THE RELIGIOUS INFERENCES OF THE THOUGHT SYSTEMS
OF
WILLIAM JAMES AND JOHN DEWEY

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree
of
Master of Arts
at
The Rice Institute

by
Donald E. Elder

June, 1940
INTRODUCTION

In so far as it lies within the ability of the writer, it is his purpose to conduct the inquiry in this essay in the spirit of the two eminent protagonists of Pragmatism with whom it deals. According to their tenets, thought and inquiry arise when "something has gone wrong" when the perch is no longer tenable and flight becomes necessary. In order to have any justification, then, this essay must state the 'trouble' from whose womb it was born, and, in the process of its development, prove that it is a legitimate child. Herewith, therefore, is its birth notice.

As early as 1903 William James announced the birth of a son in Pragmatism, one John Dewey. (1) Nor is the son reluctant to acknowledge his father. (2) Both breathed the breath of life from a new psychology having its background in biology. Both owned a common ancestry in Charles S. Peirce. Except for certain relatively minor differences, the structure of their respective systems have the same form, as we shall later see. Though both are of the same Abatements, they speak differing thoughts on religion. Thereupon the problem is born. Why should this be? From the same promises the consequences should be the same if the logic is rigidly applied. But they seem not to be the same. This is troublesome, and demands inquiry.

"...If inferences made and conclusions reached are to be valid, the subject matter dealt with and the operations employed must be such as to yield identical results for all who infer and reason. If the same evidence leads different persons to different conclusions, then either the evidence is only speciously the same, or one conclusion (or both) is wrong. The special constitution of an individual organism which plays such a role in biological behavior is so

(1) James, Letters, Vol. II, pp.201-202
irrelevant in controlled inquiry that it has to be discounted." (1)

"The function of reflective thought is...to transform a situation in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious." (2)

The purpose of this essay is to trace the premises, and the successive steps by which James and Dewey arrive at their respective views on religion; furthermore to compare these critically so as to trace the common sources of the similarities and the divergent sources of the differences in their views on religion. By the nature of this inquiry, certain elements of the respective systems will not be called into account. Yet, because religion, whatever else it may be, is a man's evaluation of his life as a whole, both personal and social, the inquiry must of necessity consider the general philosophic outlook of these two great thinkers. It is obvious that not only their specific thought on religion must be examined and evaluated, but also the religious force of their conclusions in other specific areas.

I. William James' Pragmatism

One cannot enter into a discussion of William James' thought without taking into account some of the influences which converged in him and were transformed by him into the fruits of his thought. His father, Henry James, was a theologian by avocation. Though in general he aligned himself with the doctrines of Swedenborg, the Swedish mystic, he was really more of a freethinker, in the sense of being hospitable to and interested in a wide range of religious thought. He was intimate with the eminent religious thinkers of his day, and knew Emerson and Carlyle. While William James did not follow his father's thought, he was profoundly effected by his religious interests. Among the son's autobiographical comments he mentions religious problems and tensions prominently in his early experiences. This religious temperament and interest was prominent throughout his life and work. He never lost the moral earnestness which he caught from his father.

While an undergraduate at Harvard, James had as one of his instructors, Louis Agassiz, who taught natural science. Later James was to accompany his teacher on a biological expedition to the Amazon. One of Agassiz's maxims was "Go to Nature; take the facts into your own hands; look, and see for yourself." Years later James wrote of Agassiz's influence: "the hours I spent with Agassiz so taught me the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fullness, that I have never been able to forget it." (1)

A cursory glance at a list of James' written works shows that his life was spent in an attempt to reconcile these two strains in his

(1) Louis Agassiz (an address delivered in 1896), reprinted in Memories and Studies.
thought and temperament; the religious, speculative and the rigorous, scientific. This fact is further reflected in his characterization of types of mind as "tough-minded" and "tender-minded". It is not strange that James should have developed his religious thought first and his methodology comparatively late in his life. But it will be somewhat awkward to show how that which came first is the logical consequence of that which came later in time. In 1893 James made an address to a Unitarian Minister's Institute entitled Reflex Action and Theism; this was followed in 1894 by an article on Absolutism and Empiricism; in 1895 In Life Worth Living?; The Will to Believe, 1896; The Varieties of Religious Experience, 1902. This strain closed with his metaphysical work, A Pluralistic Universe, 1909. About half-way between Absolutism and Empiricism and Is Life Worth Living? James published his Principles of Psychology, 1891. Pragmatism and its sequel, The Meaning of Truth, did not appear until after The Varieties of Religious Experience, in 1907 and 1909 respectively. Though there seems to have been an inverse coordination between the cadence of the religious and scientific interests in James' work, it is probable that the two interests were developed concurrently. In any event it cannot be said that James developed his Pragmatism as a method to substantiate his religious thought. The two are, however, so intimately connected that they may be considered as contingent.

"The truth is that science and all these other functions of the human mind are alike results of man's thinking about the phenomena life offers him...If we think clearly and consistently in theology and philosophy we are good men of science too. If we think logically in science we are good theologians and philosophers." (1)

(1) quoted in R.B. Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, p. 31.
Two other influences on James should be mentioned, namely those of Charles Renouvier and Charles S. Peirce. The former confirmed James in his revolt against the "mad Absolute" and freed him from determinism. The latter provided James with the basis for his theory of the pragmatic meaning of truth.

In writing eulogistically of Herbert Spencer, James said:

"Everyone who writes books or articles knows how he must flounder until he hits upon the proper opening. Once the beginning is found, everything follows easily and in due order. If a man, however narrow, strikes even by accident, into one of these fertile openings, and pertinaciously follows the lead, he is almost sure to meet truth in his path... Such a thought was the gradual growth of all things, by natural processes, out of natural antecedents." (1)

James himself used this selfsame opening, an opening hit upon by Darwin about the same time that James was a young man of seventeen years, and felt that he, having followed the lead, had met truth in his path. James, however, confined himself largely to special application of the Darwinian principle of biological utility to the human organism and seized upon that principle as an explanation of human consciousness.

