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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by SIDNEY ZINK

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THE ETHICAL THEORY OF JOHN DEWEY

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PREFACE

In our project of critically analyzing Dewey's ethical theory, the first task we face is that of assembling discussions on common topics which appear scattered over a number and variety of writings; the second, that of exegesis of these writings in their relations. The two efforts, however, will be subsidiary to our main purpose of criticism, and they will follow the outline laid down in the Introduction for the purposes of criticism. The rather elaborate and extended framework there offered presents no obvious relation (with the exception of the third section) to Dewey's ethics itself. However, we find this systematic classification of ethical problems and theories necessary as a basis from which to consider Dewey's particular theory. Such a procedure is suggested first of all by the difficulty of classifying Dewey's system in traditional terms. Further, it provides certain

presuppositions and arguments that serve as a foundation for the consideration of Dewey's position, giving connection and substance to the later criticisms. The procedure is advised as the only alternative to either a heterogeneous accumulation of minor criticisms or an unraveling of major criticisms that are all explained by disagreements most effectively attacked at other points.

In such a study, in which the pertinent material includes an unusual number of books and articles covering a period of fifty years, it is inevitable that some interpretation will be involved in an endeavor only to present fairly the author's complete view. This necessity arises, not out of the purpose of the inquiry, which in this case is critical, but from the nature of the material dealt with, this being of a sort which does not allow a just presentation of the author's fullest position by a method of systematic selection of discussions of the different issues from various writings. Dewey's expressions on any one point are so rich and various that at least the semblance of contradictions arise. Our position in the following will be that such divergences are only superficial and that all his writings contribute to one point of view. Nevertheless, the breadth of the statements of this position makes necessary a dual process of interpretation. On one hand we must explain apparent contradictions yet

strive to retain in some measure the richness of his expressions. On the other, we must gather treatments which, while seeming to introduce distinct points and be focused upon distinct problems, constitute rather a single general argument. We must try to condense and synthesize these into one statement relating the various expressions so as to present systematically the complete argument. Thus it is hoped that, quite aside from our negatively critical efforts, new assimilations will be made and new perspectives introduced, rendering our study not without worth merely as a clarification of some aspects of Dewey's thought.

Yet it is perhaps to be expected that in the approach we are adopting very little of the "spirit" of Dewey's moral theory will be preserved, for our purpose is not a rich presentation of his doctrine but a logical analysis of it; an attempt to see how the parts hang together. But of course such an approach should do no injustice nor prejudice the case against the theory initially, for, if the position is firmly girded, well bound, and neatly finished off, our analysis can only cast this into greater relief or, perhaps, disclose our own misapprehensions and confusion.

INTRODUCTION

The procedure we are adopting in presenting Dewey's ethical theory is advised by the particular critical purpose entertained. We shall examine his theory in terms of what are suggested as three fundamental problems of ethical theory. These three issues are: (1) a theory of The Good, (2) a theory of Human Nature, and (3) a theory of Moral Knowledge, of Standards, or of our Method of Knowing the Right. We shall consider these in detail presently; for the moment it suffices to indicate their relation. Briefly, the theory of human nature provides the evidence or demonstration for the theory of the good, whereas moral knowledge is the instrument for achieving the good. Thus the former designates the theoretical, the latter the practical dimension of the good. The theory of human nature contains our means of knowing the good in the abstract; the theory of moral knowledge, our means of knowing the good in concrete moral situations.

Were the purpose merely expository it perhaps would be difficult to justify a procedure which on the surface has so little relation to the actual ordering of treatment in Dewey's ethical writings. In such a case it would seem both more appropriate and more efficient to follow some outline that is suggested in the original theory. Different considerations predominate, however, when the intention is critical. Here the writer must seek a method that will elicit most effectively the points he wishes to make, shaping the material to a schema suitable to this purpose, rather than following an outline contained in the material. In this pursuit there are two obvious dangers to be avoided. These are the selection of issues which are either not pertinent to the particular theory considered, or insignificant in themselves. The first would result in the external imposition of a form upon a content alien to it, causing both a distortion of the theory and a reduction to irrelevance of the points advanced. That our method is capable of correctly representing Dewey's view, and provides a fruitful means of expounding certain of his doctrines, will be shown further on. That the problems are significant for ethical theory is recognizable by anyone familiar with the body of outstanding ethical writings. And while we do not propose to argue here that they constitute <u>the</u> three real essential problems of ethical

theory, we intend that our introductory exposition shall disclose that they have something more than a merely hypothetical claim to significance.

In stating what is meant by the conception of the good it is well nigh impossible to avoid begging the issue by such terms as "desirable", "satisfactory", "valuable". We may say that a theory of the good is one that designates to what these adjectives apply. Perhaps a greater precision is obtained by distinguishing the "true", "real", or "supreme" good from the "specious", "illusory", or "inferior" good. But this involves the danger of being taken to imply a particular theory as to the nature or content of the good. Thus in the interest of clarity we are forced to fall back on a definition asserting the relationship of whatever is the good to something else. The good is that which ought to be the goal of conduct; it is that which behavior should strive to achieve, imagination to envisage, belief to entertain. It is that which should give all aspects of conduct organization and harmony, which ought to be the center of active effort, and the pivot around which deliberation moves.

A conception of the good entails at the same time a view of the non-good, and to be effective it must be indicated how in living experiences the good is distinguished from the bad. When this polarity of the good and the non-

good is stated, the concepts usually employed are the Right and the Wrong, suggesting that the question is crucially one of how the good is known. The failure, then, of an ethic to propound a definition of the good that is sufficiently definite to distinguish good from non-good, is doubly disastrous, rendering the theory inadequate in its definition of the good and rendering dubious an effective practical knowledge of the good.

This definition of the concept of the good involves no implications as to what the concrete nature of the good is, either as to its mode of existence or as to the details or scope of its relation to human beings. It may be an "essence" or an "existent", or both or neither; it may be "absolute" or "relative", or both or neither. We do not even assume that such a thing as the good exists. However, if it does exist, then we may expect that it is the business of ethics to describe it.

There is one assumption in the previous definition of the concept of the good. This is that the good with which ethics is concerned is related in a certain way to the human being. Ethics deals above all with human conduct and with the value phenomena found there. Although it may not conceive the good as restricted to its role in human affairs, its basic endeavor is to lay bare the relation of the good to human beings. In maintaining that

ethics must furnish a theory of the good we are going to mean by the good that which is related as the End to human purpose.

This brings us to the second requisite of an adequate ethics. Because the good is related as the end to human purpose, ethics must provide a theory of human nature such as to account for the end; to explain why it constitutes the good for man. The theory of the good and the theory of human nature must be so oriented that the end can be understood to be what it is because of the nature of the human being for whom it is good, and human purpose can be understood as fulfilling its proper demand in the pursuit of that end. The theory of human nature serves as the evidence or argument for the concept of the good. It is that which explains why the good is good for us; why it constitutes the goal of striving and describes the highest condition of welfare. Because it is the substantiation of the concept of the good (which, as we shall see presently is the basis for standards), it is the most fundamental element of an ethics. A theory that attempts to describe what is good either for all or for a specific group of individuals, must substantiate its conception by a view of the demands of the human beings to whom it applies, showing that these particular things are good because they satisfy these demands.

There is one misconception to be avoided, namely, that the necessary connection that must hold between the theories of the human being and the good, presupposes any particular doctrine upon these. A presupposition that there might be some inclination to impute to the above account, is an "absolutistic" interpretation of human nature or the good. It is not implied, however, that the good is single and eternal, the same for all persons wherever and whenever encountered, nor that human nature is single; that there is a common identical nature possessed by all human beings. What is implied is that the relation between the human nature described and the sort of good considered good for it, must be single, or more properly, necessary. The relation must be internal; the nature of each term must be such as to involve the other, it being inconceivable that there be a human being of the sort described and that he possess a different ideal end than that described. Thus, while it may be within the limits of the human being described that he may change (or that there are other types of human beings); and of the good described that it may alter (or that there are other kinds of good); an alteration in either involves a corresponding one in the other. The "absolute" necessity of the relation between the nature of a human being and the good to which he is related, not

the "absoluteness" of the terms separately, is what I take to be the primary condition of an adequate ethics.

Before stating the third requisite it is necessary to consider briefly one aspect of the relation between ethics and metaphysics, as it affects our undertaking. Each of the above topics at some point becomes a metaphysical issue. In deciding the ethical import of the good and the nature of the human being (regardless of whether these are single or plural), we are driven to consider their modes of existence. Ultimately the ethical issues depend upon metaphysical inquiries and are decided by them. And while the procedure and results of such inquiry are beyond our purpose, it is necessary to indicate the basis upon which we have said that the theory of human nature serves as the evidence or demonstration of the concept of the good, and why we did not assert the reverse: that the concept of the human being was established by the theory of the good. This will not bear directly upon the comments upon Dewey's ethics, since we are not interested in examining the adequacy of his theory of the good in terms of the adequacy of his theory of human nature, upon which the former relies; an enterprise that would plunge us directly into metaphysics. Our interest is in the internality of the relation between them. But to substantiate our schema of ethical theory, which will provide a useful approach to

Dewey's theory, it is necessary to legitimate the above assertion: that the evidence for the theory of the good is the theory of human nature, and not the reverse.

The point may be stated in terms of the distinction between the good and goods or values. "The Good" expresses that which possesses a unique claim upon a person's belief and action in virtue of the constitution of that person; it defines the "ought" or the "right". "Values", on the other hand, are the name for a kind of qualitative experience and existence, usually without the implication that they constitute "The Good". Certain members of their class may embody or compose the "ought" or the "right"; but they do so not in virtue of their peculiar mode of existence but in virtue of their relation to the person whose good they contain. Thus the crucial question with regard to values is their mode of being. Inasmuch as certain values define the good in a particular case, an important element in determining their mode of existence will probably be this relation to the subject involved. We arrive at the determination of the good, however, by reference to the nature of this subject; for although the nature of the good as an existence is this very problem of the mode of existence of values, in so far as the good is itself composed of certain values, the crucial question for ethics is the

specification of just what are the values denoted by the good, not what values themselves are.

Value must be approached as any other phenomenon in the endeavor to discover its real status in the universe; its mode of being. Results of ethical investigation will necessarily be employed in such an inquiry, but these ethical results can to some extent be reached prior to at least this particular metaphysical undertaking. This is not to suggest that metaphysical assertions are not involved in answering fundamental ethical questions; in fact, the contrary is asserted. What is important, however, is that the character of ethical questions is such that the metaphysical knowledge involved is primarily of another order than that of the nature of goods. The crucial ethical question--what is good--is most directly related to the question: what is the nature and end of the human being for whom the good exists. Thus, it is the human being that is the "nature" of which metaphysical knowledge is first required for ethics.

From knowledge of the nature of the subject we can determine what conditions, objects, or values must fulfill to be part of the good, whereas from knowledge of the mode of existence of values we cannot determine the structure of the subject to whom it relates. Of course, if the relation of the values composing the good to the human being

is internal, a complete knowledge of either would involve a complete knowledge of the other, it being indifferent from which end we started in defining the good. The point, however, is that we do not begin with a wholesale knowledge of either; that we can distinguish more detailed problems, and order them im terms of their importance for ethics. And what is of primary importance is, what is the good, or, what is the end for human purpose, which involves a knowledge of the human being.

The point may be illustrated in terms of the view that value (value in existence rather than value as the good) is a certain relation between a subject, possessing certain organic conditions of want, and an object, possessing determinate characters. We cannot, it seems to me, determine what is the good by recognizing that value as quality is of this nature; we learn only what values are as a class of existents but not what particular values constitute the good. The very fact that there are existent values which are not uniform constituents of the good, indicates that a knowledge of the general nature of this type of existence cannot discover to us what are the "proper" values. Knowledge of the good requires knowledge of the peculiar nature of values in their relation to a subject.

Similarly, the knowledge that values are eternal, metaphysically real essences, containing internal relations

disposing them in a hierarchical order, does not demonstrate that they constitute the good, until it is shown that they are related to human nature as its proper end.

Thus, we are not maintaining that ethics does not include a consideration of the question of the metaphysical nature of values; our point is merely that, first, there is a distinction between this question and that of the good, between that of the general structure of values and that of the "right" values, or the particular nature of values; second, that the latter is the more original elementary ethical issue and is at least as capable of independent treatment as the former question, and thus that the solutions to the two issues are distinguishable. A complete ethic would doubtlessly include both, but since the former question is secondary, we are not considering it here as an element to be required of Dewey's ethics.

The third requisite of an ethic is that it inform us how the good can direct our conduct, i.e., it must furnish us some means or "standards" for determining how we are to act in pursuance of the good; how we are to know "the right". It must provide us with knowledge of the procedures by which we can make the good directive of our actual behavior. It must indicate the method by which the good is to be made concretely effective, disclosing to us not only what is abstractly desirable, but how we are to

decide what is desirable in its relation to the good, in the immediate situations in which a moral decision is required. The standard is that which tells us what is "right" or "obligatory", what is our "responsibility". And the "right" is that which conduces to, or is in harmony with, the good. Thus, standards are dependent upon the good in the same way that the good is dependent upon a theory of human nature; just as a theory of human nature must determine the conditions for the good, so must a theory of the good set the conditions for standards. And thus there must be the same necessary relation between standards and the good that obtains between human nature and the good. Accordingly, any ethic demonstrates its formal adequacy first, by simply containing these three elements, and second, by organizing them with each other consistently.

Again, as in the case of human nature and the good, no view of just what are the proper standards or just how we know the right is presupposed. The former may be the Ten Commandments, the "categorical imperative", the "means", "utility", or what not; and we may know the good by "intuition", by "an irrational preference", by "scientific method", or what not.

There is apt to be an overlapping in the discussions of the good and standards, for there may be but one standard of the good itself, this general concept being

the only criterion for individual cases of conduct. In one sense this is true for all theories entertaining a concept of the good, since the good will set the conditions standards must fulfill. However, a difference may remain in that some theories regard principles subsidiary to the good essential to its effective achievement, these acting as precepts or guides in the moral life. On the other hand these may not be regarded as necessary, their presence in ethical theory and their employment in actual conduct being criticized as a sign of moral degeneracy; as an attempt to avoid the really crucial aspect of the moral situation. Thus, from this point of view the matter for primary consideration is the human factor of choice, and what is required is an explanation, in terms of the elements of the human being, of the conditions and structure of decisions that conform to the good. On theories (if there are any) that consider right choice and action as almost entirely explained by the rather automatic use of general principles, the human element in decision can largely be neglected, and attention transferred to the nature and function of these standards.

The first task is to inquire into Dewey's conception of ethics to determine whether he would question our characterization of the general business of ethical theory. For if his conception of ethics is so different as to

direct itself toward a quite distinct set of issues, thus precluding answers to the questions we raise, it would be beside the point to criticize his theory as deficient on these scores. The assumption in such criticisms would be the incorrectness of Dewey's conception of the ethicist's task, and under such circumstances the fruitful approach would be one directed toward the nature of ethical inquiry itself, which is the matter in dispute. On the other hand, a productive investigation might be conducted upon the hypothesis that while Dewey entertains a view of the office of ethics different from that proposed here, he nevertheless develops a moral theory in conformity with the requirements we have postulated, and while denying the validity of these questions, still does furnish answers to them. We shall endeavor first to show, by calling upon various of his writings, that Dewey's view of ethical theory conforms generally to our own. That Dewey does treat the three issues, will come out in our general treatment of his theory, and while this alone provides sufficient justification for our method of procedure, it will have been helpful if we can relate these discussions to clear statements of Dewey's own view of ethical theory.

The determination of whether a particular ethics permits the application of our three requisites is a matter of ascertaining whether it conceives a theory of the good

to be a proper requirement. For from the first the other two follow necessarily,- a theory of human nature as the theoretical substantiation, and a conception of the method of knowing the right, as the practical excuse of an ethic. If the theory is to have theoretical grounds and practical significance, these latter are required. Logically, it is true, only the theory of human nature is needed, on the assumption that ethics is not concerned with influencing practice. The assumption in Dewey's case, however, is just the reverse. Hence our primary task is to discover whether a supporting theory of human nature is a legitimate demand. We shall, however, indicate that he explicitly recognizes this and tries to provide for it. The requisite of a method of knowing the good we shall barely mention, showing where he does recognize its necessity but resting the bulk of our case upon the integrity of theory and practice in his system.

In the two editions of the Ethics, Dewey makes a single classification of ethical problems and of types of ethical theories in terms of their answers to these problems.[1] However, as he indicates in the first edition, the

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1. The classifications are not identical in the two editions, but for our purposes the difference is so light as to be negligible.

purpose of the classification is mainly one of facilitating exposition and inquiry, and not logical or analytic as is ours.[1] The principle of his classification is one of emphasis, and thus there are overlappings, no one type of theory being clearly or exhaustively characterized. He warns against the reader's being moved by the classification to an undue simplification, saying that, "As a rule, all the elements are recognized in some form or other by all theories; but they are differently placed and accounted for."[2] Thus the significance of the classification is largely as a statement of general ethical problems. He concludes that:

> In any case, it is voluntary activity with which we are concerned. The problem of analyzing voluntary activity into its proper elements, and rightly arranging them, must coincide finally with the problem of the relation of good and law of control to each other, with the problem of the nature of moral knowledge, and with that of the relation of the individual and the social aspects of conduct. 3

Here, then, we have a general indication that ethics is concerned with the good, and with the method of knowing the good.

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1. Ethics, first edition, p. 224.

2. Ibid., p. 227.

3. Loc. Cit.

The importance of a conception of human nature for ethics is not only suggested by Dewey but forms the subject of one of his most, if not the most, influential books, Human Nature and Conduct. One quotation from its Introduction will serve to establish the point:

> Our science of human nature in comparison with physical sciences is rudimentary, and morals which are concerned with the health, efficiency and happiness of a development of human nature are correspondingly elementary. These pages are a discussion of some phases of the ethical change involved in positive respect for human nature when the latter is associated with scientific knowledge. 1

Thus Dewey is not only asserting the integral connection of ethics and human nature, but proposing to offer a treatment of human nature which will recognize that connection in such a way as to remedy the errors of other ethicists who were not similarly impressed with the relation. The nature of this reform we shall consider later.

While it is not necessary to find passages in which Dewey explicitly asserts that a satisfactory ethics must provide a theory of the good, it being sufficient to discover an explicit answer to this question,[2] the evidence

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 4.

2. That there is a quantity of this sort of evidence will come out in our main treatment. More is provided by such discussion and criticism of other ethical theories, in terms of their definitions of the good, as are found in Outline of Ethics and in the two editions of the Ethics.

is not limited to such answers. In the common Introduction to the two editions of the Ethics, he defines ethics as:

> --the science that deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad.... Ethics aims to give a systematic account of our judgments about conduct, in so far as these estimate it from the standpoint of right or wrong, good or bad. 1

He illustrates this further along:

> To study choice and purpose is psychology; to study choice as affected by the rights of others and to judge it as right or wrong by this standard is ethics. Or again, to study a corporation may be economics, or sociology, or law; to study its activities as resulting from the purposes of persons or as affecting the welfare of persons, and to judge its acts as good or bad from such a point of view, is ethics. 2

In his discussions Dewey sometimes seems to use "the good" and "the end" interchangeably. However, the latter seems to be the term he prefers to designate what we have called the good, by "end" being meant the true or wise "good", the good that has been reached as the result of "rational insight" or "moral wisdom", in contrast to the merely "seeming" good. 3 Thus he declares:

> The task of moral theory is thus to frame a theory of Good as the end or objective of desire, and also to frame a theory of the true, as distinct from the specious, good. 4

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1. Ethics, second edition, p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid., p. 205.

While the last surely is unambiguous, there are places where Dewey seems to question the propriety of a theory of the good in ethics. After having said explicitly in the Outlines of Ethics, his first book on the subject, that ethics is one of the normative sciences, Dewey later, in Experience and Nature seems to retract this position. However, we shall attempt to show the apparent contradiction can be resolved into a difference of emphasis and traced to the use of "normative" or "good" in different senses in the seemingly opposed passages.

In classifying ethics in Outlines of Ethics as one of the "normative sciences", Dewey distinguishes it from other sciences by saying that the latter "branches of knowledge simply describe, while the business of ethics is to judge".[1] He goes on to say that "Ethics deals with conduct in its entirety, with reference, that is, to what makes it conduct, its end, its real meaning".[2] Yet even here he is careful to qualify this definition by differentiating this function of ethics from that of "prescription". He says, "This does not mean that it belongs to ethics to prescribe what man ought to do; but that its business is to detect

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1. Outlines of Ethics, p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

the element of obligation in conduct, to examine conduct to see what gives it its worth".[1] The point of view becomes more clear in a comment appearing in a criticism of Kantianism. He says,

> It is not the business of theory, however correct as a theory, to lay down rules for conduct. The theory has simply to discover what the end is, and it is the end in view which determines specific acts. It is no more the business of ethics to tell what in particular a man ought to do, than it is of trigonometry to survey land. But trigonometry must state the principles by which land is surveyed, and so ethics must state the end by which conduct is governed. The objection to hedonism and Kantianism is that the end they give does not itself stand in any practical relation to conduct. We do not object to Kantianism because the theory does not help us as to specific acts, but because the end, formal law, does not help us, while the real moral end must determine the whole of conduct. 2

This presentation of the office of ethics seems to be entirely compatible with that adopted in the two Ethics. And upon what appears to be the most justifiable interpretation of the pertinent passages in Experience and Nature the latter also seem to fit the view we have stated. The difference is that in the latter book Dewey is stressing what ethics is not to do, namely "to prescribe", although at times his statements do seem to pass the limits of emphasis and to introduce a contrary position.

His remarks here are made in connection with the exposition of his own ethical theory of valuation and criti-

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1. Ibid., p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 89

cism, and his comments are colored by the context. He is insisting that values are the product of reflective criticism (a theory we will be very much concerned with later), and is objecting to moral theories that regard ethics' business to be such as to obviate his particular theory. He says that, contrasted with his own view, there is an underlying preconception of such moral theories preventing their attainment of a standpoint of science:

> This is the assumption, implicit or overt, that moral theory is concerned with ends, values rather than with criticism of ends and values.....To discover and define once for all the bonum and the summum bonum in a way which rationally subserves all virtues and duties, is the traditional task of morals; to deny that moral theory has any such office will seem to many equivalent to denial of the possibility of moral philosophy. 1

In the later development of this, two points are important for his criticism: (1) the view that ethical theory should "reveal" what is good; (2) the view that ethical theory should "prescribe" what is good. As regards the first, Dewey argues that the traditional moralist has tried to usurp the function of the artist and in so doing has involved the second:

> Conversion into doctrinal teachings of the imaginative relations of life with which great moral artists have dowered humanity has been the great

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 431.

> cause of their ossification into harsh dogmas; illuminating insight into the relations and goods of life has been lost, and an arbitrary code of precepts and rules substituted. 1

The view that the function of ethics is revelation of goods would of course rule out Dewey's effort in ethics which proceeds upon the view that:

> .....the business of moral theory is not at all with consummations and goods as such, but with discovery of the conditions and consequence of their appearance, a work which is factual and analytic, not dialectic, hortatory, nor prescriptive. 2

Further along he indicates what he means by "dialectic", which seems to be a form of the error of trying to "reveal" goods, saying of this type of theory:

> Therefore like the Aristotelian ethics, they have been dialectic, defining and classifying in hierarchical order antecedent goods and terminating in a notion of the good, the summum bonum; or, like hedonistic ethics, they have made a dialectic abstraction of a feature of concrete goods, their pleasantness; and instead of providing a method of analysis of concrete situations, have laid down rules of calculation and prescribed policies to be pursued as fixed... 3

Such statements can, I think, be shown to be consistent with those that it is the business of ethics to judge good and bad. And while the complete explanation will appear only in our exposition of Dewey's conception of the

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1. Ibid., p. 432.

2. Ibid., p. 433.

3. Ibid., pp. 433-434.

nature of values and the role of valuation, we find that apparent disagreements are resolvable by observing what he means by "goods" and in what sense he denies the business of ethics is to define the good.

When Dewey says above that ethics is concerned with "goods as such", the important part is the "as such"; for we learned earlier in the chapter that Dewey's particular theory is that goods or values as "immediate existences" (which is evidently meant by "as such") are not discriminable in terms of their objective goodness. The latter is the result of comparing and relating, not a matter of immediate experience. Thus he is saying that the concern of ethics is with objective goodness, a work which for him is concerned "with discovery of the conditions and consequences" and hence is "factual and analytic".

Secondly, his remarks upon the attempt to define the summum bonum seem to have as their purpose the criticism of attempts at exhaustive accounts of the good, of the sort which gives such a complete and rigid definition of the right as to be casuistical. This is what is stresed in the two sentences upon the summum bonum quoted above; in the first it is that ethics define the summum bonum "once for all" and in a way which "rationally subserves all virtues and duties"; in the second, that there is laid down a "hierarchical order" and "rules of calculation and pre-

scribed policies to be pursued as fixed". These, I take it, not the attempt to describe the good, constitute the error in such efforts.

Thus we are to conclude that in what Dewey considers as the requirements of an adequate ethical theory, we frequently find more than is necessary for our purpose. For in considering the nature of ethical theory he often includes not only the problems that must be answered by ethical theory in general but the specific way in which they are to be answered, this preparing the way for the answer he gives. Such is true of his constant emphasis upon the point that ethics should not prescribe rigid standards and rules for determining what is right in particular situations, this being simply one particular solution of the general ethical problem of how we know the right. Hence the proper place for considering this contention is in the chapter on Moral Knowledge, and not here as an element in Dewey's conception of the nature of ethical theory. That Dewey himself considers views of this sort properly ethical in nature is plain in the criticisms he makes of them in clarifying his own view.

This preliminary examination has then justified an investigation of Dewey's ethics in terms of the three issues suggested as fundamental for ethical theory. For we

have found that in his conception of ethical theory Dewey recognizes the significance of these problems. We are ready to undertake our main project of investigating his position upon these: the Theory of The Good, the Theory of Human Nature as it relates to the good, and the Theory of Moral Knowledge.

CHAPTER I

THEORY OF THE GOOD

In examining the adequacy of a theory of the good three general requirements might be made: (1) a meaningful definition of the good, (2) a proper basis for the theory of the good in a theory of human nature, the latter explaining why the good is such, (3) a <u>true</u> theory of human nature, in terms of which the conception of the good is not only validated by (2) but demonstrated true. Whether Dewey provides (1) will constitute the subject of this first chapter; whether he provides (2) will constitute the subject of the second. In the latter we shall inquire, as is indicated in the Introduction, only as to whether a theory of human nature is advanced that is adequate to explain why the good is good; and hence we shall be concerned not at all with (3). The limitations of this project restrict our

inquiry to one into the adequacy of Dewey's ethical theory in terms of our initial schema. To determine the truth of Dewey's theory of human nature would require entering fields--psychological or metaphysical--to which we could not hope to do justice here. Thus, whatever our findings regarding human nature as the basis of the good, whether these prove negative or positive as to the facility of Dewey's theory of human nature to ground his conception of the good, we shall not have demonstrated either the truth or falsity of his theory of human nature. And an ethical theory might conceivably contain a true theory of human nature and yet not be adequate as regards the theory of the good, since the information concerning human beings might be true but insufficient to explain why what was defined as good should be such. Nevertheless, inasmuch as the good is the end of human nature, it is difficult to understand how a theorist could be in possession of both altogether true and complete knowledge of human nature and yet be in error as to what is good. While on the other hand an ethical theory could contain a true definition of the good and still be inadequate as regards the theory of human nature, it would be only an accident. For the truth of the theory of the good depends upon both the adequacy with which its theory of human nature explains it and the truth of this theory of human nature.

As a helpful preliminary to the examination, we might note what generally will be necessary to an adequate definition of the good. For a conception to constitute a real definition, it must, of course, differentiate the good from the bad. It is also reasonable to expect that it designate certain general elements that compose the good, such as certain virtues and values that are essential to the good. However, this cannot be made a general requirement, for the theory may be such as to assert that general virtues or values are, for various reasons, incapable of being defined. Thus this is not essential to a definition of the good, and it is sufficient that by some means it enable us to recognize instances of good as good. Nor can we require that the definition enable us to know what will conduce to the good in any particular situation, for the complexity of the latter may require that the abstract concept be supplemented by a certain moral method. It <u>is</u> necessary that the concept enable us to recognize the element in verified instances of good that causes them to be good. If a definition is adequate it will enable us to denote instances of what is defined; in this case instances of good or of moral conduct. This does not mean that it must serve to tell exactly what will be good in a particular case, for this may involve conditions whose nature or operation is not known prior to action. It does mean that

after an act has been taken and its consequences have accrued, we should by the use of the definition be able to tell whether the consequences are good, and hence whether the act, if it is judged by its consequences, was moral.

In this chapter we wish first to determine precisely what constitutes Dewey's conception of the good. This involves the elimination of certain descriptions of the good that accompany the essential doctrine. Our procedure will be the demonstration of the inadequacy of these other concepts in their failure to serve as definitions of the good, our point being not that Dewey advances these as explicit and exhaustive conceptions of the good, but that the complexity of his discussions tends to obscure the essential element. While he often seems to do the former, what is important is, that although a number of the characterizations of the good are not adequate, there is one which does seem to be so, namely, "social well-being". In the following we wish to distinguish exactly what can and what cannot be legitimately offered as his conception of the good, rather than to point to certain inadvertences that seem to appear in the discussion of the good. Having isolated the essential idea in Dewey's conception of the good we shall then be ready to examine its foundation in his theory of human nature.

Our conclusion will be that Dewey does have an adequate definition of the good, namely "social well-being", this being a preliminary to the crucial undertaking of determining whether he has an adequate basis for this conception in his theory of human nature. It should become clear in the exposition of various other descriptions of the good, and their elimination as inadequate unless supplemented by the concept of social well-being, that these descriptions are not regarded by Dewey as alternative and individually complete accounts of the good. Each concept tends to pass into and to involve the other. However, each also contains information not directly relevant to the definition of the good; information concerning the nature of the experience of good and the manner of knowing the good. As will be indicated presently, our particular approach is designed to distinguish these elements in his theory. But the explanation of our method of expounding the various descriptions separately, is that Dewey invokes <u>all</u> of these concepts, sometimes alone, sometimes together, without ever noting either their identity or differences. The reader, then, wishes to know whether they are merely different names for the same view, or alternative concepts. We believe that they are the former; yet because each concept introduces distinct points capable of being treated under its special label, the contention demands corroboration that when these are proposed

as conceptions of the good they represent an identical position. Our point will be that Dewey cannot sustain a definition of the good upon any one of these concepts or upon all taken together, so long as they do not include the notion of the social character of the good.

Although the reference to any one of these as an adequate statement of the good provides no valid objection to his definition of the good in so far as Dewey includes the concept of social well-being in the exposition of any one, it does obscure what is the essential differentiating trait of the good. Approaching his theory as we do, we can distinguish this element--social well-being-- from other elements that accompany and enrich it, yet do not constitute its essential characteristic. Our only contention for this method is that it does enable us to label certain elements that are not the distinguishing characteristic of the good, and that each does call attention to distinct features of Dewey's treatment of the good.

