed by the fundamental role of habit in men and societies and by the manner in which those habits are altered and changed. (1)

His philosophy should

> culminate in the earnest consideration of the social techniques for organizing beliefs and behavior--techniques very different from those dealing with natural materials. (2)

Since Dewey does not give this method, we must therefore be on our guard against illegitimate inferences from the objectivity of scientific method in the strict sense to this practical knowledge of intended consequences in which Dewey is primarily interested.

Valuation is an aspect of the judgment of intended consequences in practical knowledge, and we must examine the instrumental value-theory. In valuation knowledge gives the practical guidance to conduct which is Dewey's

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1. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 82.

2. Ibid., p. 91.

chief interest. He believes that the application of operational thinking to the field of values offers the way to escape both the traditional empiricism of Hobbes and his successors, and the traditional belief in an objective order of values.

Dewey's value-theory seems to be based upon a realistic view of the basis of our enjoyments. Qualities are experienced in the interaction of an organism and things. (1) Enjoyed qualities are <u>in</u> nature in the sense that they are end-ings of natural events in which things interact with organisms; they are ends in the valuational sense only as they are chosen by us. They reveal the "intrinsic qualities" of events "in their consummatory reference". (2) This realism comes down to the position that qualities are given in the interaction of organism and environment; they are natural products. Values are clearly human and volitional. The significance of Dewey's recognition of an objective basis for the non-cognitive experience of qualities is that the enjoyed objects may be

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1. <u>Experience and Nature,</u> p. 259.

2. Ibid., p. ix.

controlled through science.

These qualities, according to Dewey, are "had" by feeling; they are what they are, and we can say nothing of them as qualities. Since we have these qualities we do not need to know them. (1) In agreement with Hobbes, the enjoyment qua enjoyment is final; it is a good as such. In contrast to Hobbes, the immediate enjoyment is not a value, but a value-claim; it is problematical in terms of value, but final in terms of enjoyment.

> There is no value except where there is satisfaction, but there have to be certain conditions fulfilled to transform a satisfaction into a value. (2)

While an enjoyment is final as such, it is uncertain in terms of value. Immediate satisfaction is for the instrumentalist problematical: it raises the question of satisfactoriness. The consequences of the object possessing the quality must be experimentally determined. In valuation attention is turned from the enjoyed object to the scientific object. Intelligence plays a double role in relation to values. Since the qualities valued in

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 264.
2. The Quest for Certainty, p. 268.

nature--and all goods according to naturalism have their basis in natural events-- are precarious, one task is that of making them secure through science. The other task is the one which bears upon Dewey's right to assert that his position does not lead to pragmatic expediency: criticism, or the guidance of conduct.

As Eliseo Vivas has pointed out, Dewey's major contribution to naturalistic value-theory lies at this point. Dewey agrees with other naturalistic philosophers that value is "a function of animal interest;" he adds that intelligent criticism saves interest from seeking satisfaction blindly.

> A thing is valuable not only because we are interested in it, but also because reflection, after a broad survey of the means necessary to bring it within our grasp and of the consequences of doing so, approves of it. And it does so because it finds it prospectively qualified to fulfill the desire that led originally to the survey. (1)

Dewey believes in the possibility of scientifically valid objects of valuation.

> Correlations between changes that form <u>conditions</u> of desires, etc., and changes that form their <u>consequences</u> when acted upon, have the same standing

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1. Article on The New Naturalism, Kenyon Review, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 452.

> and function in this field that physical objects have in their field. (1)

This practical guidance lies at the heart of Dewey's philosophy and ethics.

Dewey has stated his theory of value and of valuation most completely in the article Theory of Valuation, in the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. Valuation takes place in a problematical situation, in which something is to be brought into existence, or something in existence is to be protected. Valuation is prizing, or liking, expressed in observable behavior in an observable problematical situation. Valuation and values are produced by desires and interests, which differ from impulses and habits because they include foresight. Desire, which combines foresight and effort, is a means to that which is lacking in the situation.

Desires and interests, being observable, can be appraised. Desire involves an object as an end-in-view, as that which, if acted upon, will solve the problem. The end-in-view is the method of reaching the end as existential consequence. The desire itself, being a means, must be appraised along with the end-in-view. In

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1. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 543.

deliberation we weigh both desires and the conditions involved in ends-in-view. That which is desired becomes the desirable when it is chosen from competing desires and interests, in the investigation of conditions and consequences, as that which will organize personal and extra-personal energies as means to the successful resolution of the problem. Scientific propositions about relations of conditions and consequences can therefore enter into the formation of interests and desires. And the actual consequences can be compared with the intended consequences; validity can be tested, and valid general rules developed for use as hypotheses in particular situations.

According to Dewey, "value in the sense of **good** is inherently connected with that which promotes, furthers, assists a course of action, and .....value in the sense of right is inherently connected with that which is needed, required, in the maintenance of a course of activity ....."(1) Value, strictly speaking, is limited to its meaning as a verb. Prizing is an act of seeking something. "If one has an ardent desire to obtain certain

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 57.

things as means, then the quality of value belongs to, or inheres in, those things". (1) Both values and valuations are connected with desires and interests. And in evaluation we consider the consequences of the action which involves the desire and that which is valued.

There are important implications in Dewey's theory for ethical theory. One assumption is that value is human value; it is connected with our activity not only in the sense of completing that activity, but also because the enjoyment recognized by Dewey in value-experience, beyond the immediate enjoyment of a quality which presents a problem for valuation and evaluation, is that which results from the successful intelligent effort to solve the problem. (2) Another assumption is that frustration of, or conflict of, impulses and desires is always a sign of an objective problematical situation to be transformed. A further assumption is that desires are

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 27.

2. Further evidence that value means human value is seen in Dewey's contrast between the "casual" and "accidental" enjoyments experienced apart from criticism, and those which have "meaning". "Enjoyments that issue from conduct directed by insight into relations have a meaning and a validity due to the way in which they are experienced". See The Quest for Certainty, pp. 264,7.

particular, and are for objects which promise to meet genuine needs; men are satisfied by the solution of particular problems. This view of human nature will be examined in the next chapter.

Another assumption concerns that which is not relative in the process of valuation.

> Ends-in-view are appraised or valued as <u>good</u> or <u>bad</u> on the ground of their serviceability in the direction of behavior dealing with states of affairs found to be objectionable because of some lack or conflict in them. They are appraised as fit or unfit, proper or improper, <u>right</u> or <u>wrong</u>, on the ground of their <u>requiredness</u> in accomplishing this end. (1)

The frame of reference is the situation; a physician, for example, faces the problem of restoring health. Dewey believes that if you face trouble which is statable in a problem, then criteria arising in experience are progressively self-corrective in locating the source of the trouble and the means for dealing with it. Needs and conflicts therefore are the controlling factors in the institution of ends and values. But ends and values have the function of restoring positive conditions as well as of inhibiting obnoxious conditions.

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1. <u>Theory of Valuation</u>, p. 47.

If desires and interests are limited to the particular objects which offer possibilities for the solution of the problem, deliberation subjects desires and interests as well as objects to criticism. But there is a more general desire or interest involved in the situation, such as the interest in health. While particular desires and interests produce valuations which are evaluated, this more general interest provides the standard for the evaluation. That which is not in question in this process of criticism is that by which we decide whether the particular desire, and the object of that desire, will, or will not, do. As Dewey states in the Quest for Certainty (1), criticism decides whether or not a thing which is immediately satisfying is satisfactory, whether its consequences are such that it will do, and should be perpetuated. Value in this sense means good for. Interest provides the ultimate test. (2)

Now this clearly goes beyond Hobbes, and other interest theories of value. It is also quite true that this process of valuation is important. The food-value of an

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1. P. 260.

2. The quotation, on p. 76, from the Theory of Valuation, p. 47, makes this clear.

enjoyable new article of food must be subjected to precisely this kind of controlled experimentation. Our question, however, concerns the relation of this kind of criticism to the kind of pragmatic expediency which threatens democracy. This question cannot be answered at all fully until we have analyzed Dewey's ethics. It is clear that in so far as Dewey's method is used, we are free from the expediency which arises from the blind satisfaction of impulses and habits, for desire and interest include foresight; they are judged in terms of their probable consequences, and eventually in terms of the actual consequences of the chosen organization of personal and extra-personal energies. However, in one recognized definition of the term expedient--"fit or suitable to the end in view"--Dewey's process of criticism is concerned with what is expedient, for the standard by which particular valuations are evaluated is provided by interest in a more general sense. I recognize that this ultimate standard may be a wide, even universal, interest.

Dewey's method is important. It may be used with the fullest regard for human interests. But the method may also be used by those who do not share Dewey's humani-

tarianism. The danger in Dewey's theory is that our tests of value vary with our desires and interests. The fact that they include foresight is not enough. If it is assumed that men are social to the extent that evaluation will be fully social, the observable expediency in conduct which threatens democracy from within and from without contradicts the assumption, and points to man's need for standards which are independent of though relevant to both the particular valuations and the more general interests by which valuations are evaluated. Before turning to the study of Dewey's ethical doctrines to see whether the protection not found in the general theory of value is offered there, another question needs consideration: Is Dewey's value-theory true to the value-experience we do have?

In ordinary language, John Laird points out, the term value has two meanings.

> The first is the character or property of value, the second the things which are said to possess this character or property. (1)

In Dewey's usage value means that an enjoyed object has been valued, and is to be perpetuated; if possible it is

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1. The Idea of Value, p. xiii.

to be improved as well as made secure. If the ordinary usage of value to which Laird refers is true to our experience, then we do know values which are independent of yet relevant to desire and interest; we therefore have a basis for testing our desires and interests themselves. I turn therefore to the consideration of two aspects of our value-experience which, I believe, go beyond Dewey's account, and support the meaning of value as an objective character or property.

The first of these two aspects is to be found in the experience of qualities, and the question concerns the extent of our immediate knowledge. Are we limited in our judgments to knowledge of conditions and consequences? We recognize a universal in the particular experience of quality. Dewey gives an operational definition of the universal.

> Any idea as such designates an operation that may be performed, not something in actual existence. The idea of the sweetness, say, of sugar, is an indication of the consequences of a possible operation of tasting as distinct from a directly experienced quality. (1)

But we do have direct knowledge of something in actual

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1. The Quest for Certainty, p. 160.

existence, sugar, and of a universal, sweetness, which characterizes it. When I enjoy sweetness, I find myself distinguishing the quality enjoyed, and prepared to defend the enjoyment as the enjoyment of an enjoyable character. It is true that agreeable feeling is a constituent part of the experience of good; sincere feeling is essential to the discovery and appreciation of good. But we do not simply enjoy; we can approve an enjoyment. There is an intellectual element in the direct knowledge of qualities. Our response to quality is not simply a natural product given in feeling. Our feeling-response to quality, or value, can be appropriate or inappropriate, and appropriate feeling implies insight into what is enjoyed or disliked. We recognize the universal in the particular. This does not seem to be adequately recognized in Dewey's account of qualities as making sense, and gaining signification as signs of other things. (1)

The main question, however, is whether Dewey has taken into consideration the full range of value-experience. It is true that we exprience values which are connected with desire and satisfaction. It is also true that Dewey

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1. See Experience and Nature, pp. 258 ff.

has made an important contribution to the guidance of our conduct in problematical situations. But our experience includes value in the sense of worth. Value does not mean only human choice and effort, and the achievement of intended consummations. We are concerned, in value-experience, not only with the consequences of objects, but with their character. There are phases of value-experience in which we recognize, and approve, worth. In this sense, value refers to an objective characteristic of what is enjoyed or approved, and not to consequences for our activity.

The characteristic beauty in a natural object or product of human art, or the characteristic courage in a human act, is there to be known as well as to be enjoyed or approved. The thing or person is valued because of the quality or character of value which it possesses. This is the meaning of truth in value-experience, that the character of value is objectively there, to be recognized and enjoyed or approved, and that other persons who judge rightly will find the same characteristic. If this primary meaning of value as a character or property is not recognized, the value judgment is

made in terms of consequences for our activity.

The value-judgment, as A. K. Rogers has written, "professes to make a straightforward statement about the constitution of reality". (1) Things are given in experience with characteristics which go beyond Dewey's account of qualities; they are given, as A. E. Taylor maintains, with values.

> What confronts us in actual life is neither facts without values nor values attached to no facts, but fact revealing value, and dependent, for the wealth of its content, on its character as thus revelatory, and values which are realities and not arbitrary fancies, precisely because they are imbedded in fact and give it its meaning. (2)

A theory which finds validity in the sense of truth in value-judgments, in contrast to Dewey's validity in terms of their "serviceability in the direction of behavior", (3) does not hold that values are apart from experience, in some eternal realm. It holds that they are given with facts in our experience. This carries with it an implication which is inconsistent with naturalistic humanism:

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1. Religious Realism, edited by D. C. Macintosh, p.9
2. The Faith of a Moralist, Vol. I, p. 62.
3. Theory of Valuation, p. 47, quoted above, p 76.

the meaning of an object is not to be found simply in intended consequences. Meaning is found in objective values which we ought to recognize; it is not relative to our intentional operations, and the interests behind them.

Our conclusion is that in our experience we find values which are relevant to interest, but which are not determined by interest. And this conclusion bears upon the instrumental doctrine of the ideal and the real. For Dewey, the ideal means an unrealized plan, or idea; it is ideal in the sense of being projected and desired. But our experience of facts characterized by values is the basis for our discovery of ideals which are obligatory, and are not based upon our desires and interests, though they are relevant to desires and interests. If this interpretation of our value-experience is true, Dewey's naturalism is but a partial account of it. What naturalism omits lies at the basis of the belief in Western civilization that there is a moral order not made by men.