This application was first developed systematically in James' Principles of Psychology. This work, while laying the foundations of psychology as a science, is shot through and through with metaphysical side-lights, making it difficult at times to determine which is science and which metaphysics. In the very opening pages of the Principles he writes:

"..Is the Cosmos an expression of intelligence rational in its inward nature, or a brute external fact pure and simple? If we find ourselves, in contemplating it, unable to banish the impression that it is some realm of final purposes, that it exists for the sake of something, we place intelligence at the very heart of it and have a religion. If, on the contrary, in surveying its irremediable flux, we can think of the present
only as so much mere mechanical sprouting from the past, occurring with no reference to the future, we are atheists and materialists." (1)

James does not leave his readers in doubt as to his own position. On the same pages he states: "The presence of future ends and the choice of means for their attainment are... the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality in a phenomenon." (2) It is from this point of view that the Principles were written.

How this mentality is a stage in "the gradual growth of all things by natural processes, out of natural antecedents" James indicates in the following statement: "If evolution is to work smoothly, consciousness in some shape must have been present at the very origin of things."...

The girl in 'Midshipman Easy' could not excuse the illegitimacy of her child by saying, 'it was a little small one'. And consciousness, however little, is an illegitimate birth in any philosophy that starts without it, and yet professes to explain all facts by continuous evolution." (3) While this is a metaphysical matter, it has some bearing upon what appears to be an inconsistency in James' treatment of the relation of the mind to the brain. In one case he says: "The immediate condition of a state of consciousness is an activity of some sort in the cerebral hemispheres... mental action may be uniformly and absolutely a function of brain-action, varying as the latter varies, and being to the brain-action as effect to cause." (4) Later in his Ingersoll Lectures he held that the function of the brain action may be only transmissive, and is not necessarily productive. He also writes:

"Probability and circumstantial evidence...run dead against the theory that our actions are purely mechanical in their causation. I shall talk as if consciousness kept actively pressing

(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid., p. 149.
(4) Textbook of Psychology, p. 5.
against the nerve centers in the direction of its own ends, and was no mere paralytic and impotent spectator of life's game." (1)

This seems to be an espousal of interactionism. It is further confirmed by a statement in the Principles:

"The consciousness, which is itself an integral thing not made of parts, 'corresponds' to the entire activity of the brain, whatever that may be, at the moment." (2)

Some years later (1904) in his essay, Does Consciousness Exist? he revises his idea again—

"Consciousness connotes a kind of external relation, and does not denote a special stuff or way of being. The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only are, but are known, which = their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations — these relations themselves being experiences — to one another." (3)

In a discussion of habit, James states that the laws of nature are nothing more or less than the immutable habits which particles of matter exhibit in their actions and reactions toward each other. These habits in elementary particles are not subject to variation, but in organic systems, which are compounds of elementary particles, habits are due to the compound structure of the organism and are mutable, or plastic. Nervous tissue possesses an exceptional degree of this plasticity. "The phenomena of habit in living beings," then,"are due to the plasticity of the organic materials of which their bodies are composed." (4) This, says James, is not a chapter in psychology or physiology, but a chapter in physics.

Mechanical though habit is, it is a useful instrument for consciousness, for it reduces the constant attention that must be given to our actions. Habits are appropriate modes of action imposed upon the

(1) Ibid., p. 104.
(2) The Principles of Psychology, I, p. 177.
(3) Essays in Radical Empiricism, p. 25.
plastic organism by some intelligence. Consciousness has interests in
its own right, which it strives to achieve by the mechanism of habits.

"We talk, it is true, when we are darwinizing, as if the mere body
that owns the brain had interests;...and we treat...survival as if
it were an absolute end, existing as such in the physical world, a
sort of actual should-be, presiding over the animal and judging his
actions, quite apart from the presence of any commenting intelligen¬
ence outside. We forget that in the absence of some such superadded
commenting intelligence... the reactions cannot be properly talked
of as 'useful' or 'hurtful' at all....Survival can enter into a
purely physiological discussion only as an hypothesis made by an
onlooker, about the future...Every existing consciousness seems to
itself...to be a fighter for ends, of which many, but for its
presence, would not be ends at all." (1)

By this reasoning James refutes what he terms "the automaton theory".

Since consciousness is a "fighter for ends", the presence of ends
demands some explanation. This is furnished by an examination of atten¬
tion. The world about us is a big "buzzing, blooming" confusion, parts
of which are of interest to the human organism. This interest on the
part of the human organism is selective and determines in a large
measure its "experience". "My experience is what I agree to attend to.
Only those items which I notice shape my mind—without selective
interest, experience is an utter chaos." (2)

The selective interest, James says, is determined by an "ideational
preparation" or "preperception". This is symbolically portrayed as a
brain cell being acted upon from two directions—by an afferent
stimulus from an object without, and by "other brain cells, or perhaps
spiritual forces" from within.

"The plenary energy of the brain cell demands the co-operation of
both factors: not when merely present, but when both present and
attended to, is the object fully perceived." (3)

Whether the element of 'ideational preparation' arises from other brain

(1) Ibid., p. 142.
(2) Ibid., p. 102.
(3) Ibid., p. 142.
cells or from spiritual forces, James says, is one of those "central psychologic mysteries".

"When we reflect that the turnings of our attention form the nucleus of our inner self; when we see...that volition is nothing but attention; when we believe that our autonomy in the midst of nature depends on our not being pure effect, but a cause, -

Principium quodam quod fati feedera rumpat,

Ex infinite ne causam causa sequitur-

we must admit that the question whether attention involve such a principle of spiritual activity or not is metaphysical as well as psychological, and is well worthy of all the pains we can bestow upon its solution. It is in fact the pivotal question of metaphysics, the very hinge on which our picture of the world shall swing from materialism, fatalism, monism, towards spiritualism, freedom, pluralism, - or else the other way." (1)

This brings us to the threshold of James' philosophy of religion, but there are several other elements of his thought which should be considered before entering upon that phase of the problem.