To the objection that this procedure of discussing these non-essential elements under headings that Dewey uses to refer to the good obscures the fact that Dewey recognizes that each of these concepts expresses an identical theory, our reply is that the difficulty is with Dewey himself. We are eager to grant that Dewey regards social well-being as the essential characteristic of the good. Yet we suggest

that he unnecessarily obscures his theory by calling the good by such different names in different places, on these occasions introducing his essential doctrine only incidentally and as an aspect of some other view; as a mere detail in the conception that the good is "activity", or "self-expression", or "harmony". There is no obvious reason why the same wealth of expression could not be obtained by focusing the points these include around a central and unmistakable concept. While this concerns manner of expression, the difficulties it provokes justify the separate treatment of each of Dewey's ways of characterizing the good. Further, this method obviates the possibility, after having considered the relation of Dewey's theory of human nature to the concept of the good as social, of being confronted with the objection that the entire treatment is irrelevant because it is some other of these descriptions that is fundamental. In exposing the inadequacy of these other descriptions of the good, therefore, we hope we may assume that this is equally apparent to Dewey, and thus discloses the significance of the conception of social well-being.

The observation in the Introduction, that while Dewey sometimes seems to deny the propriety of ethical inquiry into the nature of the good, he nevertheless recognizes the provision of a concept of the good as a necessary

task of ethics, furnishes a point of departure in considering his particular theory of the good. The apparent attack upon attempts to provide a theory of the good, is either in flat contradiction with other assertions, or it reveals something about the nature of Dewey's view. We believe the latter to be the case. It discloses that his criticisms are directed at a particular way of knowing and doing the good act in concrete situations. He is objecting to the use of absolute principles to classify automatically the concrete situation as of a certain sort and to prescribe, therefore, a proper form of action. Again it is the casuist that Dewey assails. The positive view in terms of which the attack is made, is that of the relation of "end and means", but since it concerns the issue of Moral Knowledge, is taken up in that chapter. It is necessary, however, to notice here briefly how the apparently contradictory statements about the necessity of a theory of the good are reconciled by a distinction between two uses of the term "end" by Dewey. This will also bring out an aspect of Dewey's conception of the good.

Dewey attacks traditional ethical theories for their common assumption that "there is a single, fixed and final good", suggesting that "we advance to a belief in a plurality of changing, moving, individualized goods and

ends".[1] Yet at one point in the same chapter where these statements appear, Dewey himself says that "Growth itself is the only moral end".[2] These statements are reconciled by observing that "growth" connotes the willingness to abandon previously experienced particular ends and to make a "plurality of changing, moving, goods and ends" the only good end. But while this discloses that there is complete particularity in the quality of each experienced good, there seems also for Dewey to be a single pattern or element which they all possess, as is expressed here by "growth". This latter sense seems to be that in which Dewey means "end" when, as we have noted in the Introduction, he uses it to express the proper goal of human effort, the abstract good; whereas in the former sense, when he is criticizing "fixed ends" and maintaining the particularity of the good, he is considering ends as elements in the temporal sequences of experience. In this second sense end may mean either a specific purpose or its specific accomplishment,[3] but in either case it stands for something

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1. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 162.

2. Ibid., p. 176.

3. In Theory of Valuation, p. 49, Dewey distinguishes between end as a particular purpose and as the purpose actually achieved.

concretely present as an experience. In the other abstract use, however, the "end" is never the content of an experience; it does, of course, appear in experience but does so as an abstract symbol. The end or the good designates some formal property, or some identical element that qualifies all cases of moral conduct; it is a conceptual symbol classifying certain experiences as of one type. And while the experiencing of this type is real, any particular experience in its fullest reality contains more than this common element or symbolic representation.

That this is the proper interpretation of Dewey's diverse statements upon ends is indicated by the fact that the denial that there are fixed ends is always coincident with the assertion of the "uniqueness" of the good. In a chapter significantly entitled, we think, "The Uniqueness of Good" and not "The Uniqueness of The Good", Dewey severely criticizes doctrines that would employ in a mechanical fashion static principles for prescribing how we are to act in terms of the situation, thus making each experience a duplication of some prior one. The good, he insists, is in quality never the same.[1] Thus the sort of uniqueness Dewey stresses is one of the experience of good, and hence is primarily a statement about experience, not about the good

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 211.

as such. It is entirely compatible with the assertion that in "quality", taken in another sense, the good is the same wherever found, as in another passage Dewey himself asserts.

By the doctrine that that good is single, one need not mean that the content of the experience of good is always the same or that the novel situation is to be dealt with simply as a duplication of past situations, but only that there will be a common feature distinguishing all cases of good. The question is whether the good is unique only in that it is never experienced in just the same way, for them there may be some "generic trait" of all experiences of good. If there is this trait, this is what will be important for our purposes, since it is the common element that constitutes any experience as good. That there is such a trait for Dewey seems to be implied both by his assertion that it is the business of ethics to give a concept of the good, and by his own endeavor to provide such a concept. What is Dewey's theory of the good?[1]

The difficulty is not in finding a concept of the good in Dewey, but in reducing the several expressions of this concept that are offered to a single clear definition. For while Dewey indicates that the statements upon the uniqueness of the good are made relative to a conception of

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1. Mr. W. A. Crawley wishes to say that "It should be added that both the content and the form of the good may vary or change, as I understand Dewey."

a good that is identical throughout the diversity of the particular instances, he seems to take several different positions upon what this single good is. In particular writings unambiguous definitions of the good are found, but Dewey's variety of expressions give the appearance of advancing distinct, if not incompatible, conceptions of the good.

This situation is to be accounted for, we believe, by the presence of three related but distinct issues in the treatments of the good. Dewey discusses these together without sharply distinguishing the separate points involved, thus giving comments upon these other issues the appearance of being comments upon the good. Two of the issues are related to the good but do not constitute a definition of it. These are: (1) the method of knowing the good, and (2) the nature of the experience of good. The third element (3) is of course a discussion of the good itself. All of these are vitally connected, yet there is for our purposes an important separateness. It is possible to have fairly complete answers to (1) and (2) without a positive description of the good. In eliciting the essential element in Dewey's conception of the good we wish to show that a number of the descriptions concern (1) and (2), and hence that these are inadequate without the further concept given by (3).

It is to be remembered that Dewey scarcely ever discusses in strict separation any of the six descriptions that we shall enumerate as definitions of the good, and our purpose in breaking up his actual discussions into these elements is only to make clear just what is involved in his conception of the good and what bears upon these other points. In this chapter we shall be dominantly concerned with eliminating what is not essential to the good as such, i.e., as the abstract element qualifying the particular instances of good as good. The positive content of what we take to be his conception of the good will be presented in the following chapter. Here we shall first indicate generally why Dewey's comments upon the method of knowing the good and the nature of the experience of the good are not adequate to defining the positive content of the good. Then we shall attempt to show how a number of descriptions of the good bear on these two points and hence must depend for their adequacy as descriptions of the good upon the further concept, which, in the actual discussions, is almost always conjoined with these descriptions.

As to the first, we observe that Dewey's criticism of other ethical theories suggests the nature of his position on the method of knowing the good and on the character of the experience of good. The criticisms were launched in terms of the individuality of the moral situation, and this

element of "uniqueness" is the common feature in both issues. As to our method of knowing the right, the individuality of every situation requires that a fresh examination be undertaken to determine what to do; and, as to the nature of the experience of the good, the action that follows from attention to this individuality will issue in an experience that is unique because consisting of a unique combination of elements.

The proper method for knowing what is good in a particular situation, and hence how to act, is to examine carefully and thoroughly all the relations that are involved in the situation,- conditions and consequences. Clearly this view, rather than containing a description of the good, need not imply even that its proponent has a conception of the good. It may be insisting only that the same method be applied here that has been successfully employed in obtaining other sorts of knowledge, so that the only assumption involved would be that the good is sufficiently the same sort of object as the other kinds of things of which we have knowledge that whatever the good actually turns out to be it may be approached by the same method. And as a matter of fact this is Dewey's position.[1] Hence

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1. Cf. Chapter "Moral Knowledge".

information about our method of knowing what to do in a moral perplexity does not imply a description of the good.

However, if for Dewey the good were knowledge of the good, or the endeavor to attain this knowledge, then the account of the method of knowing the good would seem to be adequate to constitute a definition of the good. That the good is not the latter becomes clear in our treatment of virtue, which, as the endeavor to know the good, is related to the good as its instrument but is not identical with it. And if the good is knowledge, not in general, but <u>of the good</u>, it is implied that the good, besides its character of being known, has some special content; so that to define the good as knowledge of the good still leaves the problem of defining what else the good is; that is, what it is that is known. It may still be held that the <u>essential</u> trait of the good is its being known, but without a definition of the particular content of the good which is known, the fact of its being known cannot differentiate the good from anything else that is known. Hence we can require that the good be defined apart from its being known and hence in distinction from the method by which it is known.

But we shall see that neither does Dewey conceive the good as knowledge of the good. For him the good is, first, something "experienced", and while this includes knowledge of the good, it does not exhaust the good; and

second, it has a positive content. A thing to be a good must be verified by intellectual procedure, but its nature as good consists not in this verification but in a positive content--social well-being. For Dewey, knowledge of the good is an indispensable instrument to the good, but it is neither identical with it nor its essential trait. Thus it must be possible to describe how the good is known without describing what the good essentially is; and hence the good cannot, for Dewey, be defined by the method of knowing the good. It may be that the attainment of the good requires an account of our method of knowing it, and that a full account of the nature of the good as social well-being involves a reference to this method; yet it is possible to define the essential nature of concept of social well-being in distinction from the nature of moral knowledge. However closely moral knowledge and the moral good are connected, it must be possible to describe the former without including the latter. Were it not, the two would be identical, which we have seen cannot furnish a definition of the good.

Second, Dewey's conception of the nature of the experience of good does not contain a description of the good. For what is stresed as the essential feature of this experience is its "uniqueness", the absolute individuality of its felt quality. To constitute an adequate definition of the good this feature would have to differentiate good

from bad, there being no bad experiences that were unique. But while Dewey holds that uniqueness is a necessary trait of the experience of good, he would hardly maintain, we believe, that only experiences of good were unique.

In bringing out that these views of our method of knowing the good and the nature of our experience of the good are not adequate to define the good we shall consider all but one of the descriptions of the good--the essential doctrine, which is that the good is "social well-being". Each of the descriptions to be considered bears upon both points, but they may be divided into two sets in terms of their emphasis. Those characterizations of the good that stress our method of knowing the good are: "that which meets the needs of the situation"; "Exercise of Function", or "Realization of Individuality"; "harmony". Those which more clearly recognize the nature of the experience of the good are: "growth"; "activity"; "experience of meaning". The common emphasis in all six is, as has been noted, the character of individuality or uniqueness. Our exposition of these descriptions will attempt to show how they tend to pass into each other, as well as their bearing on one or the other of the two issues, and their inadequacy as a definition of the good.

I

THE VARIOUS DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GOOD

The Good as "Meeting the Needs of the Situation".

The first of the general characterizations of the good to be considered--"that which meets the needs of the situation"--brings out with greatest force the individuality of every moral situation and consequently of every moral experience. The following quotations indicate the nature of the characterization of the good as that which meets the need of the situation. "...no act can be so virtuous, so right, as to go beyond meeting the demands of the situation."[1] "A moral law...is the principle of action which, acted upon, will meet the needs of the existing situation as regards the wants, powers and circumstances of the persons concerned."[2] It is in reference to this, perhaps the most familiar of Dewey's descriptions of the good, that he contends that conduct is "absolutely individualized".[3] Moral deliberation (like any form of deliberation, for Dewey) arises in a "problematic situation"; a conflict or stress of some sort is presented and provokes an effort to

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1. Outlines of Ethics, p. 225.

2. Ibid., p. 177.

3. Moral Theory and Practice, p. 191.

relieve it. Because every such situation is a complex of peculiar elements it exacts a fresh analysis and in the resolution provides a unique good. The good is unique, Dewey says, because "it marks the resolution of a distinctive complication of competing habits and impulses which can never repeat itself."[1]

The other important feature of the concept is the necessity of a conscientious survey of the facts and relations relevant to the performance of the good act. Rules and principles are to be used as instruments for analyzing out elements of the situation, rather than for prescribing mechanically what is to be done. The neglect to engage in this detailed work results in the guidance of conduct by "instinct" or "sentiment". Thus the act which will meet the situation is determined by the relationships the latter contains.[2]

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 211.

2. The nature of the "situation" to which Dewey refers and the "relationships" that are to determine the good act are illustrated in an example he gives of what constitutes obligation. Taking the case of a street railway conductor whose union has ordered a strike, Dewey says: "He has to act not in view of some abstract principle, but in view of a concrete situation. He considers his present wage in relation to its needs and abilities; his capacity and taste for this and for that work; the reasons for the strike; the conditions of labor at present with reference to winning the strike,

(see next page)

It is apparent that this concept offers only advice as to how, in a particular situation, to know and attain the good, not a description of what the good is. There is the further question, to be considered in the chapter on Moral Knowledge, of how, without an abstract concept of the good, w e could know what the good is, even in the particular situation. But in any case the advice does not define what is good in the abstract; it does not include the common element in the good. It suggests rather a procedure for obtaining good in the concrete. The advice alone would be sufficient if there were no common trait of the good, or if the good were simply a procedure. But if there is such a thing as the good, its particular instances must possess some common element certifying them as good.[1] And while Dewey believes that in morals method is supreme,

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and as to the chance of getting other work. He considers his family, their needs and developing powers; the demand that they should live decently; that his children should be fairly educated and get a fair start in the world; he considers his relationships to his fellow members in the union, etc." (Outlines of Ethics, p. 178; this same illustration is given in more dramatic form in Moral Theory and Practice, p. 199).

1. The Philosophy of John Dewey, The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. I ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, Northwestern University, Evanston and Chicago, 1939.

certainly he does not believe that the good is identical with the endeavor to discover it. He does have a positive notion of the good, as is apparent in its description as social well-being.

Without some further specification of the "needs of the situation" we would have no way for determining whether specific acts and their consequences are good or bad. "Needs" is evidently meant to designate what the agent ought to do, but until the nature of these needs are specified, until we are told what needs are legitimate and what ones wrong, we are unable to determine whether the agent has responded to those that are proper; or, if the term "needs" is restricted to those that are proper, its content must be elaborated so as to enable us to define the good denotatively. We could perhaps determine whether the act followed from the correct method of knowing the situation, but this could not decide the morality of the act nor the goodness of its consequences unless the good consisted in knowing the good, which we have seen to be inadequate as a definition. To make the notion of the "needs of the situation" compatible with the standard of social well-being which Dewey advances, these needs must be given a definite restriction. Without the specification of their social character there can be no objection to finding in any situation "needs" contrary to social well-being. "Certainly," one might agree,

"it is necessary to meet the needs of the situation, but the only real, valid needs are my own, and whether these include social well-being is simply irrelevant." On the general description of the "needs" of the situation that has thus far been given, no effective reply could be offered.

However, Dewey has other descriptions of the good that seem to provide greater specificity to the general conception of "that which meets the needs of the situation". Do these introduce an adequate definition of the good?

The Good as "Exercise of Function" or "Realization of Individuality".

An analysis of Dewey's meaning of "function" and "individuality" in this description of the good discloses in more detail the nature of the "needs" of the situation.

The common feature in "individuality" and "function" is that each includes <u>both</u> subjective capacity and objective environment. Individuality means:

> On one side,...special dispositions, temperament, gifts, bent, or inclination; on the other side,...special station, situation, limitations, surroundings, opportunities, etc. Or, let us say, it means <u>specific capacity</u> and <u>specific environment.</u> Each of these elements, apart from the other, is a bare abstraction and without reality. 1

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1. <u>Outlines of Ethics</u>, p. 97.

Environmental conditions give significance, content, and opportunity for exercise, to capacity; capacity selects out and gives vitality to environment.

As to "function", Dewey explains:

> Function is a term which we may use to express the union of the two sides of individuality. The idea of function is that of an active relation established between power of doing, on one side, and something to be done on the other. 1

Thus it follows that individuality will be realized, or function exercised, only by action which is properly related both to subjective capacity and objective circumstances.

In short, this good will be achieved by action which meets the "requirements of the situation", situation now being seen to include both subjective and objective elements. There are two types of "needs" to be satisfied, and each is strictly relative to the other.[2]

The same poimt is expressed more explicitly, but much more briefly, in Study of Ethics, the only place to my knowledge where Dewey expressly defines the ethical meaning of the much used term "situation". Here he says, "...the situation is nothing but the complete co-ordination of all his (the agent's) powers (abilities) and relations".[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 100.

2. Study of Ethics, pp. 10-11.

3. Ibid., p. 3.

He illustrates with a business situation:

> The agent, to be successful, must form his plans with reference to his conditions--state of raw material, transportation facilities, demand in market, and others competing to supply this demand. His purposes, so far as rightly formed, are a synthesis or co-ordination of the prevailing conditions of his scene of action. But this situation is not something hard and fixed, outside of the agent. What the situation is to him depends upon his own capacities--his resources, skill, etc. He himself is a part of the conditions to be taken into account. Inferior raw material will yield to an invention which enables him to get more out of it, remoteness from market to his ability to contrive new methods of transportation, etc. 1

We are thus enabled also to see more clearly the import of the assertion: "...moral conduct is entirely individualized. It is where, when, how, and of whom."[2] Because the good act, as that which meets the needs of the situation, is determined by two variable elements, subjective disposition and objective circumstances, so related that each is influenced by the other, the good of the situation must be wrought so as to satisfy this peculiar set of specifications.

Here again we have only more specific advice as to how to achieve knowledge of the good and good action, not a description of what the good abstractly consists in. We know that the elements in the situation are so related that they cannot be considered in isolation, and that the

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1. Ibid., p. 9.

2. Outlines of Ethics. p. 135.

particular good of the situation will be one that takes this into account. But so far we do not know what the generic trait of the particular good will be. Again, with the general account given thus far, we would be incapable of condemning or approving any sort of conduct, for without a restriction upon the elements that are properly involved in the moral situation, the agent might claim that any he chose to concentrate upon constituted the needs of the situation.

There is, however, another description of the good that might seem to make this conception adequate by explaining how the "needs of the situation" are to be met, suggesting that they have a certain organization. We turn them to an examination of the description of the good as "harmony".

The Good as Harmony

The emphases upon the method of knowing the good, and upon the nature of the experience of good, seem to merge in the concept of harmony. This apparently possesses for Dewey two meanings in relation to the good. In one it signifies the nature of the active experience of good, namely as the resolution of conflict. In another, it signifies the orientation of desires or needs in reflection.

In the first sense harmony means only uninhibited activity; in the second it means a relation of consistence among "ends", "desires", or "values". Yet the two meanings

are complementary; for acticity can move "freely", it can possess integrity or harmony only when there is no conflict among "ends". Harmony then in one case is simply an adjective applied to satisfactory activity to designate its satisfactoriness; in the other it stands for a certain relation among the ends of conduct. The latter is something to be achieved by deliberation, while the former is the result of this accomplishment of harmony. Because the latter is a product and an irreducible quality of direct experience, the term "harmony" becomes significant as a characterization of the good only as this relation of ends, the satisfactory character of experience that is indicated by the other use of harmony being an effect of this relation. The "harmony" that consists of a certain type of experience apparently can not be described as experience, except perhaps poetically, and hence it is important as a description of the good only in this formal, relational aspect.

The purpose of all cases of deliberation is to reinstate the active harmony of experience, to "secure a reunification of activity and the restoration of its ongoing unity".[1] The distinguishing feature of the problematic moral situation, however, is that the conflict to be resolved lies between ends or values potential in the presented situation. In another type of situation the end is given

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 196.

at the start, there is only one value, and deliberation arises to discover the means of obtaining it. In the moral situation it is necessary, on the one hand, to act in some fasion on the other, to base action upon a choice between "incompatible values".[1]

> "Moral theory[2] cannot emerge when there is positive belief as to what is right and what is wrong;... It emerges when men are confronted with situations in which different desires promise opposed goods and in which incompatible courses of action seem to be morally justified. Only such a conflict of good ends and of standards and rules of right and wrong calls forth personal inquiry into the bases of morals." [3]

It is to be expected them that the office of reflection is "the formation of a judgment of value in which particular satisfactions are placed as integral parts of conduct as a consistent harmonious whole".[4] and accordingly "...a satisfaction which is seen, by reflection based on large experience, to unify in a harmonious way his (the agent's) whole system of desires, is

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 174.

2. Moral theory is used here as synonymous with reflectiom upon a moral problem.

3. Cf. Ethics, first ed., pp. 205-211.

4. Ibid., p. 228.

higher in quality than a good which is such only in relation to a particular want in isolation."[1]

> Wisdom, or, as it is called on the ordinary plane, prudence, sound judgment, is the ability to foresee consequences in such a way that we form ends which grow into one another and reenforce one another. Moral folly is the surrender of the greater good for the lesser; it is snatching at one satisfaction in a way which prevents us from having others, and which gets us subsequently into trouble and dissatisfaction.[2]

But thus far the comments indicate only the general fact that ends are to be organized in some fashion, a point that would seem to be contained in the insistence upon the necessity of meeting the needs of the situation. Is there no general trait that distinguishes the relation of "harmony"? Dewey seems to offer none.

We find that the meaning of "harmony" as a description of the good, tends to become absorbed into two of the other characterizations. As a certain relation among desires it becomes the "expression of the entire self"; as a certain relation among the elements of the situation it "meets the needs of the situation". As regards the former, the idea of harmony is expressed in described the good act as that which manifests the <u>whole</u> self.

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1. Ibid., p. 212.

2. Ibid., p. 228.

> The basis for discriminating between "right" and "wrong" in the judgment is found in the fact that some acts tend to narrow the self, to introduce friction into it, to weaken its power, and in various ways to disintegrate it, while other acts tend to expand, invigorate, harmonize, and in general organize the self. 1

Again:

> The bad act is partial, the good organic. The good man "eats to live", that is, the satisfaction even of the appetite of hunger is functional to the whole self or life; if we say the man who "lives to eat" is bad, it is because he is sacrificing much of himself to one partial expression of himself. 2

The good man expresses his entire self in each particular act; the particular deed "harmonizes his powers, reducing his impulses, both primary and induced, to unity." [3] Duty is the appeal of this larger, organic self as against the divided, partial self.

The concept of "harmony" as equivalent to "that which meets the needs of the situation" is indicated in its use in stating what is involved in the "mediation of impulse". The latter is clearly a description of the method for knowing the right; and hence is not to be considered here. However it is only in reference to this that the distinctive meaning of harmony as a relation is suggested.

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1. Study of Ethics, p. 22.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

3. Ibid., p. 74.

And we find not only that harmony designates primarily our means of knowing the good but that even in this meaning it does not contain distinguishing traits, thus adding nothing to the concept of meeting the needs of the situation.

Contrasting reasonable and unreasonable choice, Dewey describes the latter by:

> But the object thought of may be one which stimulates by unifying, harmonizing, different competing tendencies. It may release an activity in which all are fulfilled, not indeed, in their original form, but in a "sublimated" fashion, that is, in a way which modifies the original direction of each by reducing it to a component along with others in an action of transformed quality. 1

Later he says that reasonable choice

> implies, of course, the presence of a comprehensive object, one which coordinates, organizes and functions each factor of the situation which gave rise to conflict, suspense and deliberation. 2

But here Dewey is speaking of a unification that is strictly relative to the situation in which action must eventuate, and so he speaks of the harmony that is to be achieved as between "habits" and "impulses". The problem is focused, not upon the relation of abstract ends to one another, of their "harmony" or consistence, but on the relation of desires or "preferences" to one another.[3] The center of attention is the problematic situation, and the relation among ends is apparently relative to this situation.

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 193-194.
2. Ibid., p. 195.
3. Ibid., p. 193.

Thus it seems that "harmony" cannot be described in terms of certain general traits but that, on the contrary, it is always such a unique affair that the formal aspect is inseparable from the actual elements coordinated. The individuality of the situation in which harmony is to be secured apparently requires that the relation among the elements organized be equally inimitable. That this is the case is indicated by Dewey's failure, to my knowledge, to consider this question, and by the fact that all his discussions are related to the problematic situation. For if harmony were a general relation possessing a certain formal structure, surely Dewey would define it.

The same comments apply to "harmony" as a description of the good that apply to "that which meets the needs of the situation" and to "exercise of function". The points in each case bear upon the method for knowing what act will promote the good in a concrete situation. They do not tell us what is the nature of the general good that this method will promote, nor how to determine whether or not a particular act is good.

The Good as Concrete and Experiential: "Enrichment of Meaning", "Activity"

A qualification of the concept of the good as the act which meets the needs of the situation now must be made explicit. This concept has more importance in reference to

the right than to the good, indicating what ought to be done in the particular situation rather than what is abstractly good. This same concept is employed as the standard for knowing the right. We already have seen that on occasion Dewey speaks of the act which meets the needs of the situation as the moral good, indicating that such an act is in terms of a responsibility or obligation. It is necessary to notice as regards the good that it is not identical with the act of doing the right. Moral goodness, or virtue, is precisely the doing of such acts; but these are designed to serve the accomplishment of experienced good. This Dewey indicates in three other descriptions of the good that pervade all his ethical writing. One is that of "growth". The others are those of the good as "enrichment of meaning" and as "activity" or "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."[1] The description of the good as "enrichment of meaning" is so close to these two other notions that its consideration will be incorporated in that of these other two.

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 210.

The Good as "Activity"

The last quotation serves to enunciate a point that is not always clear in Dewey, namely, that the good is not activity as such (when activity is conceived in the ordinary way as distinguished from quiescence) but activity having a certain form or certain traits. This does not mean that the good is activity of a particular kind or concerned with certain sorts of objects, such as thinking or making money, but only that Dewey introduces qualifications of activity that distinguish the proper sort of activity from other forms of behavior. Obviously without such qualifications he would not have given an adequate concept of the good, since the fact that human beings are always active in some form deprives us of any means of distinguishing the good from the bad.[1] What them is meant by the good as activity?

In one form in which the good is characterized as "activity" there is intended a distinction between it and "deliberation", in which case the description seems to be

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1. In Human Nature and Conduct p.118, Dewey says:"In truth man acts anyway, he can't help acting." And in The Quest for Certainty, he declares that the fact that action is not inherently inferior to knowledge "...does not imply that action is higher and better than knowledge, and practice inherently superior to thought...Action, when directed by knowledge, is method and means, not an end. The aim and end is the securer, freer and more widely shared embodiment of values in experience." p. 38.

equivalent to that of the good as "harmony" in one of its meanings. Activity then means the results which follow "deliberation", the latter being the process that arises in the event of a felt conflict and has as its function the resolution of the difficulty. This resolution is followed by "activity". Thus to designate the nature of the activity that follows deliberation, as well as the office of the latter, activity is usually characterized as "unified", "integrated", "harmonized", "equilibrated", "restored". Such terms clearly reveal the nature of the origin of the process bringing them about. In a situation that is "troubled", "disintegrated", it is the business of deliberation to remove the inhibiting obstacles, "to resolve entanglements in existing activity, restore continuity, recover harmony."[1]

In other cases in which Dewey speaks of activity as the good, activity means "freedom" or "exercise of function", these terms signifying the same thing.[2] "The end of desire is activity; and it is only in fullness and unity

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 199.

2. "Only that end which executed really affects greater energy and comprehensiveness of character makes for actual freedom. In a word, only the good man, the man who is truly realizing his individuality, is free in the positive sense of that word." Outline of Ethics, p. 164.

of activity that freedom is found."[1] Thus this notion of activity as the good turns us back to the conception of the good as "the realized will, the developed or satisfied self".[2] Saying that "the realization of our capacities or powers constitutes our moral goal" he goes on to say: "To realize capacity...means to act at the height of action, to realize its full meaning."[3] The identity of this notion with that of "exercise of function" (and the indivisuality of the situation in which it is exercised) is apparent when he explains that the capacities to be realized are not simply capacities in general, but specific capacities in relation to a specific environment.

> The capacities of a child, for example, are not simply of a child, not of a man, but of this child, not of any other. So far as they have to do with the ideal to be realized, it is the precise capabilities existing at that exact moment, capabilities as individualized as that place in space and that portion of time which is concerned. 4

Dewey says:

> The notion which I would suggest...is that of self as always a concrete specific activity; and therefore... the identity of self and realization. 5

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1. Outlines of Ethic, p. 164.

2. Ibid., p. 95.

3. Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal, p. 659.

4. Ibid., p. 655.

5. Ibid., p. 653.

The identity of the concepts of activity and self-realization as the good is clear in:

> To find the self in the highest and fullest activity possible at the time, and to perform the act in the consciousness of its complete identification with self (which means, I take it, with complete interest) is morality, and is realization. 1

This description of the good is inadequate, first because action per se cannot differentiate the good from the bad, and second, because all other comments involved in this characterization and specification of the senses in which activity is good either reduce to previously considered descriptions or indicate the experiential nature of good. The latter does not suffice because it is a description of the character of experience rather than of the good. Two points are made: (1) The good harmonizes competing impulses (2) in an experience that is satisfying. But Dewey has been seen to offer no account of a general relation that subsists between impulses when they are so organized as to eventuate in an experience that is good. Nor is there provided the other alternative that might inform us what sort of experiences are "satisfying"; we are not told which general capacities may be realized. That the realization or activity of just any capacity does not comstitute good is clear in the description of the good as social welfare, for

this must condemn the manifestation of the anti-social capacities of the criminal. Can the concept of growth offer any help?

The Good as Growth

This notion of the good as experiential is clearest in Dewey's conception of progress. The good, Dewey has said, is the meaning belonging to a present experience, and progress, he likewise insists, is simply the increase in "meaning", "fullness", "richness", "significance" of the present. It is not a never ending approximation to a future goal, each step diminishing by a certain amount the road to be traversed. Each situation provides its own measure for progress, which will be attained in so far as existing obstructions are removed.

> We move on from the worse into, not just towards, the better, which is authenicated not by comparison with the foreign but in what is indigenous. Unless progress is a present reconstructing it is nothing; if it cannot be told by qualities belonging to the movement of transition it can never be judged. 1

Its object is not in a sort of perfection but simply a more satisfactory experience. Ideals, ends, prove their worth, not by their capacity to disparage from their empyrean heights our actual and attainable values; not by their ability to captivate our imagination with an intensity that

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 282.

paralyzes our active energies. Theirs is the humbler office of enriching present experience, of informing effort with significance and imtent. And Dewey records as the "underlying truth" of Epicureanism its recognition of the all-importance of the present as the locus of good. This view is essentially that the good is a matter of direct experiemce. Dewey's addition is that the best preparation for future goods, the best way to perfect our techniques for handling future situations, and the only means for attaining in the future things of worth, is by attending to the situation directly presented.

> An activity which does not have worth enough to be carried on for its own sake cannot be very effective as a preparation for something else. By making the present activity the expression of the full meaning of the case, that activity is, indeed, an end in itself, not a mere means to something beyond itself; but in being a totality it is also the condition of all future integral action. It forms the habit of requiring that every act be an outlet of the whole self, and it provides the instruments of such complete functioning. 1

The connotation of growth or progress in "realization" and "activity" renders these especially suitable to carry Dewey's meaning. One of his favorite remarks is "the better is the good", this being intended to express not only the idea that what is good in a situation is always a matter of comparison but that without constant

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1. Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal, p. 660.

improvement the agent ceases to be good. He declares, "no matter how "good" he (the agent) has been, he becomes "bad" (even though acting upon a relatively high place of attainment) as soon as he fails to respond to the demand for growth."[1] Thus Dewey contrasts "possessing" and "acting", the former being satisfaction with prior attainments, the latter a willingness to abandon old values and to exploit the potentialities of the new situation to meet the demands it imposes. "The getting and possessing side of life has value only when it is made the stimulus and nutriment of new and wider acting."[2] The moral life is an active search for new values and for new differentiations and complexities in those already experienced.