# CHAPTER III

## THE NEW NATURALISTIC VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT

### Part I. Dewey's Ethics

Ethics, in John Dewey's instrumentalism, is a branch of criticism. Ethical theory, he holds, must turn from ends and values, and attain the standing of science by using the experimental method. This is an objective task:

> . . . .the business of moral theory is not at all with consummations and goods as such, but with discovery of the conditions and consequences of their appearance, a work which is factual and analytic, not dialectic, hortatory, nor prescriptive. (1)

The task of criticism is "to make it possible to choose knowingly and with meaning instead of blindly", and to enable "liking, bias and interest to express themselves in responsible and informed ways". (2) The first question to be asked of Dewey's ethical theory arises just at this point. Since desire and interest include foresight, they will be expressed in informed ways. But we found in the previous chapter that the instrumentalist's tests of value vary with desires and interests. What is the basis

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 433.

2. Ibid., p. 430.

of Dewey's assurance that the expression of liking, bias and interest will be responsible?

Dewey's philosophy makes fundamental changes in the American democratic faith, as summarized by Gabriel. Belief in a moral order is rejected on the grounds that we do not know such an order, and that acceptance of eternal principles becomes a substitute for the intelligent reconstruction which science makes possible. It is the purpose of morality to establish a culture in which the individual is free to express liking, bias and interest in intelligent activity. Since conduct is interaction

> between elements of human nature and the environment . . . . freedom is found in that kind of interaction which maintains an environment in which human desire and choice count for something. There are in truth forces in man as well as without him. While they are infinitely frail in comparison with exterior forces, yet they may have the support of a foreseeing and contriving intelligence. When we look at the problem as one of an adjustment to be intelligently attained, the issue shifts from one within personality to an engineering issue, the establishment of arts of education and moral guidance. (1)

Dewey stresses the "objective character of freedom, and its dependence upon a congruity of environment with human

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 10.

wants", (2) instead of the congruity of human wants with the moral order.

The free individual, in this naturalistic theory, is, except for the impulses which are native, held to be a social product. The individual is to be free not because he is more than political in nature and destiny, nor because he obeys the moral law, but because he is a center of experience, and because he reconstructs society. Habit, impulse and intelligence in the individual, and custom in society, are the key concepts in Dewey's account of the individual and society. Impulse and intelligence enable the individual to remake society, 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. (2)

The "engineering issue" of which Dewey writes is the establishment of social methods of producing "free" individuals who will express liking, bias and interest in

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 305.

2. Ibid., preface.

"responsible and informed ways". The sacredness of the moral order and the sacredness of the individual disappear together. The secondary nature of mind explains why Dewey's ethical theory is not concerned "with consummations and goods as such"; they are given by the social environment and human nature.

Dewey maintains that his theory provides the basis on which the individual will arrive at objective--by which he means universal--standards. The Greeks made the mistake of considering reason itself as objective or universal, and thus of substituting "a metaphysical or transcendental ethics for the ethics of custom".(1)

> If Plato had been able to see that reflection and criticism express a conflict of customs, and that their purport and office is to re-organize, re-adjust customs, the subsequent course of moral theory would have been very different. Custom would have provided needed objective and substantial ballast, and personal rationality or reflective intelligence been treated as the necessary organ of experimental initiative and creative invention in remaking custom. (2)

Dewey is assuredly right that the course of moral theory would have been different. We must suspect, on the basis

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 79.

of our study of the actual development of Western civilization, that the course of civilization would also have been different, and look carefully into the implications of these fundamental changes.

"Morals has to do with all activity into which alternative possibilities enter". (1) The field of morality is deliberate conduct, or, in other words, conduct which has to do with problematical situations, in which a choice is to be made between alternative goods. The good to be sought in moral conduct is distinguished not by its character, but by the method through which it is attained.

> Good consists in the meaning that is experienced to belong to an activity when conflict and entanglement of various incompatible impulses and habits terminate in a unified orderly release in action. This human good, being a fulfilment conditioned upon thought, differs from the pleasures which an animal nature hits upon accidentally. (2)

Moral good consists, as all good does for Dewey, in "the satisfaction of the forces of human nature, in welfare, happiness." (3) Morality therefore provides the individual

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 278.
2. Ibid., p. 210.
3. Ibid., p. 211.

with intelligently ordered and achieved satisfactions. When we examine Dewey's description of how the reconstruction of customs is to take place, we find that it is in the activities of the individual as he faces problematical situations.

Dewey terms his morality valid, in contrast to theories which set up "static goals" or which idealize "raw impulse". (1) Impulse, released by the frustration of habitual behavior, is the cause of moral action, in the sense that it is the element in the total act which can be recognized as tending to produce certain results. Intelligence makes possible this anticipation of results. Morality, which is essentially intelligence in choosing goods, does not give us motives, but guidance for impulse.

> Instead then of saying that a man requires a motive in order to act, we should say that when a man is going to act he needs to know what he is going to do--what the quality of his act is in terms of consequences to follow. In order to act properly he needs to view his act as others view it; namely, as a manifestation of a character or will which is good or bad according as it is bent upon specific things which are desirable or obnoxious. There is no call to furnish a man with incentives to activity in general. But there is every need to induce him to

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 105.

> guide his own action by ah intelligent perception of its results. For in the long run this is the most effective way of influencing activity to take this desirable direction rather than an objectionable one. (1)

It seems to be assumed that an intelligent perception of results by the acting individual will see the act as others see it.

Moral judgment, as Dewey describes it, is concerned with the guidance of conduct in problematical situations, and it leads to choice between alternative goods or satisfactions. It is essentially reasonableness in facing the conflicting interests and desires, and the possible ways of acting. (2) It includes consideration of the objective situation, but it is distinguished from criticism in its general form by the attention given to the desires and interests of the individual, and to consequences in their effect upon desires and interests, and upon society. This consideration of the opportunities open to desire and interest goes beyond a narrow expediency. An imaginative survey is made of the consequences of various lines of

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 121.

2. Ibid., pp.190-4.

action. This is experimental only in that imagination traces the consequences of each possible act; Dewey presupposes that we know the self sufficiently well to see what impulses, desires and interests are involved, and that we know what the consequences of a particular act will be. This seems to claim at least as high a degree of anticipatory knowledge of consequences as the theories which Dewey criticizes. It is also maintained that this imaginative survey will see acts as others see them. Dewey believes that deliberation will give full consideration to each desire and each circumstance involved. And he goes beyond previous interest philosophies in his willingness to seek that which is new. A significant choice is a choice of ends. (1) However, ends for Dewey are ends-in-view, particular means to consequences which are liked, and chosen in the process of deliberation.

This account of moral judgment goes beyond previous interest theories in its careful consideration of the ways in which a satisfactory fulfillment may be secured. Dewey also adds an empirical test of the goods or satis-

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 219.

factions chosen to unify and release conflicting impulses and desires:

> unifications which are not unifications of fact are revealed by the event, by subsequent occurrences. (1)

But the empirical test is the test of satisfaction of the various desires and interests involved. The validity of a moral judgment is in terms of satisfaction. The meaning of a valid moral judgment is that the act has been in fact satisfying.

The result of moral judgment is choice, which is "simply hitting in imagination upon an object which furnishes an adequate stimulus to the recovery of overt action. Choice is made as soon as some habit, or some combination of habits and impulse, finds a way fully open". (2) There is nothing in this process of moral judgment as described by Dewey which gives a standard by which to judge interest itself. This is clear in two statements about the place of intelligence in judgment.

> Morality resides not in perception of fact, but in the use made of its perception . . . . .It is the

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 211.

2. Ibid., p. 192.

> part of intelligence to tell when to use the fact to conform and perpetuate, and when to use it to vary conditions and consequences. (1)

When a fact comes into operation with a human being, it gains new capacities because of human desire and aversion.

> Morality begins at this point of use of knowledge of natural law, a use varying with the active system of dispositions and desires. (2)

Dewey is confident that the chosen act will be seen as others see it, and that it will be fully social. Whether it will be social in the sense Dewey intends depends upon the "active system of dispositions and desires". It is apparent therefore that Dewey's confidence really rests upon the doctrine that "mind is a system of beliefs, desires and purposes which are formed in the interaction of biological aptitudes with a social environment". (3) This explains his confident freeing of desire, and dependence upon tests within, rather than independent of though relevant to, interest. Before turning to examine the truth of this view of human nature, it is necessary to see how Dewey

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 298.
2. Ibid., p. 299.
3. Ibid., preface.
4. Quoted also above, p. 87.

interprets the basic ethical concepts of right and good.

In customary ethical usage the term good, in the sense of goodness, is used of the motives and character of the moral agent. Dewey recognizes this usage, but modifies it. The emphasis is upon the social determination of the habits which make up the self in Dewey's view. Character is pluralistically defined as "the interpenetration of habits". (1) These habits are seen as objective not only because they are formed by the social environment, but also because they incorporate that environment. Society precedes habit, and habit comes before intelligence; ideas and even sensations therefore depend upon habits. "Only the man whose habits are already good can know what the good is". (2)

While goodness therefore seems to depend upon society, Dewey recognizes that there are occasions when "morals, or ulterior effect upon character", (3) form an important aspect of deliberation.

> .....any act, even that one which passes ordinarily as trivial, may entail such consequences for habit

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 38.
2. Ibid., p. 32.
3. Ibid., p. 40.

> and character as upon occasion to require judgment from the standpoint of the whole body of conduct. It then comes under moral scrutiny. (1)

This is called a "relative, pragmatic, or intellectual, distinction between the moral and the non-moral". (2) Since habits are means to goods, the moral judgment concerns the effect of the act in question upon the habit or habits which must be seen as instrumental to future goods as well.

One of the contributions of instrumentalism lies in its insistence that "motive" must not be separated from "motive-force in action". (3) A moralist who finds moral right and good objectively true and obligatory will agree with Dewey's objection to subjectivism, but not with this relative, pragmatic treatment of moral character, which blurs an important distinction.

> Common-sense. . . never loses sight wholly of the two facts which limit and define a moral situation. One is that consequences fix the moral quality of an act. The other is that upon the whole, or in the long run but not unqualifiedly, consequences are what they are because of the nature of desire and disposition. (4)

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 40.
2. Ibid. p. 40.
3. Ibid., p. 45.
4. Ibid., p. 45.

Neither of these propositions, as Dewey has stated them, is held in our common moral consciousness. It is what a man intends to do, rather than what he succeeds in accomplishing, which fixes the goodness or badness of the motive which is expressed in the act. Consequences fix the rightness or wrongness of the act. And it is only secondarily true that consequences are upon the whole determined by the nature of desire and disposition. We can determine the act, but not its actual consequences; results of the act depend upon an objective order not made by ourselves. Dewey's recognition that we must discover what consequences follow from an act is clear in his adoption of the experimental method; his humanism, however, leads him to stress the efficacy of human intention and effort beyond their true limits, and to obscure one of the primary experiences of a moral order which is empirically objective and verifiable.

Because the consequences in any particular case may be a-typical of the tendency of the disposition or habit, Dewey sees a need for judgment in the light of the usual result. It then becomes apparent that the consequences which "fix the moral quality of an act" are not judged in moral terms.

> Virtues are ends because they are such important means. To be honest, courageous, kindly is to be in the way of producing specific natural goods or satisfactory fulfilments. (1)

The center in ethics shifts from the virtues to the "satisfactory fulfilments". The virtues will therefore vary with the kind of fulfillments sought. It is to be recognized that Dewey's intention is to direct us to goods which are fully social, and agree that the virtues are not to be considered as though they are unrelated to human desires and interests and fulfillments. But we must also recognize that we have in the past found in the virtues tests of the kind of satisfactions to be sought, rather than means to satisfactions.

It is true that one meaning of the term good is useful or efficient; a tool, a carpenter or a teacher may be said to be good in this sense. But the term good has also a moral meaning in which it is not relative to consequences; it means admirable, or excellent. As W. D. Ross points out, there is a clearly distinguishable difference in attitude towards the two kinds of value. That which is good in the sense of being useful in securing satisfactions is the appropriate object of satisfaction. Our attitude towards a

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 47.

fine intellectual effort or a brave act contains also admiration, and admiration implies that the effort or act is good in itself, that it is worthy.

> Certain moral dispositions and actions and certain activities of the intellect and of the creative imagination, appear to be good in a way which depends entirely on their intrinsic nature, on the first being conscientious or benevolent, for instance, or on the second being logical or having the characters, harder to specify, that make artistic activity good. These things are good in a sense which is indefinable, but which may be paraphrased by saying that they are fine or admirable activities of the human spirit, and by adding that they are good in such a way that any one who has them or does them is to that extent being good himself. (1)

If virtues are ends only because they are such important means, the distinctively moral use of the term <u>good</u> is lost. Keeping a promise is not simply a virtuous act because it is a means to a satisfactory fulfilment; it is still a virtuous act whether it has such fulfilment or not. (2) It is admirable, and anyone who judges correctly can find in it that admirable character which we mean by moral goodness. Such an act is not motivated by desire for "specific natural goods or satisfactory

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1. W. D. Ross, <u>Foundations of Ethics</u>, p. 283.

2. I do not hold that morality provides standards which relieve us of the responsibility for analysis of the situation in the decision concerning the right act. See chapter V.

fulfilments" so much as it is by desire to do one's duty, to play his role, to do what is right. It is not, in other words, simply expedient. And if virtues vary with our desires and interests, something essential in morality is lost: the goodness of character which is admirable, and not relative to satisfaction. An ethics which holds that guidance of conduct in objective choices is all that we need assumes that we already have within the system of dispositions and desires the standard by which to judge the fulfillments to which the virtues are instrumental.