James delineates two kind of knowledge: knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge-about. (2) The former is 'pure experience', sensations of color, of space, or of time. For this area of knowledge he develops a method which he calls Radical Empiricism. This method is summarized in the preface to The Meaning of Truth as consisting of three parts: a postulate, a statement of fact and a generalized conclusion. The postulate is that subjects debatable among philosophers should be limited to such things as are "definable in terms drawn from experience". This does not preclude there being things which are unexperiencedable, but they cannot be subjects of debate. The statement of fact is that the relations between things, conjunctive as well as disjunctive are just as much matters of direct particular experience, neither more nor less so, than the things themselves". Concepts are just as immediately experienced as percepts. Both rationalism and realism are the results.

(1) Ibid., p. 447.
(2) Ibid., p. 221.
of misplaced emphasis. The generalized conclusion, James says, is that "therefore the parts of experience hold together from next to next by relations that are themselves parts of experience."(1) Immediately experienced nature shows itself to have a structure which is concatenated or continuous.

The second kind of knowledge, knowledge-about, consists in judgments or constructs projected by belief or hypothesis having reasons; such judgments are to be consistent with other judgments and verifiable in terms of experience. This kind of knowledge James described as consisting of 'flight and perch.' Tensions develop in the neutral field of consciousness, or of pure experience, which force the organism to carry itself into a stable situation or condition. The transitional phase in thinking and the tentatively stable conditions at either end of the transition are the perchings.(2) The method for this realm of knowledge is what James called Pragmatism. The germinal idea for this method James received from Charles S. Peirce, specifically from the latter's article published in the Popular Science Monthly in 1873 entitled, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear." Therein Peirce wrote:

"It appears then, that the rule for attaining...clearness of apprehension is as follows: Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object." (3)

James' version is:

"There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere - no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in concrete fact and in conduct consequent upon that fact, imposed upon somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somehow." (4)

The meaning of a concept is the future consequences which it has in

(1) The Meaning of Truth, p. xii, xiii.
(3) Acknowledged by James in lecture at University of California, Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results, 1896.
(4) Pragmatism, p. 50 f.
experience. Besides being a theory of knowledge, Pragmatism was for James also a theory of truth. An hypothesis, or a judgment of any sort is simply a "truth claim". Such are verified if when acted upon our experience yields the desirable consequences. These consequences may be perceptible, non-perceptible, or purely intellectual; what is important is that they should have "cash-value", that is to say, they must be significant to the context which gave rise to them.

Professor B.B. Perry suggests that there is a third kind of knowledge which is implicit in James. This he calls knowledge by faith. It consists of beliefs which cannot be verified in the immediately given elements of experience, but which are useful and justifiable on moral grounds. (1) The method for this area of knowledge Perry calls fideism. It was set forth in the essay, "The Will to Believe", which James later restated as "The Right To Believe". James himself did not consider it a distinct method, but rather a variation of the pragmatic method as applied to moral and religious experience.

One further aspect of James' thought concerns our problem and invites our attention, namely, his psychological description of the empirical self. In the chapter on "The Stream of Thought" in the Principles, James equates consciousness to the stream of thought. Thought occurs "within a personal consciousness" and is a part of it. Within such a consciousness thought is at once changing and continuous. It appears to be about independent objects, and chooses upon which among these objects it will bestow its interest and attention. (2) This selective emphasis determines ultimately the character of the 'personal consciousness' within which the thought moves.

(1) B.B. Perry, In the Spirit of Wm James, p. 72.
"A man's empirical thought depends upon the things he has experienced, but what these shall be is to a large extent determined by his habits of attention." (1)

Thought in its on-flowing character is apparently not itself the chooser, but the personal consciousness, the inner self of the man whose stream of thought it is. Thought is instrumental once the decisive choice is made, but thought by itself would be in the position of Socrates's ass.

"The problem with... man is less what act he shall now choose to do, than what being he shall now resolve to become." (2)

We are thrown back then, upon the fact that "the turnings of our attention" originate in the "nucleus of our inner self", which is and remains a psychologic mystery.

"A man's Self", James says, "is the sum total of all that he calls his, not only his body and psychic powers," but his clothing house, relatives, friends, everything that is "his". This self consists of several parts or phases, which group themselves into two classes: The material and the social Self; the spiritual Self and the pure Ego. (3)

The material Self is a person's body, clothing, property, and immediate family. The social Self is "...the recognition which he (a man) gets from his mates," and includes fame and honor, or ignominy and dishonor. So much, the first class of parts of a self, may be called the empirical self. The spiritual self is not so easily delineated. James calls it "the feeling of (a) central active self", and depends upon introspection for a description of it.

"...I am aware of a constant play of furtherances and hindrances in my thinking.... The mutual inconsistencies and agreements, reinforcements and obstructions, which obtain amongst these objective matters, reverberate backwards and produce what seem to be incessant reactions of my spontaneity upon them, welcoming or opposing, appropriating or disowning, striving with or

(1) Ibid., J. P. 386
(2) Ibid., J. P. 388
(3) Ibid., J. pp. 291-292.
against, saying yes and no, this palpitating inward life is, in me, that central nucleus..." (1)

But, he goes on to say, when he leaves off such generalizations and grapples with particulars, "it is difficult for me to detect any purely spiritual element at all." (2)

"In a sense, then, it may be truly said that, in one person at least, the 'Self of selves', when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of those peculiar notions in the head, or between the head and the throat...it would follow that our entire feeling of spiritual activity...is really a feeling of bodily activities whose exact nature is by most men overlooked." (3)

Farther than this James feels he cannot go clearly. But he does leave the door open, and, as is well known, was seriously interested in psychical research. James, the scientist, however, so far as I know, never got beyond 'peculiar motions between the head and throat'.

Still, in discussing the cepions which the constituent parts of the Self arouse, he says that:

"Under the head of spiritual self-seeking ought to be included every impulse towards psychic progress, whether intellectual, moral or spiritual in the narrow sense of the term."