In one place Dewey distinguishes four types of Badness, all being instances of the failure to grow. "Lawlessness", "Selfishness", "Baseness", and "Demoralization" are all ways in which the self refuses to expand and develop, to break away from its narrowness in the projection of a larger self.[3]

The concept of the individuality of the situation and of the good as meeting its demands, merge in this con-

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 342.

2. Outlines of Ethics, p. 209.

3. Ibid., pp. 216-221.

cept of growth. For it is precisely because the situation presented is new, and holds potential new values, that it is incumbent upon the agent to meet this novelty with a corresponding reconstruction.

"Growth" likewise is inadequate alone as a definition of the good. For in order to be distinguishable from mere change, growth must possess both continuity and increase of some specific sort. Continuity implies a relationship among changes, and growth an increase quantitatively or qualitatively. Thus growth to become a meaningful conception of the good, adding something to the other concepts considered, must be more specifically defined. Again in terms of the description of the good as social well-being there are certain forms of "growth", in its ordinary connotation at least, that clearly would not be acceptable instances of good, e.g. growth in the ability to cheat ones associates.[1]

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1. Perhaps an additional note is necessary upon the good as enrichment of meaning. For Dewey, the concept seems either to be identical with "growth" and "activity" or to signify a purely cognitive apprehension. In the latter sense it would not constitute the good. The insistence upon the uniqueness and the immediacy of the good need not include such a conception, for while cognitive meanings are, for Dewey, predominantly instruments, they yet may provide direct enjoyments. But as we shall see when considering the good as social, this enjoyment is good only as approved by a social standard.

The Common Element in These Descriptions of the Good

It is apparent that what were considered as relatively distinct concepts of the good are not really so in Dewey's system; that they are rather different ways he at various times expresses one essential view, without ever distinguishing them himself. Perhaps, then, it is not altogether surprising that in each of these descriptions of the good we were forced to turn to something else to render them adequate. They furnish a rich expression of the method of knowing the good and the nature of the experience of good, but they all have in common the failure to define the good. That their inadequacy in combination is equal to that of each separately, is apparent when it is noted that they tend to merge into each other and that they agree in their contribution and in their inadequacy--that of containing information on the two above issues, information related to a description of the good but not including it.

The reason the inquiry up to this point has not been successful, and that thus far no satisfactory concept of the good has been uncovered, is the omission of the common element in each of the views; this element--the social chacter of the good--being the central and crucial item in Dewey's ethics. The purpose in treating the other

elements in his view apart from this essential element is that Dewey himself never clearly makes the separation, and the various ones discussed tend to become confused with one another and with the element omitted. Having proceeded in this way we are enabled to see that because these views discussed depend for their adequacy upon the element common to them all, they cannot be offered as a substitute or bulwark for this.

Dewey seems implicitly to recognize that these descriptions are not be themselves sufficient to define the good, for his discussions of these various aspects of the good usually turn at some point to the good as social. Self-realization is the good only in so far as the realization depends upon "...enduring interests in the objects which all can share."[1]

> The kind of self which is formed through action which is faithful to relations with others will be a fuller and broader self than one which is cultivated in isolation from or in opposition to the purposes and needs of others. In contrast, the kind of self which results from generous breadth of interest may be said alone to constitute a development and fulfillment of self, while the other way of life stunts and starves selfhood by cuttings it off from the connections necessary to its growth. [2]

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 335.

2. Ibid., p. 335.

And of the good as harmony, he says:

> The rational good means a comprehensive or complete end, in which are harmoniously included a variety of special aims and values...Since the general or inclusive good is a common or social good, reconciling and combining the ends of a multitude of private or particular persons, justice is the preeminently social virtue; that which maintains the due order of individuals in the interest of the comprehensive or social unity. 1

Of "exercise of function" he says:

> That performance of function which is "the good", is now seen to consist in vital union with, and reproduction of, the practical institutions of which one is a member. The maintenance of such institutions by the free participation therein of individual wills, is, of itself, the common good. 2

Dewey's Conception of Virtue

The inadequacy of these descriptions of the good may be brought out in still another way, at the same time furnishing an opportunity to expound Dewey's conception of virtue. Since virtue is related to the good as a means to obtaining it, a definition of the cardinal virtues should both indicate the nature of the good and serve as a test for the adequacy of a conception of the good. It should do the latter by requiring that the definition offered of the good be capable of deriving the cardinal virtues. Since the virtues are the instruments for securing the good, a conception

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 414.

2. Outlines of Ethics, pp. 173-174.

of the good should be capable of stating what the virtues are. This does not require that the concept be capable of telling in every concrete case a priori what will conduce to it; but only that it be able to state in general terms, such as the cardinal virtues, what instruments are productive of it.

In our examination of Dewey's theory of virtue we shall look for these two things: first, what Dewey's conception of virtue indicates regarding his theory of the good; second and principally, whether from the above descriptions of the good we can derive what he defines as the virtues. As regards the first, the virtues indicate that what is good is both knowledge of the good and social well-being. We are already familiar with the involvement of the former which is not a differentia of the good with the latter which is this differentia, in Dewey's treatment of ethical issues. As regards the second, if the virtues were confined to indicating that the good is knowing the good, the various descriptions of the good that were considered would seem to be capable of deriving what are defined as the virtues. This would not appear to be the case, however, if the virtues also indicate that the good is social, for inasmuch as the six descriptions of the good do not contain the notion that the good is social, they would seem to offer no reason why socially beneficial dispositions are virtuous.

Two objections may arise to contest the serviceability of such a method of testing the definition of the good. One is that the meaning of the virtues is not static but changing, and since they have no essential identity they are useless to differentiate good from bad. Such an objection will be considered at another place, (Chapter II, Sec. 1) but it may be observed in passing that if this is true of all general terms, then the definition of the good is manifestly inadequate since it contains such terms which must then have no single meaning. The second objection is that moral situations are so individual that what is a value or virtue can be told only in reference to a particular case, because the good or bad quality of the value or virtue depends upon the peculiar nature of the instance. If this were the case the adequacy of a conception of the good would be determinable only as regards the adequacy of the theory of human nature supporting it and the adequacy of its theory of our method of knowing the right. Is this true of Dewey's position?

Dewey's insistence upon the non-static character of virtues embraces two points. One is the alterability of the meaning of concepts of virtue, and this we have reserved for a later treatment. The other is the plasticity of the virtues as regards one another. We shall see that he does not regard virtues as relative to the situation in the above

Dewey's position is that as attributes of character virtues are not separate and definite dispositions, to be cultivated one at a time. Rather they interpenetrate and fuse, involving one another in their effective operation. He says:

> The mere idea of a catalogue of different virtues commits us to the notion that virtues may be kept apart, pigeon-holed in water tight compartments. In fact virtuous traits interpenetrate one another; this unity is involved in the very idea of integrity of character. At one time persistence and endurance in the face of obstacles is the most prominent feature; then the attitude is the excellence called courage. At another time, the trait of impartiality and equity is uppermost, and we call it justice. At other times, the necessity for subordinating immediate satisfaction of a strong appetite or desire to a comprehensive good is the conspicuous feature. Then the disposition is denominated temperance, self-control. When the preiminent phase is the need for thoughtfulness, for consecutive and persistent attention, in order that these other qualities may function, the interest receives the name of moral wisdom, insight, conscientiousness. In each case the difference is one of emphasis. 1

For both of these reasons it is impossible to catalogue the virtues and define each exactly.[2] The substitute Dewey offers, however, presents no hindrance to considering them as the cardinal virtues, so long as we remember their interpenetrative character. They are explicitly advanced on this basis in his earlier Outlines of Ethics. In the later

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 283; for a further illustration of this "wholeness of virtue", see Ibid., p. 285.

2. Ethics, first edition, pp. 400-402.

editions of the Ethics he prefers to consider them as "qualities characteristic of interest".[1] But in both cases there are three primary virtues that do not alter with situations in such a way that in some their opposites constitute virtuous action. On the contrary, all of the virtues seem to be involved in a sublimated form in every instance of moral conduct, the variances of the particular situation serving only to emphasize the presence of a particular one.[2] Thus the virtues, either singly or conjointly, qualify every case of moral conduct. This will become clear in the following discussion of the concrete nature of the virtues.

The relation of virtues to the good as instruments to its accomplishment is clear in the statement that virtues are "The habits of character whose effect is to sustain and spread the rational or common good."[3] Virtue is explicitly defined as "...the settled intelligent identification of an agent's capacity with some aspect of the reasonable or common happiness."[4]

Dewey's conception of virtue is, we believe, best understood in terms of the good and knowledge of the good.

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1. Ethics, second ed., p.281; Cp.Ethics,first ed.,pp.402-405.
2. Ethics, second ed., p. 285.
3. Ibid., p. 401.
4. Ethics, first ed., p. 403.

On one hand he maintains that the virtues are those tendencies that tend to "sustain and spread" the "common" good; on the other he defines as the virtues, dispositions all of which are aspects or instruments of knowing the good. We shall consider the latter first.

On one occasion Dewey states explicitly the instrumental function of the virtues for knowing the good. He says:

> Our moral failures go back to some weakness of disposition, some absence of sympathy, some one-sided bias that makes us perform the judgment of the concrete case carelessly or perversely. Wide sympathy, keen sensitiveness, persistence in the face of the disagreeable, balance of interests enabling us to undertake the work of analysis and decision intelligently are the distinctively moral traits--the virtues or moral excellencies. 1

The idea is more substantially expressed in the distinctively ethical writings. The "qualities of genuine interest" (or "aspects of virtue" as they are designated in the first edition of the Ethics) are "wholeheartedness", "persistence", and "impartiality" ("purity" or "sincerity" are given in place of the last in the first edition.) All of these are plainly connected with efficient reflection. For Dewey, "wholeheartedness" means "consistency" and "singlemindedness"; "persistence", stability under adverse conditions; "impartiality", disinterestedness. The point is brought out in

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1. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 164.

the importance attributed to "conscientiousness". Dewey later distinguishes between Wisdom, the older term, and Conscientiousness, the modern term: the former emphasized a knowledge already possessed, the latter interest in the discovery of knowledge. The latter is preferred by Dewey, who says: "Moral knowing, as a fundamental or cardinal aspect of virtue, is then the completeness of the interest in good exhibited in effort to discover the good."[1] In the first edition of the Ethics Dewey concludes that conscientiousness is the "guarantee" or "nurse" of all the virtues: "...since no habitual interest can be integral, enduring, or sincere, save as it is reasonable...interest in the good is also wisdom or conscientiousness--interest in the discovery of the true good of the situation."[2] He continues to explain specifically how wisdom or conscientiousness is:

> "...the nurse of all the virtues. Our most devoted courage is in the will to know the good and the fair by unflinching attention to the painful and disagreeable. Our severest discipline in self-control is that which checks the exorbitamt pretensions of an appetite by insisting upon knowing it in its true proportions. The most exacting justice is that of an intelligence which gives due weight to each desire and demand in deliberation before it is allowed to pass into overt action. 3

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 420. For further statements of this point see Ethics, second ed., p. 275 and pp. 297-298.

2. Ibid., p. 405.

3. Ibid., p. 405.

In study of Ethics, where Dewey also attempts to reduce several virtues to the one of conscientiousness,[1] he stresses the importance of knowledge for virtue. He declares: "Moral education requires a shifting of the centre of obligation, locating it less in the mere doing of what seems to be right and more as the habit of searching for what is really right."[2]

But while the sincere desire to discover the good may constitute virtue, Dewey sometimes includes in virtue, as "interest in approved objects", not merely an interest in discovering what they are but dispositions towards them as the discovered good. This may simply indicate that Dewey believes sincere thought is the one means necessary to arriving at a notion of the proper good as he conceives it, an hypothesis we will examine in the chapter on knowing the right. Here it is enough to notice that Dewey describes the virtues in such a way as to suggest they are what they are because they conduce to social welfare--the common element in all the expressions of the good.

The statement previously quoted: "...no act can be so virtuous, so right, as to go beyond meeting the demands

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1. Study of Ethics, p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 141.

of the situation...the doing of what needs to be done is right or virtuous"[1] might be taken as the clearest indication that virtue is pursuit of a discovered good. However, it might also indicate just the reverse, namely that the good as the "needs of the situation" is primarily a device for describing our manner of attaining the good, which can be accomplished only by a full knowledge of the actual case. And we have seen that this is the purport of the description of the good as that which meets the needs of the situation. It is the reference of virtue to the good as social that we wish to stress. Its reference to these other concepts of the good may reduce to the point first considered--virtue as dispositions efficacious in knowing.

The social orientation of virtue is stated in the Ethics, first edition. There Dewey defines virtue as "...the settled identification of an agent's capacity with some aspect of the reasonable or common happiness."[2] And he declares:

> Every natural capacity, every talent or ability, whether of inquiring mind, of gentle affection or of executive skill, becomes a virtue when it is turned to account im supporting, or extending the fabric of social values; and it turns, if not to vice at least to delinquency, when not thus utilized. 3

1. Outlines of Ethics, p. 226.

2. Ethics, first ed., p. 403.

3. Ibid., p. 400.

The point is also brought out by the identification of the characteristic "impartiality" with equity or justice. Equity is described as the demand that

> one should have an equal and even measure of value as far as the interests of the others come into the reckoning...the maxim to love our enemies as we love ourselves signifies that in our conduct we should take into account their interests at the same rate of estimate as we rate our own. It is a principle for regulating judgment of the bearings of our acts on the happiness of others. 1

The examination of the virtues has then provided some clear and significant distinctions of good from bad. The good is that which promotes disinterested knowledge and social welfare, and the bad must accordingly be that which stifles knowledge and involves selfishness. The relation of these--whether knowledge is morally good simply in revealing the particular character of our duty to social welfare, the essential good, and whether the employment of the first necessarily brings along the second--are problems for later consideration.[2] But we can now recognize that these virtues could not be derived by the descriptions of the good that have been discussed. We find by applying the latter to the cardinal virtues that they cannot differentiate the virtues as good or bad, indicating that we have as yet no

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1. Ethics, second ed., pp. 282-283. For further statement of the same point, see Ethics, first ed., pp. 297-298,p.397.

2. See chapter on Moral Knowledge.

conception of the good in relation to which the appropriate virtues can be defined as instruments. Taking the virtue of "impartiality" in its aspect as concern for the interests of others, there is no way of determining whether or not it will: "meet the needs of the situation", "express the whole self", "harmonize desires", "produce growth". We must know first that the "needs" of the situation, the "whole" self, the "meaning" of activity, the relation of "harmony" among desires, "growth", include social well-being. Otherwise it is entirely possible that some other disposition, such as partiality, will meet the "needs" of the situation, express the "whole" self, etc. Impartiality as the endeavor to know exactly what the situation contains without permitting prior theory to influence the inquiry, could be derived as a virtue from these descriptions of the good, in so far as they contain the notion that knowing is the good. However, impartiality means for Dewey something more than objective disinterestedness; it means an active interest in the welfare of others. And it is not apparent how this sort of impartiality could serve as an instrument to these characterizations in the signification we have discovered in them. In fact it might be argued to do the opposite--to hamper the attainment of objective knowledge.

Thus we return to an examination of the common element in the various characterizations of the good--its

social character, for it must be this which renders any of these doctrines adequate.

In all of his books Dewey says that the good is social in character. Yet because he always describes the good in other terms, his view is somewhat difficult to extract. From the Outlines of Ethics to the second edition of the Ethics the social nature of the good is emphasized. In the first he asserts that "the moral end is wholly social"; in the last, "social well-being" is the standard of approved conduct. He repeatedly speaks of the "rational or common good", indicating their continuity.[1] The social character of the good usually appears, however, in conjunction with one of the above descriptions of the good; and the latter refer primarily to individual conduct. The explanation seems to be that the social aspect exercises a limiting or restricting, rather than a constitutive function, in relation to the good. When the concrete, experiential character of the good is uppermost, it is the individual that is stressed--the exercise of function and enrichment of the meaning of activity--since only individuals, not society, experience. But when the kind of experiences that constitute the good is touched upon, the social factor predominates. This is not to suggest that the relations we enjoy as social members do not contribute to our experience

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1. "Introduction" to Ethics, first and second editions.

of good, but only that the social aspect in Dewey's theory of the good is of major importance in defining the kind of experience that is proper.

A verbal contradiction in two of Dewey's statements serves to open the discussion. We have quoted the statement that: "In quality, the good is never twice alike."[1] He later says: "...good is the same in quality wherever it is found, whether in some other self or in one's own."[2] This is not noted to make something of the verbal inconsistency, but to indicate precisely the sense in which the two statements are both true for Dewey. In the first the point is the uniqueness of all experiences of the good; in the second Dewey is noting a trait which must mark all such experiences, namely, concern for the welfare of others. This, I believe, is the limiting condition of all experiences and interests; they must be approved by the standard of social well being.

But, of course, in restricting the sort of satisfactions and interests that are legitimate, the actual content of the good is also positively defined. For Dewey's theory of the good, however, the negative, delimitative function reveals better the nature of his view.

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 211.

2. Ibid., p. 293.

The specific qualities of values are immediate and hence not to be comprehended by an abstract term. A trait of the experience of genuine values is their uniqueness, whereas spurious values tend toward the generality that comes from conformity to old patterns. Hence definitions can serve only as general directions or restrictions of the possible field, rather than as complete descriptions. Nevertheless, Dewey does express the good as social well-being in more positive concrete terms, as we shall see in the next chapter.

That the social character of the good is primarily a method of restricting possible moral values and conduct is indicated by the fact that "social well-being" is often advanced as the standard for conduct that is "approvable", "right", or "obligatory".[1] There is, however, a difference

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1. Dewey holds that "It is possible to maintain the distinctness of the concept of right without separating it from the ends and the values which spring from those desires and affections that belong inherently to human nature." (Ethics, second ed., p. 236) His explanation of the way in which the concepts of the Right and the Good are distinct, and yet how the two are connected, is that the demands of others "When considered as claims and expectations...constitute the Right in distinction from the Good. But their ultimate function and effect is to lead the individual to broaden his conception of the Good; they operate to induce the individual to feel that nothing is good for himself which is not also a good for others. They are stimuli to a widening of the area of consequences to be taken into account in forming ends and deciding what is Good." (Ibid., p. 245).

between the earlier Outlines of Ethics and Study of Ethics and the two later Ethics. In the latter the distinctness of the concepts of the Right and the Good is stressed, whereas in the earlier Outlines of Ethics, both are embraced under the concept of the "moral end", which has the two functions of "unifying individual conduct" and "affording a common end".[1] This difference is also revealed by the striking variance in emphasis upon the importance of a standard of consequences or social welfare, a point always coming up for another turn in the later writings, yet rather played down in the Outlines of Ethics.[2] In no case does Dewey endorse either the Utilitarian or the Kantian doctrine of the locus of moral judgment; he attempts a reconciliation of their particular truths by identifying "intention", as the willed consequences, with "motive" as psychological stimulus. The difference of emphasis, however, is remarkable, and serves to introduce a more significant one between the earlier and later treatments of the social character of the good.

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1. Outlines of Ethics, (pp. 31-32; 132).

2. Cp. for example, the statement in Outlines of Ethics, p. 114: "...moral goodness pertains to the kind of idea or end which a man climgs to, and not to what he happens to effect visibly to others" to any statement that appears later, e.g. Human Nature and Conduct, pp.43-51.

In the two Ethics Dewey attempts to give some foundation for the standard of social welfare in an analysis of the social involvements of the human being, apparently recognizing the need for justifying to the individual the demand that he conform his desires to the social good.[1] Thus this support for the theory of good as social will be treated in the shapter on his theory of human nature. But in the Outlines of Ethics Dewey asserts the "identity of individual and common good" as a "postulate", the Ethical Postulate. Apparently the moral end is first of all "exercise of function" or "realization of capacity", it being postulated that such exercise will naturally fulfill both individual and social good. This illustrates the difference of emphasis. Here the good is in any case a realization of individual function, although such an activity should involve common good. In the later Ethics the satisfaction of personal interest is only to be undertaken with explicit reference to the common good. The question is as to how this social good performs as a Standard in the earlier doctrine. Does Dewey succeed in justifying his conception of the good as social by means of the Ethical Postulate?

Our general conclusion will be that the postulate remains merely a postulate and simply sidesteps the task of

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 245 ff.

explaining why social welfare is good. It is not completely clear that Dewey intends for it to argue that the good is really social; but the treatment does seem to evince this intention, as will appear in our discussion. We shall contend that the argument offered, if it is such, is circular. It is in brief that the Good is social because moral conduct postulates that the good is social. However, what is moral is defined in terms of the good, and hence cannot be offered as evidence for it. It is not necessary to determine whether when the Ethical Postulate was advanced Dewey entertained the conception of the social nature of the individual that he later employs to base the conception of the good as social. While it is at least certain that the view was not developed in the complete formulation in which it appears in the Ethics, at the time of the Outlines of Ethics and Study of Ethics Dewey apparently did not consider it adequate to ground his social conception of the good, else he would not have been forced to rest this doctrine upon a "postulate". We shall see that while he holds that only moral practice, not moral theory, rests upon this postulate, this implies that nothing more than a postulate is at the basis of his moral theory of the good. The demonstration of the inadequacy of this ground of the social conception of the good prepares the way for the consideration of the more substantial basis offered in his later writings. Yet we may find

in our examination in the following chapter of this theory of the social nature of the human being that a postulate is ultimately all that Dewey has to ground his conception of the good.

III

THE ETHICAL POSTULATE

Dewey states the Ethical Postulate as the presupposition that:

> In the realization of individuality there is found also the needed realization of some community of persons of which the individual is a member; and, conversely, the agent who duly satisfies the community in which he shares, by the same conduct satisfies himself. 1

He indicates clearly, however, that what the individual attends to is the realization of his capacities, trusting that in so doing he will also accomplish social good. And this must be Dewey's meaning if the social good is to be really a "postulate". If it were incumbest upon the individual to act always with an explicit reference to the social good, this would constitute a Standard to which he must conform in realizing his individual function. But the common good is a "faith", not a standard. Dewey says:

> ...the agent acts from a faith that, in realizing his own capacity, he will satisfy the needs of society. If he were asked to prove that his devotion to his function were right because certain to promote social good, he might well reply: "That is none of my affair. I have only to work myself out as strength and opportunity are given me, and let the results take care of

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1. Outlines of Ethics, p. 131.

> themselves. I did not make the world, and if it turns out that devotion to the capacity which was given me, and loyalty to the surroundings in which I find myself do not result in good (Dewey apparently means here social good), I do not hold myself responsible. But, after all, I cannot believe that it will so turn out. What is really good for me must turn out good for all, or else there is no good in the world at all." 1

The meaning of the somewhat surprising last sentence is clarified by:

> All moral conduct is based upon such a faith (in the Ethical Postulate); and moral theory must recognize this as the postulate upon which it rests. In calling it a postulate we do not mean that it is a postulate which our theory makes or must make in order to be a theory; but that, through analysis, theory finds that moral practice makes this postulate, and that with its reality the reality and value of conduct are bound up. 2

Thus we seem to encounter a contradiction. Dewey first emphasizes that the concern of the individual is entirely upon the performance of personal capacity, quoting Shakespeare's statement of the postulate:

> "To thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the night the day,
> Thou can'st not then be false to any man." 3

Yet he goes on to say that for conduct to be moral it must make this postulate. But if the good is simply expression of personal capacity why must the agent postulate that his

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1. Ibid, pp. 127-128.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

3. Ibid., p. 131.

conduct will promote the common good? The explanation seems to be that the postulate is made not by the ethical theory, but by moral practice. It is not a matter of saying that conduct should make this postulate, but that moral conduct as a matter of fact does so. But this clearly presupposes some way of determining what conduct is moral, apart from its faith in the Ethical Postulate. When Dewey says that theory "find" that moral practice makes this postulate, he must mean that by definition only that practice is moral which does make this postulate. Otherwise there would be no basis for the assertion, since we could find instances of practice that do not involve this assertion, yet which might very well be moral upon some other definition of the term. Their exclusion as moral implies a definition of moral as that conduct which proceeds upon the Ethical Postulate. Hence it is a misnomer to say that theory "finds" that moral practice makes this postulate, since indeed it must in order to be moral in Dewey's meaning of moral.

Thus the social nature of the good in being a postulate for moral practice is necessarily also an article of Dewey's moral theory. The very postulation of this "faith" as a moral necessity presupposes that the good is of a certain nature. If good consists merely in the exercise of individual capacity, without presupposing that this capacity is of a certain sort, then we have no reason for regard-

ing it essential for this function to have certain results outside itself. If one's good consists simply in fulfilling his powers, whatever they may be, there is no basis for considering it a more satisfactory situation if his personal activities have certain non-personal consequences. If it is simply the exercise that is important, then social consequences are irrelevant, since whatever the results turn out to be, the capacity will still have been exercised.

In contending that the Ethical Postulate is a moral necessity Dewey assumes that the good is social. At the beginning of Outlines of Ethics he had defined as moral, conduct viewed in relation to its end. This end he later defines as "exercise of function", and it involves the realization of both personal capacity and social good. He says that the moral end "may be termed indifferently: "The Realization of Individuality", "The Performance of Specific Functions", "The Satisfaction of Interests", "The Realization of a Community of Individuals".[1] The assertion that the moral end may be termed either of these, and the implication that the realizations of personal interest and social interest are equivalent, can be justified only by the Ethical Postulate. For the realization of individuality will be equivalent to the realization of a community of individuals only if the Ethical Postulate operates in the former,

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1. Ibid., p. 132.

causing personal interests naturally to consist in social interests, the personal good naturally to conduce to the social good. Thus while Dewey says that the postulate is not made by moral theory, but by moral practice, this description of the moral end (in his moral theory) can be supported only by an assumption of the operation in moral practice of a "faith" in the postulate. And this assumption is justified only by a definition of what "moral" practice is, which in turn depends upon a conception of what is the moral end. The restriction of "moral" conduct to that which embraces the Ethical Postulate, can be justified only by considering the End (by reference to which conduct becomes moral) as social. When Dewey says that moral practice makes this assumption he must mean the sort of practice that pursues a social as well as an individual good. The "reality and value" of conduct are bound up with this postulate only if "moral" practice is that which serves a social end. Otherwise there is no reason why practice that pursues exclusively personal ends, and has no need for the postulate, should not be moral.

Thus the justification of the Ethical Postulate, which depends for its necessity upon a theory of the good as social, is identical with the justification of the latter theory. Approached from the standpoint of the Ethical Postulate it becomes clear that the kind of, or the specific,

capacities that may be exercised is definitely restricted. Ignoring the difficulties in the assertion that "moral practice makes this postulate" the question is still whether it can be substantiated by our knowledge of the nature of the human being. If the definition of the moral end is to be satisfactory, it must be shown that the human being is so constructed as to find its proper realization only in the capacities that foster social, as well as personal, good.

It may be suggested that Dewey provides for this transition from the end as realization of individual capacity to a social good by the contention that while the good is realization of individuality, it does not mean the realization of individuality by any one person, but by all. And this requires that the exercise by one person of his capacity does not interfere with the exercise by other persons of theirs. But this means either that the capacities any individual may express are of a certain restricted kind, or that they are not. If the former, a definition of the good is required and a delineation of these capacities in terms of a theory of human nature; if the latter, then the good is not social or anything else except what the realization of any individual's capacities happens to consist in. The latter involves only the supposition that the expression by any person of his capacity (its character or results being

Whatever they may) will conduce to the expression by all other persons of their capacity.[1] In this case the Ethical Postulate is superfluous; for the good is simply expression of capacity, and no qualification is necessary; in the first case it consists in a definite concept of the good and must be supported as such.

The inadequacies of the Ethical Postulate may be pointed by inquiring into its utility. Dewey says that all moral conduct makes the postulate. How then are we to discover what conduct makes use of the postulate and hence is moral? There are apparently only two methods: we might ask the individual whether he does proceed upon this faith, or we might examine his conduct to see whether the faith is exhibited there. In the first case the answer would be significant only if the person could show how this faith influences his conduct, causing him to choose some courses of action and to abstain from others. Thus it links with the second alternative, in which conduct that embodies the faith possesses distinctive characteristics. If then, the faith actively affects the way we behave, enabling us to discriminate between right and wrong, it is more than barely a "postulate"; it is a positive conception of good and bad.

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1. The theories of Might makes Right and "laissez faire" seem to take the latter position, but not Dewey.

There is no more of a postulate involved in conduct guided by the conception than in any deliberate conduct, in all of which there is something of a postulate, namely, that our action will have the results we expect it to have on the basis of past experience.

Dewey says the proof of the postulate belongs to metaphysics not to ethics, and it is apparently for that reason that he does not attempt to justify it. We need not linger over the distinction between Ethics and metaphysics. In the Introduction we attempted to state fundamental ethical problems apart from this distinction; and, on that basis all that we are requiring of Dewey is that he give the postulate support. If he is right in the contention that the establishment of it is an affair of metaphysics, and hence not appropriate in a book on ethics, then he should indicate where, in its proper place, it is established.

In any case it is necessary that the conception of the good as social, which the Ethical Postulate expresses, must be grounded upon a theory of human nature, it being shown that the latter is such as to find its proper end in the pursuit of such a good. The Ethical Postulate, we have seen, simply illuminates the need of this support. On one interpretation this postulate might be taken as a denial of the possibility of so grounding the theory that the good is social. But the insistence that the postulate is one of

moral practice rather than of ethical theory indicates that Dewey's error is rather one of failing to recognize the extent to which ethical theory is involved in this assertion. Furthermore, the complete discussions of the social nature of the individual in the later Ethics manifests an awareness of the dependence of the good upon human nature. We turn then to an examination of the theory of human nature that is regarded as supporting the concept of the good as social.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE

Thus far we have indicated only very generally the meaning of the concept of the good as social well-being. Our inquiry has been limited largely, first, to excluding as unessential to the theory of the good certain concepts that Dewey at times seems to offer as such, and second, to indicating that the one argument, apart from his theory of human nature, that Dewey seems to offer in support of the social theory of the good, is inadequate, serving only to illuminate the need of a theory of human nature as the substantial basis. Before we proceed to study directly this theory of human nature it is necessary to give more attention to the meaning of the concept of the good as social, and to elaborate our general statements more specifically.

I

It is not immediately obvious just what the social nature of the good means. Clearly it cannot mean that the experience of good is had by society rather than by its members. It might mean that the good is relative to society. But we will see that Dewey proposes certain values that endure from one society to another, so that he must believe that in its social significance the good is single. The clue to his meaning resides in the dual aspect of the notion of social well-being. This contains the ideas that because of the nature of the individual as a member of society there is, first, an objective social standard regulative of his conduct; second, that concrete experiences of values that are part of the good will be social in origin and content. Recognizing this, and remembering his emphasis upon the function of social well-being as a standard, we are enabled to see the importance of the commitments upon "general goods" and "enduring values". These seem to cover the belief first, that the good involves certain sorts of experience that includes the enjoyment of social relations, this being indicated by the description of "general goods"; second, that the experiences are such that all should be able to participate in them and hence that it is the moral obligation of the individual to consider the effects of his conduct upon the opportunities and experiences of others, this being

expressed by the "enduring values". The connection of "social well-being" as the standard of the good and as the good itself is seen in a passage describing the Standard:

> It says that among the different kinds (of happiness) that one is to be approved which at the same time brings satisfaction to others, or which at least harmonizes with their well-being in that it does not inflict suffering upon them...The standard says that we should desire those objects and find our satisfactions in the things which also being good to those with whom we are associated, in friendship, comradeship, citizenship, the pursuit of science, and so on. [1]

We shall first explore Dewey's comments upon "enduring values" and "general goods", showing that these indicate that the good is not relative to any particular society and that they give the "social well-being" positive content. We shall then examine Dewey's concept of human nature, endeavoring to determine why, in terms of this constitution, the good consists in the values and virtues Dewey proposes.