Since both intelligence and goodness are relative to the "active system of dispositions and desires", we turn to the customs which provide the "ballast" for the free individual.

> For practical purposes morals means customs, folkways, established collective habits. (1)

These collective habits determine the habits of individuals, and exert a continuous pressure upon them.

> Customs in any case constitute moral standards. For they are active demands for certain ways of acting. (2)

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 75.

2. Ibid., p. 75.

Morals, in this use of the term, refer to practical codes of conduct, and Dewey stresses the unconscious and non-rational origin of both individual and social morality. Reason and habit in the individual, and the customs we call morals, grow out of the basic institutions of society, such as language, the family, property. These institutions

> did not originate to serve conscious ends nor was their generation regulated by consciousness of principles of reason and right. (1)

The authority of these standards which develop in the natural interaction of human beings in society is that of "life". (2) Dewey agrees with William Graham Sumner that there is no moral criterion outside custom.

> Reason, moral principles, cannot.....be shoved behind these affairs (customs and institutions), for reason and morality grow out of them. . .In short, the choice is not between a moral authority outside custom and one within it. It is between adopting more or less intelligent and significant customs. (3)

Sumner, he believes, overlooks the fact that the real opposition is not between reason and habit but between

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 80.
2. Ibid., p. 81.
3. Ibid., p. 81.

routine, unintelligent habit and art. Even a savage custom may be reasonable in that it is adapted to social needs and uses. (1) Customs may be compared in terms of their success in meeting the non-rational needs in which they have their origin.

Dewey therefore defines right in terms of social pressure.

> Right is only an abstract name for the multitude of concrete demands in action which others impress upon us, and of which we are obliged, if we would live, to take some account. Its authority is the exigency of their demands, the efficacy of their insistencies. There may be good ground for the contention that in theory the idea of the right is subordinate to that of the good, being a statement of the course proper to attain good. But in fact it signifies the totality of social pressures exercised upon us to induce us to think and desire in certain ways. Hence the right can in fact become the road to the good only as the elements that compose this unremitting pressure are enlightened, only as social relationships become themselves reasonable. (2)

Social pressure is a fact to be reckoned with in any moral theory; society is a source of obligation, and it exerts its pressure upon the individual. If the individual possesses a mind which is not a social product only, and

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 77.

2. Ibid., p. 326,7.

if he knows values and standards which also are not social products, there is a basis for the transcendence of social pressure, and for judgment of the customs and obligations of a particular society. But in that case we do not identify social pressure with right, and we can distinguish between right and wrong customs and obligations.

John Dewey is a social reformer who asks fundamental changes in our customs and institutions. Yet he not only identifies **right** with social pressure, but maintains that there is nothing objectionable in the definition of right as that which is socially demanded. Social pressure, he believes, is only a name for the interactions which are going on, and in which we must participate or die: "we live mentally as physically only in and because of our environment". (1) He sees that if we have minds apart from social connections then it might be objected that social pressure is external; from his social point of view the social pressure is simply life itself presenting its claims.

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 327.

We began this chapter with Dewey's statement that the business of ethics is not with ends and consummations as such, but with criticism, which enables "liking, bias and interest to express themselves in responsible and informed ways". We agreed that the expression will, if the method is used, be informed. Our question concerned the basis of Dewey's assurance that the expression will be responsible. If the analysis of Dewey's Human Nature and Conduct presented is correct, the answer involves both the individual and society, but centers in the secondary nature of mind. In the interaction of native biological impulses with the social environment both morality and mind are formed. The basis within the individual for responsibility is the active system of dispositions and desires, which is formed by society. Deliberation, if reasonable, is an anticipatory process in which action is released when the appropriate object is found. The ethical center in the choice made by the individual is found in the desires and interests which seek satisfactory fulfillment.

The standards for choice are therefore within the active system of desires and interests. These desires

and interests may be fully social, and Dewey believes that he provides for standards which are objective in the sense of universal, and for choices which are valid in the sense that they are criticized. But there are two important reasons for questioning the adequacy of Dewey's position. One is the question as to whether the realm of interests itself provides the standard for judging interests. The conflicts of interests in the modern world indicate a need for standards which are independent of, yet relevant to, interest.

The second reason for questioning Dewey's position arises from the observable behavior organized around particular interests. If morality is relative to the active system of desires and interests, it is relative to whatever desires and interests are really there to express themselves in action. This is true both of individuals and of groups. Dewey trusts man because he believes that man is a product of society. What I do not find in his description of the nature of man is a basis for the transcendence of society which we observe in a reformer like Dewey, or for the defiance which we confront in the individual who calculatingly asserts his particular interests at the expense of others. The observable facts seem

to suggest that there is some important aspect of man's make-up which is not included in Dewey's theory. This question is to be investigated in the next section of this chapter. The same observable facts suggest that standards independent of though relevant to the system of desires and interests are needed. That such standards are needed does not mean that they are true, and the validity of moral standards will be examined in chapter IV.

The other basis of Dewey's trust that the expression of liking, bias and interest will be responsible lies in the pressure of society. It is this pressure which, in interaction with biological impulses, forms the system of desires and dispositions. This basis for responsibility is both indirect and ultimate. Dewey does, in the passage quoted above in which he defines <u>right</u> as social pressure (1) suggest a distinction between kinds of social pressure, for he writes of enlightened and reasonable customs. But he does not say that it is reasonableness which constitutes the authority of customs. His point that customs must be reasonable in

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1. P. 102.

order that behavior may lead to the good makes it clear that it is social pressure which makes the custom right from the standpoint of the individual, and not the reasonableness of the custom. He therefore raises a fundamental problem: if man is adequately described in this philosophy, how can man distinguish between the irrational pressure which Dewey ascribes to pre-scientific customs, the pressure of the totalitarian state, and the pressure of enlightened and reasonable customs, scientifically criticized, in which Dewey sees the hope of democracy? I recognize that Dewey believes that we can and do make these distinctions.

Dewey holds that science offers the method for making customs reasonable and enlightened. His interest in experimentalism as a method of changing customs was noted in the previous chapter, along with the observation of J. H. Randall,Jr., that a method applicable in this field, so different from the social sciences, has not been developed. (1) And the question here is, what is the standard by which customs are to be criticized and remade? Is it outside custom, and, if so, is it independent of

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1. P. 69.

interest? Our conclusion in regard to the knowledge of intended consequences, which is the wider kind of knowledge applicable to social problems, was that knowledge includes the test of interest. This does not mean that science is unimportant; it offers immense possibilities for the future of mankind--possibilities for ill as well as for good if we do not find the way to the resolution of our conflicts. It means rather that the test of consequences presupposes standards by which success or satisfaction is judged. These standards are not, so far as I can see, contributed by science itself; science gives rather the method by which the conditions and consequences are to be analyzed. Dewey finds in science also the spirit in which social experimentalism is to proceed. (1)

Dewey's ethical theory, as outlined in Human Nature and Conduct, assumed that if we give our attention to the objective problems of developing the arts of education and guidance which will result in the development of intelligence in action, we need not concern ourselves with any inner moral problem. But in Freedom and Culture, published in 1939, Dewey recognizes the existence of an

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1. Freedom and Culture, p. 145.

inner problem.

> We cannot continue the idea that human nature when left to itself, when freed from external arbitrary restrictions, will tend to the production of democratic institutions that work successfully. We have now to state the issue from the other side. We have to see that democracy means the belief that humanistic culture should prevail; we should be frank and open in our recognition that the proposition is a moral one--like any idea that concerns what should be. (1)

Gordon W. Allport points to the standard which is not relative in Dewey's system: "Dewey compels even a metaphysical postulate to give way unless it is democratically oriented". (2)

But is Dewey's ethical theory adequate to the standard which is at the heart of his system? A theory which makes morality theoretically relative to the active system of desires and interests makes it relative to the desires and interests which are actual, whether they are democratic or not. The theory that man is responsible because he is a social product must be examined in the light of the observable nature and behavior of man; if it is mistaken, the new naturalism offers a mistaken so-

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1. Freedom and Culture, p. 124.

2. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 283.

lution for our problems. And unless we have principles which are not relative to the customs of a particular society, the individual loses an objective basis from which to judge the requirements his society makes of him, and the tendency of nations to affirm the values of their own societies, and to adopt the ethics of narrow expediency and force, is strengthened.

# CHAPTER III

## THE NEW NATURALISTIC VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT

### Part II. Man as Interpreted by John Dewey and George H. Mead.

John Dewey's optimism rests basically upon his complete trust that intelligent choices will lead to social harmony. It is this which leads him to believe that man should be freed from absolute values, and that social harmony will result from the reconstructive activities of all individuals. His theory presents the paradox of holding that intelligence is a character of individual activity, and that it is at the same time completely objective and completely trustworthy from the ethical point of view. Dewey also defines the happiness which man seeks in both individual and social terms, with no explanation of their relationship. (1) His view is that intelligence is a social product, and therefore fulfills both social and individual needs. This complete trust in intelligence must be subjected to critical examination. If men are freed from the traditional ethical and religious foundations of our civilization, will they act as

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 210,1; p. 265.

Professor Gabriel indicates that they are doing, or as Professor Dewey expects intelligent free men to do?

The pragmatic account of the origin of self-consciousness and rationality has been developed most fully in George H. Mead's Mind, Self and Society. His standpoint is social behaviorism.

> Mental behavior is not reducible to non-mental behavior. But mental behavior or phenomena can be explained in terms of non-mental behavior or phenomena, as arising out of, and resulting from complications in, the latter. (1)

His purpose is clearly stated by the editor of Mead's lectures in this field.

> Mead's endeavor is to show that mind and the self are without residue social emergents; and that language, in the form of the vocal gesture, provides the mechanicism for their emergence. (2)

The account of the emergence of mind in Mead's social behaviorism is so important that a crucial passage must be carefully studied.

> Only in terms of gestures as significant symbols is the existence of mind or intelligence possible; for only in terms of gestures which are significant symbols can thinging--which is simply an internalized or implicit conversation of the individual with himself by means of such gestures--take place. The

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1. P. 11.

2. Introduction by Charles W. Morris, p. xiv. (Mind, Self, and Society.

> internalization in our experience of the external conversations of gestures which we carry on with other individuals in the social process is the essence of thinking; and the gestures thus internalized are significant symbols because they have the same meanings for all individual members of the given society or social group, i.e., they respectively arouse the same attitudes in the individuals making them that they arouse in the individuals responding to them: otherwise the individual could not internalize them or be conscious of them and their meanings. As we shall see, the same procedure which is responsible for the genesis and existence of mind or consciousness--namely, taking the attitude of the other toward one's self, or toward one's own behavior--also necessarily involves the genesis and existence at the same time of significant symbols, or significant gestures. (1)

This explanation of the emergence of mind is, in an important sense, not empirical. It does not begin with mind as experienced, which is individual mind; (2) it is an effort to explain mind as a social product, and to keep it within the conception of man as only a biological organism.

This account begins with gestures in social behavior. That the gestures are gestures to the other individual is incidental to behavior directed towards objects which ful-

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1. Mind, Self, and Society, pp. 47, 48.

2. See above, p. 56.

fill desires. A meaningful, but non-significant, conversation is presupposed. Consciously significant gestures arise

> when they implicitly arouse in an individual making them the same responses they explicitly arouse, or are supposed to arouse, in other individuals, the individuals to whom they are addressed ....(1)

The purpose to communicate, and communication which does result in socially adapted behavior, exist before the emergence of significant gestures. When the gesture arouses in the gesturing individual the response which it is "supposed", obviously by the gesturer, "to arouse in other individuals", we have significant symbols.

Mead's conclusion is that "It is the social process itself which is responsible for the appearance of the self..." (2) However, the only explanation given is that when the gesturer responds to his gesture with the attitude of the other, we get stable meanings in the community, and self-consciousness and thought in the individual. What is tacitly assumed is that an individual with the capacity for self-transcendence is engaged in a social act.

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 47.
2. Ibid., p. 142.

Granted that an individual who can understand and "take" the attitude of the other, and who can see himself from the standpoint of the other, is gesturing, we can expect the result which Mead describes. It is far truer to reverse Mead's words, "Only in terms of gestures as significant symbols is the existence of mind or intelligence possible", to read "Only in terms of mind or intelligence is the existence of gestures as significant symbols possible". Mead's argument proves not that the response to one's own gesture is the basis of the existence of mind, but rather that only in terms of gestures as significant symbols is the social operation of mind or intelligence possible.

The inconsistencies in Mead's account of mind indicate at once that the problem is more complex, and his work upon it more complete, than his theory. Reinhold Niebuhr has called attention to Mead's contradiction of his own claim to present an entirely social account of the origin of mind, (1) in contrast to a partially social view.

On this (latter) view, though mind can get expression

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 223.

> only within or in terms of the environment of an organized social group, yet it is nevertheless in some sense a native endowment--a congenital or hereditary biological attribute--of the individual organism, and could not otherwise exist or manifest itself in the social process at all....The advantage of our view is that it enables us to give a detailed account and actually to explain the genesis and development of mind; whereas the view that mind is a congenital biological endowment of the individual organism does not really enable us to explain its nature and origin at all: neither what sort of biological endowment it is, nor how organisms at a certain level of evolutionary progress come to possess it. (1)

However, a few pages later we find this explanatory footnote:

> All communication, all conversation of gestures, among the lower animals, and even among the members of the more highly developed insect societies, is presumably unconscious. Hence, it is only in human society--only within the peculiarly complex context of social relations and interactions which the human central nervous system makes physiologically possible--that minds arise or can arise; and thus also human beings are evidently selfconscious or possessed of selves. (2)

Mead's account is therefore not a completely social account of the origin of mind. He recognizes the biological development which makes possible the social relations in which mind emerges.