He goes on to say that much that is called spiritual self-seeking is only a masked bodily and social self-seeking beyond the grave. And that:

"It is only the search of the redeemed inward nature, the spotlessness from sin, whether here or hereafter, that can count as spiritual self-seeking pure and undefiled." (4)

James provides the following chart which is of interest:

"The empirical life of Self is divided, as below, into

(1) Ibid., p. 299.
(2) Ibid., p. 300.
(3) Ibid., p. 301 f.
(4) Ibid., p. 309."
In this connection, James attacks the concept of a Soul as another kind of substance. The only positive meaning the term can have is, "the ground of possibility" of thought. Its usual meaning has its origin, James says, quoting Dr. Hodgson, in -

"Whatever you are totally ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else." (2)

Our individuality is likely "an average statistical resultant" of nature, its conditions being what they are; it is not an elementary and inscrutable fact, or force.

"My final conclusion...about the substantial Soul is that it explains nothing and guarantees nothing. Its successive thoughts are the only intelligible things about it..." (3)

James has not clearly answered the question as to what the nucleus of the inner self is, what it is that determines the significant and characterful choices of men. There is continuity and change or novelty in thought, but what makes the change or novelty good or evil is not explained.

(1) Ibid., I, p. 329.
(2) Ibid., I, p. 347.
(3) Ibid., I, p. 550.
II. John Dewey's Instrumentalism

In the year 1859 Charles Darwin published his Origin of Species. In the same year John Dewey met and solved his first problems in life—how to breathe and take nourishment successfully. These two events are not unrelated in Dewey's thought. As an application of the Darwinian hypothesis a new psychology was developed. The basis of this psychology was the relation and interaction of the human organism and its environment as an account of what we call thinking and of mental processes generally. Upon this psychology Dewey erects his system. Through it he sees nature not in fixed, immutable patterns, but as a dynamic, moving, progressive equilibrium.

The biological functions and structure of any organism are, for Dewey, the necessary, and in some sense the sufficient condition of inquiry. Indeed there is a prototype of the genesis of inquiry in the disequilibrium of certain inorganic chemical elements. (1) Oxygen disturbs the inner equilibrium of iron. The solution of the unstable condition is found in the combination of the elements into iron oxide. In organic life the situation is basically the same; however, the organization is more complex and the problems involved in maintaining the biological functions of the organism are proportionately complex. The more complex the organism the more complex and diverse are its problems. The reason for this lies in the fact that an organism is a certain organization of elements or process of activity, and an environment which is its sufficient condition. It is an organism not only because of its inner organization, but because it is organized, integrated to its

(1) Experience and Nature, pp. 252-255
environment. Without the latter the former would be impossible, for an organism is a living process involved in the transformation and output of energy. The process is carried on under the limitation of a physical economy which demands that if energy is expended it must be replenished. The organism does not create energy by its processes, but transforms the energy it receives from sources outside itself, from its environment. The living process also involves the expenditure of energy. It must replenish this energy if it is to continue to expend it. This can be done only if the organism is successful through its life processes in making "return drafts" upon its environment. An organism must be able to acquire energy from its environment or disintegrate; there is no alternative to this need for adjustment. The solution of this perpetual problem does, however, have alternatives. The raw energy of the environment is not always hospitable to an organism. The organism can then either reorganize itself so that it can utilize that energy, or it can act upon its environment so as to convert the raw energy into a usable form. The former is essentially the basis of the Darwinian hypothesis, and the latter is more distinctly Dewey's version of the matter, and reflects an Hegelian strain in his thought. Apparently, the energy of the environment is itself unstable. Why this is so is a metaphysical question and does not concern us at the moment. It is an observable fact that the raw energy of the physical universe is in a constant state of flux. And upon this abiding and flooding tide of power the organism must preserve its delicate balance. Hence there is a constant reconstruction of life-processes, the emergence of new forms. Life is an obligate to the cadence of ceaseless cosmic change.
The important fact is that life is not something outside of and
distinct from environment, but is a process within nature and an
integral part of it. The difference between the animate and the inanimate
is not that there is any quantitative difference between them, but
rather that the respective processes have different consequences. (1)
Obviously there is a natural world which exists outside of and
independently of the organism. This world is, however, environment for
the organism only in so far as it enters mediately or immediately into its
life functions. (2) Adaptation by inner change of the organism is
actually expanding, enlarging and diversifying its environment. Hence
the emergence of new biological forms. Sedentary organisms change their
structure so as to be able to move and thus enable them greatly to
change their environment, seeking that which is hospitable actively.

Higher organisms must adapt themselves and readapt themselves
rapidly. They develop, therefore, habitual modes of behavior, which are
a kind of short-hand of the life functions of the organism. This pre-
figures the ability to learn. "Habits are the basis of organic learning." (3)
Though habits are in a sense behavior fixations, it must not be suppos-
ed that they are inflexible. They are simply directions which the
organism gives to its future actions.

In certain higher organisms, preeminently the human organism, habits
take on an additional characteristic of memory or recollection, whereby
consequences of behavior patterns are foreseen or inferred. "The living
creature undergoes, suffers, the consequences of its own behavior. This
close connection between doing and suffering or undergoing forms what
we may call experience." (4) Thereupon judgment comes into play.

(1) Experience and Nature, pp. 252-256
(2) Logic, The Theory of Inquiry, p. 33
(3) Ibid., p. 31.
(4) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 36
Intelligence emerges as an organizing factor within experience. (1) Outcome or consequences can be determined or planned, and the means can be ordered and selected by which the predetermined consequences are to be attained. (2) The mind or intelligence is, then, instrumental to human behavior.

Dewey distinguishes three levels in nature: the physical, the psycho-physical and the mental. While on the physical level activity has the character of events with certain selective reactions, there is no inherent bias in the activity to perpetuate itself. It should be noted in this connection that a 'thing' for Dewey is not a substance, but a kind of activity. "Every existence is an event." "Objects are events with meanings." (3) The activity which we designate as organic life, however, has the distinctive characteristic of maintaining and perpetuating itself. (4) The moment it ceases to exhibit this special characteristic it ceases to be an organism, as such. To be at all, it must overcome the inertia of its inorganic constituents. Thus it seems that life is also an affair of chemical balance. In the absence of the supernatural or transcendental, life must have emerged in certain fortuitous, hospitable compounds of inorganic elements. And when we have sufficient understanding of the operations of the inorganic elements, we ought to be able to reproduce and demonstrate this emergence. In any event, the organic is not possessed of some additional substance or "animal spirits", nor does it abrogate the chemico-inorganic activity.