That the good is in one sense relative to the particular society seems to be indicated in places where Dewey appears to regard as the end of human activity simply participation in a social whole, to be a "sustained and sustaining member of a social whole". "Shared experience is the greatest of human goods."[2] "...there is no mode of action as

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1. Ethics, second ed., pp. 271-272.

2. Experience and Nature, p. 202.

fulfilling and as rewarding as is concerted concensus pf action. It brings with it the sense of sharing and merging in a whole".[1] These statements appear where Dewey is describing the function of language in providing the means of communication that bind members of a group together, uniting them in ties of utility and affection. However, man's "pathetic instinct toward the adventure of living and struggling together"[2] is not fulfilled in just any form of group membership. On the contrary, complete social participation is possible only when social institutions are of a certain sort, namely, adapted to justly fulfill the needs and capacities of all members. The purpose of social agencies is the service of the whole of the members, and when social mechanisms are not designed so as to promote this (as in our own society in which the incentive is private gain, yet the product social) individuals will be unstable, being deprived of "definite social relationships and publicly acknowledged functions".[3] In his criticism of the current social system Dewey seems to presuppose certain stable values, above all, justice. How does he conceive these?

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1. Ibid, p. 184.

2. Individualism Old and New, p. 59.

3. Ibid., p. 51.

Since it is possible to define the good, it also would appear to be possible to derive a further specification of its actual content in terms of kinds of experience or relations among persons and objects, in short, to discover certain ultimate values and their corresponding disvalues. No problem as to their metaphysical status need be provoked other than their relations as valid forms of the good; the problem of their nature as universals need not be involved. Further, the question of the function of these as standards for determining the right could be deferred, the issue being simply whether there are enduring sorts of relations or experiences that can be described as proper or improper in terms of the nature of the good. Given some concept of the good, there seems to be no way of avoiding this except upon the position that every moral situation and every experience of the good is so peculiar that valuative kinds of experiences and relations do not really exist. We find that while Dewey does seem to deny the possibility of ultimate values, upon such a position as the above, in other places in his writing he unmistakably endorses particular such values.

The question of whether there are enduring values is finally that of whether we can recognize certain common results to persons effected by varying forms of external or social organization, whether social institutions are so

intrinsically related to the individual that different agencies cannot foster the same general goods. Dewey sometimes seems to argue that the values change because the institutional forms change; that there are not values apart from the institutions because these are the material and content of whatever goods and bads human beings possess. We cannot separate the effects of these organizations in the way of goods preserved because these goods are constituted by the social agencies. But then in other places he seems to say that these effects upon human beings are capable of separate consideration and evaluation, the institutional machinery being treated as the means to certain common human ends, and these sets of machinery classed as good or bad in terms of their relatively external promotion of certain similar effects in human living.

It is primarily in denying the utility of "fixed ends" or "static principles" in guiding moral conduct that Dewey seems to deny that there are any permanent human relations that are desirable. He also seems to reject this view by his insistence upon the alterations in the meaning of concepts of values and virtues that these undergo from society to society. These two points are really one, however, since it is because the nature of values is altered by different social institutions that the work of revision is necessary for values.

We believe that these are to be interpreted, in the light of other endorsements of "enduring values", in the same way we interpreted his apparent rejections of the possibility of describing a single good, i.e., as an unusually emphatic criticism of the effort to invoke general customary standards to answer all moral questions. The nature of this criticism is the concern of the chapter on Moral Knowledge, and here we will restrict ourselves to indicating his statements upon these persisting values.

A typical statement is the following:

> ...the meaning, or content of virtues changes from time to time...No social group could be maintained without patriotism and chastity, but the actual meaning of chastity and patriotism is widely different in contemporary society from what it was in savage tribes or from what we may expect it to be five hundred years from now. Courage in one society may consist almost wholly in willingness to face physical danger and death in voluntary devotion to one's community; in another, it may be willingness to support an unpopular cause in the face of ridicule. [1]

But the author goes on to distinguish between "conventional" and "genuine" virtue, and in pointing to the need to criticize what is popularly regarded virtuous, says: "Hence men must look behind the current valuation to the real value."[2] Thus while the meanings of virtues change throughout various societies, conformity to custom is not virtue.

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 401

2. Ibid., p. 401

Yet Dewey sometimes seems to say that what is virtuous and what valuable is relative to a particular society, even though what virtues and values are proper to any society is not equivalent with that which is currently accepted. The relativity, however, seems to be mainly as regards the good; for virtue is defined generally as the dispositions which promote "the rational or common good", and was found to be of a certain uniform nature.[1] Virtue, in being related to the good as social, might then remain essentially the same while the good changed from group to group. Is this Dewey's doctrine, or are there certain "enduring values" that pronounce the moral vocation of any society?

The relativity of the good to social groups is suggested by the insistence that the actual content of values varies with the social institutions. "The conditions and the concrete significance of liberty, of equality, of mutual respect, and reciprocal service, change from generation to generation, in some degree from year to year."[2] But the absoluteness of the good is implied by the fact that different sets of institutions can promote the same values, each in its peculiar way; and that certain current institu-

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1. Chapter 1, p. 22 ff.

2. Ethics, second ed., p. 389.

tions are criticized by Dewey in terms of their opposition to these values. In several books Dewey mentions "science", "art", and "social companionship" as "general goods". In defining the office of philosophy as criticism he says:

> No just or pertinent criticism in its negative phase can possibly be made, however, except upon the basis of a heightened appreciation of the positive goods which human experience has achieved and offers. Positive concrete goods of science, art and social companionship are the basic subject-matter of philosophy as criticism; and only because such positive goods already exist is their emancipation and secured extension the defining aim of intelligence. 1

He goes on to indicate the significance of a certain relation of these, saying that the business of criticism is to see how these can be distributed more equitably:

> The more aware one is of the richness of meanings which experience possesses, the more will a generous and catholic thinker be conscious of the limits which prevent sharing in them; the more aware will he be of their accidental and arbitrary distribution. 2

Thus the value of justice seems to regulate the experience of these goods.

Again, in redefining religion as a harmonizing of self or unification of will that springs from devotion to certain moral ideal ends, Dewey says that the important prerequisite of such ends is that they be inclusive and comprehensive enough to unify the self; and he points to "art",

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 412.

2. Loc. cit.

science and good citizenship" as displaying the quality of this comprehensive attitude.[1] Further along he says that we frame our ideal ends out of "values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis--the goods of human association, of art and knowledge."[2] Here, too, he goes on to indicate the need for distributing these goods more widely and equally.

Thus we find stated both general experiential goods that are social in nature, and general social relations conditioning the enjoyment of these goods. The "enduring values" are more specifically of the latter type.

In Liberalism and Social Action, where Dewey most incisively shows the inadequacy of old institutions to new needs, he yet recognizes certain "enduring values" fundamental to the liberalism that was responsible for institutions now outmoded. He says:

> If we strip its creed from adventitious elements, there are, however, enduring values for which earlier liberalism stood. These are liberty, the development of the inherent capacities of individuals made possible through liberty, and the central role of free intelligence in inquiry, discussion and expression. 3

In the discussion of these three values it becomes clear that

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1. The Common Faith, pp. 22-23.

2. Ibid, p. 48

3. Liberalism and Social Action, p. 32.

that the value of "liberty" signifies also equality or justice; for it is shown how the spirit of the liberal doctrine evaporated when conditions so altered that the radical individualism it forwarded failed to secure the equality of opportunity and happiness it was designed to promote. Dewey stresses that the primary concern of such liberals as Bentham was to remedy injustices, the emphasis upon liberty being more a means to the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" than an intrinsic good.[1] It is apparent, then, that the social nature of the good does not mean that the good is relative to society. Rather there are "enduring values" and "general goods" giving a stable and specific content to the social conception of the good.

Not only are there persisting characters of the good. It is also disclosed that these values are inherently related to human nature.

> ...the cause of the liberty of the human spirit, the cause of opportunity of human beings for full development of their powers, the cause for which liberalism enduringly stands, is too precious and too ingrained in the human constitution to be forever obscured. 2

And in A Common Faith (p. 79) we find: "No matter how much evidence may be piled up against social institutions as they

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1. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

exist, affection and passionate desire for justice and security are realities in human nature." Again: "Human beings have impulses toward affection, compassion, and justice, equality and freedom."[1]

But, of course, such assertions indicate little as regards the good, since they do not say whether these impulses are appropriate to human nature as such, constituting the natural end of the human being, or whether they even contain the good for a limited number of persons. However, that Dewey has defined the objects of such tendencies as "enduring values" manifests his belief that they are part of the good, and having seen that he believes the good is social such statements are supported by this, serving also to give the meaning of this definition more content. The moral character of these general goods and their connection with human nature becomes more explicit when Dewey in A Common Faith treats the elements in the "ideal ends". He repeatedly speaks of "natural human relations", indicating that there are proper relations, ingrained in the nature of the human being, that should govern associations among individuals. He avers that improvements "...of a spiritual or ideal nature...can come only from more intense realizations of values that inhere in the actual connections of

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1. Ibid., p. 81.

human beings with one another"[1] The question then is: What are the bases of these relations in human nature?

But it has become quite clear that the good as such is not relative to a particular society. The particular forms it assumes depend upon the structure of each society's institutions, but in all groups there should be certain general goods that these make secure, and certain enduring values that govern human relations and criticize extant social agencies.

A consideration of the social character of a moral act brings out the peculiar way in which the good is social while not being relative to a particular society. While the good is not whatever a particular society approves, nor moral conformity with the approved, the good as social develops out of existing social conditions and the moral is related in origin and results to the society in which it occurs.

Three levels of conduct are distinguished by Dewey, only on the latter of which, where behavior emerges from the merely customary and becomes reflective, does truly moral conduct arise. This is the stage of "...conduct in which the individual thinks and judges for himself, considers whether a purpose is good or right, decides and

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1. A Common Faith, p. 80

chooses, and does not accept the standards of his group without reflection."[1] Yet while this recognizes the necessity for moral conduct of a voluntary reflective effort by the individual, it still, on the basis of the statement, could allow the good to be conformity; for it says: "does not accept the standards of his group (italics mine) without reflection." Nor does this possibility rest upon this one quotation; it is representative of what is generally found. When the personal factor in morality is noted it is always stated as though the only essential were voluntary, reflective conformity. Further along Dewey says:

> What is needed is that the more rational and social conduct should itself be valued as good, and so be chosen and sought; or in terms of control, that the law which society or reason prescribes should be consciously thought of as right, used as a standard, and respected as binding. 2

Are society and reason equivalent?

It is hardly necessary to say that to interpret these statements in the above way would constitute as flagrant a falsification of Dewey's doctrine as could be committed. If he goes to any extreme it is that of emphasizing the moral goodness of constant change and growth, of the ready perception of defects in the existing scheme and eagerness to devise a remedy. The ambiguity of his state-

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

ments upon the social nature of the good serves as a departure in bringing out his meaning more exactly, for this ambiguity is not accidental but is directly related with his doctrine.

This doctrine is that while the nature of the social good is not exhausted by the existing social arrangement, its germs are contained in this arrangement, and progress can be achieved only as a development from it. Thus Dewey argues that the "ought" is grounded in the "is".

> A moral law, e.g., the law of justice, is not merely a law of what ought to be than is the law of gravitation...It is a law of the society of which he (an individual) is a member. And it is because he is a member of a society having this law, that it is a law of what should be for him. 1

A society in which utterly no social bond of justice existed to unite its members is unthinkable. A law of justice always is in some degree. Thus the standard of right is public, not private; it

> ...is not the opinion of some other person, or group of persons. It is a common, objective standard. It is that embodied in social relationships themselves. 2

And while

> This does not mean that the "is", the actual status of the moral world, is identical with the "ought", or the ideal relations of man to man...it does mean that there is no obligation either in general or as any specific

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1. Outlines of Ethics, p. 175.

2. Ibid., p. 189.

> duty, which does not grow out of the "is", the actual relations now obtaining. [1]

It is explained that the relations are never perfectly embodied in existing institutions, the business of the reflective agent being to determine "What is the true spirit of existing institutions, and what sort of conduct does this spirit demand?" [2] The law of action is given by "...actual social forces in their onward movement." [3]

Still it is not altogether clear just where the ought comes from nor in what it consists. Dewey's answer seems to be that the actual value to be sought is in the actual institutions, but it is there only partially and imperfectly; and it is the citizen's moral obligation to extend and render consistent the value. He illustrates by:

> It is because the relation of justice does hold in members of a stratum of society, having a certain position, power or wealth, but does not hold between this section and another-class, that the law of what should be is equal justice for all. In holding that actual social relations afford the law of what should be, we must not forget that these actual relations have a negative as well as a positive side, and that the new law must be framed in view of the negatives, the deficiencies, the wrongs, the contradictions, as well as of the positive attainments. 4

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1. Ibid., p. 176.

2. Ibid., p. 186.

3. Ibid., p. 178.

4. Ibid., p. 177.

The issue that emerges perhaps with greatest force in the above is that of Moral Knowledge, but this must wait for later consideration. Our concern is its bearing upon the good and the moral as social, the examination disclosing that these are contained in some way in the relations actually obtaining in any society. We must complain, however, of the inadequacy of the information. It is not enough to say that the proper value or relations of a social group exist in the group, but only partially; that the difference between the "ought" and the "is" is one of degree. For in any case the perception of the defects of existing relations depends upon a referemce to ideal relations not found in present existence. The value that is proper, even if one says it differs from existent circumstances only in degree, is not contained in these circumstances. The initial imputation of a certain value to present institutions which they fail to perfectly embody, implies a value independent of the institutions. Otherwise there would be no perception of the points where the institutions failed to fulfill the value. The existing conditions would define the value at the start, and there would be no criterion for evaluating them.

It is very nearly a contradiction in terms to say that a certain society realizes justice partially; that while the relation holds among some members it does not

among others and hence "The law of what should be is equal justice for all." If justice really means equality, then this society does not have justice, and there is no way of judging this except by appealing to a value outside it; whereas if justice means the relations actually existing, then they provide no means of criticism. Either justice which is partial is not justice, or justice can mean nothing more than the relations that do as a matter of fact hold. The discovery of injustice, even though this be conceived earlier as justice, implies an independent conception of justice, one not directly given in existing institutions. Thus it follows that the same ideal relations of societies are valid for all, liberty and justice being conceptually, or essentially, the same in each case; or there is no such thing as liberty or justice but only the relations that do hold in any given society.

This argument does not imply that the knowledge of the value of justice which is employed in criticizing the current social structure is derived from some source other than the experience provided by the natural environment. The explanation of our capacity to use a standard not directly provided in what is experienced is a further and much broader problem, one quite beyond our present purposes. And it can be distinguished from the question of whether the value we say ought to exist does al-

ready exist in society. Were the latter literally the case the imputation of any ought would be altogether impertinent; it could not induce action, as knowledge must, but would only record an antecedent existence.

In the second edition of the Ethics, where Dewey seems to be touching the same point yet without referring to this distinction of the "ought" and the "is", he seems to be asserting only that criticisms of existing social dispensations are made in terms of the actual social situation. He says:

> While the negative values call out desire for something different and better, the positive values supply the content and material attributed to the better. There is no source save past experience out of which the concrete stuff of new aspirations can be formed. 1

This is a much modified and more intelligible expression than the earlier one in Outlines of Ethics, and if they are intended as statements of the same point, as seems to be the case, the above objections are rendered unnecessary. For it is scarcely to be denied that experience of existing evil is what gives rise to projection of reform, or that an effective reform must be instituted in view of the situation actually presented. This is, however, quite different from saying that what ought to be is a "law of", and "embodied in", the existing society. Were the latter true, progress would lack incentive and direction.

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 380.

Thus it seems most advisable to take this second statement as the correct one, modifying the extreme form in which the point earlier appeared, and giving an empirical meaning to the status of the existing society in influencing value judgment. Only on this interpretation can his position be made compatible with the endorsement of enduring values. In this way it may be held that the ought is embodied in the ideal relationships that bind members of society together, but rather than existing in any particular society, the ought obtains in the natural relations that hold between the members of all groups, being grounded in the nature of the relation rather than in the particular group organization. Thus Dewey's apparent desire occasionally to limit values to a particular society seems most properly interpreted as a deceptive emphasis upon the extent to which the character of the institutions, which will subserve the "enduring values" in any particular society varies, and hence as the reminder that these must be constantly kept amenable to reconstruction in terms of such values. This seems to be explicit in Liberalism and Social Action, where he says:

> ...the ideas of liberty, of individuality, and of freed intelligence have an enduring value, a value never more in need than now. It is the business of liberalism to state these values in ways, intellectual and practical, that are relevant to present needs and forces.

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1. Liberalism and Social Action. p. 48.

The nature of his view is indicated in a passage where he speaks of the "falsity of the common notion that justice carries its definite meaning", then goes on to say:

> The meaning of justice in concrete cases is something to be determined by seeing what consequences will bring about human welfare in a fair and even way. 1

Clearly the latter indicates the way in which justice serves to evaluate concrete cases, the abstract concept "fair and even way" standing for something apart from the specific instance. That there are single ideal relations among members of a group is indicated by the assertion:

> Should a classless society ever come into being, the formal concept of liberty would lose its significance, because the fact for which it stands would have become an integral part of the established relations of human beings to one another. 2

Thus the good is social not it that it is relative to particular societies, but in that it involves the relations that members of a group sustain to one another. The way such relations as liberty and justice, and such goods as art and companionship will be secured in a particular society will vary with the structure and development of its institutions, but apparently these furnish ideals for the organization that any group finds suitable to its peculiar circumstances.

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 275.

2. Liberalism and Social Action, p. 48.

II

We are, then, ready to ask what are the traits of human nature conditioning the social values and goods. What are the human bases of the proper relations among individuals?

Before examining the social nature of the human being, preparing him for social good, it is necessary first of all to observe that in the same way that Dewey had a conception of the good as single, so does he assert the essential identity of human nature despite the particular variations that can occur here, just as in the content of the good. In the Foreword to Human Nature and Conduct he says: "Perhaps the tendency today in many quarters is to overlook the basic identity of human nature amid its different manifestations."[1] And he avers that the book is to be interpreted as an attempt to keep in balance the two forces of "...intrinsic human nature on one side and social customs and institutions on the other."[2] He indicates further that this identity is one that is relevant for moral conduct, implying that it is not simply the sort of identity of biological structure that enables us to "identify" human beings as of one class. Rather it seems to be one that

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. viii.

2. Loc. cit.

influences the nature of the good. He says in this same place:

> ...there are always intrinsic forces of a common human nature at work; forces which are sometimes stifled by the encompassing social medium but which also in the long course of history are always striving to liberate themselves and to make over social institutions so that the latter may form a freer, more transparent and more congenial medium for their operation. 1

Again, in the Ethics, we find:

> ...the right, law, duty, arise from the relations which human beings intimately sustain to one another, and... their authoritative force springs from the very nature of the relations that binds people together. 2

Yet while Dewey avows the endeavor to keep a proper balance between the two forces of cultural conditioning and native human nature, we discover that his emphasis upon the former often is such as to appear to deny the latter. Now it might be that the complete domination of individual activity by social training manifests the nature of the human being, the most characteristic trait of the latter being his amenability to social influences. In such a case "imitation" would cover practically all of the ethical constituents of human nature. But then it would not do to speak of "two forces", since there would be but the one of social determination, and perhaps accident. There could

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1. Ibid., p. viii, ix.

2. Ethics, second ed., p. 238.

then be no conflict between innate elements of the human being and the social system to which he belonged. However, Dewey has clearly indicated that the latter is possible, and that there are forces in human nature that will always protest against their suppression by social arrangements.

What, then, is the significance of his contention that human nature can be changed? His belief in the changeablemess of human nature is often implied, as in the chapter "Changing Human Nature" in Human Nature and Conduct, and throughout his chapters in the two Ethics; and he states explicitly in Freedom and Culture that "...the alleged unchangeableness of human nature cannot be admitted."[1] Clearly if there is an essential human nature--a kind of being that is "human" possessing the identity of a "nature"--it is unalterable. As a nature it is contradictory to speak of altering it; for in order for it to change it would have to cease to be what it was, and become a different nature. But then it is not one nature, becoming another nature; for the actual nature passes out of existence and a new one arises. Beings that have natures might conceivable switch natures. However, when this occurs it is not proper to speak of the nature of that being changing, but of the being acquiring a new nature.

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1. Freedom and Culture, p. 112.

That human nature changes must mean strictly that in ethical terms, there are no such things as human beings; they are all ethical monstrosities. The statement might be intended to mean only that variations are possible within an essential identity. But if this is the meaning then it is a misstatement to say that human nature is changeable; for it is not the essential nature, the differentiating trait of human beings that changes, but aspects of that nature whose variation is included in the nature's being what it is. Thus the nature conditions the change rather than itself changing.

Thus, at the least, Dewey's language is confused. Having asserted that there is an identical human nature he must recognize that an apparent change in this human nature means simply that the being who has changed has ceased to be human. If he meant that human nature strictly were alterable he would not only be talking nonsense but contradicting himself. He would be talking nonsense because a "nature" cannot alter; only beings with natures can do that. He would be contradicting himself because he has repeatedly asserted that "human nature is one at bottom".

The question is one of the degree to which cultural agencies can determine the formation of impulses, for it is in the interest of showing the capacity of human beings under cultural influences for improvement and for the eradication

of evil practices that Dewey attacks the notion that human nature is unalterable. He says: "...whatever are the native constituents of human nature, the culture of a period and group is the determining influence in their arrangement."[1] (italics mine) He later speaks of "the function of culture in determining what elements of human nature are dominant and their pattern or arrangement in connection with one another..."[2] What Dewey seems to mean, then, is that the values the culture emphasizes will stimulate the exercise of the corresponding tendencies in the individual. He illustrates this influence by:

> ...if our American culture is largely a pecuniary culture, it is not because the original or innate structure of human nature tends of itself to obtaining pecuniary profit. It is rather that a certain complex culture stimulates, promotes and consolidates native tendencies so as to produce a certain pattern of desires and purposes. 3

Thus the point seems to be simply the extent to which social approval conditions habits of belief and conduct. And as we have noted, this determination can only be partial; natural impulses that are persistently suppressed will assert themselves eventually. Dewey emphasizes the formative influence

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1. Freedom and Culture, p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 21.

3. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

of culture because he believes the power of social approval is of supreme positive value. When institutions are constructed so that they attract and approve the social virtues then will these increase. However, he also has made clear that the unreflective adoption of customary standards does not constitute morality in its highest sense; it is reflective morality that introduces the distinction between what is done socially and what ought to be done, making real progress possible.[1]

The nature of his view is most sharply seen when approached from its negative side. For the exaggeration of cultural determination, and the contention that human nature is malleable to the formative force of custom, arises, like other apparent contradictions, as surplus steam in the heat of an attack upon an opposed view. The idea of the unalterability of human nature has been associated with two doctrines that are not only theoretically false but morally pernicious. Both of these utilize the unalterability of human nature to justify particular political and economic systems. According to one type of theory there is a single, prepotent human drive of which all particular impulses are variations. The most perfect social arrangement will then be one in which this instinct is provided freest expression. Another group infers from the ineradicableness of

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 431.

ultimate instincts the necessary transience of improvement in human affairs, contending that because there are certain forces ingrained in the nature of the human being there must persist in any society corresponding and irremediable evils. It is vain to suppose that their suppression can be more then temporary; genuine melioration is impossible.

Dewey meets the first theory by disputing the contention there is one super-impulse defining all human manifestations; but what is crucial for our present purpose is the manner in which he rejects the social implications derived from both theories. This rejection elicits the positive basis upon which he declares that "...the alleged unchangeableness of human nature cannot be addmitted."[1]

While there are numerous references to innate "elements" or "constituents" of human nature, the latter being equally frequently characterized as "original", "native", "raw",[2] the terms are never described or denoted, and always accompanying the reference is the qualification that these elements are not isolated from each other or from the environment. Hence the significance of any impulse or "constituent" can be understood only in relation to the particular cultural setting in which it is manifested.

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1. Freedom and Culture, p. 112.

2. See, for example, the first chapter of Freedom and Culture.

Native tendencies acquire meaning only in cooperation with environmental forces, the results of behavior representing the conjunction of personal dispositions and social customs. Thus, while there are inherent tendencies, the results they produce in operation are not inherently connected with native structure. They are a product of native tendencies and cultural agencies of a certain sort. We cannot appeal, therefore, exclusively to psychological factors to explain what does or what should take place in human affairs.[1] The problem must always be set "...in the context of the elements that constitute culture as they interact with elements of human nature."[2] The point may be best stated by quoting at length from Dewey:

> Like Greek slavery or feudal serfdom, war and the existing economic regime are social patterns woven out of the stuff of instinctive activities. Native human nature supplies the raw materials, but custom furnishes the machinery and the designs. War would not be possible without anger, pugnacity, rivalry, self-display, and such like native tendencies. Activity inheres in them and will persist under every condition of life. To imagine they can be eradicated is like supposing that society can go on without eating and without union of the sexes. But to fancy that they must eventuate in war is as if a savage were to believe that because he uses fibers having fixed natural properties in order to weave baskets, therefore his immemorial tribal patterns are also natural necessities and immutable forms. 3

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1. Ibid., p. 112.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

3. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 110.

Because the same tendencies produce different results when stimulated by different objects and eventuating in different environments, the latter must be the factor explaining the variation in behavior. The very fact that human nature is constant requires the influence of cultural factors to explain the actual variations in human phenomena.[1]

> If we take all the communities, peoples, classes, tribes and nations that ever existed, we may be sure that since human nature in its native constitution is the relative constant, it cannot be appealed to, in isolation, to account for the multitude of diversities presented by different forms of association. 2

Again it must be concluded that in view of other statements, this stress upon the moral potentialities of social influence cannot be intended to deny that there is a stable human nature underlying the changes social institutions may produce, nor that truly moral conduct is voluntary, reflective, individual conduct, nor that there are "intrinsic forces of human nature" striving to achive an appropriate expression. The price at which Dewey would purchase this denial is contradiction, while he may retain these assertions when the statements that would deny them

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1. Ibid., pp. 91-92.

2. Of course this would explain only variations in behavior from one culture to another, and would leave as difficult a problem in accounting for the variations within one culture.
Freedom and Culture, p. 19.

are interpreted as exaggerated expressions of ideas that in a modest form are compatible with them. The involvement of a stable human nature, even in this emphasis upon the power of social approval, is plain in the manner in which this force must operate. Its benefits are possible only because there are native tendencies toward good, just as there are toward evil; and because, by appealing to either, social sanction can to some extent provoke their expression. If Dewey can be sure that human beings generally can be altered in a certain way, prior to the analysis of the particular constitution of the separate individuals, it must be because they possess a common human nature and common tendencies which may be appealed to.

III

We turn, then, to an examination of Dewey's concept of human nature in its relation to the good as consisting of social values and goods, in order to see why the human being is so constituted that the pursuit of these defines his appropriate function.

The question of why a thing is good in terms of the nature of the being for whom it is good, is equivalent to the question of why any individual, as such a being, should pursue this good. The reasons supporting the theory are the same as those explaining to the person his obligation to seek the good. The good is such <u>because</u> it constitutes the

proper end of human nature, the "natural" expression of human capacities. We are obligated to seek this good and adopt it as standard because our nature demands the activity in which this consists.

This observation helps us to differentiate those social aspects of human nature that are relevant from those that are irrelevant to the nature of the good. Those are relevant that explain why the good possesses an authority over behavior; for this "ought" can be substantiated only by the possession by the agent of the traits preparing him for this sort of conduct. No social features of the human being will be relevant that do not indicate why it is his duty to promote social well-being.

It is necessary to preface the inquiry into Dewey's conception of the social nature of the human being by a distinction between two of his doctrines that are crucial for this issue. These are: "Morality is Social," and "The Good is Social". The distinction is necessary because by the former Dewey usually means both moral and immoral conduct, the contention being simply that conduct is social. Most of the remarks upon the social nature of the human being are of this sort, explaining how "the social environment enters into the stuff of character,"[1] and not why

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 379.

strictly moral conduct is that which takes account of the welfare of others. Of course the occurrence of personal action in a system of social relations explains how conduct can be moral, namely, by attending to the consequences of acts, but it does not elicit the element of obligation in this sort of conduct.

In examining Dewey's conception of human nature, the endeavor to determine its adequacy to support his theory of the good will partly consist in distinguishing between these two accounts. Dewey must offer more than a description of the possibility of moral conduct in virtue of the natural social involvements of human beings. He must provide an explanation of the social traits of human nature that determine its proper goal to be a social good.

The conception of the social nature of the human being is fundamental to Dewey's entire philosophy. It is a part of the doctrine of the "continuity" of the human being with the environment, the latter including both the natural objects and social institutions. This means that the very substance of the individual is constituted by his relation to these two environments. Just as his existence depends upon the constant appropriation of natural energies, so his moral self endures only through his relations to a social group. Tufts declares that "...the individual cannot attain

a full moral life by himself."[1] Apart from these relations the individual is a meaningless abstraction, an empty form. His reality consists in his functions and involvements in social enterprises. Family, job, state, provide the content and meaning of his being.

> ...the human being is an individual because of and in relation with others. Otherwise, he is an individual only as a stick of wood is, namely, as spatially and numerically separate. 2

Individuality

> ...is a unique manner of acting in and with a world of objects and persons. It is not something complete in itself, like a closet in a house or a secret drawer in a desk, filled with treasures that are waiting to be bestowed on the world. Since individuality is a distinctive way of feeling the impacts of the world and of showing a preferential bias in response to these impacts, it develops into shape and form only through interaction w with actual conditions; it is no more complete in itself than is a painter's tube of paint without relation to a canvas. 3

Society is not composed of isolated units, brought together through some external contract. The individual is born into an already organized and active system, and from it draws his material and spiritual sustenance, appropriates its things and habits, adopts it language and instruments. Accordingly, the educational process is a direct factor in the shaping of individuals, modifying the originally given

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 148.

2. Ethics, second ed., p. 248.

3. Individualism Old and New, p. 156.

just as "...hydrogen is modified when it combines with oxygen."[1] The laws of human nature are laws of individuals in association, not of beings in a mythical condition apart from association."[2]

The intimacy of the individual's relations to others and the necessity of his dependence upon others determine the social nature of conduct. Not only is bare existence conditioned upon social relations, but the particular habits of thought, modes and instruments of action, and, to some extent, the particular ends sought, are endowments of the society into which one is born. Institutions furnish both the language with which we think and the agencies by which we secure a livelihood. As to physical livelihood:

> Individuals are interdependent. No one is born except in dependence on others. Without aid and nurture from others, he would miserably perish...As he matures, he becomes more physically and economically independent; but he can carry on his calling only through cooperation and competition with others; he has needs which are satisfied only through exchange of services and commodities. 3

Intellectually:

> The material of personal reflection and of choice comes to each of us from the customs, traditions, institutions, policies, and plans of these large collective wholes. They are the influences which form his character, evoke and confirm his attitudes, and affect at every turn the quality of his happiness and his aspirations. 4

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1. Liberalism and Social Action, p. 41. 2. Loc. cit.