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 224.

2. Ibid., p. 235.

Mead's account of the appearance of self-consciousness is also inconsistent with his social theory in that self-consciousness "is an awakening in ourselves of the group of attitudes which we are arousing in others". (1) If this is a product of the social process, it is so in Mead's own statement of the case only in the sense that the social process provides the environment in which we awaken in ourselves the attitudes of the other.

> The taking or feeling of the attitude of the other toward yourself is what constitutes self-consciousness, and not mere organic sensations of which the individual is aware and which he experiences. (2)

To say that mind and self-consciousness are not present until we respond to our gestures in the social process by awakening in ourselves the same response as the other makes, and at the same time to maintain that mind and self-consciousness are a social product, is not convincing, to say the least. What has to be proved by Mead is not that society provides the setting for individual awakening, but that mind has "an entirely social" origin. His only account of its basis, in the individual, rather

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 163.

2. Ibid., p. 171.

than its occasion, is biological rather than sociological. This naturalistic humanism claims an objectivity in consciousness which must be examined, since it has a direct bearing upon the optimism about man which characterizes its ethical and political doctrines. The negative side of this doctrine of the objective nature of consciousness is stated in the following sentence:

> Until the rise of his self-consciousness in the process of social experience, the individual experiences his body--its feelings and sensations--merely as an immediate part of his environment, not as his own, not in terms of self-consciousness. (1)

The cogency of the argument depends upon the assumption that there is no kind of self-consciousness until the process described above takes place. From this social account of mind two conclusions important for ethics are drawn. The first is that the whole social process enters into the experience of the individuals involved.

> Mind arises in the social process only when that process as a whole enters into, or is present in, the experience of any one of the given individuals involved in that process. When this occurs the individual becomes self-conscious and has a mind; he becomes aware of his relations to that process as a whole, and to the other individuals participating in it with him; he becomes aware of that process as modified by the reactions and interactions of the individuals--including himself--who are carrying it

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 172.

> on. . . .It is by means of reflexivenesss--the turning back of the experience of the individual upon himself--that the whole social process is thus brought into the experience of the individuals involved in it. (1)

The second is that we take an objective attitude towards ourselves; we do not experience ourselves as ourselves until we take the standpoint of the "other".

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individuals of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. (2)

Apparently by the "individual as such" Mead means the "biologic individual", acting impulsively and immediately, Underlying this doctrine are two assumptions: first, that we are aware only when direct impulsive activity is frustrated; and second, that we have no capacity for awareness and for thinking until we take the attitude of the other. The problem which is solved by the appearance of self-consciousness is created by the assumption that man, though possessing a far more complex central nervous system, is limited to experience of the animal order until

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 134.

2. Ibid., p. 138.

in social experience he takes the attitude of the other to himself. Assuming that mind is a character of a process, and that it reflects rather than controls behavior, the significance of Mead's emphasis upon the vocal gesture is that it is a response of the organism which releases another, and objective, response on the part of the organism. Language is necessary first of all for us to communicate with ourselves. Mead contrasts the "I"--the acting biologic individual, of which we are conscious only after we have acted or spoken, and therefore only in memory--with the "me", which is the organized set of attitudes adopted from the community. The "I" is the impulsive source of spontaneity and initiative in society; the "me" is the source of morality. (1)

Upon this basis, Mead and Dewey come to two important conclusions about man. One is that there is no unity within the individual which is more than a working unity of all our habits; mind is not an entity within us which transcends nature, but a character of action on the self-conscious level. There are therefore no general sources of evil in man; particular impulses and habits can be satisfied through intelligent action, and particular habits

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1. Mind, Self and Society, pp. 192 ff; pp. 273 ff.

can be changed. The moral problem is to be broken down into specific problems. The second assumption is that man's behavior *is* social, and that his attitude to himself and to others is the objective attitude of another person, or of the generalized other of society. This means, therefore, that man not only is a social being, but that his attitude is inherently social in the moral sense. The question is whether or not this account of our experience is true.

Are we in fact behavioristic in our knowledge of ourselves? The answer to this question depends in part upon our analysis of our own experience. I do not find my self-consciousness to be simply objective. Mead's statement, "The individual as such enters into his own experience only as object, not as subject" (1), is, unless it applies only to a biologic individual which is an abstraction, false. Empirically, Descartes' "*cogito, ergo sum*," is far more accurate than Mead's "I take the attitude of the generalized other, and experience myself as object". I am conscious that, whatever the content of consciousness may be, it is *my* consciousness. It is true that I can take the attitude of the other; but I do not

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1. *Mind, Self and Society*, p. 225.

take the standpoint of the other only. I survey myself from the standpoint of the other; and I take the attitude of the other as I see it. I cannot assume, either theoretically or practically, that I have taken the attitude of the other completely. Analysis of the experience we do have, I maintain, indicates that the self-conscious mind is the basis of our knowledge of the world which includes other selves. This unity of self-conscious mind is evidence that mind explains the use of signs, rather than that signs create "reflection, foresight and recollection". (1)

Evidence of the falsity of this social view of mind is also to be found in our social experience. Having derived the cognitive aspect of man from the conative aspect, the disinterested aspect of reason cannot be found within the individual. Therefore it is attributed to the origin of mind in social co-operation. The result is the conclusion that we are disinterested towards ourselves, and that organized inquiry can transcend the conflicts of interest within society. If Dewey's theory is true, what explains the present crisis? Why do men see from partial perspectives, yet take their perspectives to be absolute?

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 169.

Why is democracy threatened from within and from without by the kind of expediency which uses any methods, including force, which promise success for their chosen ends? Faulty education and cultural lag are doubtless partial explanations, but they do not explain why man, if he is as disinterested and as social as the new naturalism maintains, sets himself so violently and so calculatingly against his fellows, even within the society which has formed him. Man is evidently not social in the way this behavioristic theory would lead us to expect.

The missing factor is man's transcendence both of nature and of society; this transcendence has been analyzed by Reinhold Niebuhr. Even the most thorough-going naturalism recognizes that man is a tool-making animal, and therefore more than an animal. Man's reason, his capacity for conceptual thought, enables him in a real sense to stand outside the world of nature. Furthermore, the very survey of the nature and functions of reason undertaken by Dewey and Mead indicate a capacity which must be taken into account.

> (Man's) effort to estimate the significance of his rational faculties implies a degree of transcendence over himself which is not fully defined or explained

> in what is usually connoted by "reason". For the man who weighs the importance of his rational faculties is in some sense more than "reason" and has capacities which transcend the ability to form general concepts. (1)

Furthermore, the fact that naturalistic humanism finds other-worldliness an influential attitude against which to struggle is an indication of the stature of man.

> The man who can negate "life" must be something other than mere vitality. Every effort to dissuade him from the neglect of natural vitality and historic existence implies a vantage point in him above natural vitality and history; otherwise he would not be tempted to the error from which he is to be dissuaded. (2)

If mind is only a character of action in an "acculturated organism" (3), how has man accomplished the separation of thought and action from which Dewey seeks to persuade him?

The central fact is that man is a conscious being who can transcend himself in terms of "indefinite regression".

> Consciousness is a capacity for surveying the world and determining action from a governing centre. Self-consciousness represents a further degree of transcendence in which the self makes itself its own

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1. The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 1.
2. Ibid., p. 2.
3. John Dewey, The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 555.

> object in such a way that the ego is finally always subject and not object. (1)

This transcendence both of self and the world explains why man seeks in religion an unconditioned ground of existence. The self is not at home in the world, as naturalism believes that it should be. The greatness and the sinfulness of man both derive from his unique transcendence of nature, life, reason, his world, and himself. Dewey sees that social harmony is the law of man's life; what he does not give is an adequate explanation of man's disobedience of the law of his life. Niebuhr points to the source of man's sin in his freedom to transcend nature and reason.

> Man is a sinner not because he is one limited individual within a whole but rather because he is betrayed by his very ability to survey the whole to imagine himself the whole. (2)

The moral problem is an inner problem as well as one of social engineering. For if intelligence is a governing centre, it is not simply a product of the interaction of biological impulse with a social environment. Intelligence

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1. The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

includes the attitude of the other, but it is nevertheless the experience of a particular self.

Bertrand Russell's Power, A New Social Analysis, presents empirical evidence from the ethical and political spheres which corroborates Niebuhr's analysis of the locus of the moral problem. While Dewey emphasizes man the problem-solving being, Russell emphasizes man the problem-making being. He rightly sees that the problem-making aspect of man lies primarily in the fact that desires include not merely foresight of specific consequences, but can and do become infinite.

> While animals are content with existence and reproduction, men desire also to expand, and their desires in this respect are limited only by what imagination suggests as possible. Every man would like to be God, if it were possible; some few find it difficult to admit the impossibility. These are the men framed after the model of Milton's Satan, combining, like him, nobility with impiety. By "impiety" I mean something not dependent upon theological beliefs: I mean refusal to admit the limitations of individual human power. This Titanic combination of nobility with impiety is most notable in the great conquerors, but some element of it is to be found in all men. It is this that makes social co-operation so difficult, for each of us would like to conceive of it after the pattern of the co-operation between God and His worshippers, with oneself in the place of God. Hence competition, the need of compromise and

> government, the impulse to rebellion, with instability and periodic violence. And hence the need of morality to restrain anarchic self-assertion. (1)

Bertrand Russell introduces into the discussion of the nature of man a realistic explanation of man's behavior which I do not find in the writings of Dewey and his followers. The arguments used by Dewey against such views are of two kinds. The first is that the forces in original human nature are not evil in themselves. It is true that our impulses are neutral or innocent rather than evil. But we cannot argue from the innocence to the virtue of original human nature, or assume that society bears the sole responsibility for good and evil. The human problem is not simply that of finding harmonious satisfactions for particular human impulses and needs; it is not simply that of "freeing" human nature. For we are dealing with individual selves who can set themselves against other selves, and whose desires "are limited only by what imagination can suggest".

The second argument is that there are no general forces, such as love of power, in human nature. The

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1. Power, p. 11.

appeal here is not to be observed facts of human behavior, but to science. Dewey says that science did not make progress until it abandoned such general, reduplicative expressions as that nature abhors a vacuum, and analyzed the particular elements in a particular situation. The way to progress in solving our human problems lies in an analagous use of the scientific method. Dewey's argument is from experience in the natural sciences to the adoption of the same method in the social sciences. It assumes that an investigation of the specific causes of particular evils will reveal the way to deal with it. Now it is true that specific evils cannot be corrected without specific knowledge, and that we need the resources of science in dealing with evils. But we need also to see the source of evil in human nature itself.

Dewey has pointed out that evil does not take only one form, such as the love of power. This is true, and Bertrand Russell's emphasis upon love of power is therefore not a sufficient location of the source of human conflict. Niebuhr, on the other hand, points to the basic tendency of man to imagine that his perspective

is an absolute perspective. The absolutization of the relative may therefore take various forms, and Dewey is right in pointing to the social conditioning of the particular forms evil takes. But Dewey's position is that mind is a social product, and that intelligence takes an objective standpoint. If the analysis presented above is true, Dewey does not recognize the extent to which the individual "consciousness is a capacity for surveying the world and determining action from a governing centre". Both the greatness and the sinfulness of man have their source in the unity and the transcendence of the human spirit.

An interesting, and dangerous, result of Dewey's philosophy requires our consideration in conclusion. The theism to which Dewey objects on bases which include its absolutism nevertheless seeks to persuade man that he is finite, and that his desire to be God is a temptation to be resisted. In one of its aspects, Dewey's philosophy stresses man's finitude and relativity; man's destiny lies within nature, including society. But in another aspect Dewey's philosophy promises that if we pursue our interests intelligently both social harmony and progress will result. If we free human nature as

Dewey wants us to do, but man is what Niebuhr and Russell describe him to be, we shall be freeing man for unprecedented conflicts. For this philosophy on the one hand assures us that intelligence is wholly objective and social, thus obscuring the partial character of our interests and desires, and on the other hand it takes away the ethical principles independent of yet relevant to interest and custom, and the devotion to God, which in the past have been important checks upon interests and desires. The result, which is the opposite of the intention of the democratic instrumentalist, is the strengthening of man's tendency to adopt an ethical relativism in which interest, rather than a moral order not made by man, furnishes the only standards, and in which force is used where it promises success.

I conclude, therefore, that Dewey's optimism about man rests upon a false analysis of human consciousness, reason and desire. The thesis that the objectivity of moral standards and a theistic source of moral obligation are essential foundations of our civilization is supported by the conclusions reached concerning human nature. The following chapters are devoted to the analysis of these foundations themselves.

# CHAPTER IV.

## THE VALIDITY OF MORAL STANDARDS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the foundations of a moral theory which is valid in the sense that moral standards are independent of, though relevant to, desire and interest. According to Dewey, our tests of value vary with our desires and interests. It is true that his own standard even for metaphysical doctrines is democratic. But there are three important reasons for asking whether there are not standards by which to test our desires and interests. The first is that the conflicts within nations and between nations indicate our need for a standard independent of interest. The second is that a relativistic theory makes morality and politics relative to whatever interests are recognized. The third is that man's inherent tendency to take as absolute what he sees from the vantage point of the self, and of his particular society, is strengthened rather than checked by a morality which is relativistic. We therefore return to the basic doctrine of American democratic thought, the moral order, to examine its philosophical foundations. It is significant that J. P.

Mayer reaches a similar conclusion concerning the importance of a moral law not made by man in Political Thought: The European Tradition.