Conjoined with this characteristic of active self-maintenance is a new relation to other events and activities in the environment which

(1) Ibid., P. 91  
(2) Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, p. 35.  
(3) Experience and Nature, pp. 71, 318.  
(4) Ibid., pp. 254-255; cf. also p. 272.
can be characterized as "need-demand-satisfaction". In other words the existence of an organism is problematic and contingent upon an organism-environment interaction and integration. Dewey defines this state of affairs very carefully in order to avoid misconstruction, aligning himself neither with traditional materialism, nor with traditional idealism.

"By need is meant a condition of tensional distribution of energies such that the body is in a condition of uneasy or unstable equilibrium. By demand or effort is meant the fact that this state is manifested in movements which modify environing bodies in ways which react upon the body, so that its characteristic pattern of active equilibrium is restored. By satisfaction is meant this recovery of equilibrium pattern, consequent upon the changes of environment due to interactions with the active demands of the organism." (1)

Also it should be pointed out that the parts of an organism act so as to both maintain themselves and the whole, by selective biases. "This pervasive operative presence of the whole in the part and of the part in the whole constitutes susceptibility - the capacity for feeling-.." Thereupon responses become something more than selective biases, acquiring the added characteristic of being "discriminatory". This power of discrimination is what Dewey means by "sensitivity". "Thus with organization, bias becomes interest, and satisfaction a good or value and not a mere satisfaction of wants or repletion of deficiencies." (2)

Up to this point we can follow the development of the "psychophysical" or the organism. It is understandable that an energy or a chemical deficiency would set up a "condition of tensional distribution of energies". But this cannot account for the ability in the organism to rise from selective bias to discrimination. Discrimination presupposes an ability to choose consistently, to judge, as it were. There must be some basis for such judgment, exterior to the mechanics of the organism.

(1) Ibid., p. 253.
(2) Ibid., p. 255.
else the choosing would either be random chance or a simple continuation of chemicophysical laws. In either case there would be no real choosing.

Dewey insists that the fundamental "postulate" in describing nature is continuity. (1) I think, however, that Dewey must admit that interest and good or value in satisfaction are novelties, and are not derived in the continuity of nature. When dealing with human intelligence, Dewey does accept the idea of novelty in nature:

"As a matter of fact, the pragmatic theory of intelligence means that the function of the mind is to project new and more complex ends to free experience from routine and caprice. Not the use of thought to accomplish purposes already given either in the mechanism of the body or in the existent state of society, but the use of intelligence to liberate and liberalize action is the pragmatic lesson." (2)

"Pragmatic intelligence is a creative intelligence, not a routine mechanic." (3)

The presence of a prior intelligence, though not necessarily a supernatural intelligence, would explain the emergence of novelties in the simplest organisms, but can such an intelligence be shown to be a derivative of the continuum of nature? Rather, some sort of intelligence must be in the continuum of nature. It is not impossible that such an intelligence is in the continuum. Ex nihilo, nihil fit. Without a prior or inherent intelligence in it, nature could hardly pull itself up from selective biases to discriminative choice by its bootstraps. In some moods this is what Dewey seems to say -

"All life operates through a mechanism, and the higher the form of life the more complex, sure and flexible the mechanism....Nevertheless the difference between the artist and the technician is unmistakable. The artist is a masterful technician. The technique is fused with thought and feeling." (4)

Accepting the presence of the capacity for feeling in a living

(1) Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, pp. 24, 35; Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 87.
(2) Creative Intelligence, p. 63.
(3) Ibid., 64.
organism as observable fact, we can go on to observe that as the organic forms become more complex distance receptors are developed. The organism can, then, anticipate and react to the not-present, and in the course of further development, to the future. Eventually, nature rises to the third level, the mental.

"As life is a character of events in a peculiar condition of organization, and 'feeling' is a quality of life-forms marked by complexly mobile and discriminating responses, so "mind" is an added property assumed by a feeling creature, when it reaches that organized interaction with other living creatures which is language communication. Then the qualities of feeling become significant of objective differences in external things and of episodes past and to come. This state of things in which qualitatively different feelings are not just had, but are significant of objective differences, is mind. Feelings are no longer just felt. They have and they make sense; record and prophesy." (1)

Thus we encompass the three known levels of nature descriptively, the physical - a type of events which characterize inorganic chemical constituents of what we call matter, the psycho-physical - which denotes those additional properties exhibited by physical events in a living organism, and the mental - the stage where still other properties are acquired by the organism. Dewey states emphatically that he only describes this pattern in nature and does not in any way attempt to explain it. To do so would be to commit the common fallacy of both 'Mechanical' and 'Teleological' metaphysics.

At any level of nature the pattern characterizing the behavior of an organism is essentially the same. A disequilibrium develops. The organism moves in search and exploration for means of restoring its equilibrium. The fulfillment of the needed equilibrium is accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction. In the case of human beings, since man's feelings have an objective reference the meaning and significance of (1) Experience and Nature, p. 258.
which can be symbolized, he can investigate the possible and probable effects of his actions without immediately carrying out those actions. This is due to the fact that when animal activities are transformed into significant and meaningful behavior, they acquire the additional quality of being logical when formulated. When activities become meaningful, they are more than mere occurrences. They have connotation and denotation. They connote something beyond themselves; they have implications and are the basis of inferences. At the same time they are denotative, and must finally find their expression in concrete effects.

Man need not commit himself to any of the activities which he mentally rehearses. If he infers that activity is likely to fail to restore his equilibrium, then he can withhold action and reinvestigate the problem. This is what Dewey defines as inquiry. "Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole."(1)

By this means human life can be constantly enlarged and enriched. Thus inference pushes back the unknown, forces things to yield up new and additional properties. "Inference reaches out, fills in the gaps." Its fruits are increments of knowledge and richer meaning.