3. Ethics, first ed. p. 247. 4. Ethics, second ed. p. 351

Dewey notes in Human Nature and Conduct that such things are matters of fact and hence that they do not indicate what is right or good. As to the influence of social approval, he explains 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. Others do take account of what we do, and they respond accordingly to our acts. Their reponses do affect the meaning of what we do. The significance thus contributed is as inevitable as is the effect of interaction with the physical environment. 1

As to our practical and intellectual dependence upon others he says:

> This social saturation is, I repeat, a matter of fact, not of what should be, not of what is desirable or undesirable. It does not guarantee the rightness of goodness of an act; there is no excuse for thinking of e evil action as individualistic and right action as social. Deliberate unscrupulous pursuit of self-interest is as much conditioned upon social opportunities, training and assistance as is the course of action prompted by a beaming benevolence. 2

Thus Dewey recognizes what is clearly true--that the above account of the social involvements of the individual, in thinking and acting, in the enterprises of work, play, and art, indicates only the possibility of a good that is social in nature, not its necessary connection with human nature.

Yet Dewey later seems to contradict this, saying that the answer to the question of why "acknowledge the

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 316.

2. Ibid., p. 317.

Right" is of the same sort as to the question: Why not put your hand in the fire?[1] In each case the answer is one of fact; and although he does not indicate what is the answer to the former question that corresponds to the answer to the latter, that one will be burned, he explains why it is the same sort:

> For 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.[2]

The question is the nature of these demands. The last sentence seems to say that the social pressures actually made constitute the demand, in which case morals would reduce to social approval, which Dewey cannot mean. The other alternative is that the demands are imposed by the ideal nature of the relationships themselves, and while this apparently contradicts the passage, it not only seems the most accordant with his general position but is suggested by other remarks.

Since it cannot be the completeness of our involvements in social relations that determines what is good, the latter must be grounded in the nature of certain social relations; and Dewey says:

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 326.

2. Loc. cit.

> We reach the conclusion that Right, law, duty, arise from the relations which human beings intimately sustain to one another, and that their authoritative force springs from the very nature of the relation that binds people together. 1

There are, for example, binding claims involved in the very nature of the parental and friendly relation, demanding certain conduct from their members. The obligations are not arbitrary, but are implied by the nature of the relation.

> The duties which express these relations are intrinsic to the situation, not enforced from without. The one who becomes a parent assumes by that very fact certain responsibilities. Even if he feels these to be a burden and seeks to escape from them, he flees from something which is part of himself and not from something imposed by external force. 2

Thus neither "current laws" nor "personal subjective opinion" determine right and wrong.[3] Just as spurious demands may be exerted by social pressure in the name of these relations, so the individual may exploit the existence of these relations for purely personal interest, violating their natural intention.

> The fact that the idea of principle of Right has such a natural basis and inevitable role does not, however, signify that it will not conflict with what an individual judges to be his good and his end, nor does it guarantee the rightfulness of all claims and demands that are put forth in its name. On the contrary, one may use the power and prestige which a representative capacity confers to advance one's personal interests, add to one's individual enjoyments, and enhance one's private gains. A parent may degrade the parental office into a means of increasing his own comfort and displaying his own whims, satisfying his love of power over others...Such conduct is <u>faithlessness.</u> 4

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1. <u>Ethics</u>, second ed. pp. 237-238.
2. Ibid, p. 248. 3. Ibid., p. 251. 4. Ibid., p. 249

It appears then, first, that the human being is naturally social, and second, that the relations this sociality involves determine the nature of the good. The question is why the relations that are necessary to a social member, being inseparable from participation in a group, should demand a certain sort of action from the individual. Granting that the individual has no substance apart from his relations to other persons, does this fact impose upon him any obligations as to the way in which he should adapt himself to, or make use of those relations? Why should not the parent, the citizen, the friend, utilize these relations for purely personal interests, rather than in view of a "common good"?

Dewey's answer is that the nature of the relation forbids such a use. The good is social and the individual is obligated to act in view of the welfare of others because the human being sustains certain relations that prescribe such conduct. Thus it seems to be implied (and so far as I can discover, only implied, never explicitly stated) that the good is social because the structure of human nature designs it for the sort of participation in social relations that involves attention to the good of others.

But the failure to connect these relations to our "common human nature" is evidently more than an accident.

For here again, as little as in the case of the Ethical Postulate, Dewey does not demonstrate the necessity of the relation of the good to human nature. He does not show that being the sort of creature we are we should pursue a good in accordance with social welfare. The description of human nature is restricted to showing that the individual is social in that his reality depends upon relations to others. It is not shown that he is designed for pursuing only the sort of good that involves the well-being of others. In the scarce passages in which the naturalness of certain human relations is mentioned (from which we have quoted liberally) the statement amounts only to an assertion that the good consists in the social values. Dewey does not explain why the socially motivated conduct which these relations enjoin, appertain to the nature of the human being for whom (he believes) they are regulative. In so far as a systematic and complete exposition of human nature is undertaken, it is solely to the point of showing the internality of the relations of the self to society and not the basis of these relations in human nature, nor the internality of a <u>particular</u> <u>way</u> of behaving in these relations to the nature of the human being. Yet such treatment is advanced in the contexts of the good and the Standard as though it were evidence in support of these.[1]

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[1] Ethics, second ed., pp. 247-248.

If the good were social welfare then the description of human relations that Dewey advances must be correct; these must be such as to impose upon us certain actions. If the good is social welfare there must be certain natural relations among men inducing them to mutually support one another. But the nature of these relations cannot be deduced from the conception of the good; rather the latter must be established by an analysis of human nature, and in virtue of this nature the sort of relations human beings should sustain to one another. That the nature of the human being restricts the use he can properly make of these relations is not established by saying only that they are "intrinsic to the situation" or that they are "natural". In that case any theory of the good would be established by the assertion that the pursuit of it constituted the proper expression of human nature; in short, no fundamental argument in support of a theory of the good would be required. Dewey seems to feel the need for a solid foundation for this theory in a conception of human nature, but he makes only a beginning, namely, the discussion of the social involvements of the individual.

The issue is: What is there in the nature of the human being that requires that he should limit his satisfactions to those that are not antagonistic to the happiness of others? The reply of common sense is that we simply ought to, that everyone really knows he should, and that there is

no more to be said. But this will hardly do to support a philosophical ethics. If there is anything the latter can do to justify a superiority, or even an addition, to common sense, it is to provide a view of human nature that is adequate to explain why what is good <u>is</u> good. Few philosophers, or laymen, would disagree to the contention that men ought to make their conduct compatible with the good of others, that justice and liberty are enduring values, and that art, science and social companionship are noble goods. But the philosophy that would make a significant contribution cannot simply assert what practical wisdom recognizes. It must explain why these things constitute the good, and it must enable the individual to recognize that his choice of such a good is not arbitrary but rests upon the firmest of grounds, the ground of his nature.

Only then can an appeal for socially beneficial conduct have force, and judgment of right and wrong authority. There is no validity to the imputation of responsibility for one sort of action rather than another unless it is predicated upon the nature of the agent. Without this he can always ask Why?--Why should he follow your opinion rather than his own. The query can be satisfactorily met only by a reply which shows that, being the sort of creature he is, he ought to do this, for only this will represent his proper function. Dewey once asserts that:

> The mode of action which is required by the fact that the person is a member of a complex social network is a more final expression of his own nature than is the temporarily intense instinctive appetite, or the habit which has become "second nature". 1

But clearly the justification of the assertion depends upon evidence that such a mode of action is integrally related with his nature. Without this evidence, if the agent felt that his chief good lay in satisfying an "instinctive appetite," he would be a fool to attach any validity to the claim.

Dewey sometimes seems to express this social obligation as arising out of a "contract" which the individual enters as a member of society. He says:

> ...that end which possesses claim to regulate desire is the one which grows out of the social position or function of the agent, out of a course of action to which he is committed by a regular, socially established connection between himself and others... Every relationship in life, is, as it were, a tacit or expressed contract with others, committing one, by the simple fact that he occupies that relationship, to a corresponding mose of action. 2

In the second edition of the Ethics wrong is defined as the violation of such contracts,--the failure to conform to terms that one depends upon being fulfilled by others.

> Wrong consists in faithlessness to that upon which the wrongdoer counts when he is judging and seeking for what is good for him. 3

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 345.

2. Ethics, first ed., p. 345.

3. Ethics, second ed., p. 251.

Pointing out that the fallibility of custom "...does not commit us to the conclusion that there is no criterion of right and wrong except that personal subjective opinion"[1] he explains: "A man would not steal if there were no value placed by him on property; even a thief resents having what he has stolen taken from him."[2]

Yet the question remains as to why the individual should not make use of his social position for purely selfish interests, why he should not enter contracts that he does not intend to keep but from which he hopes to profit. The thief, while resenting having his stolen property stolen from him, might very well deny that either he or the one who stole from him had a certain obligation which was violated. For the thief to take advantage of the rights others guarantee to him, involves no contradiction in his conduct; he simply profits by the moral superstitions of others. Moreover, if the culprit is exceptionslly clever and powerful he may wish to pursue the same course even at the cost of having others do likewise, rendering himself subject to the acts he does to others, confident that his natural superiority will bring him out on top.

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit.

IV

The difficulty is that while Dewey says that there are native "elements" or"Constituents" of human nature, he never defines them. He mentions certain basic appatites--"like hunger, thirst, sex"--and instincts--"like anger, fear, and hope"--that are necessary to conduct, saying that "Such tendencies then, constitute an essential and fundamental part of the person; their realization is involved in one's happiness."[1] But he goes on to indicate that they are not the sufficient elements in happiness, and must be organized in terms of other more refined satisfactions. Thus they cannot explain what is good. Dewey also speaks of "certain biological facts--sex, parenthood, kinship" as the "roots" of social participation, and of "Imitation and suggestion, sympathy and affection, common purpose and common interest" as "aids" in building up a social self.[2] But then he discloses that these do not act as the basis for moral conduct, saying that when the self is socialized "Conscious egoism and altruism become possible..."[3] Thus again the account of human nature is adequate to explain only the social nature of conduct, the possibility of moral conduct, not why social well-being is the end of moral con-

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3. Ethics, first ed., p. 340.

2. Ethics, second ed., pp. 8-9.

3. Ibid., p. 9.

duct. Dewey does however adduce reasons why he does not define the ultimate constituents of human nature, and it becomes our business to examine these, since they may justify his neglect to provide a basis in human nature for his conception of the good and may offer a valid substitute.

The traits of human nature that are discussed by Dewey in connection with moral conduct, are "impulses" or "instincts", his view consisting largely in a rejection of the possibility of defining them. While there is no explicit evidence that his denial of the possibility of defining instincts is equivalent to a denial of the possibility of defining traits of human nature relevant to the good, we shall proceed as though this were the case. We shall not attempt to verify that this is so (although the evidence points that way) but shall only note that if they are not equivalent then Dewey is without any excuse for neglecting the human bases of the good; whereas if they are equivalent, or if the latter is involved in the former, Dewey has a justification for the inadequacy of his theory of human nature. If it is in the nature of the case impossible to define the basic ethical characteristics of human nature, then it is of course no discredit to Dewey that he neglects to provide them.

However, it commits us to the conclusion that neither is a legitimate theory of the good possible, and

hence casts doubt upon the significance of Dewey's effort. If the rejection of instincts were valid, rather than justifying a theory of the good, it would condemn even the attempt. The contention that there is a common human nature together with the one that the bases of the good in human nature are not definable, implies that the theory of the good, which must then be single, cannot be supported. Hence Dewey seems to furnish the condemnation of his own attempt. It has been remarked, however, that Dewey himself refers to certain impulses and instincts, indicating that his rejection of the doctrine is complex, and suggesting, therefore, a detailed examination of his view as revealed in the argument against the discrimination of instincts. We shall try to determine whether he so explains his failure to provide a basis in human nature for his theory of the good that this theory can stand without such a support.

The discussion of the reasons behind Dewey's argument that it is an error to try to define the original human instincts, may be best prepared by considering what he means by impulse and instinct. The intentional use of the terms interchangeably indicates the nature of his view, the use of "impulse" suggesting that instincts are regarded as more flexible and plastic than in their usual employment. The meaning of impulse, for Dewey, appears to be derived from its polar opposition to "habit". As habit connotes stability, organization, definiteness, so impulse

connotes plasticity, spontaneity, unreliability. Impulse is native and original, habit acquired and learned. Habit, however, first gives meaning to impulses, directing them into the channels custom has provided for their expression. Because the "meaning" of impulses is not native but acquired, "In conduct the acquired is the primitive."[1]

Yet while the manner in which the impulses will be used and expressed is conditioned by the patterns of the society into which the child is born, this apparently does not mean that there will always be a perfect accord between impulse and custom. On the contrary, customs tend to become fixed and harsh, stifling the expression of instinctive needs. It is necessary that the relation between custom and impulse be kept reciprocal; that while the former provides organization and stability to impulse, impulse should be the source of reorganization and reconstruction of custom. Otherwise a suppressed impulse will gradually build up such a reservoir of unused energy that it will finally burst the dams of custom completely, ruining the latter and expending itself in a fruitless discharge.

That this situation is possible would seem to imply that impulses are not entirely malleable; that they have at least some purpose and direction of their own.

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 89.

The possibility first, of there being such a thing as suppression, and second, of an impulse asserting itself in spite of and in opposition to the suppressing factors, would seem to imply that there are definite instincts, whether or not they are definable. Yet Dewey sometimes seems to deny even this. In stressing the formative force of habit, he sometimes seems to consider impulse as a sort of crude, amorphous energy without the desire, will, or intelligence to do anything on its own; acquiring definiteness, order and reality only when harnessed by specific habits and projected through them. But if to habit impulse were only the raw material, the receptable to the form of habit, there could be no question of good or bad customs; for the criterion for judging customs is, according to Dewey, the success with which they enable the expression of native activities.

This quantitative notion of impulse is suggested first, by the way in which the reorganizing function of impulses is expressed by Dewey. It is stated as though impulses are a general source of energy, as though there is simply impulse, not distinct impulses. Dewey speaks of "constantly utilizing unused impulse to effect continuous reconstruction",[1] saying: "There always exists a goodly store of non-functioning impulses which may be drawn upon. Their

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1. Ibid., p. 101.

manifestation and utilization is called conversion or regeneration when it comes suddenly. But they may be drawn upon continuously and moderately. Then we call it learning or educative growth."[1] Impulse seems to be considered as simply a source of novelty and reconstruction *in general*, and not as consisting of definite impulses, each with its specific demand. "Impulse is a source, an indispensable source, of liberation; but only as it is employed in giving habits pertinence and freshness does it liberate power."[2]

The same conception seems to be involved in the prepotency that is given the environment in determining behavior. He says: "Any impulse may become organized into almost any disposition according to the way it interacts with surroundings."[3]

If Dewey had omitted the "almost" in the last quotation he would be asserting explicitly the doctrine he seems to suggest. However, the following illustration discloses that the impulse does exercise a determining or selective influence, explaining what is constant in these various diversities. "Fear may become abject cowardice, prudent caution, reverence for superiors or respect for equals; an agency for credulous swallowing of absurd

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1. Ibid., p. 102.

2. Ibid., p. 105.

3. Ibid., p. 95.

superstitions or for wary scepticism."[1] What is clear is that all of these qualitatively different fears are further determinations of one kind, and as such are distinct from other kinds, of impulses. Dewey did not say that fear could become hunger, or brotherly love, and so long as one is unable to shift impulses in this radical way it would seem that there are distinct impulses and not simply impulse. The "almost" in the above quotation is the most necessary term there.

Dewey indicates that there are distinct impulsive tendencies, not only by reference to different ones--as to those of "sex", "fear", "possession", etc.--but in pointing out the necessity for understanding how social environment influences impulses. He speaks of "...questions that demand discussion of cultural conditions, conditions of science, art, morals, religion, education and industry, so as to discover which of them in actuality promote and which retard the development of the native constituents of human nature."[2] Again: "We need to know exactly the selective and directive force of each social situation; exactly how each tendency is promoted and retarded."[3]

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1. Ibid., p. 95.
2. Freedom and Culture, p. 34.
3. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 148.

Clearly such statements presuppose that there are specific tendencies promoted or retarded in specific ways by specific environmental factors.

The ambiguity of Dewey's position is seen in the chapter title "No Separate Instincts", which may mean either that no instincts are separate or that there are no instincts, depending upon whether "Separate" or "Instincts" is meant to receive the emphasis. However, the dual meaning may be intentional, for the first passes into the second; if instincts are not really distinct but interpenetrate and substitute one for the other, then there are no instincts, but only an undifferentiated energy. Whether Dewey does really believe this remains (for me at least) an open question; there are statements that seem to be ultimately at odds, and to present no suggestion as to their reconciliation. The preponderance of evidence, however, seems to favor the view that he does believe there are separate instincts, and that his denial extends only to the possibility of defining them. Having noted the tenuousness of his position on the first score, we may proceed to his argument against the effort to distinguish basic instincts; for the latter view at least is unequivocal. If there are no instincts at all then his difficulty is increased with regard to supporting this concept of the good; whereas if they are only indefinable he has at least some claim of

justification in not supporting this concept by relating it to essential human traits.

The issue of whether instincts are separate, tends to pass into that of whether it is possible to define instincts, for part of the argument against the latter concerns the difficulty in strictly demarcating one instinct from another.

The error in "the notion of a single and separate tendency" seems to be that of slighting the uniqueness of each phenomenon of instinctive behavior, and springs from the ignoring of the intimate involvement of each expression of instinct with the two variables of organism and environment. Each manifestation of an instinct involves the entire organism and eventuates in an original environment, so that there will always be two reasons why the manifestation of instinct is unique. As to the organism, Dewey says:

> The whole organism is concerned in every act to some extent and in some fashion, internal organs as well as muscular, those of circulation, secretion, etc. Since the total state of the organism is never exactly twice alike in so far the phenomena of hunger and sex are never twice the same in fact. 1

Furthermore:

> ...the environment in which the act takes place is never twice alike. 2

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1. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

Illustrating the same point with the force of "fear" he says:

> Again it is customary to suppose that there is a single instinct of fear, or at most a few well-defined sub-species of it. In reality, when one is afraid the whole being reacts, and this entire responding organism is never twice the same. In fact, also, every reaction takes place in a different environment, and its meaning is never twice alike, since the difference in environment makes a difference in consequences. 1

This does demonstrate that there is no "single, identical psychic force which "causes" all the reactions of fear". It shows that each case of fear is "qualitatively unique" because interacting with a unique set of conditions, and that any particular phenomenon cannot be fully explained apart from the cooperating organic and environmental circumstances. But what is interesting is that throughout distinctive types of phenomena are referred to--those of fear, hunger, sex, etc.--posing the question of whether Dewey has shown anything more than the insufficiency of a general "instinct" to explain any individual manifestation of the particular kind of behavior it was designed to explain. Surely he does not. He shows with force the necessity for supplementing that explanation with further causes, but he seems to assume throughout that this general cause must also be invoked. At any rate the uniqueness of the particular phenomenon requires only that certain unique factors, or a combination of general factors, be recognized in explaining

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1. Ibid., p. 154.

it; not that general ones are not equally necessary, and certainly not that they are not possible explanations.

This turns us to Dewey's criticism of "general forces" as a method of explanation; but first we must take note of two other arguments that might conceivably be invoked against the possibility of defining separate instincts.

In pointing out how every phenomenon of behavior must be unique because eventuating in a unique environment, Dewey states that objective consequences provide the "only components of the meaning of the act."[1] At other points he insists that a capacity cannot be meaningful apart from an environment. However, if this relationship means that the capacity is not definable, it would also imply that the nature of the environment is not definable since it likewise depends upon capacity.[2] However, Dewey concedes that while "attitudes, dispositions and their kin" are never separate in fact they are "capable of being distinguished and made concrete intellectual objects." He says: "They are always of, from, toward situations and things. They may be studied with a minimum of attention to the things at and away from which they are directed. The things with which

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1. Ibid., p. 151.

2. Outlines of Ethics, p. 100.

they are concerned may, for purposes of inquiry, be represented by a blank, a symbol to be specifically filled in as occasion demands."[1] Thus the integral relation of instincts to environment does not explain their indefinability.

A related point, apparently more significant for our purposes, is the statement that the "component in human nature",

> ...the impulse (or whatever name be given it) is neither socially maleficent nor beneficent. Its significance depends upon consequences actually produced; and these depend upon the conditions under which it operates and with which it interacts. 2

The issue turns out, however, to be one of Moral Knowledge--one of the nature of the function of spontaneous impulses, or impulsive emotions, as determinants of the proper way of acting, rather than whether there can be fundamental traits that are the conditions of the good. Dewey says:

> ...any tendency, whether original instinct or acquired habit, requires sanction from the special consequences which, in the special situation, are likely to flow from it. The mere fact that pity in general tends to conserve the welfare of others does not guarantee the rightness of giving way to an impulse of pity, just as it happens to spring up. This might mean sentimentalism for the agent, and weakening of the springs of patience, courage, self-help, and self-respect in others. 3

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 238.

2. Freedom and Culture, p. 111.

3. Ethics, first ed., p. 386.

Thus Dewey is here considering impulses in the sense of "direct responses to situations"[1] and as a method of knowing what is morally right in the particular case.

But the question of whether spontaneous feeling is adequate to determine the right is distinct from that of whether basic characters of human nature are essential to a satisfactory conception of the good. It is not a question of the fallibility of direct "impulses" in informing us in particular situations what to do to achieve the good; but one of whether what is assumed as good presupposes basic traits of human nature as its necessary condition. Dewey has shown that an impulse to do something is not an adequate certificate of its worthwhileness. For the nature of the results of the act will depend not upon the actuating impulse, but upon objective factors with which it interacts; hence knowledge of the consequences is equally necessary to moral conduct. But while this proves that impulses are not guarantors of a particular type of result, and hence that their direct expression is neither good nor bad alone, it does not imply either that instincts are not possible modes of explanation, or that certain traits of human nature are not necessary conditions for good conduct. For a reflective survey of consequences may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition.

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 324.

Taking Dewey's conception, while pity or altruistic impulses are not sufficient conditions of moral conduct, they, or some equivalent trait in human nature, must be necessary conditions; since without such impulses the survey of consequences could not necessarily determine our conduct in socially beneficial ways. Dewey himself says: "A union of benevolent impulse and intelligent reflection is the interest most likely to result in conduct that is good."[1] Thus, while the manifestations of native traits are not good or bad apart from their results, their concrete goodness, depending upon the reenforcement of another factor--intelligence, they are necessary conditions of the good being what it is. The reason that particular manifestations may not necessarily result in good, is precisely that the proper impulses are not truly manifested; not being aided with the intelligence necessary to secure an appropriate, intentional expression. It would also seem as though the traits were necessary as emotional impulses in order for conduct to be "good", but this is a problem for the chapter on Moral Knowledge.

We have still to consider the fundamental argument against the endeavor to define and classify instincts--the criticism of the appeal to "general forces" as a method

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 331.

of explanation. This is stated but briefly in Human Nature and Conduct, the main part of the treatment being occupied with exposing specific errors that have been made in defining fundamental instincts. This suggests that one argument may be the variety of opinions that have prevailed upon the number and ranking of instincts.[1] But of course if errors have been made and there have been wide divergences among the theories of the basic instincts, this, rather than condemning the effort as classification, enumciates the need for a more exhaustive and penetrating analysis.[2]

Dewey's own not infrequent references to various impulses suggests that he is criticizing only the attempt to employ any single instinct as a general explanation of all phenomena. For example, in one place he delineates several "elements in human nature" that have been appealed to by the Nazi faith,[3] thus seeming to assume that, while a single force cannot explain either all human phenomena or a particular phenomenon, a complex of forces can do so. In any case there is a fundamental difference between the contention that no single human force--as love of power--can account for all human behavior or even for a particular

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 132.

2. See W. McDougall's article "Can Sociology Dispense with Instincts?", Amer.Jour.of Sociology,1924,Vol.29,esp.pp. 663-664,for an analysis of the grounds for Dewey's rejection of instince, following somewhat the same line of criticism adopted here.

3. Freedom and Culture, p. 36.

phenomenon, and the assertion that no determinate tendencies of the human being are assignable. The first may be simply the criticism of an error as to the nature or the number, or both, of the tendencies, whereas the latter denies that such errors are even possible, because the enterprise in which they might be made is itself mistaken. Only the latter can constitute a substantial objection to the endeavor to define instincts. How does Dewey sustain it? What are the errors in the employment of "general forces"?

Dewey explicitly sets forth two points in arguing the misapprehension of the endeavor to discriminate the fundamental human instincts. He says: "In the first place, it is unscientific to try to restrict original activities to a definite number of sharply demarcated classes of instincts. And the practical result of this attempt is injurious."[1] In the following discussion, however, the points seem to be one, for the only evil effects of the effort seem to be directly connected with the theoretical error. "When we assume that our clefts and bunches represent fixed separations and collections in rerum natura, we obstruct rather than aid our transactions with things...We are rendered incompetent to deal effectively with the delicacies and novelties of nature and life."[2] Why then is this effort "unscientific"?

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 131.
2. Loc. cit.

Dewey's answer is that the process of classification is "performed for a purpose"; and generally the purpose is "to facilitate our dealings with unique individuals and changing events."[1] Thus the question is whether a classification of instincts can perform such a purpose; and apparently the only way it could do so would be by being a true reprsentation of the nature of the human being. Why does Dewey think that in the nature of the case "instincts" cannot perform this purpose? The failure of past classifications would be no argument against the validity of the procedure. And he cannot mean that every human phenomenon is so unique that no classifications are useful in knowing it, for of course generalization is the basis of all knowledge, The error that arises in the classification of instincts must be more special.

This error seems to be the employment of "lump forces" to describe phenomena that ought to be analyzed into more elementary factors. He explains:

> "...science and invention did not get on as long as men indulged in the notion of special forces to account for such phenomena (as lightning, etc.)...They spoke of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; of a force of combustion; of intrinsic nisus toward this and that; of heaviness and levity as forces. It turned out that these "forces" were only the phenomena over again, translated from a specific and concrete form (in which they were at least actual) into a generalized form in which they were verbal...After it had dawned upon inquirers

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1. Loc. cit.

> that their alleged causal forces were only names which condensed into a duplicate form a variety of complex occurrences, they set about breaking up phenomena into minute detail and searching for correlations, that is, for elements in other gross phenomena which also varied..But as yet we tend to regard sex, hunger, fear, and even much more complex active interests as if they were lump forces, like the combustion or gravity of old-fashioned physical science. 1

In making this point Dewey seems at times to neglect the indispenable function that such general characterizations as the force of weight do have, viz., that of indicating just what is to be explained. The assertion of the force of weight may be simply a verbal recording of phenomena that do occur; and, as Dewey says, it may not explain anything. Nevertheless, it does indicate where and in terms of what the explanation is to be found. It indicates that A, B, and C cases of weight are similar phenomena and hence are to be explained by similar causes. Likewise with instinct. It may well be that "instincts" express only general classifications of human phenomena, and to be more than verbal, to be real, explanations the more minute conditions accounting for these need to be discovered. What is important, however, is that this inquiry can proceed only under the direction of the initial classification. Without the classification of behavior into the separate kinds of phenomena, we will not expect to find general causes of behavior

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, pp. 149-150.

but in each case a set of peculiar conditions. We will be unable to give any general explanations for different kinds of human phenomena unless we have first analytically distinguished different types of phenomena. This initial classification assumes that distinct results have distinct causes, similar results similar causes; and it is a necessary assumption for general explanations of phenomena. Yet it is perfectly capable of recognizing that any instance will have to be explained, in any complete sense, by the supplementation of the particular factors operating in this case.

But for our purposes it is sufficient to notice that in Dewey's criticism of explanation by general forces two alternatives are presented. Either there are more elementary factors that inhere in a common human nature, or these are in each case so particularized that there really are no common traits of human nature. If the former, then Dewey must explain how they are such as to account for the good being what it is--which we have seen he does not. If the latter, he has deprived himself of any possible basis for his theory of the good, not only precluding the possibility of supporting it, but positively condemning it. For if each human phenomenon is so individual as to require an explanation encompassing a set of peculiar factors, then there can be no human nature as such, nor any good related to it as its proper end.

Thus we have found, first, that Dewey has no adequate basis for the good in a theory of human nature; and second, that he does not justify his neglect to provide this foundation, having failed to show either that "instincts" (taken as essential traits of human nature) are incapable of definition, or that they are not necessary to account for human phenomena.

CHAPTER III

THE THEORY OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE

From the discussion of the good we have discovered at least one factor in moral knowledge. This is the standard of social well-being. While the enduring values--liberty, justice, equality of opportunity--apparently serve in some way in passing judgments of good and bad, Dewey is himself the sharpest exponent of the limitations of such standards. Their generality renders them inadequate alone to determine what constitutes the moral action in a concrete situation. Condensing as they do the essence of a host of goods of particular situations, they cannot be mechanically applied to new cases to inform us as to the proper course of behavior. It is necessary to uncover the actual case in all its concreteness, to bring out all the relations that are involved, so that the full weight of its demands be brought into view. Stressing the need of

reflection in moral issues he says:

> Justice: to be sure; give to each that which is his due. But is individualistic competitive capitalism a just system? of socialism? or communism. Is inheritance of large fortunes, without rendering of personal service to society, just? What system of taxation is just? What are the moral claims of free-trade and protection? What would constitute a just system of the distribution of national income? Few would question the desirability of chastity, but there are a multitude of interpretations of its meaning. Does it mean that celibacy is more pleasing to God than marriage? This idea is not generally held today, but its former vogue still affects the beliefs and practices of men and women. What is the relation of chastity as a moral idea to divorce, birth control, state censorship of literature? Human life is sacred. But what about many of the health-destroying practices and accident-inducing practices of modern industry? What about war, preparation for which absorbs the chief part of the revenue of modern States? 1

It would appear, however, that this exhaustive examination of the actual situations is required precisely in order to avoid an abrogation of one of the values that constitute social well-being, these being the ultimate criteria to which the survey of consequences must constantly appeal. They would seem to serve as the delimiting factors within which right action could occur. When an act promised to induce consequences or to require for its performance conditions destructive of these values, then the latter, as the final court of appeal, would condemn the act as immoral. In such an office social well-being and its component values would endow the inquiry into the particular

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1. Ethics, second ed., pp. 189-190.

situation with context and significance, operating as the referent in terms of which the discovered results obtain active significance and energy in conduct.

Such an analysis brings out the limitation of the standard of social well-being and its values in moral knowledge, as well as their necessity in the performance of this restricted function. Dewey, however, in emphasizing their restrictions seems at times to deny their necessity. He appears to forget all about his endorsement of the standard of social well-being and to advance a theory of valuation in which judgment has no need for anything more than a thorough knowledge of the relations involved in the situation in which action will eventuate, and, accordingly, a recognition of the conditions and consequences of the alternative acts possible to perform in that situation. In examining the theory of valuation it thus becomes important to notice (a) the apparent contradiction in Dewey's endorsement of the standard of social well-being and the ignoring of it in his theory of valuation, (b) the account of how proper valuations are made.