> There is a sense....in which the basic idea of natural law is a necessary part of any political philosophy which seeks to be more than a doctrine of immediate expediency. (1)

The need for Knowledge in ethics is also apparent in the fact that Dewey's position involves the definition of right in terms of social pressure, even though he believes that there are distinguishable kinds of social pressure. The possibility that we have knowledge in ethics is indicated by the fact that we do not, in our common moral usage, equate right with social pressure. We make a distinction between what is socially demanded, and what we accept with the moral approval which is expressed in the term right. We may bend, but we do not approve unless we judge a custom, a law or an act right, and the grounds of rightness are other than social pressure, and also other than the individual feeling of approval. The moral reformer, as in the case of Amos, stands against the world. This experience implies valid

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1. P. 105.

standards by which the difference between right and wrong can be discovered.

W. D. Ross makes an important distinction between the essence and the ground of rightness. For example, the tendency of an act to produce the most good may be the ground on which the characteristic of rightness depends. The moral judgment, the judgment of rightness, is not simply a judgment of the way to satisfaction. Nor can it be based upon sense-experience alone, for rightness is a characteristic which we find an act possessing because it has some other characteristic also. And neither the essence nor the ground is social pressure. An act is right because it fulfills a claim--such as a promise made, or some consequence which we believe will be good--upon us, and because no other act would fulfill the claims upon us more completely. The <u>essence</u> of rightness Ross hold to be indefinable because, while it falls under the general category of "suitability", it is <u>ethical</u> suitability. It is the recognition of these claims embodied in principles which are seen to be right, which is lacking in Dewey's preoccupation with the satis-

factory release of activity. Ross holds that if we face these claims upon us, we know what we ought to do.

In a truly valid morality, moral judgment is concerned with the suitability of the act to the moral claims upon us and to the situation in which we are to act. The moral situation is not to be identified with a situation precarious from the standpoint of satisfaction. Dewey's definition of the problematical situation is not an adequate basis for ethics.

> .....the awareness or "acknowledgement" of precariousness is not ground in which the ethical interest can take its rise and grow. A precarious situation is one in which what we already prize, and are determined to prize is endangered. In an ethical situation nothing is for us in danger but our success in achieving what shall be better worth our prizing. (1)

Moral standards, principles and values, according to Dewey, possess neither certainty nor "inherent truth and authority". They are to be used as hypotheses, or instruments, for the guidance of action in particular situations. They are instruments in criticism.

> A moral law, like a law in physics, is not something to swear by and stick to at all hazards; it is a formula of the way to respond when specified con-

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1. Henry W. Stuart, in The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 297.

> ditions present themselves. Its soundness and pertinence are tested by what happens when it is acted upon. Its claim or authority rests finally upon the imperativeness of the situation that has to be dealt with, not upon its intrinsic nature-- as any tool achieves dignity in the measure of the needs served by it. The idea that adherence to standards external to experienced objects is the only alternative to confusion and lawlessness was once held in science. But knowledge became steadily progressive when it was abandoned, and clews and tests found within concrete acts and objects were employed. The test of consequences is more exacting than that afforded by fixed general rules. In addition, it secures constant development, for when new acts are tried new results are experienced, while the lauded immutability of eternal ideals and norms is in itself a denial of the possibility of development and improvement.(1)

We must distinguish, as Dewey does not do, between the few most basic general obligations, and the particular elements of the moral code of a particular day and social group. There is a very important sense in which Dewey is right that the test of consequences is more exacting than the tests afforded by fixed general rules. But the test of consequences itself depends upon the use of at least one general rule concerning the kind of consequences which will fulfill the test. For example, granted the acceptance of the position that the world should be organized for a just and durable peace, the test of consequences is exact-

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1. The Quest for Certainty, p. 278.

ing concerning the methods through which peace is sought. The difficulty is that a moral system which deals with the criticism of particular valued objects, but which does not present a general doctrine of ends and consummations, assumes its standards concerning what consequences are to be sought. These undiscussed standards are the real moral laws, and we have a right to ask what a moral theory judges consequences by.

An example of the way in which Dewey's basic moral principles simply appear without discussion or systematization occurs in his discussion of moral essences in Experience and Nature. In his analysis of the concept of jurisdiction, Dewey illustrates by an imaginary case of a bullet which is fired in one state and which kills a man in another state. Since jurisdiction is divided, by strict definition no crime occurred in either state. But other moral essences are also relevant, and Dewey introduces into the discussion one of his moral axioms.

> Such an outcome is evidently prejudicial to the integrity and security of human association and intercourse. (1)

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1. p. 198.

The case is judged by a standard which is not relative--though it is relevant--to the particular situation. Dewey's professed empiricism includes such general tests. They are, to be sure, empirical in the sense that they arise within experience; this is true of all our moral standards and ideals. But they are intellectual intuitions both in the sense that the general principle is recognized within the particular case, and that the principle itself is given in direct insight.

Dewey's own illustration also implies that there are moral facts to be found when we give our attention to experience and the claims it presents. It is not simply that we <u>want</u> such consequences as the integrity of human association, the production of the maximum possible good, compensation for good or evil done, the fulfillment of promises, and justice in the distribution of goods. These things are <u>right</u> in a normative way, so that we <u>ought</u> to want them whether or not we do want them. And the results of disregarding such a basic moral law as that requiring security and integrity of human society indicate that they have a general validity; what we find is a moral <u>order</u> which makes these requirements of us. Such moral laws

are formulations of truth discovered in our moral experience.

Two of Dewey's misunderstandings of the meaning of valid general moral laws now become apparent. One is that the position that there are fixed moral principles means that we can settle moral questions in advance, and with certainty. This objection to a moral theory which finds moral principles valid in the sense of independent of, though relevant to, interest and desire is a justified objection to Kant's extreme separation of the categorical imperative and the general goods of happiness. A general law such as that of fulfilling promises does not solve particular problems in advance; but it is, as W. D. Ross suggests, a prima facie obligation. Dewey is correct in holding that we must face the "imperativeness" of the situation. But we face the situation in the light of moral imperatives such as those listed on the previous page, which are general, and which may be set aside only because of some other claim in that particular situation. It is only a partial truth concerning such an imperative that

> its soundness and pertinence are tested by what happens when it is acted upon. (1)

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 278.

It is also true that we judge the results of acting in particular cases by a few basic laws of this kind.

The other misunderstanding is that an ethical system which finds general validity in certain basic moral laws freezes the particular customs and fashions and moral requirements of a particular society, and therefore makes progress impossible. On the contrary, we then have a consistent and objective set of norms by which to judge whether the consequences of these particular moral rules are or are not progress. Dewey's pragmatic test is valid and important within its proper field.

> If we follow the lead of empirically verifiable cases, it would then appear that mathematical and moral essences may be dialectically fruitful, because like other machines they have been constructed for the purpose of securing certain consequences with the minimum of waste and the maximum of economy and efficiency. (1)

We can agree with Dewey's insistence that particular habits and customs and moral requirements be judged as instruments to certain consequences if the central moral principles by which the consequences are judged are

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 202.

clearly stated, if they are consistent, and if they formulate the claims which we know in our actual moral experience. But if there is no clear understanding of what we ought to want--which is also what men do want at their best--and the moral laws with which we approach problematical situations are to be tested by the consequences in particular cases, the consequences will be judged in the light of whatever desires or interests are actually operative. To make moral laws relative to interests when interests are observably in fundamental conflict is to invite disaster.

Instead of making progress impossible, it is only in the light of valid general principles that we can use the term progress in the general sense. For, as William Ernest Hocking points out, there is nothing permanent in the pragmatist's relative adjustments and harmonies within a scheme of thought itself held to be conventional.

> Our pragmatic discovery has added to our freedom; it has limbered a static world of truth; it has brought flexibility into the conception of law; in breaking many an ankylosed social joint it has made way for overdue change.
> But it has this inconvenience, that if nothing stays gained, nothing can be built on.....If

> progress has brought us to pragmatism, it has brought us to the insight which puts an end to belief in progress. (1)

Dewey's instrumentalism undermines not only the democratic doctrine of an objective moral order, but also the doctrine of progress which related the moral order and the free individual. Without the recognition of abiding principles, progress gives way to particular changes in which desire and interest are the moving and determining factors.

But if these valid general principles are tests of the consequences of action, and are not simply to be tested in action, it is clear that their validity must rest upon other grounds than empirical verification alone. The validity of the moral judgment, as a judgment which affirms the predicates of ethical right and good, must therefore be examined. The moral judgment, as we have seen, (2) cannot be based upon sense-experience alone; and it cannot be verified in sense-experience. Yet it claims objective validity. Judgments of right and good are not made as statements of a subjective attitude, but of objective truth, valid for all who judge correctly.

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1. What Man Can Make of Man, p. 18.

2. Above, p. 133.

The judgment expresses a feeling of approval, but that feeling is grounded in an intellectual discrimination of a character which is there to be approved.

We have already considered some of the relevant evidence for the validity of moral judgments. (1) Our response to quality includes an intellectual element, implied in the fact that feeling can be appropriate, or inappropriate. The term value goes beyond feeling to include worth. Value is experienced as a characteristic of things and of persons; it is given in conjunction with facts. When we make a value-judgment, we profess to make a statement about the constitution of reality. Validity in value-judgments therefore depends upon the recognition of a true character of value, and the standards and principles of morality have the same objectivity as moral values themselves.

Moral values characterize persons and their acts. In moral judgments we are concerned with qualities which are mental, such as generosity and courage. But they are not therefore subjective facts. As John Laird writes, "they really are facts which may be known through observation,

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1. Pp. 80 ff., above.

judgment, inference and other such processes....In other words, our thoughts may refer to minds or other thoughts in the same fundamental way as they may refer to things that are not minds at all". (1) The fact that moral values belong to persons does not mean that they are subjective. Such characteristics, if truly present, are objective properties. And because moral values are primarily of the kind designated by excellence, rather than satisfactoriness, they are not of simply human significance; they are objective characters which are rationally known. Dewey's use of the term value limits it to human value, by which I mean value for human beings. Here, too, I agree with Laird.

> In reply to this view (that value means human value) I can only affirm that even if all the major excellences within the universe happen to belong to human 'persons', it cannot be true that excellence means something human. (2)

The moral judgment, therefore, refers to an objective character, and it claims universality, in the sense that others who judge correctly will find the same value in

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1. The Idea of Value, p. 230.

2. Ibid., p. 111.

the same situation. Another universal factor in morality is most clearly stated in Immanuel Kant's interpretation of ethics: the good will.

For Kant, there is a good which is not a good-for-something-else. That good results from the inner acceptance of an unconditional obligation, and from the inner determination to make one's whole inner spirit and outer conduct conform to that obligation. The will becomes good-in-itself when it recognizes an absolute obligation--a moral law which is the formulation of the requirement of an objective and absolute value. Unless there is a good beyond the self to which the self ought to conform, there is no sense of duty in this sense, and there is no high valuation of the good will. Kant weakens his own position, however, by making the will itself the law-giver. The important point is that there is no good will unless there is a good which is not subject to the will. If value is relative to the will, whether it be conceived as a function of emotion or reason, the will is not under the discipline of an obligation which comes from beyond itself, and the distinctive quality and spirit of high morality are lost. In the purpose to will that

which is objectively good there is a universal element in morality and the good will is an essential basis for right action. As W. D. Ross points out, "If a man is not morally good, it is only by the merest accident that he ever does what he ought". (1)

A third argument for the objectivity of the moral judgment points to the systematic character, or order, of moral values. This argument has been developed by W. R. Sorley, in Moral Values and the Idea of God. The particular moral judgment leads on to more general principles, and to a search for the ethical absolute, in which all moral values are comprehended. One of the chief arguments against the objectivity of moral judgments is based upon the diversity of moral standards. A theory of morality must account for the diversity which the ethical scene presents. First of all it is to be recognized that not all moral judgements are valid, any more than all judgments of perception are valid. This means that some of the diversity has its source in wrong opinions. As in Science, tests of validity must be applied. Furthermore, moral judgments are relative in the sense that they

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1. The Idea of Value, p. 310.

are made in particular circumstances. A moral judgment is made by a person in his own unique situation, and it is an assertion of what is conceived to be good or evil in that situation. This kind of relativity is inseparable from true morality.

Three types of unity appear in morality. First of all there is the unity of spirit which Kant presents: the obligation to act by principle rather than by impulse and desire. There is in the second place a high degree of unity in the areas of life in which moral judgments are made by different peoples. And there is in the third place the universal character of values such as justice and truth. Values are universals, though they belong to particulars, and they can be systematized and ordered. The systematic character of the realm of values is discovered, rather than imposed by our interests and desire.

The truth is that the relativity in the field of morals is no more inconsistent with objective truth than is the diversity to be found in the field of science. In each field our knowledge is incomplete. And in each field the validity of particular judgments must be tested, and the appeal made to further experience. The claim of

judgments in each field to validity must be accepted in general before any rational endeavor to order experience will be undertaken. And within the variety of particular judgments in each field general principles must be sought. Accepting the general claim to validity in moral judgments, certain criteria may be used to determine whether or not particular judgments are valid. The first, as Sorley points out, is that of consistency with other moral judgments. "Freedom from contradiction, coherence, and thus possible systematisation are criteria by which the validity of any moral judgment may be tested". (1) The possibility of systematization rests upon the universal character of values; they are applicable to, or characterize, many particulars. This criterion of system applies just as in the case of perception. A further test applies to systems of judgments. It is the test of comprehensiveness, and needs to be applied, for example, to the Nazi system of values. "The criterion of comprehensiveness is fully vindicated only when the moral

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1. Moral Values and the Idea of God, p. 96.

principle of wider sweep has proved its claim to validity by including the narrower principle which it supplants". (1)

A careful analysis of the relativity in morality reveals an underlying unity in the recognition of values, and an underlying moral spirit, which support the claim of the moral judgment to objective validity. It does not justify an absolute claim for any particular ethical code. It indicates that our knowledge of values is incomplete, and that progress in morality lies in the search for more complete knowledge of an objective order of values.