But thinking by inference is by no means an armchair affair. It is only the middle phase of fruitful human conduct. First the indeterminate, problematic situation which is directly experienced. Then follows the exploratory or thinking phase. Where there is no problem, there is no thinking, no probing or exploring, no pushing back of the frontiers of the unknown. It is based solely upon a particular, problematic

(1) Logic, The Theory of Inquiry, pp. 104-105
situation. Reflective thinking brings us secondary objects of experience, ideas, plans of action, hypotheses. So far nothing significant has been gained. Much may have been proposed, but nothing has been achieved. According to Dewey the traditional philosophies, both rationalistic and idealistic, as well as traditional religions, went only this far. The next step, which they did not take, is the important and decisive factor, namely, the secondary objects of experience, the hypotheses and inferences must be brought back into gear with the primary objects of experience, the original indeterminate and problematic situation. Thinking is not significant or enriching unless it can resolve an indeterminate situation into a determinate one. An idea is of no value, it adds nothing, unless the action it proposes is successful, satisfying in action. Thinking is known by its fruits.

"Reason is experimental intelligence, conceived after the pattern of science, and used in the creation of social arts; it has something to do... It projects a better future and assists man in its realization. And its operation is always subject to test in experience. The plans which are formed, the principles which men project as guides of reconstructive action, are not dogmas. They are hypotheses to be worked out in practice, and to be rejected, corrected or expanded as they fail or succeed in giving our present experience the guidance it requires..... Intelligence is not something possessed once for all. It is in constant process of forming, and its retention requires constant alertness in observing consequences, an open minded will to learn and courage in readjustment."

While Dewey does not specifically mention it as such, apparently he recognizes a fourth level in nature, which may be called the psycho-social in contradistinction to the psycho-physical. The environment in which human activity is performed, particularly that peculiarly human activity called thinking, is not wholly physical, but consists also in a cultural matrix as well. The relationships of human beings to one

(1) Reconstruction in Philosophy, pp. 96-97.
another raise many intricate and troublesome problems, which demand inquiry. The enrichment of human life is achieved more especially in their solutions, than in the satisfactions attending the solutions of mere biological problems. It is important to notice, too, that human activity is set in an environment that is not only immediately social, but is culturally communicated from one individual and one generation to another.

"The conceptions that are socially current and important become the child's principles of interpretation and estimation long before he attains to personal and deliberate control of conduct. Things come to him in language not in physical nakedness, and this garb of communication makes him a sharer in the beliefs of those about him. These beliefs coming to him as so many facts form his mind; they furnish the centers about which his personal expeditions and perceptions are ordered." (1)

Custom, traditions, institutions, religions and the purposes and beliefs they transmit or induce determine how a man acts as well as his organic structure and physical heredity. However, it is not to be supposed that the cultural environment is discontinuous from the physical environment.

"The acquisition and understanding of language with proficiency in the arts (that are foreign to other animals than men) represent an incorporation within the physical structure of human beings of the effects of cultural conditions, an interpretation so profound that resulting activities are as direct and seemingly 'natural' as are the first reactions of an infant. To speak, to read, to exercise an art, industrial, fine or political, are instances of modifications wrought within the biological organism by the cultural environment." (2)

There is no need to appeal to anything a priori, such as Reason or Intuition, to account for the differentiation between the merely organic activity of other animals and the psycho-social activities of human beings. The latter are only special, though highly developed,

(1) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 92.
(2) Logic, Theory of Inference, p. 143.
cases of the "problem of continuity, of change and the emergence of new modes of activity - the problem of development at any level." (1) The ordinary activities of animals assume in the human being new properties and meanings. Eating becomes a feast, a celebration, a festival. Acquiring food and shelter becomes agriculture, architecture, manufacturing, finance, business. Copulation and procreation is transformed into a family and a home.

Whatever refinements any age may add to these must be the outgrowth of and continuous with the existing cultural environment provided by the age immediately preceding. The Federal Radio Commission would have been meaningless fifty years ago, for the culture of the day did not include the problems engendered by radio transmission and communication. Dewey rarely quotes, a fact which lends unusual importance to the following quotation which evidently epitomizes his thought:

"There is an inalienable and ineradicable framework of conceptions which is not our own making, but given to us ready-made by society - a whole apparatus of concepts and categories, within which and by which individual thinking, however daring and original, is compelled to move." (2)

In the physical sciences there must be a progressive and expanding unity and coherence. The scientist determines his specific problem, proposes its possible solutions from which he selects the most probable, and by experiment ascertains the exact consequences of the chosen solution. While such a procedure may resolve an indeterminate situation into a determinate one, it must be submitted to the further test of consistency and coherence with the existent body of scientific knowledge. For the latter test the scientist must rely largely upon the confirmation and criticism of a community of fellow scientists within his

(1) Ibid., p. 112.
special field. (1) In precisely the same way, the individual is confronted with problems, seeks and chooses possible solutions, which when acted upon have certain evident consequences. These consequences must not only cohere and be consistent with the consequences of other activities of the individual himself so as to produce a unified personality, but must stand the additional test of being consistent and coherent with the body of activities and their consequences as performed by others. Necessarily, this test is applied mainly to the individual by the society of which he is a member, the society of individuals within whose experience the activity in question has consequences. Inasmuch as the consequences of any activity become in turn a part of the environment of others as well as of the performer himself, the activity is subject to the approval or disapproval, the confirmation and the correction of the others. What happens is that the context of any specific problem-solving activity, or in fact any activity whatsoever, is enlarged so as to comprehend all the levels of nature in the past, present and future. The special sciences are just activities confined to a narrow context for the sake of convenience, but none the less must fit in the larger social context, which is the largest Dewey admits. Each bit of thinking

(1) In this connection, Dewey points to a statement of C. S. Peirce in The Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology, v. 2, p. 502: "The next most vital factor of the method of modern science is that it has been made social. On the one hand, what a scientific man recognizes as a fact of science must be open to anybody to observe, provided he fulfills the necessary conditions, external and internal. As long as only one man has been able to see a marking on the planet Venus, it is not an established fact. . . . On the other hand the method of modern science is social in respect to the solidarity of its efforts. The scientific world is like a colony of insects, in that the individual strives to produce that which he himself cannot hope to enjoy."
and acting, then, is a universalizing of human activity or an attempt to universalize it.