Since if the standard of social well-being were considered integral to valuation its operation surely would be made unmistakable, and its detection not require a subtle investigation, our purpose shall be not to argue in detail the absence of this standard in valuation, but to

show its complete necessity to right valuation. Its absence should, however, become evident in our treatment of this method of arriving at moral decision. If it yet be argued that Dewey assumes the standard of social well-being as so obvious it need not be indicated, the proper reply is that this is an unwammranted assumption, since the reader has no way of deciphering what is assumed and what argued. He does not know whether Dewey means to provide a substitute for or alternative to the standard, or only a supplement and elaboration of the conditions under which it becomes effective. After studying with some thoroughness Dewey's writings on valuation, this particular reader is still not sure which is the case. The failure to refer to the standard would be hardly excusable even if the discussion of valuation were confined to the complete ethical writings, in which the standard of social well-being is endorsed in another section. It is surely without justification, and can lead only to misunderstanding, when it is omitted in the distinct discussions of valuation, as is the case in the many articles noted in the following, as well as in the Theory of Valuation.

If, then, this chapter is devoted to demonstrating at length what Dewey would recognize all the time, this does not deprive our immediate project of significance; for it makes clearer than Dewey ever does the precise

extent and limits of what he describes strictly as this moral method, orienting the standard of social well-being as its inevitable complement if the process is adequately to explain moral choice. As in the first chapter it was necessary to examine a number of Dewey's descriptions of the good to discriminate precisely what was essential to his theory of the good, and toward observing that social well-being alone renders these other descriptions adequate, so our present project is to investigate his theory of valuation to determine what is required to render it an adequate account of moral decision, and to show the inadequacy of other methods and standards that might conceivably be employed.

There are times when Dewey uses as equivalent the consideration of consequences and an interest in socially beneficial consequences, in which cases the standard of social well-being is of course incorporated in the process of deliberation. When he is discussing the question of the locus of the moral judgment of an act--whether it applies to motive or consequences--the moral act is considered as that which intends consequences conducive to social welfare.[1] An act is moral when it is performed with an active concern for the way it affects others. Now, if

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 243.

it were plain in the treatments of valuation that the inquiry into consequences were guided by concern for social welfare, this being a standard in terms of which consequences were preferred and approved, the doctrine of valuation would be complete. But there is never a mention of such a standard nor a statement that the importance of the review of consequences is in reference to this standard. On the contrary, Dewey seems to claim the independence of this process of standards for deciding between alternatives, restricting the function of general standards to the purely intellectual one of informing us what consequences can be expected, and maintaining that the standard for any situation is really developed within the particular instance of valuation. Thus his neglect of standard seems to be one not merely of omission but of positive denial. There seems to be an utter break between his definition of a standard of social and personal conduct as social well-being, and his description of the process of valuation as a purely disinterested survey of conditions and consequences.[1]

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1. Of course when Dewey is speaking of the moral quality of the act as its intending the right consequences he refers only to consequences, since the means to the end pursued are also part of the consequences of the act; whereas in speaking of the valuation of the end he refers to conditions and consequences, since the direct consequence of the act is the enstatement of the means to the end.

It is natural for the conception of the good as social well-being to accompany the conception of intended consequences as the criterion of the moral act, since the good of others cannot be achieved except by concrete consequences. One's own moral character may be affected by noble motives, but hardly the welfare of others. But on the other hand a consideration of consequences does not guarantee social conduct. It is as much to the interest of the entirely selfish person, as to the socially minded one, to examine with precision the possible results of his act. Nor is it unusual to find the most cool and complete calculation of consequences undertaken with the sole interest of self-profit as a motive. The only basis upon which this examination can be assumed to result in promotion of the good is the operation of some standard or method that insures judgment accordant with the good.

The question of whether there is a standard for value judgments is that of whether it is possible to provide an objective warrant for a judgment, basing it upon grounds that are verifiable. The alternative is that the judgment is declared by some "subjective" faculty and hence is neither amenable to statement in terms of objective grounds nor capable of public verification. In the latter case "interest", "liking", "taste", or "bias" is ultimate, and judgments become relative to the agents making them.

Dewey's position is the former; valuations are objective and the process of making them is intellectual. He declares:

> ...to value means to weigh, appraise, estimate; to evaluate--a distinctly intellectual operation. 1

In almost every one of his papers on valuation Dewey reiterates that tastes are the one thing worth disputing about and that by reflection they can be altered and placed upon objective bases. He speaks of evaluation as:

> ...a process of inquiry for the determination of a good precisely similar to that which is undertaken in science in the determination of the nature of an event. 2

The Theory of Valuation undertakes to show how verifiable valuations can occur, and Dewey says that valuation propositions:

> ...in their generalized form may rest upon scientifically warranted empirical propositions, and are themselves capable of being tested... 3

Referring to the conviction of common sense, that there is a real distinction between immediately enjoyed goods and these goods appraised and rectified, and that there are principles by which this criticism may be accomplished, Dewey says that this notion

> ...is sound as to the needs and possibility of objective criticism of values. 4

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1. Logic (1938) p. 172.

2. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 353.

3. Theory of Valuation, p. 24.

4. Experience and Nature, p. 427.

Its weakness is as to "the method of accomplishing" and presumably Dewey will repair this.

Now whatever the method for making value-judgments that are "significantly conclusive", clearly the reason why the judgment is objectively grounded, why it is "right", is that it is conducive to the good, which for Dewey is, of course, social well-being. The criteria for determining whether a judgment is correct may not be identical with this conception of the good; the criteria may have to be more technical and adaptable to concrete cases. But ultimately the only thing that can justify them is their guarantee of judgments in accordance with social well-being. While the judgment may be immediately subject to these criteria, the criteria in turn can have no other purpose, justification, or test than their accordance with the good. It is important to remember that for Dewey the objectivity of a valuation means only that it declares what is right in the specific situation. But clearly it also means that in any situation there is a judgment that is correct and others that are wrong. Thus it does call for some method or standard, or both, that will warrant a judgment of value as right and enable the agent to make such judgments.

If we are able to show that the standard of social well-being is necessary to moral knowledge, being the essen- condition to the issuance of grounded value-judgments, the

conclusions of the preceding chapter become equally pertinent here. Having found that a good consisting of the promotion of social well-being was not adequately grounded in a theory of human nature, and hence has no rightful claim upon conduct, it follows that this, as a standard, cannot insure correct judgments of value. It may insure judgments accordant with the conception of the good upon which it rests, but since the latter is unsupported, it likewise is ungrounded. The function of the standard is to induce judgments and acts conducive to the good, and hence its validity to determine right judgments depends upon the correctness of this presupposition as to what is good. If we have not demonstrated that social well-being is the good, we have no basis for believing that judgments and acts accordant with it are right.

I

On the matter of standards, as on other issues, Dewey seems to take contrary positions. At times he severely criticizes all attempts to employ standards to regulate conduct, arguing that there is nothing beyond the concrete situation regulative of it; that this situation contains its own standards, and that these standards are determimed in the process of deliberation upon this concrete case. This point of view is most insistent in the discussion of the process of valuation. However, in all four of the

strictly ethical books[1] there is an attempt to define a standard for determining what acts are approvable and for enabling the agent to make approvable decisions. Thus Dewey seems at one time to say that there is no general standard determining what is right in a particular case, and other times to define such a standard.

This is partly to be explained by the appearance of the explicit rejection of all standards in the criticism of their casuistical use. Dewey makes it clear that the standard he endorses is not to be so used, and devotes a section to explaining the relation of ends-in-view to the standard. Speaking of the standard as "the general happiness" of "well-being" he says that this cannot provide particular ends-in-view; "It does not tell what things should be specifically aimed at."[2] Desire moves us to select concrete objects at which to aim. The standard operates as a "standpoint for survey". Speaking of the common happiness he says:

> As a standard it is rather a cautionary direction, saying that when we judge an act, accomplished or proposed, with reference to approval and disapproval, we should first consider its consequences in general, and then its special consequences with respect to whatever affects the well-being of others. As a standard it provides a consistent point of view to be taken in all deliberation, but it does not pretend to determine in advance precisely what constitutes the general welfare or common good. 3

1. Outline of Ethics, Study of Ethics, Ethics, first and second editions.
2. Ethics, second ed., p. 310
3. Ibid., p. 281.

The view is complex, however. It is not clear whether Dewey means to attribute to the standard the purely intellectual function of eleciting before attention all the consequences that may be involved in conduct, or whether he conceives it as also enabling us to choose between these consequences after they have been known in their fullest scope. While the above passage may suggest the former, he also says that:

> The function of the standard then, is to discriminate between the various material kinds of satisfaction, so as to determine which kind of happiness is truly moral; that is approvable. 1

Further,

> The significance of the standard is that it involves a conception of the way in which ends that are adopted should be formed; namely, that they should be such as to merit approbation because their execution will conduce to the general well-being. 2

These support the second interpretation, indicating that while the standard does not select the end-in-view initially, it yet determines which one is finally chosen.

If the standard gives us a means of judging ends-in-view then it is what is crucial in determining the ends that will be pursued. For while desires furnish ends it is the standard which criticizes them and which has the final word in deciding which one will pass into realization. In terms of Dewey's conception of the good, this is the

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1. Ibid., p. 271.
2. Ibid., p. 270.

function that we would expect of the standard. Yet both in the theory of valuation and in the treatment of standards in Outlinesof Ethics and Study of Ethics all regulative office is denied them. Here the standard seems to have applied to it all the comments Dewey makes of other "principles" and "rules", the only function remaining to the standard being the intellectual, heuristic one he insists constitutes the entire significance of principles and rules. The account of the process of valuating the situation contains an attempt to explain why standards are not required to enable decision, and this we shall consider presently. First it will be well to examine the treatment of standard offered in the Outlines of Ethics and Study of Ethics, for these introduce what is to be looked for in the theory of valuation.

In Outlines of Ethics the standard is stated as "exercise of function "; in Study of Ethics, as "expression of self". The earlier conclusions in the theory of the good about these as further specifications of the conception of "meeting the needs of the situation" apply here. For we discovered that all of these were primarily accounts of our method of knowing, and that "exercise of function" and "expression of the self" furnished further information about the kinds of "needs" that were to be looked for, designating the sorts of elements contained in the situation.

The standard as the needs of the situation is to be examined in the discussion of the process of valuation, where it is crucial. Our first task is to observe that in the explicit advancement of the other concepts as the standard, their meaning is that found in the "needs of the situation", viz: the uniqueness of the actual situation and the necessity to study it in all its relations and peculiarities.

Describing how "exercise of function" "explains the possibility of decision as to whether this or that proposed act is right", Dewey says:

> We have only to analyze the act itself. We have certain definite and wholly concrete facts; the given capacity of the person at the given moment, and his given surroundings. The judgment as to the nature of these facts is, in and of itself, a judgment as to the act to be done. The question is...: What is this case? The moral act is not that which satisfies some far-away principle, hedonistic or transcendental. It is that which meets the present actual situation... The case made out, the moral end stands forth. 1

The same point is expressed in Study of Ethics:

> The criterion and its application both exist in terms of the individual's own moral life; it is always putting two and two together; doing the best possible with the material available. Its terms are the given impulse and its bearing in the agent's own life; it is simply a complete view, or judgment, of the intrinsic nature of the act. 2
>
> ...the case and the standard are really one; it is always a question of what the case really is, when looked at not partially, but in the light of the agent as a concrete, effective agent in his vital relationships.3

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1. Outlines of Ethics, pp. 134-135.
2. Study of Ethics, p. 70.
3. Ibid., p. 71.

This enables us to see how the endorsement of a standard and the rejection of standards may be reconciled, for here the standard offered becomes identical with conducting a complete analysis of the concrete case. Dewey proposes the above standards in conjunction with a condemnation of the employment of separate standards in the concrete case, saying finally that "the case and the standard are really one". It seems to amount to the paradox that the only standard is that there shall be no standard. He insists that in the proper sense his standard is absolute, but that in this proper sense it is also relative.

> A truly absolute criterion is one whichadjusts itself to each case according to the specific nature of the case; one which moves with the moving world. On the other hand, if relative means uncertain in application, changing in time and place without reason for change in the facts themselves, then certainly the criterion is not relative. If it means taking note of all concrete relations involved, it is relative. The absoluteness, in fine, of the standard of action consists in never failing application. 1

It is clear that this provides a method for judging what to do, but that this method does not contain a standard for enabling us to decide between alternatives. It tells us that in every case the right decision must follow from an exhaustive analysis of the nature of the case; it does not explain how the alternative values or ends potential in the situation

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1. Outlines of Ethics, pp. 135-136; see Study of Ethics, pp. 70-71 for further statement.

and petitioning for our attention are to be compared and evaluated. If we are to obtain a means for deviding between these alternatives, it must then be contained in the method of deliberating upon this case. We turn then to the statement of this method in the theory of valuation.

The theory of valuation is based upon the fundamental concepts of Dewey's theory of knowledge, especially upon those of the origin of knowledge in a problematic situation, and the nature of knowledge as mediate and relational. Moral knowledge is no different in kind from scientific knowledge. In fact it is hardly legitimate to say even that his epistemology is applied to morals to produce the theory of valuation; for, according to Dewey, value judgments are contained to some extent in all cases of deliberation. But while moral knowledge is thus continuous with scientific knowledge, there is indicated a distinction which, for our purposes, is fundamental. There are situations in which the problem for deliberation is to discover the appropriate means to some preconceived end; the knowledge here in question is "technical". In other situations there is no single end decided upon, but there are several ends competing for our decision; in such cases, and only here, is the situation "moral".[1] "The problem now is what

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1. Ethics, first ed.,pp.205-211; Ethics, second ed., pp. 172-172, 302.

is really valuable. It is the nature of the valuable, of the desirable, that the individual has to pass upon."[1]

In considering the theory of valuation it will, of course, be the moral phase only that we shall be concerned with, for only here does the problem of a standard arise. Where the issue is merely "technical" all that is lacking is an adequate knowledge of means, and if the affair really is merely technical; if, that is, it has been agreed that under no circumstances, no matter what the means turn out to be, will the end be questioned, a knowledge of means will be sufficient to release action. In the moral situation, as when the means are examined in terms of values other than the initial end they may promote or hinder, it would seem as though something more than knowledge of the means or of various alternative sets of means were required to instigate decision, and that some standard were required for deciding between the competing values.

The general function of valuation is indicated in its origin. Arising because of a conflict of a "problematic situation" its purpose is to complete the situation, to solve the problem.[2] The value judgment is relative to the particular situation and because this is indeterminate and

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 207.

2. As we shall note later this origin also sets the general standard for deliberation, namely, the needs of the situation that require fulfilling.

activity inhibited the judgment of value is one of what is to be done. Since, however, in the moral situation there are competing ends, clearly the determination of what act to perform must follow from an estimation of the relative worth of the alternative ends. While Dewey asserts that it is really the act, not the object that is judged, he also says that the object that is judged valuable or the reverse and hence made an end of action, is judged so in reference to the value of the end to which it is a means.[1] Thus, finally, both act and object are judged and action determined by the judgment of the value of the end to which they are related. And valuation concerns conflicting ends. Dramatizing a particular perplexity, Dewey writes:

> What will I have the situation become as between alternatives? And that means what force shall the thing as means be given? Shall I take it as means to present enjoyment, or as a (negative) condition of future health? When its status in these respects is determined its value is determined; judgment ceases, action goes on. 2

Thus in so far as valuation is moral (and we shall subsequently consider valuation only in this sense) its problem-solving function is the narrower one of selecting among alternative ends, any one of which may be the proper way of rendering the indeterminate situation determinate and hence enabling the recovery of activity.

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1. Essays in Experimental Logic, pp. 359-363.

2. Ibid., p. 361.

The question we are concerned with is how the alternatives are judged; what is the standard.

Because the question in the moral situation is what in the specific case is really valuable or good, the process of valuation in rendering an indeterminate situation determinate will be engaged not merely in "enstating" a value in existence. Dewey contends that in so far as the proper value of this situation is not known, the valuation giving rise to the restatement of the value will also be providing the data for determining the accuracy of the initial judgment as to the rightness of this value and its corresponding act. Only with the issue can the judgment be conclusively verified; "...the act (of valuation) is the <u>proximate</u> object of judgment which is required to make a logically <u>conclusive</u> judgment possible."[1]

Thus the process of valuation involves <u>experiment</u> which provides the data for determining the truth of the value judgment. This must be the case, since the subject-matter is always an indeterminate situation and arises to settle what <u>act</u> is to be performed. But before we study the means of <u>verifying</u> a value judgment, we must consider the method by which valuations are initially to be made, how they may be warranted as hypotheses. It is clear, however,

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1. Valuation and Experimental Knowledge, Phila. Review, Vol. 31, p. 336.

that if a valuation cannot be conclusively verified until after it has issued into act, enstating the value in actuality and thus providing the complete data for its judgment, then there can be no infallible method for determining the right course of conduct. But in any case there is some method of "conclusively" verifying value judgments experimentally, and Dewey believes also that there is a method of arriving at approximately correct judgments prior to action. Although the complete absence of the latter would not automatically deprive his ethical theory of adequacy, it certainly would be a strange quantity in the philosophy that believes the function of knowledge is to enlighten conduct. First, then, what is the method of deciding what to do in a moral situation?

The general character of this method is repeatedly illustrated by a distinction between two senses of the term "value". Dewey notes that in one sense to value means "esteeming", "prizing", "appreciating"--all acts of direct apprehension or immediate knowledge--and anything is a value which is an object of these activities. In another sense to value means to "estimate", "appraise", "evaluate", this activity being reflective and mediated, and the final object designated "valuable" being the product of a careful inquiry. Dewey's general theory of the process of knowledge as mediate and of the object of knowledge as relational, indicates which

of these meanings he believes correctly states the judgment of value. It is, he insists, only when the immediate appreciation of value is subjected to a critical examination that a warranted judgment can be made and a proper value instituted. "Valuation" proper begins when direct experiencing of values leaves off, although the function of this process is to reinstate a value immediately apprehended.

II

There is no doubt as to what is in general the moral method as Dewey conceives it. The question is as to the nature of the standard and whether this furnishes the standard. The method is "intelligence", or "scientific method" (they are equivalent for Dewey) and in asserting its supremacy Dewey is at some pains to impress the reader with its necessity. It is "the reasonable object of our deepest faith and loyalty, the stay and support of all reasonable hopes."[1] However, intelligence alone is hardly definite or distinctive enough to constitute the peculiarly moral method. It will not be contested that whatever one does he ought to do it intelligently and not unintelligently. But to perform as a distinctive instrument for informing us what we ought to do and for making value judgments, "intelligence" must be

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1. Experience and Nature, pp. 36-37.

given a more precise and distinctive formulation, in terms of traits that characterize the process in its moral aspect,--the standard that supports it, or the object it manipulates.

Dewey himself recognizes this and tries to give it this precision and distinction. He says that in stating the supremacy of the method of intelligent action in dealing with problems of valuation he has

> ...tried to take that statement out of the region of innocuous truism by linking up the possibility of intelligence in action with that ascertained knowledge of conditions and consequences which is obtained by the use of the methods which stand out conspicuously in the physical sciences. 1.

Thus the end of intelligence as moral method is a knowledge of "conditions and consequences". And it is by this knowledge, it is disclosed in Experience and Nature, that values are criticized and appraised. Knowledge of their causes and effects provides the data by which values are wanranted or proved defective. Values as they are immediately given must be appraised by reflection before they are proved desirable.

> Properties and relations that entitle an object to be found good in belief are extraneous to the qualities that are its immediate good; they are causal, and hence found only by search into the antecedent and eventual. 2

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1. Schilpp, p. 591

2. Experience and Nature, p. 405.

Again: Of immediate values as such, values which occur and which are possessed and enjoyed, there is no theory at all; they just occur, are enjoyed, possessed; and that is all. The moment we begin to discourse about these values, to define and generalize, to make distinctions in kinds, we are passing beyond value-objects themselves; we are entering, even if only blindly, upon an inquiry into causal antecedents and causative consequents with a view to appraising the "real", that is, the eventual goodness of the thing in question. 1

An investigation of the productive causes and the following effects is then the method of appraising a value or a value-object. How precisely does this method function?

In the exposition of the theory of valuation Dewey states what warrants a value as the discovery of its conditions and consequences, never as its conformity with social well-being. He says that:

> ...enjoyment becomes a value when we discover the relations upon which its presence depends. 2

The point of view is elaborated in Theory of Valuation:

> The proposition in which any object is adopted as an end-in-view is statable (or explicitly stated) is warranted in just the degree to which existing conditions have been surveyed and appraised in their capacity as means. 3
>
> Hence it follows necessarily that the idea of the object of desire and interest, the end in view as distinct from the end or outcome actually effected, is warranted in the precise degree in which it is formed in terms of these operative conditions. 4

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1. Ibid., p. 403.

2. Quest for Certainty, p. 247.

3. Theory of Valuation, p. 25

4. Ibid, p. 29

The most obvious interpretation of such statements is that virtue is only self-consciousness; that whenever the conditions and consequences involved in actualizing a value are known, whatever their specific content or however they are approved, the judgment of value is warranted. This implies that the nature of the ends chosen are irrelevant to their warrantability; all that is relevant is their being the result of a certain method, their being consciously recognized in the energy they will cost and the sacrifices they entail. Yet Dewey, having defined certain values and ends that are good, has indicated that their specific content is important, that the value of an end is relevant to its worth. In terms of his conception of the good, surely any consequences or conditions involving effects contrary to social welfare must be condemned, however strict their adherance to the method and however thoroughly they were known. If the moral good is of a certain social nature, the only warrant for moral conduct and correct valuations could be compatibility with this good.[1]

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1. In one passage in The Quest for Certainty, it is suggested that the nature of the value is relevant to the correctness of the value-judgment, and that the conditions that warrant a value must be not merely known but of a certain sort. While the general statement does not hint this, one elaboration of it does. He begins with:"To say that something satisfies is to report something as an isolated finality. To assert that it is satisfactory is to define it in its connections and interactions."(Quest for Certainty, p. 248) But later he says: "To declare something satisfactory is to assert that it meets specifiable conditions."(Loc. cit.; last italics mine). (continued)

Thus it seems proper to conclude that Dewey believes judgments resulting from the use of the method of surveying conditions and consequences, are warranted as products of this method precisely because its application will necessarily result in the adoption of the specific values he regards good. In this case the method suggested would, as a reliable way of making judgments, serve to warrant any particular moral decision and end chosen. The question we are concerned with is whether this method warrants judgment by containing the employment of the standard or by supplanting it, and if the latter, how. It must explain (1) how the agent chooses between incompatible ends, and (2) how the choice is warranted or grounded. The question is as to the nature of the function of knowledge of conditions and consequences in warranting the value. What in the case of any particular value are the particular conditions that will warrant or invalidate it? How are we to determine whether the conditions and consequences a value involves are such as to validate or invalidate it?

Such questions give rise to the more elementary ones of how the causes and effects of a value can be relevant to its worth as a value--to its "valuableness".

(continued) Thus he seems to say that a thing is valuable only if its conditions are of a certain sort. However, since the notice is so incidental, and the nature of these "specifiable" conditions is not suggested, it cannot be treated as of any particular significance.

It is clear that the only way in which the causes or effects connected with the existence of a value could bear upon the worth of that value would be for them to contain or be promotive or destructive of values other than the one to be judged. Otherwise they would not enter into the sphere of value at all and hence could not bear upon the valuableness of a particular value. If the causes and effects of a value were valuationally indifferent, except in their efficacy in producing the value in question (which of course would leave effects without any value aspect at all), then the only purpose of knowledge of conditions would be to enable the production of the value. They could not then approve or condemn the value for it would be the purpose and test of them, the only question being whether they really would bring the value into existence. If conditions and consequences are relevant to the worth of a value it must be because they involve the promotion or destruction of <u>other</u> values.

If this is the case it follows that the process of considering a value in terms of its conditions and consequences is one of <u>comparing</u> the value to other values. The conditions are considered in terms of the values they promote or destroy in producing the value in question. Only in this case could consequences have any bearing at all upon the value. Only this could explain why criticism of a value is necessary; namely, because in choosing a particular value we choose

not only it, but other values connected with the means and consequences of its existence, and if choice is made in ignorance of these conditions or consequences, values superior to the value desired may be sacrificed im its achievement. Thus the process of criticism settles down to a comparison of the worth or quantity of value of one value with another.

But then is this not simply a statement of the problem with which criticism or appraisal is concerned, rather than an account of the method it employs? Dewey himself has stated the moral problem as that of the reconciliation of incompatible values, a choice among competing ends. The question is precisely what is the method or standard for accomplishing this reconciliation or determining this choice?

Adequate evidence is not available to determine whether Dewey does or does not recognize that the verification of a value by inquiry into conditions and consequences is significant only when the latter are analyzed into other values with which the former is compared. It is not necessary to ponder in detail the evidence on either side; for it can be observed that in either case he must provide some further method, or a further specification of this initial procedure, to explain how values can be warranted. However, it may be helpful to indicate the general nature of the evidence for the two alternatives. Moral deliberation is explicitly defined as the endeavor to reconcile incompatible values or

ends, so that recognition that conditions and consequences must be refined into values is implicit in the nature of valuation. Further, some passages are found in which Dewey indicates that causes and effects are to be examined in warranting a value, because these may involve the sacrifice of other values than the one of initial concern. One of these is the contention that a desire may be modified by the discovery

> ...that an immense amount of effort is required to procure the conditions that are the means required for realization of a desire (including perhaps sacrifice of other end-values that might be obtained by the same expenditure of effort). 1

And in criticizing the doctrine that "the end justifies the means" Dewey says, in reference to a particular example, that this

> ...would mean that the value of the attained end...was such as to warrant the price paid in the means by which it was attained--sacrifice of dwelling-houses and sacrifice of the values to which they contributed. 2

But such observations should be preliminary to considering the crucial evidence, for determining whether Dewey recognizes the merely preliminary nature of a study of conditions and consequences which is that of whether he actually tries to furnish a further method for comparing the values the latter contain. That he does not, as we

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 25.

2. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

shall find, furnish such a method, nor appeal to his standard of social well-being, seems to indicate that he is unaware of its need, and hence of the partial character of knowledge of conditions and consequences. But while this would explain the absence of a standard in the theory of valuation, we cannot conclude that this is the case. For the question remains as to whether his failure is in not recognizing the necessity of a further method, or simply in neglecting to refer to a standard that is assumed throughout.

III

Although Dewey makes clear in his treatment of the moral situation, and occasionally in his description of the process of valuation, that moral evaluation consists in rating and deciding between diverse ends or values, the general characterization of valuation tends to obscure this. It is for this reason that Dewey has frequently been accused of reducing valuation (moral valuation, i.e.) to the utilitarian problem of devising means to an end. The criticism that Dewey does not recognize the peculiar nature of the moral problem as a reconciliation of, or at least choice, between diverse ends, can be recognized from the foregoing to be mistaken. A more correct criticism may be that Dewey provides no way for <u>settling</u> the moral problem,--for selecting one of several competing values.

While the first objection should have been dispelled by a more thorough examination of the doctrine, the critics are perhaps not entirely to blame for their mistake. For in always setting the moral problem in the context of the indeterminate situation Dewey tends to refer only to one end or value, speaking of valuation as the "mediation" or "reconstitution" of the end by a survey of its means. His general characterization of the valuational situation is one in which the worthwhileness of an end is in doubt; the agent is not sure whether this particular end, verified as good in past experiences, constitutes the good of the present situation. But it has been shown that in the moral situation the only way a value could be doubtful would be in relation to other values, so that there are really several values that are in doubt. I offer a suggestion as to why Dewey describes the situation as one in which a value is doubtful rather than as a conflict between opposed ends. This is, that upon his notion of habit, in any problematic situation, the agent may be regarded as making a direct, although perhaps inadequate, response of some sort, the new situation being classified as similar to past ones, and accordingly as containing the same previously experienced value. Thus the primary issue for the agent is the adequacy of the past mode of action in this new situation. Although in the questioning of this habit and its correlative value, the

presence of competing ends is implied, in the life experience of the organism, the other question of the adequacy of prior habit may be the more primitive. After this question arises it becomes refined into the matter of deciding between competing ends. Thus I suggest that Dewey's neglect, in the treatment of valuation, of its peculiar problem as a reconciliation of more than one end is explained by his endeavor to remain close to the organic, experiential aspect of valuation.

In terms of Dewey's epistemology one expects to learn that judgments of value "involve a relationship to other things".[1] The question is to what other things and in what sort of relationship is a value related? While Dewey insists that valuation is concerned with judging competing ends or values and not simply with devising means to a value already decided upon, the "relations" that are examined by deliberation are always described as those of "means-consequences" and not those of values to one another as values or in terms of their valuableness. He says of values:

> ...when thought and discussion enter, when theorizing sets in, when there is anything beyond bare immediate enjoyment and suffering, it is the means-consequence relationship that is considered. Thought goes beyond immediate existence to its relationships, the conditions which mediate it and the things to which it is in turn mediatory. 2

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1. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 356.

2. Experience and Nature, p. 397.

Of values, "All that can be said of them concerns their generative conditions and the consequences to which they give rise."[1]

The question is as to whether this is not simply a description of the method of eliciting the values that are really competing in a particular situation--a preliminary to the crucial valuation, which must examine the relations of values to one another, not in terms of their existential causes and effects, but in terms of their valuableness. Although Dewey states the moral situation as one of incompatible values, and pleads not guilty of the "particular bungling performance" of restricting valuation to assisting in "bringing into physical existence a value already, as value, given"[2], despite these declarations Dewey does not state the purely preliminary character of means and consequences, and apparently offers this method of inquiry as the sufficient means of deciding between competing ends. In incidental passages, as in a footnore, he says he accepts the view that "value-judgment always has for its subject matter a relation, better--or worse--then."[3] The idea is never elaborated, however, nor made an integral part of the theory of valuation. When he does say that the judgment

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1. Ibid., p. 396.

2. Objects of Valuation, p. 254.

3. Valuation and Experimental Knowledge, p. 334.

that a thing is good is the assertion "that one thing is better than another thing" and hence is "comparative, relational"; he goes on to say that "Comparison is comparison of things, things in their efficacies, their promotions and hindrances."[1]

Thus the relations with which propositions of appraisal or valuation have to do is that of "means to ends or consequences."[2] That this does not limit deliberation to questions of utility but includes the peculiarly moral issue Dewey argues on the basis that means and ends are determined in the same process, by the same method, and as the same operation. The root idea is the simple one that moral as well as merely prudent conduct must issue from a consideration of the consequences that are involved in an action to satisfy some desire or achieve some end, and that in the analysis of these means the initial desire or end may be altered or even abandoned. In all cases of intelligent deliberation there is but one process involved, that of considering alternative courses of action in the light of the conditions by which they are attainable. The crucial point in the theory is the continuity of the process of considering means and ends. The two terms of the relation are not decided upon separately and then brought together; there is rather a reciprocal

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 430.

2. Theory of Valuation, p. 23

balancing of one against the other. We do not settle first which end we are to pursue, and only after this is finally decided proceed to determine what are the most expedient means for producing this end. Certainly it would seem as though the consideration of means presupposes some end, but the end is a hypothesis that can be validated only by a survey of the means; it is not given complete and final at the start.

> ...things can be anticipated or foreseen as ends or outcomes only in terms of the conditions by which they are brought into existence. It is simply impossible to have an end in view or to anticipate the consequences of any proposed line of action, save upon the basis of some consideration, however slight, of the means by which it can be brought into existence. Otherwise there is no genuine desire but an idle fantasy, a futile wish. 1

Conduct which is either intelligent or moral must proceed from a survey of the means to the end it pursues.