A theory of morality which finds objective validity in the moral judgment does not deny the fact that values must be relevant to our capacity for enjoying and approving them. That which is accepted by us as an "ought" is recognized at once as good, and as relevant to ourselves as individuals, or as groups of individuals. Values for human beings are necessarily relevant to our human capacity to appreciate them, just as objects of knowledge must come within the conditions of our ways of knowing. Values are also relevant to our human capacities to

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1. Op. cit., p. 103.

realize them. In the words of W. G. Everett:

> A misunderstanding with regard to the "ought" of a more perfect morality may easily arise. For such an "ought" can never be affirmed as a present obligation without reference to the actual capacities of man. It can be applied to the imperfect life of the present only in the same way in which the ideals of manhood can be applied to the boy, or the ideal of a high civilization to a people just emerging from barbarism. (1)

It is through values that our lives are fulfilled. And in the pursuit of the values whose claims we accept, our characters, our personalities, are formed. This statement from Sorley applies to the search for truth and for beauty as well as for goodness: "It is impossible to look upon this--as some thinkers have looked upon knowledge--as merely the imitation of an external order. It is rather a growing up into the maturity of one's nature. (2) It is primarily in values that the meaning of our life is found. Our life is through and through purposive. We are value-seeking, value-appreciating, and value-realizing beings. Our experience is not simply of a causal order of nature. We experience an order of values also. And an

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1. Moral Values, a Study of the Principles of Conduct, p.19.
2. Moral Values and the Idea of God, p. 236.

interpretation of the world which omits the experience of value, or deprives it of significance in the interpretation of reality, is untrue to the aspects of experience which are most important to us--aspects which are deeply connected with our human nature. In the words of A. E. Taylor, "Serious living is no more compatible with the belief that the universe is indifferent to morality than serious and arduous pursuit of truth with the belief that truth is a human convention or superstition". (1)

The nature of the validity of moral values is not that of laws of nature which necessarily determine objects, and are thus fully realized in reality as it is. Moral values hold for persons--who may accept them or reject them. Yet their validity does not depend upon our recognition of them, or our acceptance or rejection. The possibilities for our lives are contained in these values, which are not simply functions of our interests. The "good" is not without content. The highest good is exemplified in a good will which finds its content in values which fulfill our personalities. There are rigid conditions attached to moral goodness, and to the achievement of a

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1. The Faith of a Moralist, Vol. I, p. 61.

good society. There is an independence about this order of values.

> Whether we are guided by them or not, whether we acknowledge or not, they have validity; they ought to be our guides. This validity differs from the validity of laws of nature, inasmuch as the latter do not actually express the constitution of reality in so far as it is material. Moral values hold for personal life in another way; they ought to enter into its constitution whether they do so or not. (1)

Moral values are partially realized in the world. Yet when we judge the world as it is by the moral standards which we discover in our experience, the world is tragically unsatisfactory. We cannot say that we as individuals, or as a world of men, are what we "ought" to be. Nor can we say--if we are true to the facts--that there is no connection between existence and value. Sorley states the connection between value and existence which our survey has revealed:

> "Values characterize personal life as completed or perfected; they are factors in the fulfillment of purpose, and purpose is an essential trait of personality. It is possible that they may never obtain complete realization in time. But, even so, they will express the limit towards which the nature of persons points and presses. In this way they belong to the sum total of reality as an existing system. And this connection resembles that of law to fact in the causal system, with this difference: that the latter relation is exhibited

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1. Sorley, Moral Values and the Idea of God, p. 238.

> at each instant of time, whereas the realised system of values is the limit towards which personal life tends in its temporal course*. (1)

We have found reason to affirm the metaphysical significance of both scientific knowledge and values. We experience order, and our conception of the world must ground our experience of laws and classes and types. We also experience values in connection with facts. When we are concerned with values we are concerned with the characteristics of individual objects and persons--or with groups of individuals. But it is just this uniqueness of the individual which science disregards in its concern with the universal. The scientific view is therefore, as Dewey rightly maintains, an abstraction, which needs, in a complete view of the world, to be supplemented by our value-experiences.

The difficulty with Dewey's position is that it does n not fulfill its promise to give full reality to value-experience. Scientific knowledge, with its sole concern for "this standardized and averaged set of properties and relations", (2) is clearly recognized as an abstraction

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1. Sorley, Moral Values and the Idea of God, p. 239.

2. The Quest for Certainty, p. 237.

which leaves the unique qualitative individual out of its account. Yet Dewey also states that the method and conclusion of natural science are authoritative for our beliefs about values.

> What revisions and surrenders of current beliefs about authoritative ends and values are demanded by the method and conclusions of natural science? What possibilities of controlled transformation of the content of present belief and practice in human institutions and associations are indicated by the control of natural energies which natural science has effected? (1)

If values, as we have maintained, are objective characters of persons and things, then the method and conclusions of science are not to be taken as authoritative for our beliefs about values. Rather, both science and value-experience are to be taken as sources of truth about reality, and used in the process of developing a systematic and coherent account of the world as it is. The good is not subject to our wills. The way to the good life for the individual, and for society, lies in the discovery of, and obedience to, the laws of value. Moral experience leads beyond the self to a moral order.

When taken as authoritative in its own right because

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1. The Quest for Certainty, p. 252.

it is objectively true, moral experience forms a basis for an argument for the existence of God. As Kant recognized, if this is a world in which obligation is what it claims to be, then it is not simply the world as naturalism describes it. The moral argument rests fundamentally upon the discovery of an obligatory character of life which cannot be reduced to a subjective aspect of experience. The conclusion is reached that a universe in which the moral demand is an objective reality will sustain the moral life, and reward it with the fulfillment it deserves. Furthermore, obligations and values are "rooted in the nature of things"; we therefore are not, W. D. Ross observes, making God in our own image in investing him with moral attributes. (1) Moral experience points towards theism.

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1. Foundations of Ethics, p. 327.

# CHAPTER V

## THE SOURCE OF MORAL OBLIGATION

In the Western tradition, morality is completed in religion. The individual has recognized a transcendent and divine Source of moral obligation. In religion the individual found his supreme object of devotion, the state found a reason for the limitation of its powers over the individual, and the society found a source of community which at the same time bound it to other societies. The universality of medieval Europe had its source in the Christian religion. In this day when blood and soil are once more the organizing centers for societies, the new naturalism must be examined from the standpoint of its theory of the source of obligation, and of its adequacy to support individuality, community and universality.

The first requirement for a theory of the source of moral obligation is that it recognize, and account for, the obligatoriness which we experience. This obligatoriness does not depend alone upon its content. In 1895 A.J. Balfour published The Foundation of Belief, a work of prophetic insight concerning the influence of naturalism

as it was then interpreted. Balfour pointed out that morality "is more than a bare code of laws." (1) The moral law is experienced as worthy of reverence and love. And Balfour stated two propositions concerning a theory of the source of moral obligation.

> (1) That, practically, human beings being what they are, no moral code can be effective which does not inspire, in those who are asked to obey it, emotions of reverence; and (2) that practically, the capacity of any code to excite this or any other exalted emotion cannot be wholly independent of the origin from which those who accept that code suppose it to emanate. (2)

A second requirement has been stated by Henri Bergson in The Two Sources of Morality and Religion. Moral theorists must not take society for granted in accounting for the source of moral obligation.

> For by taking society for granted, they have also taken for granted the matter of this morality and its form, all it contains and all the obligation with which it is clothed. (3)

Since our problem is presented particularly by nationalism, we must add that a moral theory must not take for granted

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1. The Foundation of Belief, p. 11.
2. The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, p. 13.
3. Ibid., p. 82.

the universality which we experience in obligation, by attributing it to society. What we must explain in a theory of moral obligation is how universality is achieved, for it is observably true that it is at once difficult to get and to keep.

In John Dewey's ethics, obligation centers in society. However, the active forces in human nature carry with them the authority of "life". Nature as a whole is rather the source of man's ongoing activity than the source of obligation, though there is a clear sense in which nature comes to a focus in man's intelligence and therefore in which man is a servant of nature. (1) In this system, with its emphasis upon the problematical situation, needs, and possible values which "should" be chosen, take the place of the ought of a morality which recognizes a moral order and a transcendent source of moral obligation. Dewey formulates an imperative for the individual: "So act as to increase the meaning of present experience". (2)

Conscientiousness replaces conscience in Dewey's philosophy; it is "ability to judge the significance of

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1. See Experience and Nature, p. 76.

2. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 283.

what we are doing and to use that judgment in directing what we do...."(1) Dewey is quite right in insisting that we do not cultivate conscience simply by turning our attention within ourselves. He says that we develop conscientiousness by

> fostering those impulses and habits which experience has shown to make us sensitive, generous, imaginative, impartial in perceiving the tendency of our inchoate dawning activities. (2)

Since what we mean by conscience is the capacity to recognize such ideals, and to make such discriminations, the existence of the powers of conscience is presupposed in the definition of conscience as conscientiousness.

The dangers in Dewey's doctrine of conscience become clear when we examine the social nature of this function called conscientiousness. One of the natural consequences of the actions of the individual is that other persons react. Conscience is a rehearsal of what those reactions will be.

> We foreknow how others will act, and the foreknowledge is the beginning of judgment passed on action. We know <u>with</u> them; there is conscience.

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1. <u>Human Nature and Conduct</u>, p. 207.

2. Ibid., p. 207.

> An assembly is formed within our breast which discusses and appraises proposed and performed acts. The community without becomes a forum and tribunal within...."(1)

Accountability arises because we are held responsible by others.

> These two facts, that moral judgment and moral responsibility are the work wrought within us by the social environment, signify that all morality is social; not because we ought to take into account the effect of our acts upon the welfare of others, but because of facts. (2)

Now there are important elements of truth in this social account of conscience. We do require the discipline of society. But this does not mean that moral judgment and moral responsibility can be said to be the work of society in us. Society can hold us responsible, but only we ourselves can make ourselves responsible. Nor is conscience only the union of the sensitiveness of our own impulses and the social forum of which Dewey writes. What is missing is tremendously important: the integrated individual

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 315.

2. Ibid., 316.

who has a universal, and personal, and absolute, sense of obligation.

What Dewey's view makes impossible is self-integration and a responsibility which goes beyond what society can give to us. Gordon W. Allport points to an unanswered problem in Dewey's theory; society itself is the by-product of the interactions of individuals. It is not a super-personal entity, and therefore we have various publics based upon common interests, but which represent only segments of personality. Does such a plural and segmented society account for the unity of personality? Dr. Allport answers that "More and more vigorous participation in the segmental activities of a democratic state will not achieve unity for the individual". (1) Society alone, as we know it empirically, does not account for the degree of integration persons observably possess. The evidence leads towards recognition of a capacity for self-organization which a behavioristic philosophy must omit; that basis in the consciousness from which the individual surveys the world and determines his action was examined in chapter III.

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1. In The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 287.

The problem of the integration of the individual personality and of universality in society leads us from Dewey's ethics to his interpretation of religion. In Human Nature and Conduct, Dewey defined religion in social terms.

> Religion has lost itself in cults, dogmas and myths. Consequently the office of religion as sense of community and one's place in it has been lost. (1)

In A Common Faith, published in 1934, Dewey developed his view that the religious quality of experience can be preserved while the religions, which have been bound up with the supernatural, are rejected because they are inconsistent with the method and conclusions of modern science. This experience called religious is a harmonizing of elements in the individual which also harmonizes the self in relation to the conditions which surround it. (2) However, the idea of a whole, whether of the self or of the universe, is an imaginative projection. Having denied the reality of the will, Dewey cannot say that the unity of the self is achieved in an act of resolution. "An

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1. p. 330.

2. A Common Faith, p. 16.

'adjustment' possesses the will rather than is its express product." (1) It is an influx from beyond conscious deliberation and purpose, though not from the supernatural.

> And it is pertinent to note that the unification of the self throughout the ceaseless flux of what it does, suffers, and achieves, cannot be attained in terms of itself. The self is always directed toward something beyond itself and so its own unification depends upon the idea of the integration of the shifting scenes of the world into that imaginative totality we call the Universe. (2)

In this aspect of Dewey's theory, the unification of the self depends upon an imaginative idea which is projected.

Belief, or faith, in this interpretation of religion becomes moral faith. Religions have erred in trying to prove that the ideal is also the real; this proves a lack of moral faith.

> The religious is "morality touched by emotion" only when the ends of moral conviction arouse emotions that are not only intense but are actuated and supported by ends so inclusive that they unify the self. The inclusiveness of the end in relation to both self and the "universe" to which an inclusive self is related is indispensable. (3)

The unseen power in religion is now defined.

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1. A Common Faith, p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Ibid., p. 22.

> An unseen power controlling our destiny becomes the power of an ideal. All possibilities, as possibilities, are ideal in character. (1)

In part this is faith in nature and society as supporting the ideal. In part it is faith in intelligence as the way to continued disclosures of truth. Devotion is given to ideals.

> Any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal and against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of conviction of its general and enduring value is religious in quality. (2)

The faith which possesses religious quality is defined in terms of idealism.