We have arrived at the threshold of ethics and religion, which we are to examine in some detail in a later section. There remain, however, one or two details which deserve our attention. First, the stage upon which the whole social drama is enacted is the physical environment. Nothing is done by an individual or a group except in the inescapable context of the interaction of physical conditions. No social event transpires which is not accompanied by its physical medium, however the 'physical' may be interpreted. There is no exclusive or elusive, distinctly human factor which alone can account for social consequences. It follows, then, that social phenomena as such are not subjects for direct inquiry. Rather, the approach must be made through a wide, prior knowledge of their component physical phenomena. For the purposes of inquiry and solution, the large, complex social problems must be analyzed into the simple physical conditions in which they arise and develop.  

Second, unlike physical inquiry, social inquiry does not have a body of scientific data, conceptions and methods already prepared by the results of previous inquiries. Out of the whole social context, those data which are significant to the specific problem must be sifted and ordered. The existential factors which enter into a social problem are not brute data, but become at the hands of an ordering intelligence the means by which 'ends-in-view' can be obtained.

"It follows that in social inquiry 'facts' may be carefully ascertained and assembled without being understood. They are capable of being

(1) Logic. The Theory of Inquiry. pp.191-192
ordered or related in the way that constitutes understanding of them only when their bearing is seen, and 'bearing' is a matter of connection with consequences. Social phenomena are so interwoven with one another that it is impossible to assign special consequences (and hence bearing and significance) to any given body of facts unless the special consequences are of the latter differentially determined. This differential determination can be affected only by active or 'practical' operations conducted according to an idea which is a plan." (1)

(1) Logic, The Theory of Inquiry, p. 511
Ill

A Critical Comparison of James' and Dewey's General Views

It is the thesis of this essay that the divergencies of James' and Dewey's religious views follow from the divergencies of their philosophical systems. As James relates from a conversation with a carpenter friend of his - "...there is very little difference between one man and another, but what there is is very important." Our immediate task, then, is to determine the agreements and divergencies of their respective systematic views.

As has been mentioned, both build upon a biological psychology which is the outgrowth of the Darwinian evolutionary hypothesis. The mind, or rather consciousness, is instrumental to survival, adjustment to the environment, and organic integration. The brain, for both, is the necessary condition of the mental processes. An incipient divergence appears at this point, however. For Dewey, the organism together with its environment is in some sense also the sufficient condition of mental activity, since mind and environment comprehend the whole of nature and since any force or agency outside of nature is excluded. (1) For James, the physical elements alone either of the organism or its environment do not account for consciousness. At times James seems to be in complete agreement with Dewey on this point, but the problem of the origin of selective bias in an organism developing by natural processes from natural antecedents bothered him. Although he never developed a satisfactory explanation for himself, he felt that consciousness in some form must have been present in nature prior to

its emergence. (Cf. Pg. 8).

The same incipient divergence appears in their treatment of habit. For Dewey habits in the higher organisms permit the higher organisms to remember, and thence to infer future consequences. By its intelligence, then, an organism can judge and regulate its future experience. James, on the other hand, calls such reasoning ‘darwinizing’, and points out that the operation of judging and directing present activities with reference to some future consequence involves a superadded, commenting intelligence, which makes the judgment. Consciousness may use habits and remember the experiences to which they have lead in making significant judgments about future experiences, but it is something more than the sum of the habits and experiences of the organism. This is his earlier view and is contained largely in his psychology. Later he referred to consciousness as one relationship among many possible relationships within the neutral field of experience. In spite of this change of view, however, James seems never to have lost entirely the feeling that the consciousness had its sufficient condition in something other than the physical and biological. Dewey, of course, recognizes, too, that the selective biases of the lower forms of nature become in the higher forms interests, and in the human organism allows the social and cultural conditions to become sufficient conditions of consciousness. But such higher interests are not reducible to selective biases; they are novelties. (Cf. Pg. 54) And, so far as I can see, he does not account for such novelties as gradual growths by natural processes out of natural antecedents.

The basic similarities of James and Dewey are to be found more
particularly in their understanding of the pragmatic method. With Peirce, both agree that the meaning of an hypothesis is its practical, experiential consequences. For both, thinking originates in an unstable situation, caused from a change by or to its environment. It, then, produces an hypothesis into the situation which the organism acts upon. If the situation becomes stable, that is, if the experienced consequences are practical, the hypothesis was successful. Its meaning is nothing more or less than the difference that it makes in the specific situation. Both agree that we know when we have been able to follow through this pattern of inquiry and observe the consequences. A fact to be a fact must be experienced, be conceivable as having been someone's experience, or be a possible experience for someone.

For James the objective reference of an idea is its reference to the future stream of thought. Dewey accepts this but amends it to say that an idea always includes a plan of action. In a sense, James' functional element of a concept covers the same field, but with an important difference. Dewey means by a plan of action control over the environmental situation, scientific prediction and control. By the functional element of a concept James means such control and in addition admits subjective, emotional states as objectively real as any other part of the environment.

This difference bulks large in their respective theories of truth. An idea is verified for Dewey when its plan of action results in the intended consequences. These consequences must be denotative, sensible consequences. In one mood James holds to the same principle "...eventually all true processes must lead to the face of directly verifying
sensible experiences somewhere, which somebody's ideas have copied."(1) But he also gives non-perceptible consequences equal verifying force. Any idea or belief which produces useful consequences for the consciousness entertaining the idea or belief is to the extent of those consequences verified as being true. The term useful in this sense denotes the unification and stabilization of personal emotional states. Dewey rejects this as being guilty of a post hoc, ergo propter hoc fallacy. "If ideas terminate in good consequences, but yet the goodness of the consequence was no part of the intention of the idea, does the goodness have any verifying force? If an idea leads to consequences which are good in one respect only of fulfilling the intent of the idea (as when one drinks a liquid to test the idea that it is poison), does the badness of the consequences in every other respect detract from the verifying force of these consequences?" (2) Dewey's answer is that the truth of an idea has no bearing on its value. The intention of an idea may be a goal that is valuable, or useless, but whatever its goal, it is true if in fact it leads to the goal. But care must be exercised that only the actual consequences of the idea be considered, and all others excluded. In contrast James says,