Hence it follows that a weighing of the worth of alternative ends is not sufficient to form a warranted judgment. The superiority of any of these ends can be determined only by balancing it as means-end against the other ends in conjunction with their means.

> For what is deliberation except weighing of various alternative desires (and hence end-values) in terms of the conditions that are the means of their execution, and which, as means, determine the consequences actually arrived at? 2

1. Theory of Valuation, p. 35.

2. Ibid, p. 25

Now, as is indicated in the last quotation, it is not always clear that Dewey recognizes that alternative desires are to be evaluated in some other way than in terms of the efficiency, facility, or certainty of their means. But surely something more must be involved in moral deliberation; otherwise the desire to be acted upon would be the one that was most efficiently, easily, and certainly satisfied. Hence, Dewey must mean that the evaluation of the direct satisfaction of the alternative desires cannot be adequate to determine a warranted decision unless the values involved in their means are also compared, the final evaluation thus concerning a comparison of alternative means-end or means-desire.

While it must be granted that concentration on an end without attention to the circumstances of its accomplishment is idle fantasy, and that the awareness of what is involved in accomplishing an end may cause us to modify our view of the end, even to renounce it entirely, it has still to be explained how we do choose one means-end above another. Dewey makes the matter difficult by disallowing the abstraction of "ends" in any form from the continuous process of deliberation as it temporally occurs in behavior. His description here does not consistently go far enough to disclose just why it is that the consideration of the means to an end can cause a reformation of the end. The reason must be that the conditions are found to involve results--to entail

disvalues--that make prejudicial the desirability of the end. It will have been bought at too great a cost, the value it secures will be seen to be less desirable than the values the means will jeopardize. It is well to have the concrete, living analysis of the deliberative process that Dewey provides; but it is indispensable also to note how this process can be served by the value abstractions which may seem alien to its dynamic development. It is necessary to see that the evaluation of means-end can be broken up into smaller units--values--, a dissection necessary not only to see what is theoretically involved, but to understand the way the process as a matter of fact occurs. It is true that the reconstruction or complete dismissal of an end through consideration of the means often does not occur as a result of explicit recognition of the superior worth of certain values, which would be endangered by the instigation of the means to that of the end. Yet the <u>implicit</u> cognizance of this valuational difference is presupposed by the choice actually made. Whatever the psychological description of the factors bringing it about, this is the only way in which the choice can be made intelligible. If it were not actually possible to reject means upon this basis, the theoretical description might justly be said to be meaningless. We find, however, that precisely when conduct is most intelligent and conscious, it is

this explicit recognition of the superiority of certain values that moves one to reject a certain method of securing an otherwise desirable end. The only reason that can cause one to forego the pursuit of a desired end, is that somehow, however crudely and dumbly, it is seen that the end is not worth the means, and when this apprehension is explicit, it is a conscious evaluation of the goods the means will sacrifice or cost above the goods the end will promote. There is nothing at all difficult about the mutual modification of means and ends, their formation as part of a single process, and their development in a give and take fashion, when we observe that both are subject in their worth to something more elemental and abstract--values, and that it is an appreciation of values that governs the process throughout.[1]

While Dewey notes the utility of prior values and ends in examining the present situation, his insistence, which is upon the importance of the latter, turns largely upon the mistake that may occur in valuation from separating means and ends. The errors in judgment seem to depend upon two

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1. Dewey speaks sometimes as though the comparison of alternative courses of action in some situation would proceed by reducing these to "homogeneous terms" or "elementary constituents", but all he means to designate by these phrases are the conditions and consequences into which the elternatives must be analyzed.

general characters of the relation of means to end. Because the end desired can only be obtained by certain means, which may entail the sacrifice of other values, an ignoring of the means entails an ignoring and perhaps a sacrifice of these values. Secondly, because the end is not an absolute closure it will have further consequences, which may be such as to jeopardize the value of the end. Hence only by being aware of the relatiom of means to an end can we be aware of all the values involved in our action.

The motive of Dewey's approach is revealed in his frequent denunciations of "fixed ends". His attacks take the interesting form of pointing to moral dangers, and evil consequences involved in their use, thus presupposing a certain conception of what is the morally good, which is the basis for the condemnation. For Dewey the idea of fixed ends is pernicious, because it reflects a separation of means and ends, and such a separation is a positive hindrance to the process of valuation. All the evils attaching to the doctrine of fixed ends are part of the general one of ignoring means. Adherence to fixed ends results in sentimental idealization of the end as abstractly desirable, and so diverts attention from the concrete examination of the means that would realize it. It fathers the doctrine that "the end justifies the means", which usually results in inferior taking precedence over superior ends. It deprives people of con-

tinuously satisfying experience, causing them to conceive of means as pure drudgery and ends as pure satisfaction, thus making the activity concerned with means ennervating and that concerned with ends, feverish. The doctrine makes for the destruction of both virtue and happiness, and undermines moral knowledge.

The reconstitution of the end by an analysis of its means and the mediation of a desire or impulse by a survey of its consequences, are apparently an identical process. For the end deliberated upon is always the projection of some desire seeking satisfaction, resulting consequently in the criticism of the end being a criticism of the desire, and vice versa. However, one can consider the data which are considered in valuating the end or the desire, either as the consequences of the act of satisfying the desire or the means to the end of satisfied desire. While Dewey does not propose such an analysis, it seems to constitute the only distinction between these two modes of stating the process of valuations.

Yet a difficulty is encountered in the manner in which the mediation of desire is expressed. In arguing that desires and interests are capable of modification by observing what is necessary to realize them it is said that desires themselves are to be evaluated as means.

> Desires and interests are, as we have seen, themselves causal conditions of results. As such they are potential means and have to be appraised as such. 1

The referemce to a statement of desire as a causal condition of the end is apparently to the point that desire is an organic condition of an object being valuable. In Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality Dewey asserts as the distinctive feature of ethical judgments, that they make character or the particular manifestation of character in interest or desire, a part of the subject-matter judged, this distinguishing ethical from scientific judgments. The latter depend upon the animating force of interest, but here interest simply selects a particular content and in no way determines the nature of the subject-matter judged, neither altering it nor entering into it as a constituent. In the ethical judgment one of the organic conditions of the judgment, viz. interest, is also part of the subject matter judged.

> From the strictly logical standpoint...the ethical judgment thus has a distinctive aim of its own; it is engaged with judging a subject-matter, a definitive element in whose determination is the attitude or disposition which leads to the act of judging. 2

Further:

> Just because character or disposition is involved in the material passed in review and organized in judgment, character is determined by judgment. 3

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 32.
2. Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 16
3. Loc. cit.

Since, however, the presence of the desire is the condition not only of the existence of a value but of our entertaining it as an end, it would seem that the desire could not be valuated as a means to the end but only as the end which itself was evaluated by its actual instruments. The estimation of the end and the desire would seem to be the same. Thus one does not know what to make of the statement concerning the evaluation of desires in

> ...their first manifestation through consideration of the consequences they will occasion <u>if</u> they are acted upon--an operation which is equivalent to judging or evaluating them as means operating in connection with extra-personal conditions as also means. 1

Surely while desires are causal conditions and hence means, they have a status different from that of other means; for desires condition the <u>nature</u> as well as the existence of the end, whereas other means, the instrumental ones, condition only its existence. Without the desire there could not even be an end, and since means must clearly be means to some end, neither could there be a consideration of means.

There is another alternative. Dewey could mean that desires as correlated with ends are to be evaluated as means to the end of completing or meeting the needs of the situation, the latter being the standard in the valuation of alternative ends. The needs of the situation as a standard employed in valuation will be considered later. In any case

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 30.

it is evident that thus far no standard for evaluating incompatible ends has been discovered. Dewey has emphasized that moral conduct depends upon an examination of consequences, and hence has suggested where we are to look for competing values, but thus far we have found no means for deciding which to act upon.

IV

While Dewey has proposed a standard--social well-being--that is clearly more than a suggestion to survey all the consequences of an act before performing it, other treatments of standards appearing in his theory of valuation deny every function to standard except that of promoting the survey of consequences. He says that:

> ...the attempt to bring over from past objects the elements of a standard for valuing future consequences is a hopeless one. 1

In this context "rules", "principles", "standards", are "tools of analysis". They clarify the elements contained in the situation, bringing before attention things that might have been ignored.

> ...the object of moral principles is to supply standpoints and methods which will enable the individual to make for himself an analysis of the elements of good and evil in the particular situation in which he finds himself. 2

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1. Essays in Experimental Logic, pp. 378-379.

2. Ethics, second ed., p. 309.

However, as he goes on to explain the character of this function, it becomes clear that the principles do something more than illuminate certain facts. Explaining the service of the Golden Rule he says: "But the Golden Rule does furnish us a point of view from which to consider acts; it suggests the necessity of considering how our acts affect the interests of others as well as our own; it tends to prevent partiality of regard; it warns against setting an undue estimate upon a particular consequence of pain or pleasure, simply because it happens to affect us."[1] Clearly this particular rule not only elicits certain consequences involved in conduct but tells how we are to estimate their importance in acting. The "standpoint" is not simply a disinterested, scientific one, but ascribes a certain value to these consequences and insists that we heed them. Thus they cannot be purely "intellectual or analytic".[2] It is, as Dewey insists, necessary to refrain from employing principles as external commands that are sufficient to determine a priori what is right in a given case. Yet it is equally necessary to remember that, if they are to evaluate in any degree the consequences they adduce when used as tools of analysis, they are to some extent "prescriptive", which he denies. There is no need for forgetting that "The idea of common good, general welfare...develops as social changes present new opportunities

1. Ibid., p. 310.
2. Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 169.

for personal development."[1] The only contention is that there must be some positive content to the direction given moral conduct; there must be provided some limitation of the acts that are proper, and not simply an intellectual tool.

While Dewey says that his theory involves a "standard which is determined within the process of valuation"[2] it is difficult to know how he can mean this strictly; and since the statement is not developed, its meaning is problematic. It seems unlikely, however, that he means that deliberation first determines a standard and then applies it. Despite his language I suggest that he means either that the standard is constituted by the needs of the particular situation or that the data gathered by deliberation compose the only means for settling what to do. If it is merely the latter then there really is no standard involved in valuation, and consequently the process Dewey describes offers no distinctive way of resolving a problem of incompatible values. However, there are references to things that might serve as standards, which we shall consider presently. First we may remark an error that could explain Dewey's failure to endorse standards in his theory of valuation.

Dewey apparently believes that the disjunction between the employment of standards in their usual meaning and intelligent conduct is absolute; that a careful critical inquiry into the elements of the particular case excludes the

1. Ethics, second ed.,pp.382-383.
2. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 374

possibility of using a standard to decide what to do after the complete data of conditions and consequences is made available. He says: "If the standard is already given, all that remains is its mechanical application to the case in hand--as one would apply a yard rule to dry goods. Genuine moral uncertainty is then impossible..."[1] The non-sequitur is obvious. It is entirely possible to have at hand the standard for judging a case once one really knows what the case is; but as Dewey has so ably demonstrated one cannot really know what the actual case is until he has undertaken an examination of all the elements and relations it contains. Thus there can be genuine moral uncertainty in the sense that one does not know what to do in the actual case, even though the standard does disclose what is abstractly right. Knowledge of the abstractly right rather than precluding genuine moral uncertainty endows the latter with significance. For it indicates a limit to the uncertainty and a way in which it can be dissipated. One is uncertain because he know what in general it would be good to achieve, but he does not know enough about the particular situation to know what is this particular good that will foster the general one. Uncertainty has poignance precisely because there is a good that can be promoted or sacrificed. Without such a conception, without a general standard for determining what to do,

1. Ibid., pp. 374-375.

it is difficult to know how there could be any real uncertainty in a particular situation: to be sure one does not know what to do, but then one never does, since there is no way of deciding what is right. Without the latter, uncertainty cannot be moving or vital, nor perform a positive function.

Dewey's statement of the ultimate issue in moral deliberation does not help suggest a standard. He states as:

> ...the question finally at stake: what shall the agent be? What sort of a character shall he assume. On its face, the question is what he shall do, shall he act for this or that end. But the incompatibility of the ends forces the issue back into the question of the kinds of selfhood, of agency, involved in the respective ends...When ends are genuinely incompatible, no common denominator can be found except by deciding what sort of character is most highly prized and shall be given supremacy. 1

Now Dewey surely does not mean that character is the "common denominator" selecting the kind of character that shall be given supremacy, for which he apparently believes that character determines every estimation of value, this as he says:

> ...applies to any end as it happens to arise, not to the end as we ought to form it. 2

He goes on to suggest that the standard is good character:

> ...the man of good character, the one in whom these high powers are already active, is the judge, in the concrete, of happiness and misery. 3

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1. Ethics, first ed., p. 210.

2. Ibid., p. 279.

3. Ibid., p. 280.

But while there is some evidence for concluding that Dewey believes that the man of good character is the standard for judging between diverse ends, I suggest that he is only stressing the involvement of character in decision and not endorsing good character as the standard to be employed in valuation. However, should this be a misinterpretation of his view, we can indicate briefly the error that would be made in using such a standard.

The problem of deciding what is good is begged by the use of the term "good" to qualify the sort of character that is fitted to make correct value judgments. The problem has only been restated and we are as much in need of a standard for determining what is the good character that will serve as standard as we are for judging what end is good. Are we to discover the person of good character by his reputation for being good? In this case the standard becomes social convention. Or are we to decide upon his goodness by examining his actual conduct? In this case we have ourselves engaged in valuation and if the standard employed to evaluate the conduct of another is adequate to determine its goodness and the goodness of the character responsible for it, then it must be adequate for deciding our own moral problems. Thus good character as the standard is either impossible or superfluous; impossible if we have no standard for determining what is good character, superfluous if we have such a standard.

Excluding good character three other conceptions appear in various places that might be intended to serve as standard. These are: "The needs of the situation", "science as method or as data", "the promotion of values". We shall consider first "the needs of the situation".

While in the theory of valuation Dewey does not refer to any standard by which it operates, he constantly refers to the needs or lacks or wants in the situation as that "in terms of which" the survey of consequences is conducted. Thus the "needs of the situation" might serve as a standard, action pursuing what, after inquiry, was discovered to be the real needs involved. Dewey says that in valuation "the end-in-view is formed and projected as that which, if acted upon, will supply the existing need or lack and resolve the existing conflict."[1] Further along, the point is stated more completely:

> Control of transformation of active tendencies into a desire in which a particular end-in-view is incorporated, is exercised by the needs or privations of an actual situation as its requirements are disclosed to observation. The "value" of different ends that suggest themselves is estimated or measured by the capacity they exhibit to guide action in making good, satisfying, in its literal sense, existing lacks. Here is the factor which cuts short the process of foreseeing and weighing ends-in-view in their function as means. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof and sufficient also is the good of that which does away with the existing evil. Sufficient because it is the means of instituting a complete situation or an integrated set of conditions.[2]

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 46.

In the chapter on the good we noted that apart from its connection with social well-being, the concept of "needs of the situation" consists of two general points: first, that every situation is unique and hence possesses a unique good; second, that the attainment of this good must spring from a complete examination of all the elements and relations of that situation in all their particularity. There it was noted that this characterization is inadequate as a definition of the good to the extent it is not supplemented with the qualification that these "needs" must be such as to be compatible with social well-being. The same general comment applies here. How are we to determine which needs are proper in this situation and to be satisfied, or what just are the "needs", if the term designates only those things that are properly regulative of behavior? The question is as to precisely what is the nature of these needs such that they serve as the standard for deciding between alternative ends-in-view. The general need of any situation is that being incomplete, the situation must be resolved, completed. But this only sets the problem; how are we to determine what are the exact "needs" that need to be satisfied?

Now, as has been noted, Dewey has indicated how we are to go about knowing what these needs are and in so doing has described their formal or general character; but he has not done so in a way that helps us determine what are to be

taken as the rightful demands of the particular situation. We have been informed that the needs are in every case unique, and that they are composed of two factors--subjective capacity and objective environment, these being in each case specific and relative to one another. The right act pursuing the right end-in-view will be one that coordinates these factors in their specificity and relativity. Yet this information does not describe the general nature of needs and ends that will, in his theory of the good, be legitimate, namely, those that are in harmony with social welfare. It only reminds us once more of the individuality of each moral situation and hence its demand for a fresh approach. On the surface there are a number of "needs" in any moral situation; there are as many as there are desires that might possibly be satisfied, both of the agent and of those affected by his action. An objective survey of the situation can bring these out in all their particularity and complexity, and the advice Dewey offers for this examination is valuable. Alone, however, without a standard for evaluating the respective merits of these needs, lacks, demands, and for deciding between alternative ends-in-view that satisfy particular ones of these, there is no ground for supposing the survey will move action in accordance with the good. Without some sort of restriction of the needs that are legitimate or a standard for deciding between them

and their correlative ends-in-view, there can be no assurance that conduct will be socially beneficial.

In what seems to be his first deliverance upon the nature of moral deliberation, "Moral Theory and Practice", Dewey in one passage suggests the social character of the "needs of the situation". Considering the moral act as doing "justly and truly and lovingly", which means that the agent "has to respond to the actual relations in which he finds himself", Dewey explains:

> To do truly is to regard the whole situation as far as one sees it, and to see it as far as one can; to do justly is to give a fit and impartial regard to each member of this situation, according to its place in the system; to do lovingly is to make the whole situation one's own; not dividing into parts of which one is a warm meum and the other a cold tuum. 1

Clearly, according to this statement, to meet the needs of the situation "lovingly" is to respond with affection to the interest of others, and to make that a guide in action. Were the recognition explicit in the later treatments of valuation, our problem would be greatly diminished. It would then be merely why Dewey does recognize the social criterion in only a rather incidental way, and seems to state it as a somewhat incidental corollary of the needs of the situation, a concept which without the explicit reference to the social factor indicates only the individuality of

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1. Moral Theory and Practice, p. 200.

the moral situation and the good of the situation as a function of this unique conjunction of elements. In any case, the omission of even such incidental references to social well-being in the exposition of the theory of valuation necessitates the analysis we are undertaking to show the inadequacy of this theory without social well-being as a standard. We turn then to the role of science in valuation to observe whether it provides the means for choosing between incompatible ends, either as a standard or a substitute for it.

It is not suggested that Dewey conceives either "science" or "increase of values" as standards that are explicitly applied in the process of valuation, for he has repudiated the need of such standards. However, he believes that valuation can settle conflicts between values, and we have observed that just at the point where its task became crucial, it lacks, in our present statement of it, the means for accomplishing it. What is needed is something, whether it is called standard or merely method, for choosing between competing ends. Dewey regards "science" and "increase of values" as integral parts or features of the method of valuation, and our purpose in treating them as possible "standards" is to make clear their force in resolving the peculiar moral difficulty of resolving conflicts of values. Generally stated, the function of science is as an

instrument in value-judgment, whereas the "increase of values"--rendering them more secure and varied--is the purpose or goal of these judgments. As to the latter Dewey says: "We are criticizing, not for its own sake, but for the sake of instituting and perpetuating more enduring and extensive values."[1] And in the performance of "criticism", "the conclusions of science about matter-of-fact efficiencies are its indispensable instruments."[2] Can either of these tell us how to estimate rival ends?

The idea in "extending values" is apparently that in the moral situation the particular end to be pursued is that which conduces to more values, which, besides its own inherent value, also contributes to other values. Dewey says that in criticism "The better is that which will do more in the way of security, liberation and fecundity for other likings and values."[3] "...those goods approve themselves...which steady, vitalize, and expand judgments in creation of new goods and conservation of old goods."[4] While it is not certain whether or not Dewey conceives this as enabling us to decide between competing values, it is evident that it cannot do so. For while it is surely a good

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1. Experience and Nature, p. 403.
2. Ibid., p. 408.
3. Ibid., p. 430.
4. Ibid., p. 417.

maxim never to sacrifice a value when it can be avoided and always to promote as many values as possible, this cannot tell us which values are better to promote. If values were all on a level of valuableness then in a moral situation perhaps we could simply count up the number of values each alternative act would foster, choosing the one that fostered the most, on something of the same order as the hedonic calculus. But as Dewey so forcefully points out, this is really to ignore the crucial feature of moral problems, which is that of deciding which goods are superior in worth and hence to be preferred. The inadequacy of a standard of promoting more values is evident in the fact that fewer values may overbalance in valuableness a greater number of lower values, so that a calculus based upon values as quantitative units must inevitably go wrong. Thus, perhaps, we may conclude that such passages as those quoted above are intended by Dewey only to advise the pursuit of the rational and social values that we enumerated in Chapter II and not to constitute a method for resolving particular moral problems.

Can "science" then enable decisions between competing values? In the sense in which Dewey speaks of science as scientific or experimental method it is simply identical with the process of valuation, and hence introduces no considerations distinct from those we have generally been

concerned with. But in another meaning in which science is important for valuation, Dewey speaks of science as a body of knowledge, as in the earlier quoted passage where he says that the "...conclusions of science about matter-of-fact efficiencies of nature are its (valuation's) indispensable instruments."[1]

Dewey is so clear in stating the instrumental function of science to valuation that it may seem gratuitous to examine his doctrine as possibly containing a standard or method for choosing between competing ends. In discussing a particular branch of this sort of knowledge, namely, the sociological data as to "What individuals and groups hold dear or prize and the grounds upon which they prize them", Dewey says: "Knowledge of these valuations does not of itself, as we have seen, provide valuation-propositions..."[2] And as early as 1900 Dewey ascribed a similar function to psychological science:

> Psychology will never tell us just what to do ethically, nor just how to do it. But it will afford us insight into the conditions which control the formation and execution of aims, and thus enable human effort to expand itself sanely, rationally and with assurance. 3

Nevertheless, the examination of the place of scientific knowledge in valuation may preclude possible objections,

1. Theory of Valuation, p. 58.

2. Ibid, p. 58.

3. Psychology and Social Practice, Psychological Review, p.124.

and will in any case bring out the exact function that science has in value-judgments, an item fundamental to Dewey's ethical theory.

Scientific knowledge is regarded as fundamental to making grounded valuations, but it is explained that such propositions are grounded "...in the degree in which they employ physical generalizations as means of forming propositions about activities which are correlated as ends-means."[1] The latter propositions provide "...rules of methodic procedure in the conduct of the investigations that determine the respective conditions and consequences of various modes of behavior."[2] The particular function of scientific knowledge is indicated by the following:

> Desires and interests produce consequences only when the activities in which they are expressed take effect in the environment by interacting with physical conditions. As long as there was no adequate knowledge of physical conditions and no well-grounded propositions regarding their relations to one another (known "laws"), the kind of forecast of the consequences of alternative desires and purposes involved in their valuation was impossible.[3]

Thus the scientific knowledge renders valuations intelligent by stating the relations of cause and effect that value-objects bear to one another, indicating consequently the relation of promotion and hindrance of values to one another.

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 57.
2. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
3. Ibid., p. 62.

This enables the agent to know to what he is committing himself in pursuing a certain end, for he knows the means it entails and hence the values that are sacrificed and those that are fostered.

Dewey stresses the utility of sociology and psychology in this enterprise, but all sciences, in so far as they describe relations of conditions and consequences, may prove useful. Since the business of all sciences is to state the relations that govern the operation of physical conditions, and these conditions interact with human actions so as to help determine their consequences, apparently there are no sciences that cannot provide some aid in valuation. Speaking of the need of an analysis of the situation that calls forth judgment so as to provide knowledge of the "facts of the case",[1] Dewey says that what is needed is:

> A social science which will analyze a content as a combination of elements in the same way that psychological analysis determines an act as a set of attitudes. It is assumed that the situation which calls forth moral judgment is a sociological situation, which accordingly can be adequately described only through methods of sociological analysis. 2

Later he says:

> But even if it be admitted that the scene is social, this characterization does not exhaust the description. Any scene of action which is social is <u>also</u> cosmic or physical. It is also biological. Hence the absolute impossibility of ruling out the physical and biologi-

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1. Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 23.
2. Loc. cit.

> cal sciences from bearing upon ethical science. If ethical theory requires, as one of its necessary conditions, ability to describe in terms of itself, the situation which demands moral judgment, any proposition, whether of mechanics, chemistry, geography, physiology, or history, which facilitates and guarantees the adequacy and truth of the description, becomes in virtue 1 of that fact an important auxiliary of ethical science.

The ethical service of psychology is in

> ...discovering the concrete interactions between human behavior and environing conditions which determine the actual consequences of desires and purposes. 2

> ....without psychological knowledge the force of the human factors which interact with environing non-human conditions to produce consequences cannot be estimated. 3

Thus this knowledge simply supplements our knowledge at hand for investigating the relation of means-end in a particular situation. The point seems to be simply that desire is a cause along with extra-personal causes in bringing a consequence about and hence is to be considered along with these other causes in the continuum of means-end.

There is a difficulty peculiar to psychology, however, in knowing how it can be serviceable in disclosing causes. For certainly the efficacy of psychological factors of attitude and disposition as causal factors or means in producing consequences can eventuate only through their first influencing an action. Hence it would seem that the

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1. Ibid., p. 24.

2. Theory of Valuation, p. 63

3. Ibid., pp. 62-63.

only helpful knowledge would be as to the conditions of interaction of the human act with environmental agencies. What would concern the judgment passed upon the act except its eventualities in the environment; what would be the special import of its psychological causes? Dewey does not answer this in Theory of Valuation, but he had earlier suggested an explanation in Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality. In the former he seems, by relating psychological factors influential in the act to environmental conditions, to deprive psychology of any significance in valuation of acts; whereas in the latter he indicates the significance of these factors by relating them to other psychological factors, which are in turn related to other acts and through these to other values. Thus a knowledge of the psychological factors involved in the desire of a value (and hence in an impulsion to an act) would disclose the relations of attitudes to one another. In stating what attitudes involved in one value-judgment are connected with others, it would take the same form as knowledge of extra-personal conditions, disclosing the relations of promotion and hindrance of values to one another in virtue of their connections with their objects. In judging an act we would then extend our survey of its consequences to the attitudes correlated with it in their connections with other attitudes correlated with other acts and values. Still it is not

certain that this is the function Dewey ascribes to psychological knowledge in either of these papers, and it is adopted here only as the most plausible and satisfactory interpretation. In discussing the function of psychological knowledge in valuation he says:

> ...every step toward recognition of a more organized, or inherently complex, mental structure, multiplies the number and range of possible propositions relating to connection of conditions among psychic states... 1

and earlier he had pointed to the distinction of psychology as:

> ...setting forth <u>how</u> various dispositions operate in bringing about the effects attributed to them. Just what are the various distinguishable psychical attitudes and tendencies? How do they hang together? How does one call forth or preclude another? We need an inventory of the different characteristic dispositions; and an account of how each is connected, both in the way of stimulation and inhibition, with every other. 2

Such passages suggest that the ethical service of psychology is the same as that of the other sciences, namely, knowledge of causal relations.

It is evident that no such knowledge can ever enable the discrimination of values in terms of worth. In its disclosure of the causal relations of things, the way in which action interacts with extra-personal and personal conditions to produce consequences, it can render choice more sure and intelligent. It can tell us how, after we have de-

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1. <u>Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality</u>, p. 20.

2. Loc. cit.

cided upon a value, to secure it, and what values are involved in realizing a particular value. But scientific knowledge of the sort described, cannot reveal the worth of a value, whether values foregone in obtaining an end outweigh those obtained by them, or whether the total values obtained by one means-end are cuperior to those of another. For in every case the information concerns only the causal relations of means-end, never the relation of worth among values.

Now there are two other conceivable uses of science for regulation and control of belief, that Dewey might have in mind. One is that in making character a part of the content judged, the influence of interest in determining the content is able to be eliminated. Dewey points out that the distinctive feature of the ethical judgment is that it makes interest--a condition of all judgment, scientific and moral alike--a part of the content judged; in the moral judgment interest partially determines the content, whereas in scientific judgments interest only focuses attention upon a particular content and selects out material to be judged.[1] Thus Dewey might mean that in the same way as the scientist attempts to remove the distorting influences of organic conditions in the perception of an object, so might the agent attempt to eliminate subjective conditions from the moral

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1. Ibid., pp. 14ff.

judgment, isolating the object fir a disinterested apprehension. While there are passages in which this is suggested,[1] it seems certain that this is not the intention. For since interest is a condition of the existence of any ethical content at all, to remove all interest would be to remove the object to be judged. Hence what is needed is not to remove interest but to secure the right interest. Dewey says:

> If the situation or scene of action...is fairly familiar, we may assume that the source of error in judgment lies in the disposition which is back of the experience--that if we can only secure right motive on the part of the judger, the judgment itself will be correct. 2

Thus what must be meant by the "control" of the act of judgment by psychological science is the provision by the latter of tools for discovering what attitudes and other values correclated with these are involved in a particular judgment. Its function then is to render judgment intelligent, by informing it of all the consequences of a particular judgment, not to decide what consequences are to be most highly valued nor what relation of valuableness shall obtain among the values involved in the consequences.

Another function science might be designed to play in informing us how psychological dispositions correlated with particular acts and values are related to each other, is to enable the production of values by extra-individual

1. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

2. Ibid., p. 23.

agencies possessing the necessary knowledge, instruments, and conviction in the infallibility of their valuations. The benefits of science would then show themselves in a program of moral reform rather than in particular valuations by personal agents. Given the general knowledge of the good that in the previous chapter Dewey has been seen to possess, together with knowledge of which psychological factors condition the pursuit of this good, and of the techniques for controlling these factors, the spread of the good and moral conduct would be subject to those who were able to exercise these controls. But again in this case scientific data, whether employed by social institutions to control its members or by the personal agent for self-control, states the causal conditions of values, the relation of value conditions to values and not the relations of values to each other. Hence it does not provide a standard for particular value judgments.

However, this comment is not necessary to show the inapplicability of science to decide particular judgments, for Dewey would regard such a use of science as a perversion. Science does have an office in moral reform in stating the mechanism of psychological factors, but it is not such as to operate as or remove the need of the method of valuation in particular perplexities. Dewey insists that the most perfectly functioning dispositions will not save us from facing new

moral problems in which fresh evaluations are required. Consequently the dispositions that it is well to foster, and which alone can insure moral conduct, are habits of reflection, not predispositions toward particular ideals, however noble and exalted. The purpose of scientific data is to spread the method by which this data was obtained, for it is only by the scientific method that correct judgments can be obtained in morals as in any other field. Dewey declares that for moral conduct:

> What is necessary is that habits be formed which are more intelligent, more sensitively percipient, more informed with foresight, more aware of what they are about, more direct and sincere, more flexibly responsive than those now current. Then they will meet their own problems and propose their improvements. 1

And he believes that with our tremendous scientific progress:

> ...we have at last reached a point where social conditions create a mind capable of scientific outlook and inquiry. To foster and develop this spirit is the social obligation of the present because it is its urgent need. 2

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1. Human Nature and Conduct, p. 128.

2. Ibid., p. 329.
In another contribution to the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, Dewey iterates that it is "intensely desirable that all human beings become scientific in their attitudes." (The Unity of Ecience as a Social Problem, Vol.1,p.38) Describing the scientific attitude as "at bottom but the method of free and effective intelligence" (Loc. cit.) he declares that the aim of the current education of science as technical information should be broadened to a presentation of the scientific method. In Liberalism and Social Action the point is also (cont.)

Thus the need, we are insisting, is equally great for some way of applying this scientific method to particular situations where there is a variety of values that are candidates for action. Something more is needed than scientific data, which furnishes us a knowledge of the "facts of the case"--personal and environmental, and scientific method or intelligence. Somewhere there must be included a standard for deciding between incompatible ends, and, in terms of Dewey's conception of the good, for telling us which will conduce to social well-being.