> I should describe this faith as the unification of the self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices. (3)

God is defined in terms of "the unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action"; this unification is not fanciful, for it "is the reflex of the unification of practical and emotional attitudes". (4) This idea of God

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1. A Common Faith, p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. Ibid., p. 33.
4. Ibid., p. 43.

refers to all of the natural forces and conditions, including human society, which sustain the growth and realization of the ideal. (1)

> The heart of religion, then, is devotion to ideals.
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> The reality of ideal ends and values in their authority over us is an undoubted fact. The validity of justice, affection, and that intellectual correspondence of our ideas with realities that we call truth, is so far assured in its hold upon humanity that it is unnecessary for the religious attitude to encumber itself with the apparatus of dogma and doctrine. (2)

All that existence could add to ideals is force to establish them, and to punish and reward. Instead of furthering ideals, belief in the super-natural diverts energy from ideal values and from the exploration of actual conditions in order to further their realization in human life. The conception of the working union of the ideal and the actual is all that is needed to undergird the active force which religion adds to life.

> A clear and intense conception of a union of ideal ends with actual conditions is capable of arousing steady emotion. (3)

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1. A Common Faith, p. 50.
2. Ibid., p. 44.
3. Ibid., p. 51.

Granted society as we know it, with its ideals which possess authority and universal extension, with its high valuation of the individual person, and with its idealism nurtured by the Jewish-Christian tradition, Dewey's account of religious experience seems to preserve what is essential. What do we need beyond devotion to the ideals we do possess, or can discover, and beyond intelligent use of the resources at hand for their realization? But we must ask the source of these ideal ends. Unless Dewey has modified his position, they have their source in social interaction. What is not clear is the extent to which the integration of the self is achieved by the individual. To the extent that this goes beyond the position that "moral judgment and moral responsibility are the work wrought within us by the social environment", (1) a modification of Dewey's doctrine of man is required. Dewey seems to be moving toward a view of reason which would preserve the ethical resources of an individual and rational apprehension of ends, and of the whole, and which recognizes a rational organization of the self.

Dewey's unconditional devotion to ideals such as truth

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1. See p. 159 above.

and justice is given an additional basis in this account of our experience of ideals; they are presented in imagination, and the human will responds to them as worthy of controlling our desires and choices. (1) But the will is a term referring to particular habits, and this process of unification does not seem to be rational. An account of the way we are to get the particular ends which Dewey accepts, and a consistent doctrine of ends, is required to complete his philosophy; it is not enough to hold that they are products of society. Dewey's democracy is rooted in what he has accepted from a civilization based upon the foundations traced in Chapter I, rather than in his own system. But this absoluteness concerning truth, justice, and democracy is based upon a theory which finds customs and ideals and ends to be non-rational in origin, and relative to the particular society. In regard to democracy, the interesting fact is that the logic of Dewey's position leads to a central place for society rather than for the individual. And to the extent that religious devotion is to be given to ideals and ends which

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1. See p. 163 above.

are socially enforced and approved, religion is in danger of becoming a particular rather than a universal force.

There is a place for reverence in Dewey's naturalism. It cannot be given to any large extent to the imaginative totality of the Universe, which is admittedly a projection. It belongs in part to the ideals themselves, though Dewey does not indicate why. But reverence seems to be directed chiefly to ourselves as idealists, and especially to the society which forms both the ideals and the idealist. Religion, according to Dewey, does not add a new source of obligation; it is a quality of our moral experience. And if we experience universal obligations, they must come from society. What we must explain is the extent to which we transcend our particular societies in interest and recognized responsibilities, and what we must preserve is the universalism which seems to be taken for granted in this ethical theory.

It is evident enough that we are molded to a large extent by our particular societies, and by the portion of the society with which we are in interaction. But the new naturalism in America, while maintaining that reason is formed by society, also accepts a universal humani-

tarianism. The clearest and most persuasive statement of its interpretation of the source of moral obligation is given by George H. Mead in Mind, Self and Society. We have already examined the primary doctrine that reason is the taking of the attitude of the other towards oneself. (1) The attitudes of others are formulated in what Mead terms the attitude of "the generalized other". In one discussion of this generalized other, Mead says that the individual "crystallizes all these particular attitudes into a single attitude or standpoint". (2) Another statement (3) calls the organized community which forms the individual the generalized other, and this general attitude is identified with the attitude of the whole community.

It is through the generalized other that the social process which forms the individual influences his behavior.

> The only way in which we can react against the disapproval of the entire community is by setting up a higher sort of community which in a certain sense

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1. See above, Chap. IV, Part 2.
2. P. 90.
3. P. 154.

> out-votes the one we find. A person may reach a point of going against the whole world about him; he may stand out by himself over against it. But to do that he has to speak with the voice of reason to himself. He has to comprehend the voices of the past and of the future. (1)

This is the basis on which the self, described as a process which is a phase of the social organization of which the individual is a part, or "an eddy in the social current", (2) is held to be able to assert itself against society. Our problem is the adequacy of this interpretation of the source of moral obligation.

Since the rational self is formed by society, universalism must have its source in society. The self takes the attitude of the generalized other towards his own responses, including his remarks. The widest community in which the individual is a member is the thought world. Mead also finds universal forms in society in religions and in economic processes. In the case of religion, the origin of universality is traced to "such fundamental attitudes of human beings toward each other as kindliness,

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1. Ibid., p. 168.
2. Ibid., p. 168.

helpfulness, and assistance", (1) in which an individual finds himself in an attitude of co-operation. Mead therefore concludes that "it is out of situations like that, out of universal co-operative activity, that the universal religions have arisen". (2) The assumption is, therefore, that religion is a resultant of community, instead of a source of community. The historical evidence, however, as in the case of Israel, indicates that universal religion emerged in the midst of violent conflict and disaster. The prophets of Israel believed in the reality of a universal moral order and a universal God, revealed in the breach of community combined with an inescapable requirement of community, rather than in the actualization of community between nations. Religion has created, rather than resulted from, community. And economic ties, while binding the world together, have also helped to create the conflicts which divide the world spiritually.

It is true that language, religion and economics are potentially universal. It is also true that communication

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1. Op.cit. p. 258.

2. Ibid., p. 258

is essential to the existence of community. But Mead argues from the necessity for communication to its adequacy as the basis for establishing community.

> It is only when the stimulus which one gives another arouses in himself the same or like response that the symbol is a significant symbol. Human communication takes place through such significant symbols, and the problem is one of organizing a community which makes this possible....Universal discourse is then the formal ideal of communication. If communication can be carried through and made perfect, then there would exist the kind of democracy to which we have referred, in which each individual would carry just the response in himself that he knows he calls out in the community. That is what makes communication in the significant sense the organizing process in the community. (1)

Starting with the acting biologic individual, Mead assumes that the self takes the attitude of the other. The self is therefore an aspect of society. The further assumption is made that the self in its social aspect is universal. (2) Rationality is as wide as the group involved, and can include all beings speaking the same language. From this basis Mead restates Kant's categorical imperative in social terms.

> Man is a rational being because he is a social being. The universality of our judgments, upon which Kant places so much stress, is a universality that arises

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1. Mind, Self, and Society, p. 327.

2. Ibid., p. 331.

> from the fact that we take the attitude of the entire community, of all rational beings. We are what we are through our relationship to others. Inevitably, then, our end must be a social end, both from the standpoint of its content (that would answer to primitive impulses) and also from the point of view of form. Sociality gives the universality of ethical judgments and lies back of the popular statement that the voice of all is the universal voice; that is, everyone who can rationally appreciate the situation agrees. (1)

Mead's argument assumes first that the individual takes the attitude of the other in reason. We have already seen that the individual can take the attitude of the other, but that he does so in his own experience; reason is not therefore necessarily as disinterested as Mead believes. We now see another transition which must be examined. The universality "arises from the fact that we take the attitude of the entire community, of all rational beings". The community which forms the rational individual is not the community of all rational beings, but the actual particular community of which he is a part. Now it is true that reason proceeds from community as experienced to the ideal of universal community. But it does not follow that mind which is formed by a particular community

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1. Mind, Self and Society, p. 379.

would be universal, nor that reason is in itself sufficient to make the transition from the community we experience to more nearly universal community, nor that the source of obligation does not come from a transcendent source.

Communities are not simply sources of obligation in the sense of molding our minds. They are objects of loyalty. Nationalism, and "racism", possess a dynamic power in the modern world. Against these powerful particular forces a purely rational universalism is ineffective. Dewey and Mead define religion in terms of community. Religion does not, therefore, offer an object great enough to win men's loyalty; it reinforces the sense of community with others. (1) It is true that in an ideal sense community includes all mankind. Actually, our devotion to our national groups is stronger than our devotion to an as yet unorganized world community. The weakening of the obligations centering in ethical theism has not furthered the movement towards universal brotherhood; what we observe in the modern world is, on the contrary, the development of demonic power in particular communities

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1. See Human Nature and Conduct, p. 330.

based upon blood and soil and class. The clear implication is that universalism requires an object of devotion great enough to displace lesser loyalties from the center of man's life. In the words of Charles Hartshorne, "Refuse to men the worship of God, and they fall back upon egoism or state-worship". (1)

What religion and belief in a moral order contributed to Western civilization was the possibility of a balance between the individual, the state, and the universal society. When devotion to God is lost, devotion is given to communities, or to individuals. It is not only that we need a devotion which will make possible a balance between the individual and the state. We need also a devotion which reaches beyond even a world-state, which might be at least as tyrranous as any particular state. The deification of any human institution or community leads to the absolutization of what is in truth relative. Only a transcendent loyalty can meet man's needs for an object of worship and a source of obligation which is at once ethical and universal. Hartshorne has put the matter concisely.

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1. Beyond Humanism, p. 34.

> Where is the mighty mediator by which the requisite division of powers (between individual and state) is to be given the religious appeal without which it will not be effected? It cannot be mankind. At least it must be mankind with its face turned upward toward what is greater than men and greater than human groups, toward some abiding Truth which cannot be coerced by state-suborned scientists, some lasting Good which can command innermost loyalty while measuring by its own transcendence the relativity of all human achievements, purposes, and powers. Insist upon reducing this transcendence to the mere ideal potentialities of man himself, and you throw everything into doubt, vagueness, and confusion: doubt, for man appears ultimately doomed upon this planet, so that, if he is the ultimate value, the ultimate value is apparently the value of doom; vagueness, for only by thinking of God as the maximal value of all variables can we see clearly the direction in which man must move to reach higher values of these variables; confusion, for if man is the measure of value, then the line between opinion and verity, preference and right, becomes too subtle for ordinary people to see, whatever philosophers may think they still see. (1)

Henri Bergson, in The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, has given a profound analysis of the source and nature of morality, and of the place of religion in society. This analysis is empirical, and is made from the biological standpoint. The problem for the philosopher is seen in the fact that society is akin to an organism in its discipline, yet it is composed of free wills. Society, as Dewey and Mead maintain, exerts a pressure upon us; and this obli-

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1. Beyond Humanism, p. 36.

gation rests upon habits, and the totality of habits. The test of a theory of obligation according to Bergson, is its adequacy to the observed facts of organic unity and order in society. Dewey and Mead take account of the habitual nature of this primary obligation, and of its character as pressure. But there are three elements in this social obligation, according to Bergson. The first is the pressure which each individual habit of obedience exerts upon the will; the second is the pressure of the interrelated habits of obedience which together are felt as duty; and the third is religion, which reinforces the laws of society, making them more akin to the laws of nature.

Bergson disagrees fundamentally with Dewey and Mead at the point of the completeness of this social description of obligation. For it is the characteristic of our societies to be exclusive as well as inclusive.

> Our social duties aim at social cohesion; whether we will or not they compose for us an attitude which is that of discipline in the face of the enemy....In a word, the social instinct which we have detected at the basis of social obligation always has in view instinct being relatively unchangeable--a closed society, however large. It is doubtless overlaid by another morality which for that very reason it supports and to which it lends something of its

> force, I mean of its imperative character. But it is not itself concerned with humanity. For between the nation, however big, and humanity there lies the whole distance from the finite to the indefinite, from the closed to the open... Between the society in which we live and humanity in general there is, we repeat, the same contrast as between the closed and the open; the difference between the two objects is one of kind and not simply one of degree. (1)

Mankind as a whole is too vast and diffuse to overcome the self-centered nature of the individual and of the society to which he belongs. The love of mankind is "indirect and acquired". (2)

Bergson sees the exemplification of open morality in exceptional men who give it incarnation, and who exercise a persuasive force in the lives of other men. "Whereas natural obligation is a pressure or a propulsive force, complete and perfect morality has the effect of an appeal". (3) It goes beyond the natural morality which aims at the self-preservation of the group, to ask loyalty, renunciation of self, charity. The difference is not one of expansion; it has to move from the attitude which excludes

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1. The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, pp. 23, 4.
2. Ibid., p. 25.
3. Ibid., p. 26.

others to the attitude which is all love. And the transition, Bergson recognizes, is not made directly.

> Even today we still love naturally and directly our parents and our fellow-countrymen, whereas love of mankind is indirect and acquired. We go straight to the former, to the latter we come only by round-about ways; for it is only through God, in God, that religion bids man love mankind; and likewise it is through reason alone, that Reason in whose communion we are all partakers, that philosophers make us look at humanity in order to show us the pre-eminent dignity of the human being, the right of all to command respect. (1)

It has "always been from the contact with the generative principle of the human species that a man has felt he drew the strength to love mankind;" (2) it is through the creative force which explains the appearance of man that the step from closed to open morality has been taken. Bergson's historical analysis of the development of open morality agrees with our position in Chapter I that the transition to universalism came through the Christian religion. (3)

It is one of Bergson's contributions that intelligence

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1. Op. cit., p. 25.