V

Dewey contradicts our foregoing insistence that a standard is needed with the contentions (1) that knowledge of conditions and consequences is the only knowledge of values that is available, and (2) that this knowledge provides the means for warranting and testing value judgments. He says that:

> ...when ethical theory makes statements regarding the importance of ideals ("Ideal" apparently means ideal

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(cont.)stressed; "Science is taught in our schools, but very largely it appears in schools simply as another study, to be acquired by much the same methods as are employed in "learning" the older studies that are part of the curriculum. If it were treated as what it is, the method of intelligence in action, then the method of science would be incarnate in every branch of study and every detail of learning."
Liberalism and Social Action, p. 46.

> end or value) for character and conduct, when it lays stress upon the significance of this, rather than that kind of ideal, it is engaged in setting forth universal relations of conditions; and there is absolutely no way of testing the validity of such statements with respect to their claim of generality or objectivity save by an analysis of psychic dispositions which shows what is meant by having-an-ideal in terms of its antecedents and consequences. If any general statement whatsoever can be made about ideals, it is because the psychic attitude corresponding to conceiving an ideal can be abstracted, and placed in a certain connection with attitudes which represent abstracts of other experiences. 1

It is implied then that we cannot know values in their relations to one another, except in terms of their mutual relations to a common set of psychical dispositions. The latter will consist only of knowledge of their respective modes of production and of promotion and hindrance in relation to each other through these psychic factors.

But Dewey surely cannot mean that we cannot know generally what ideals or values are desirable, for he had described certain "enduring values" and "general goods" and advanced a theory of the good as social. He must mean that in <u>particular situations</u> the only knowledge available is that of the causes and effects of certain valuable objects. But if this really is the case it implies that action can be intelligent only in a factual not in an ethical sense; it can follow from a knowledge of what results it will cause but not of whether these results will be good, whether they

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1. Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 22.

will be better than other results, nor whether the values they promote are higher than those promoted by other acts. And this means that we cannot have a definition of the good that will tell us denotatively what is good. For if the good can be denoted at all, the only reason we could not know prior to action whether an act were good and its consequences valuable, would be because we did not know precisely what its results will be. Hence when we possess the latter knowledge we are in the same position as far as knowing the good as were we facing the actually existing consequences of an act. If we cannot denote what is good in the former case there is no reason to suppose we can in the latter. In each there are presented certain value-acts or objects, the question being their quality or degree of valuableness; if our definition of the good is adequate it should tell us the worth of one value compared to other values involved in the situation.

This restriction of significant statements about values to those about their conditions and consequences is in flat contradiction to Dewey's definition of the good and his description of certain general values. On the basis of his notion of the good as social and of the superiority of the value of equality, it would seem that particular situations would occur in which one could say that the right act was given by observing that the value of private wealth was

less compelling than that of justice or free opportunity. Yet if the only things that can be said about wealth and equality concern their causal conditions, this is not the case. For while these values might, because of their causal conditions, either conflict with or conduce to one another, the agent would be able only to observe the conflict, not to resolve it, by selecting the superior value. One way of introducing compatitility in the two points is to interpret the former as applying only to the objects to which values adhere. Then it could be held that values are subject to discriminations of height, but only as abstract and general, not as embodied in objects; the only significant statements about value objects as objects concerning their causal relations to other objects. This interpretation is favored by the appearance of the latter point in Experience and Nature as a corrollary to the ineffability of values as immediate qualities, for it is quite consistent to hold that as direct qualities nothing about values can be said whereas as abstract universals they are subject to discourse. There we find:

> Values are values, things immediately having certain intrinsic qualities. Of them as values there is accordingly nothing to be said; they are what they are. All that can be said of them concerns their generative conditions and the consequences to which they give rise. The notion that things as direct values lend themselves to thought and discourse rests upon a confusion of causal categories with immediate qualities. Objects, for example, may be distinguished as contributory or as fulfilling, but

> this is a distinction of place with respect to causal relationship; it is not a distinction of values. 1

Thus this second interpretation is suggested as the correct one. Yet it only serves to point the difficulty involved in Dewey's conception of the way in which valuations are warranted and verified.

In the paragraph from which the last quotation was taken Dewey goes on to indicate how value-judgments are warranted. He says: "...to take account of the reason for liking and enjoyment concerns the cause of the existence of a value."[2] The inquiry to present has been directed toward demonstrating the inadequacy of this account of valuation in deciding in a situation with competing values which ome to pursue. It is conceivable, however, that although no means of determining this prior to action is offered by Dewey, he does propose a substantial means of testing the rightness of the act after it has been adopted and hence of verifying the superiority in that situation of the value that was pursued.

The general pragmatic theory of truth is applied to the verification of valuations; these are verified by their "issue" or "results". Dewey repeatedly says that the truth of a valuation is determined "experimentally" by acting upon it.

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1. Experience and Nature, pp. 296-297.

2. Loc. cit.

> Observation of results obtained, of actual consequences in their agreement with and difference from ends anticipated or held in view, thus provides the conditions by which desires and interests (and hence valuations) are matured and tested. Nothing more contrary to common sense can be imagined than the notion that we are incapable of changing our desires and interests by means of learning what the consequences of acting upon them are, or, as it is cometimes put, of indulging them. 1

The reason that a value cannot be verified until it is acted upon is that prior to this the complete subject-matter of judgment does not exist. This subject-matter as the value comes into existence only through action, valuation being the process of enstating a determinate value.[2]

It is of the nature of the valuation judgment that its complete subject matter is not given until an act has been performed. The judgment arises in:

> ...cases in which it is not known whether any value already given would be a value, where value is in doubt, and the object of judgment is to attain a determinate unquestioned value. 3

Hence the judgment takes the form:

> If we perform an act of a specified kind, we shall have, and only in that way shall we have, the data for a more conclusive value judgment. Or, otherwise stated, in order to attain a determinate value as subject-matter of a later post facto value judgment, it is necessary to perform such and such an act.

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 31

2. Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 346; Valuation and Experimental Knowledge, p. 326.
3. Valuation and Experimental Knowledge, p. 332.

4. Ibid., p. 333.

What then is meant by the assertion that no determinate value is given prior to the act is that the data for determining whether a past value is a value in this unique situation is given only by the act:

> In such cases we no longer accept past values as final, as unquestioned values. We evaluate them with respect to their goodness or badness in the new and unique situation. 1

Thus the act is a "proximate object of valuation" in the sense that it is judged useful as a means to making a conclusive judgment of value.[2]

> The ulterior object is then the end: discovery or disclosure of the further data and relations which will make a more adequate judgment of value possible. The disclosure of facts through the act which is conditioned by the judgment is still a means. Its end is a liking, interest, and a judgment of value based on more adequate data, more rational grounds. 3

The question is: precisely what is tested in this way? Dewey makes it abundantly clear that valuation is a process of deciding between alternative ends or values, not of determining how to secure an unquestioned end.[4] Hence the value-judgment that emerges from the consideration of the case, though its purpose is to institute a determinate value, must consist of the assertion that one alternative is more

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Ibid., p. 342.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Ibid, pp. 340-341.

desirable, more valuable than another, and this accordingly must be the hypothesis that the experiment verifies. The difficulty is that only one alternative value can be experimented upon; selection involves rejection and in deciding to act upon one value the agent foregoes the opportunity to act upon any of the others. While the value in its completeness (i.e.as the complete "subject-matter") is given only after action, it follows that any other value acted upon would not be completely given until acted upon. Hence one cannot fairly pass upon the relative merits of one value as regards another since they are not on an equal level; one is given completely and the others only partially.

Dewey seems to recognize this, quoting with approval the point as stated by a critic: "Judgment is made because we have to choose and reject, and what we reject we put forever beyond the range of actual verifying experience."[1] And Dewey himself states: "Deliberate as fully as we may, with all the aid of past values, facts and connections, still in the end we reject when we select, and the rejected, that taken to be worse, is excluded from adequate experimental testing."[2] But his inference apparently is that this deprives us only of an absolute verification, not that it undermines

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1. Ibid., p. 348.

2. Ibid., p. 349.

the very function of verification, for his next words are:

> Values resulting from valuations, no more than immediate values without judgment, stay completely put. In other words, no judgment of fact can ever be completely verified. Any experiment involves a new risk in the very process of resolving a prior doubt. [1]

His point is that the verification "serves for the time being and is subject at all times to re-appraisal."[2] Hence he draws from this only the maxim to:

> Mind your alternatives and mind them in such a way that the act conditioned by judgment will secure the maximum of testing possible under the circumstances and also the maximum of ready re-appraisal. [3]

He does not recognize that the inability to actualize but one of the alternatives removes the possibility of verifying at all the hypothesis that the judgment really consists of.

The only condition under which a valuation could be verified would be by being able to act upon each of the possible alternatives and to compare the consequences in terms of valuableness. The judgment of goodness, as initial hypothesis or verified conclusion, is one of comparison, stating that one end is more valuable than another, action following the provisional decision as to this. Thus the verification of the valuation must be a verification of the superiority of one end to others in preference to which it was

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1. Loc. cit.

2. Loc. cit. footnote.

3. Loc. cit.

chosen. But this is not possible, because only before action upon the value will the alternatives be upon a common level and so permit comparison. Since the reason the valuation is required is that the situation is unique, in no other case would the same complex of events be presented. Even if all the ends could be actualized under identical circumstances there remains the question of how they can be compared so as to determine which is right in that situation. But regardless of this question of standard, the alternatives could not even be fairly compared when one has been realized for it then enters a new level in which comparison is impossible.

The point can be made by asking what is meant by the assertion that the complete subject-matter of value judgment is not given until the value is acted upon. It might mean that the value is not known until directly experienced, but this could not sustain the assertion for the value might have been previously experienced. The meaning Dewey apparently intends is that the general value takes on a unique character in this particular situation, and because the value has not been experienced in this particular context it cannot be compared as better or worse with other values that might be realized under these conditions. But for values to be compared as to goodness they must be compared either as abstract kinds of value, or as concrete experiences of value. Clearly we could not fairly compare an abstract value

of one kind with a concrete one of another in terms of their goodness, any more than we could compare in terms of beauty a kind of art--as music,--with a particular example of a different kind, as a particular painting. For things to be compared fairly in terms of a certain trait they must be on the same level or possess the same modality, as in this case the values compared must be either all abstract or all concrete and experiential. For experiences of values to be compared they would have to be taken as experiences of a kind, either as a certain kind of quality or value, or as simple experiences of good generally. But we cannot fairly compare an actually experienced value with one that would have been experienced had a different alternative or ideal value been actualized. If any other value is actualized it must be actualized under different circumstances and hence not be comparable to the one actualized in the situation under issue as being right in that situation. We are destined never to know just what any of the rejected ends would have turned out as under the particular circumstances in which they are possible choices. Thus we must either be able to compare the values abstractly, apart from their actualization in the particular situation, or not at all.

Another possible meaning of the contention that the complete subject-matter of the judgment is not given until the value is actualized, is that the value of the end

relative to its means cannot be determined prior to the institution of the means and the production of the end, since the specific issue of these cannot be known until it has occurred. Only after the issue would we be able to compare, let us say, the values destroyed by the means, to those instituted by the means, and hence only then be able to pass judgment upon the goodness of the act that brought them about. But again this must mean either that the values involved in both end and means are known, but that they will be different in the concrete than in the abstract, or that the values involved are unknown. In either case the actualization could disclose only what these values are, not their relation of valuableness, not whether the end was worth the means. But apart from this difficulty the verification could not be effective since it could determine only the relation of valuableness of means to end and not that of alternative means-ends, which was the problem of the valuation. The problem in the above, that of comparing things having a different modality--an experienced value with alternatives to which its ideal representative was judged preferable--would be avoided in the case of means and end, for here both become actual and experienced. However, the relation of these is not the question; the original judgment was not about the relation of the means to its end but the value of one means-end compared to others. Of course

the original valuation may have arisen through reflection upon the means required to attain an end. However, this constitutes a moral problem only if the means are a concern because they involve values; and if the agent decides that the end is worth the means and acts upon it, then he has abandoned the opportunity of in this particular situation pursuing, instead, other values that are perhaps sacrificed by the means to the chosen end. It is the relative worth of these values with which deliberation was occupied. The means will have been considered because they endangered values that perhaps outweighed in goodness the end they would achieve. In deciding to pursue this end at the cost of these other values, we have made impossible their actualization in this particular situation. Thus the immediate good can be verified only as regards its worth in relation to the means that actually produced it, for they alone like it are actually existent, and not with other values, or means involving values, that remain only ideal.

It is hard to know just why Dewey believes that the actualization of a value will render a more conclusive judgment upon it possible. There are obviously several things which this actualization might disclose, but none of them are relevant to the valuableness of the value. It might show (a) the instrumental efficacy of conditions in producing the value, (b) that conditions are required not

before known, (c) the involvement in the conditions of values not previously known. This knowledge clearly cannot tell us what are the relations of worth among values. It would seem that the only thing the actualization of a value could reveal about the value is either that in actual experience it is something unique, taking on the pacticularity of the conditions under which it occurs, or that it is a different value than one has expected. But, as regards uniqueness, since it is a general feature of values, its recognition in particular cases does not require every time a fresh disclosure. Of course the unique quality a value will possess in individual circumstances cannot be known until it is experienced, but neither is it then known in a way which permits it to be compared with other values. In Dewey's terminology it is simply "had" and is ineffable. In being something non-cognitive the unique quality of a value could have no significance for the relation of the value as an abstract concept to other values.

If, on the other hand, acting upon the judgment that a certain value was right for this situation produced an entirely different value, the act could scarcely verify or disprove the original value-judgment. For the subject-matter of the judgment would then be not simply "completed" but transformed, and the value that was judged right would not have been tested. Any error in such a judgment would

again be one as to the causal condition of the value, since otherwise the act would not have brought about something different from what was expected.

VI

Thus we find that when the standard of social well-being is omitted, the validity of one end or value over another in a particular situation cannot be determined, either prior or subsequent to acting upon a value. The theory of valuation discloses only (1) the general conditions for making a correct analysis of the values involved in a situation, namely, by investigating relations of means-ends, or of conditions and consequences, (2) how the causal relations of promotion and hindrance of values are determined by way of the relations of causal factors producing values. The general defect that has appeared throughout is the inadequacy of scientific knowledge of the consequences of our acts to determine conduct. Our insistance has been that some standard is needed for choosing between the values involved by different courses of conduct.

There is, however, a way of accounting for moral decision, for choice between opposed ends, other than by the use of a standard. This is to rest choice upon some non-intellectual faculty, as "taste", "feeling", "liking", "intuition", "conscience". The difficulty with the first three

of these is that they force the conclusion that value-judgments are relative and subjective, incapable of objective grounding. And the last two presuppose some special faculty for objective knowledge of values and hence for objective valuations. Dewey will have none of either methods. While maintaining the objectivity of valuation he denies the existence or need of a special organ making it possible, contending that the same sort of knowledge attaches to values as to other natural objects. In lieu of a standard he endeavors to maintain the objectivity of valuation by resting it upon scientific knowledge. He recognizes, however, that such knowledge would possess neither appeal nor incentive for action without the cooperation of some interest or affectional factors, and so he endeavors to include "liking" or "interest" in deliberation upon consequences without jeopardizing the objectivity of the decisions issuing from this reflective procedure. What is the nature of this endeavor, and does it successfully relieve him of the need of a standard in valuations?

The overwhelming emphasis in the theory of valuation is upon the determining force of reflection and knowledge in judgment.[1] Dewey also seems to believe that thought is a

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1. The unqualified nature of Dewey's stress upon the intellectual factor has called out numberous criticisms by proponents of the interest theory of value, and for several years such writers as Prall and Perry kept the philosophic
(cont.)

constituent in the nature of values, but this is a metaphysical issue with which we are not concerned, limiting as we are our examination to his view of the method for judging values. We have seen that without a standard a grounded value judgment, one compatible with social well-being, will not necessarily be made; that without some way of deciding which of the values, or means-ends in which values are involved, is right in the situation, there is no reason for supposing that the choice will be of any particular sort, nor any way for determining the correctness of that choice. Valuations are then subject neither to warrant prior, nor test subsequent, to action. We have not yet extracted the implication that without such a standard no decision at all can be made between incompatible ends. This, nevertheless, would follow if valuational deliberation consisted simply in accumulating knowledge of the factual relations and elements involved in the situation. In any case the decisions that as a matter of fact are made, could only be described as irrational, as proceeding from "taste", "emotion", or the like. Dewey tries

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(cont.)
journals alive with examinations of Dewey's conception of value-judgment, and the latter busy with replies. The issue over which the bulk of the controversy waged was the metaphysical one of the constitutive character of reflection as regards value. Because these other writers were primarily interested in the metaphysical nature of value there was, as Dewey notes, much writing at cross purposes, Dewey's original concern being with the capacity of thought for determining value judgment rather than with its capacity in constituting values; although he did take up the challenge and argue this point as well. (See Value, Liking, and Thought, Jour. of Phil. Vol.XX, p. 619.

desperately to avoid this relativistic morass yet without taking recourse in his standard of social welfare. He resorts to a compromise by uniting thought and interest or emotion in choice, calling the fusion "thoughtful-liking", or "affective-thought". Our present purpose is to show that these do not serve as a successful substitute for social well-being, without which valuations cannot be grounded.

There is a possible misunderstanding which if not avoided vitiates our entire argument. This misunderstanding is that the insistence upon the distinguishing of interest and intellect as determinants of choice, carries along the assumption that they can be separated in psychological fact. This is not the case. It may first of all be granted that the operation of intellect depends upon some interest in the objects to which intellect attends, as well as that interest cannot operate except through the cognitive discrimination of some object to which it may attach. It may also be granted that whether or not intellect and interest operate separately, their separate operation is not distinguishable in consciousness; and hence that to the introspecting subject the mere observation of the alternatives of a situation, the tracing out in a "dramatic rehearsal" of all conditions and consequences, is sufficient to issue choice. The knowledge of what the situation actually is, is followed so directly by decision as to what is to be done, that the

latter seems to be identical with the former; decision following merely from an analysis of the concrete case. It may be that in both these senses psychological process knows no separation of interest and thought. Our point is that still these two factors must be recognized as distinct and ascribed distinct functions, if the nature of value-judgment is to be analyzed into its distinct factors and adequately understood; and that if we have no other factor, as a standard, than taste operating with knowledge of the moral situation, value judgments cannot be objectively grounded. The distinction to be observed between interest and knowledge is that the judgments of the latter are publicly verifiable--objective--whereas judgments of taste express private judgment and are not objectively verifiable, having no other ground than the nature of the judging individual. Dewey, of course, recognizes that were valuations determined by taste they would forfeit their objectivity. Therefore he insists De gustibus, disputandum est: taste can be determined by reflection.

In distinguishing intellect and interest as we have we are able to recognize that choice must be determined by one or the other--interest or intellect; that it cannot issue from both. They may be forever conjoined in psychological fact and experience, yet it is possible to distinguish their functions, and one cannot argue from this psycho-

logical conjunction to the conjunction of their functions. Were this possible it would directly follow that either all valuations are objective or none are. Dewey's view is that it is possible to inject objectivity into liking or interest by making these "reflective". Now we have considered fully the nature of the reflective treatment of desire and interest as the "mediation of impulse", having seen that this procedure consists of a review of the conditions and consequences involved in the satisfaction of the desire. Our previous difficulty was as to how, without a standard, the various possible alternative consequences were to be estimated in relation to each other. The difficulty is similar here. The function of thought in the survey of consequences is made clear and distinct, and this function is seen to be such as to be incapable of deciding the valuableness of alternative ends, for its only operation is to elaborate clearly the character of the situation and the alternatives involved in it. On one hand there is the desire, on the other a knowledge of other desires, whose satisfaction must be foregone in satisfying the original desire. The question remains as to what chooses between them. Reflection and knowledge can determine only the conditions of choice and render it self-conscious; it cannot make the choice itself, since its function does not include any affective attraction toward the alternatives it reviews. Therefore we must assume that

without the standard the choice is explained by the greater appeal of the interest to the particular individual, and while it may be capable of explanation in terms of his organic make-up, it cannot be objectively grounded by this, in the sense of conducing to the good, as it is considered by Dewey.

Dewey's conviction of the sufficiency of knowledge of the concrete situation to determine conduct, is manifested in his discussions of social reform. There he insists that what is required for the formulation of the right program to remedy existing evils is an "apprehension of the realities of our industrial civilization". He maintains that when "A consciously directed critical consideration of the state of present society in its causes and consequences" is undertaken by "...a sufficiently large number of minds... the results of their inquiries will converge to a common issue."[1] "To foresee consequences of existing conditions is to surrender neutrality and drift; it is to take sides in behalf of consequences that are preferred."[2] But his belief in the sufficiency of thought to decide what is the right course of social reform may express only his optimism, not his theory of valuation. More significant evidence then, is

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1. Individualism Old and New, pp. 129-130.

2. Ibid., p. 134.

that the idea is expressed even more definitely in Theory of Valuation. Illustrating the view that desires and interests can be reconstructed or "revaluated on the ground of evidence capable of observation and empirical test", Dewey says:

> Suppose, for example, that it be ascertained that a particular set of current valuations have, as their antecedent historical conditions, the interest of a small group or special class in maintaining certain exclusive privileges and advantages, and that this maintenance has the effect of limiting both the range of the desires of others and their capacity to actualize them. Is it not obvious that this knowledge would surely lead to revaluation of the desires and ends that had been assumed to be authoritative sources of valuation?...If, on the other hand, investigation shows that a given set of existing valuations, including the rules for their enforsement, be such as to release individual potentialities of desire and interest, and does so in a way that contributes to mutual reinforcement of the desires and interests of all members of a group, it is impossible for this knowledge not to serve as a bulwark of the particular set of valuations in question, and to induce intensified effort to sustain them in existence. 1

The proper reply is that the way in which this knowledge would affect the valuations is not at all "obvious". That this information would cause a revaluation of the desires assumes that the prosperity of all the members of a group is preferable to that of a few. Yet this standard is not stated as the condition upon which this knowledge would produce a modification of values. Dewey apparently assumes here that a social interest or a standard of social well-being is maintained by people in

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1. Theory of Valuation, p. 60.

general and thus all that is necessary to make this good an actuality is to instruct the people in the means for attaining it. Now this may be the case, but certainly it is essential to the point to state this as its necessary presupposition. It is pertinent that Dewey does not say by whom this knowledge, when acquired, would cause a revaluation, thus tending to obscure the assumption of a certain form of interest or standard.

The same ambiguity as to the capacity of knowledge in reaching moral decisions is manifested in Dewey's treatment of virtue. In Chapter I we noted how at times he seems to construe the cardinal virtues as the dispositions conducing to the acquisition of knowledge, or as the endeavor to know the good, although the social reference of these is made plain in other passages. While he appears on occasion to identify virtue with conscientious inquiry into the moral situation, it is discovered that this indicates an extension of the conception of thought and reasom to include an interest in the social character of the good rather than such a restriction of the former to exclude the latter. He states the consideration of the interests of others as a necessary element in an objective cognitive survey of the situation.

> A person of narrow sympathy is of necessity a person of confined outlook upon the scene of human good. The only truly general thought is the generous thought. It is sympathy which carries thought out beyond the self and which extends its scope till it approaches the universal as its limit. 1

In another place Dewey uses the will to know and concern with the general good as equivalent. He says:

> ...the important thing about knowledge in its moral aspect is not its actual extent so much as it is the will to know--the active desire to examine conduct in its bearing upon the general good. 2

Thus Dewey seems to mean not that the will to know inevitably results in recognizing the supremacy of a social good, but that to be genuine the will to know must include a recognition of the good as social.

In discussing the standard as the common good, Dewey emphasizes the operation of personal disposition toward social welfare as the condition of its regulation of conduct.

> The more importance we attach to objective consequences as the standard, the more we are compelled to fall back upon personal character as the only guarantee that this standard will operate, either intellectually in our estimates or practically in our behavior. 3

Thus, while social disposition does not guarantee the operation of the standard, it is a necessary condition, and hence its presence would be some, though of course not

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1. Ethics, second ed., pp. 297-298.

2. Ibid., p. 311.

3. Ibid. p. 264.

sufficient, evidence for inferring the presence of the standard. If then, Dewey says that these dispositions or interests are necessary to grounded valuations, there would be some basis for inferring that he recognizes the necessity of the standard of social well-being in valuation, and does not regard the process of valuation as a substitute for the application of this standard.

Dewey states with as much precision as could be desired, that the dramatic rehearsal of consequences must be supplemented by an interest in certain of these if the intellectual survey is to move action. He says:

> Mere foresight of results may be coldly intellectual, like a prediction of an eclipse. It moves to action only when it is accompanied with a desire for that sort of result...the foreseen consequences move to action only as they are also prized and desired. 1

It is indicated further that a direct liking must follow the rehearsal of consequences and attach to certain ones for a judgment to occur and action to ensue.

> We estimate the import or significance of any present desire or impulse by forecasting what it will come or amount to if carried out; literally its consequences define its consequence, its meaning or import. But if these consequences are conceived merely as remote, if their picturing does not arouse a present sense of peace, of fulfillment or of dissatisfaction, of incompletion and irritation, the process of thinking out consequences remains purely intellectual....it is this direct sense of value, not the consciousness of general rules or ultimate goals, which finally determines the worth of the act to the agent. Here is an

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1. Ibid., p. 186.

> inexpugnable element of truth in the intuitional theory. Its error lies in conceiving this immediate response of appreciation as if it excluded reflection instead of following directly upon its heels. Deliberation is actually an imaginative rehearsal of various courses of conduct. We give way, in our mind, to some impulse; we try, in our mind, some plan. Following its career through various steps, we find ourselves in imagination in the presence of the consequences that would follow; and as we then like and approve, or dislike and disapprove, these consequences, we find the original impulse or plan good or bad.

Nothing could be more lucid or satisfactory, yet what are we to conclude about the function of thought in warranting valuations and in "determining" liking? The above indicates the contrary to what is suggested in the initial paper on the process of valuation--"The Logic of Judgments of Practice." In the above Dewey seems to imply that alone thought can merely render liking intelligent, it can give this "direct sense of value" which is finally determinant a chance to see completely what it is selecting and rejecting in any particular choice. Were this the case we could not assume that the intellectual survey of consequences would induce choice and conduct in the direction of the good, except upon a prior assumption of the operation of a liking or of interest in social well-being and its adoption as standard.

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1. Ethics, second ed., p. 303; first ed., p. 323; the particular passage from which the quotation is taken is identical in the two editions.

We are then enabled to discern the import of Dewey's insistence that reflection can be integral in liking and that liking can be an ingredient in thought, and his reference to his position as the "thought-liking" theory.[1] He has indicated in the above that thought and liking have distinguishable functions and that ultimately liking decides value judgment. Its being the last, and hence the crucial factor, in the valuative process, does not, however, render insignificant the function of thought, which must be present for the valuation to constitute a grounded, critical judgment. It is apparently in the interest of stresing the importance of thought to distinguish critical appraisals from prizings that merely happen that Dewey seems to ascribe to thought the ability to actually make choices, and to alter desires. It is upon the inability of other writers to differentiate grounded likings from just any likeing, however uncritical, that he urges the merits of his recognition of the constitutive force of reflection.[2] However, Dewey should note that he neither is able to explain grounded value-judgments, in the sense of judgments accordant with the good, solely by the introduction of the function of reflection. He should recognize that without a particular sort of liking applying a particular standard all likings would remain upon

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1. The Meaning of Value, p. 132.

2. e.g. see Ibid., p. 132.

the same indiscriminate level of valuableness, since the reflective procedure is subject finally to the approval of the "direct sense" of value.

We return then by another route to the absolute necessity of the standard of social well-being as the basis for grounded value judgments in Dewey's theory. Both reflective knowledge and emotional liking are necessary but not sufficient conditions, neither apart nor together. Knowledge is necessary to keep liking from defeating itself, to inform it of precisely to what a choice commits it; liking is necessary to give knowledge relevance, context and energy. Both must be supplemented by the standard of social well-being if moral choices are to be made, a standard that is to some extent "prescriptive", setting limits for and giving specific direction to moral conduct. As a standard, social well-being must of course be employed by the reflective side of the psychological process of decision. And it is this positive intellectual direction, as well as a general factual analysis of the moral situation (to which Dewey seems frequently to wish to limit the function of standards), that is required to give liking coherent, intentional and responsible expression.

Our conclusion that a standard of and an interest in social well-being is the precondition of a right or grounded value judgment makes even more significant the

discovery in Chapter II that the conception of social well-being as the good, is not adequately founded upon a theory of human nature. For then this defect deprives not only the theory of the good of foundation but value judgments of objectivity. Since the standard of valuation is identical with the definition of the good, if the latter is not shown to explain the good as the proper expression of human nature, neither can it hold any authority over conduct as the criterion of behavior.

CONCLUSION

Having completed our project, as outlined in the Introduction, of examining Dewey's theories of the good, of human nature, and of moral knowledge, we may conclude by restating briefly the conclusions at which we have arrived. The fundamental failure of Dewey's ethical theory is two-fold. It is the inability of his theory of human nature to support the concept of social well-being either as the good or as the standard of moral knowledge. Our procedure has been to show that social well-being is the only concept Dewey offers that can serve adequately either to define the good or to explain how moral decisions can be reached and moral ends pursued.

Our conclusion that social well-being is Dewey's concept of the good was reached only after a prolonged study of a number of different descriptions of the good that appear in different places in his ethical writings. Because Dewey never recognizes the variety of his descriptions nor

attempts to reconcile them or reduce them to a single definition, the acceptance of social well-being as his definition of the good laid claim only to the status of interpretation. However, substantial evidence was provided for this interpretation. First, it was found in the Introduction, that Dewey recognizes the importance of the three issues suggested as fundamental to ethical theory and attempts to provide answers to them. Second, social well-being seems to be implicit in most of Dewey's other statements of the good and to be endorsed in other than the strictly ethical writings, as in the books upon social reform and upon religion. The most forceful argument for taking this interpretation, however, is that none of the other descriptions of the good provides an adequate definition, clearly differentiating good from bad. The primary purpose of the first chapter was toward showing that social well-being alone constitutes a meaningful definition of the good.

The inadequacy of Dewey's theory of human nature to sustain his conception of the good as social well-being was found to lie in its failure to establish anything more than the possibility of the sort of conduct that he regarded moral, namely, that which pursues social well-being. His account of the nature of human beings limits itself to showing the extent of their involvements in social relations, explaining how the substance or reality of the individual

is a product of the social institutions and activities in which he participates. But the demonstration that society and social relations constitute the substance of individuals does not imply that the individual should use these relations in a certain way, or to achieve a certain good. That behavior involves the welfare of others does not explain the way in which the agent should take account of this fact, whether he should make the welfare of others an end of conduct or use the instrumentalities it provides for the promotion of merely selfish interests. That this fact of social relationship implies social well-being as the good, is what Dewey fails to show.

Since the concept of human nature is inadequate to ground the concept of social well-being as the good, it must also be inadequate to ground this concept as the standard of moral conduct. Our chapter on Moral Knowledge shows that in terms of the other elements of Dewey's moral method, the standard of social well-being is alone adequate to explain how moral decisions can be made. If we are to have any assurance that the decision will be accordant with the good all knowledge of the conditions and consequences of a particular end must be subject finally to judgment by this standard. We find, then, that through the deficiency of the theory of human nature Dewey's theories both of the good and of moral knowledge are left undemonstrated.

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