2. Ibid., p. 46.

3. Ibid., pp. 50-55; 67,8.

is seen to respond to something beyond the particular society as well as to that society. A distinction is drawn between the infra-rational--in which an emotional state depends upon ideas or representations, and the supra-rational, in which the emotional state is productive of ideas. The latter only is a creative emotion. The static morality of the closed society, depending upon habits, is less than intelligence. Dynamic morality, with its religious basis, is "inspiration, intuition, emotion, susceptible of analysis into ideas....." (1) Intelligence lies between the two kinds of emotion, with their appropriate objects of society and the Elan Vital. Intelligence is not simply a function of the individual in his particular society.

Bergson makes another important contribution to our understanding of morality and religion in his analysis of the relation between intelligence and religion. Intelligence is not simply the product of society; it is dangerous to society. The tendency of intelligence is to think first of the individual; it is potentially a dissolvent force,

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1. See Bergson, p. 55.

and religion defends society against intelligence. Furthermore, religion is a defense against the knowledge of the inevitability of death which intelligence brings with it; it is an interesting fact that Dewey does not deal with the problem of evil, even in this matter of the death of the individual. Religion also balances intelligence at the point of the "depressing margin of the unexpected between the initiative taken and the effect desired". (1) Static religion, the religion of the closed society, helps to explain the success of intelligence despite its dangers.

In a static society, the Elan Vital has stopped its forward movement; life revolves in a closed circle. But in exceptional men that closed circle has been opened; as individuals, they have regained their contact with the creative impulse itself. Dynamic morality is directly based upon a transcendent source of obligation; static morality rests upon a social pressure which is an indirect expression of the creative impulse. In dynamic morality that transcendent source of obligation becomes effective

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1. Op.cit., p. 130

through mysticism, which is a direct contact with that source.

> In our eyes, the ultimate end of mysticism is the establishment of a contact, consequently of a partial coincidence, with the creative effort which life itself manifests. This effort is of God, if it is not God himself. The great mystic is to be conceived as an individual being, capable of transcending the limitations imposed on the species by its material nature, thus continuing and extending the divine action. Such is our definition. (1)

True mysticism ends in the possession of a vast energy which expresses itself in action. Through an identification of the will of the individual with the purpose of the Elan Vital, the creative effort which resulted in the human species carries humanity on to higher levels. The love which marks dynamic morality is more than human. The mystic loves mankind with a divine love because he shares God's love for man. The purpose of this mystic love of humanity is God's purpose.

> What it wants to do, with God's help, is to complete the creation of the human species and make of humanity what it would have straightaway become, had it been able to assume its final shape without the assistance of man himself. (2)

The men who express creative emotion in the field of

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1. Op. cit., p. 209.
2. Ibid., p. 223.

morality and religion are the mystics. Bergson does not mean the mystic who finds the culmination of the mystical experience in ecstasy; he believes that the true mystics are those who return to active life with a super-abundance of creative power and energy. They break down the natural resistance of humanity to a higher morality, and draw men after them through their enthusiasm which is communicated by example, rather than by word. It passes from soul to soul, "unceasingly, like a conflagration". Such an emotion was present, Bergson believes in the Greek creative period, having its source in the moral teaching of Socrates. And it is revealed pre-eminently in the Christian Gospel, and in the Christian mystics.

Bergson believes that now, for the first time in human history, a genuine creative advance is possible. There is within each of us the capacity to respond to the genuine mystic. But the creative impulse has been kept within small societies of privileged individuals while it has awaited a time in which man's attention could be sufficiently diverted from the immediate concerns of life to allow him to look heavenward. That time is now coming through the mechanization of labor made possible

by science. Without mysticism, mechanization will crush man; with mysticism, man will have the moral energy to simplify his complex life. Machinery offers the basis for the spiritualization of life; mysticism offers the dynamic for the transition from a "closed" to an "open" society. Bergson's analysis of the moral situation closes on the note of hope.

> Mankind lies groaning, half crushed beneath the weight of its own progress. Men do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first of all whether they want to go on living or not. Theirs the responsibility, then, for deciding if they want merely to live, or intend to make just the extra effort required for fulfilling, even on this refractory planet, the essential function of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods. (1)

This confident attitude rests upon a "supra-rational" basis. Optimism is given theoretical justification and validation by a religious world-view, and this analysis of the moral life includes a sense of obligation to God which releases the creative emotion of religion.

Bergson's profound treatment of the social and religious sources of morality reveals the difficulty which a moral theory which ignores religion cannot meet. Our

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1. Beyond Humanism, p. 306.

relationship to the society of which we are a part has a religious element in it. Our social units are effective sources of moral obligation. An individualistic theory may obscure that source of morality, but when our societies are threatened, as they are today, there is a revival of "closed" morality, and with it a revival of the static religion which is one factor in it. The tremendous power of the collectivistic movements substantiates Bergson's account that the closed group is itself an object of devotion which is religious in character.

We are now facing a crucial problem for the future of mankind. A morality which offers no effective source of obligation transcending the social group cannot save us from a Hobbesian "war of all against all" in which the units are closed societies rather than individuals. This study of the sources of Western civilization, and Bergson's account of "open" morality, leads to the conclusion that a theistic religion is the one source of individual and social obligation which offers hope in the struggle against the totalitarian movements, and a foundation for an ethical world-order. This does not mean that our need for theistic religion should be the ground for our acceptance of it; it does mean, however, that the reality of our

experience of moral obligation which transcends, yet includes, all human communities is one evidence of the truth of the theistic interpretation of the world.

Bergson has successfully demonstrated that the fundamental sources of moral obligation are not rational; reason can be presented as the source of obligation only if society, with its instinctive and religious bases, is assumed. But Bergson's depreciation of the claims of reason as a trustworthy source of knowledge on the basis that it is in bondage to action leaves us dangerously weakened in the face of the powerful instinctive forces at work in the world today. The truth is that instinct is more, rather than less, in bondage to action than is intelligence. The difficulties in Bergson's position appear at three levels. The first is this, that his description of the experience of obligation, and the implied doctrine of conscience, is not true to the experience of moral obligation even at the level of the closed society.

This relationship between the individual and the "closed" society, is not purely instinctive. There is a response to the "thou shalt" of society and religion--an

answering "I ought"--which is in part rational, and which involves the sense of freedom which Bergson recognizes to be bound up with intelligence. Closely related to this is the importance of moral judgments which depend upon the reason. It is not only that we give reasons for or against obedience in a particular ethical situation. It is also that we analyze our moral experience and discover structural principles, or values, such as justice and equality, which become normative, and by which we stand over against, as well as within, our society. It is significant that Bergson recognizes no moral order; in the closed society there is only the requirement from nature that there be moral rules or laws; in the open morality there is only a creative emotion which creates its own forms; a moral order is a part of ethical theory only where reason is given genuine knowledge in its analysis of moral experience--and it is a genuine moral order only when the structural principles are discovered in the real world as we experience it. And, finally, the depreciation of intellect leads to an incomplete doctrine of revelation and of the nature of the Creative Force which explains the world and society. For Bergson, it

is primarily will. It is true that revelation is supra-rational; but it is not true that reason discovers nothing of God and about God. The doctrine of God remains incomplete unless we know through reason the rational aspects of the world God has created, and unless we respond to God with our whole personalities; a mysticism such as Bergson's, which does not include reason, is an incomplete account of moral and religious experience.

The moral life moves on three essential levels: the sub-rational level of desire and of our instinctive relationship to society; the rational level of judgment and critical appraisal; and the supra-rational level of devotion to God. These three levels within the potentially moral individual make possible the full moral experience of a mormal individual in an ethical society, facing the objective truth of morality, and finding that his experience of morality comes to its focus in his recognition of, and his response, at once moral and religious, to, the divine Will.

Bergson's account of "open" morality clarifies one basis for the development of a universal sense of obligation within the particular group. We have seen that it neglects

the contribution of reason to a morality which transcends a particular society. We must add also that it neglects the contribution of a religious institution which expresses, and makes socially effective, both the transcendent and the universal aspects of morality and religion. The fact that reason, the individual who acknowledges a universal obligation, and the church as a supra-national institution, are all under attack by the "closed" movements, is evidence that no one of these factors alone explains the development of a universal morality, and that all three are essential factors in preserving the universal ideals and spirit of Western civilization.

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The problems considered in this essay are at once so complex and so controversial that the writer's own conclusions, already stated in the preceding chapters, will be but briefly summarized. The reader will already have drawn his own conclusions from the evidence and arguments presented. To retrace the steps of the argument may, however, bring the entire essay into focus. This dissertation takes its start from the observation that disintegrative individualism, mass movements in which men give up their freedom, and conflict between groups within nations and between nations, have a common root in ethical scepticism. To meet the crisis of our age successfully we need to know what ethical and political foundations are essential for a society characterized by individual freedom, an ordered life within the nation, and universal order.

The first chapter traces the actual historical sources of these characteristics of Western civilization. Belief in a moral order which is independent of though relevant to our interests, and in a divine Source of moral

obligation are basic convictions in the Western tradition. Freedom developed within the dual loyalties of state and religion, with the institution of the church making the religious obligation effective.

Two forces, individualism and nationalism, have developed within the modern Western world which threaten the balance which had been achieved between the individual, the state, and other states. Each of these movements has adopted an interest philosophy which makes morality and religion relative to the interests recognized. And it is observably true that nationalism is winning the day over individualism. My thesis is that the values of each can be preserved within the traditional foundations of Western civilization. These ethical and religious foundations do not guarantee individual freedom, a limited state, and world order. But they do provide the framework and the resources within which the solution of our crisis is not only possible, but in which these ideals are seen to be obligatory.

In Chapter II an examination of John Dewey's instrumental philosophy led to the conclusion that there is no guarantee in the instrumental method, in which ideals and

principles are tools for the solution of particular problems, that it will be used only for social welfare. In Chapter III we found that Dewey's ethics assumes that the social nature of man means that he is morally social. The problem of the adequacy of Dewey's philosophy to the values it accepts from the Western tradition requires an examination of its truth, and especially of the truth of its views of man and of society.

My conclusion is that man has heights and depths in his nature which naturalistic humanism has not recognized. The greatness and the sinfulness of man both derive from his unique transcendence of nature, life, reason, his world and himself. And because naturalism does not understand man, it misunderstands society, and the place of morality and religion in making an ordered and peaceful world possible. The decision between the two views of man considered in this essay must be made upon the basis of the evidence. I have pointed to observable facts in modern society, and maintained that a philosophy which takes account of our traditional Western beliefs about man, the moral order, and the place of religion in life,

throws more light upon our crisis than the new naturalism does.

One of the purposes of this essay has been to re-examine the experience upon which belief in a moral order and in a transcendent Source of moral obligation rests. I shall conclude with a summary of moral experience so interpreted. It begins with ourselves as active, purposive beings. Dewey stresses our endowments of impulse and socially conditioned habit, of desire and interest which include foresight, of intelligence as method and as funded experience, and of imagination. To this list, if the analysis presented above is correct, it is necessary to add reason, which makes our human experience possible, and which is the basis of our transcendence of nature, and of ~~and of~~ our capacity for self-knowledge. Conscience, with its sense of obligation to the good, and its recognition of our central obligations, is also to be added.

Moral obligation includes the pressure of society upon us, and, as Dewey, Mead and Bergson have shown, within us. We are social beings. The pressure of society upon us, according to Bergson, includes particular habits of obedience, the totality of habits of obedience which

form duty in general, and the form of religion which is involved in the life of particular communities. (1) And beyond our particular society we recognize the rational ideal of universal community. Inclusive ideals exercise particular persuasiveness when embodied in the moral innovators of history. However, both closed and open forms of morality and religion may be characterized by dynamic power.

The first objective factor in morality is the structure of the individual's own personality; the second is the society of which he is a member. The third objective factor is found in values. Dewey has performed a great service in analyzing the possibilities for selection and control of values through the use of scientific method. Reasons have been presented for disagreeing, however, that value means only human value. The values of excellence, in contrast to the values of

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1. Prof. Ralph H. Gabriel's analysis, in The Course of American Democratic Thought, of the culture-religion of the American democratic faith is an interesting confirmation of Bergson's position.

desire and interest, are independent of, though relevant to, desire and interest. Morality is based upon knowledge of a moral order which we do not make, but discover. The third objective factor in morality is the moral order. We discover structural principles, such as justice and equality, which become normative, and by which we stand over against, as well as within, our society.

There is also a claim upon us, many of us believe, which is unconditional, and which cannot be resolved into the factors already considered. Dewey's analysis of this experience as depending upon the attractiveness of our ideals is inadequate for two reasons. The first is that we would not give to the ideals which are the products of our imagination the kind of reverence which we feel in morality. The second is that it is not merely the attractiveness of ideals such as justice which impresses us, but their requiredness, their inescapability, their formulation of an order of things which we do not make.

This experience of moral obligation, described by Kant as a categorical imperative, is taken, by those who find it genuine, as an evidence that a direct and individual relationship to God is not limited to mysticism, but is a

part of our experience of a claim upon us as individuals and as a society. Bergson's doctrine of obligation, and the implied doctrine of conscience, at the level of the closed society is true only where this divine claim is unrecognized. We find ourselves in a religious environment from the beginning. And it is in a right response to this environment that we find the reverence which makes a moral code effective, the devotion which unifies the personality, the authority which balances the individual and society, the universality of obligation which includes all men, and the spirit of love which supplies the dynamic which breaks through our closed societies. It is in recognition of, and response to, the Divine Source of obligation and life that unity, balance and completeness are restored both to thought and to life.

This essay has not been directly concerned with the arguments which support theism. But the major elements of a complete interpretation of the world have been considered. If this is the kind of world I have described, then the theistic interpretation alone is adequate. For it alone places the potentially moral and religious person

in a world which is truly moral, and to which the only complete response is that full devotion and reverence and obedience which is at once the heart of religion, and the only adequate foundation for ethics and politics.

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