"...Truth is one species of good, and not, as it is usually supposed, a category distinct from good, and coordinate with it. The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in a way of belief, and good, too, for definite assignable reasons....If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there be any idea which if believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would be really better for us to believe in that idea, unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other beliefs."(3)

"Her (Pragmatism's) only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted."(4)

(1) Pragmatism, p. 215.
(2) Essays in Experimental Logic, pp. 319-320.
(3) Pragmatism, pp. 75-76.
(4) Ibid., p. 80.
In point of fact, as Dewey himself indicates (1), an idea to be true for
James must meet two tests, an objective test—of leading to the end
which it intends, and a personal test—of leading to an end which is
satisfying to the whole person. "That new idea is truest which performs
most felicitously its function of satisfying our double urgency."(2) Or
again, in contrast to the impersonal, objective, 'scientific' point of
view, James says, "The most potential of our premises is never mentioned."(3)
It is the constant premise and goal of all ideas intended to produce
activities having survival or adjustment values, which for Dewey as well
as for James are the only significant ideas and activities. For it is
only in indeterminate situations that thinking arises at all, and
obviously the goal of thinking is adjustment and survival for the
organism. Thinking begins with the question, consciously or unconsciously
expressed, 'Will this idea or proposed plan of action solve this
problem, terminate in a tenable situation for me?' The consideration of
personal welfare is an ineluctable element of every thinking situation.
As we shall see, Dewey would in some moods carefully eliminate the
personal element from rigorous inquiry. Ultimately the difference seems
to lie in different interpretations of the good. James uses the term in
a moral sense; he is concerned with the "...life that it is really better
we should lead." While Dewey uses 'good' in terms of adjustment and
integration, particularly in the context of the social.

Further discussion of this point involves us in the theory of
value which is to receive particular attention under the topic of
religion. Suffice it to say for the present that one actually doesn't
drink a liquid to determine if it is poison, especially if he is

(1) *Essays in Experimental Logic*, p. 324.
(2) *Pragmatism*, p. 64.
(3) Ibid.
interested in survival. Nature has a way of quickly eliminating that kind of thinking and activity. The real question is not—Is this liquid poison?, but—Is it safe for me to consume this liquid? According to Peirce's dictum, if no one is to consume the liquid, the fact that it is poison or not has no practical bearings and hence is meaningless. Poison is a relational term connecting and describing the effect between an objective substance and a human organism, not a goal of inquiry.

The crux of the problem is this. Dewey is supposed to have corrected James by divorcing the truth of an idea from its worth for the person whose the idea is. In any event he charged James with a lack of logical rigor, because James would not put asunder what nature had joined together. Logical truth may itself be a value, but beyond this, when that which is logical becomes practical, it is valuable in a new and different sense. For James value or worth for the thinking organism in a concrete situation was the fundamental category. As has been pointed out, he assumed that—

"The pursuance of future ends and choice of means for their attainment...are the mark and criterion of the presence of mentality." (2)

On the other hand, Dewey proposes to isolate certain functions within the human consciousness from each other—

"Others (like myself), who believe thoroughly in pragmatism as a method of orientation, as defined by Mr. James,...would apply the method to the determination of the meaning of objects, the intent and worth of ideas as ideas, and to the human and moral value of beliefs, when these various problems are carefully distinguished from one another...."(3)

This 'correction' was made in 1908. A year later in The Meaning of

(2) The Principles of Psychology, p. 3.
(3) Essays in Experimental Logic, pp. 323-324. (Italics mine)
Truth James is supposed to have recounted and returned to an earlier point of view, as follows: "The pragmatist calls satisfactions indispensable for truth building, but I have everywhere called them insufficient unless reality also incidentally be lead to. If the reality assumed were cancelled from the pragmatist's universe of discourse, he would straightway give the name of falsehoods to the beliefs remaining, in spite of their satisfactoriness... This is why as a pragmatist I have so carefully posited 'reality' ab initio, and why... I remain an epistemological realist." (1) Nonetheless, the same year he used this very argument to establish, rather than to refute, the objective reality of God in A Pluralistic Universe. The argument somewhat more specifically is as follows:

"... Ideas are practically useful in the narrow sense, false ideas some times, but most often ideas which we can verify by the sum total of all their leadings, and the reality of whose objects may thus be considered established beyond doubt. That those ideas should be true in advance of and apart from their utility, that, in other words, their objects should really be there, is the very condition of their having that kind of utility, the objects they connect us with are so important that the ideas which serve as the objects' substitutes grow important also." (2)

Another divergence which, while it is due probably to temperament, is none the less important, is the contrast between James' individualism and Dewey's later emphasis on the social conditions of knowledge. For James knowledge and values both have their locus in the individual, since knowledge is the consequence of individual interest. What a man comes to know depends upon his interests, and where his interests lie depends upon his character and his judgment of what is worthy of his interest.

Among his posthumous papers are some paragraphs, intended for a book which was to have been entitled, "The Many and the One", in which the

(2) A Pluralistic Universe, pp.207-208.
following appears:

"By empiricism I mean the tendency which lays most stress on the part, the element, the individual, treats the whole as a collection and calls the universal abstract." (1)

R.B. Perry says of him that, "He was fond of saying that he 'went in for small nations and small things generally.' 'Darn great Empires! including that of the Absolute...Give me individuals and their spheres of activity.'" (2) His intense feeling of individualism is reflected in his phrase, "me-myself-nobody-else". In Memories and Studies appears:

"The memory of ......will always strengthen my faith in personal freedom and its spontaneities, and make me less unqualifiedly respectful than ever of 'Civilization' with its herding and branding, licensing and degree-giving, authorizing and appointing, and in general regulating and administering the lives of human beings. Surely the individual, the person in the singular number, is the more fundamental phenomenon, and the social institution, of whatever grade, is but secondary and ministerial." (3)

James was an individualist, in the sense of applying pluralism to human relations, but he was not an individualist in the sense of being an atomist or a monadist. This stress on the individual seems to have arisen because of his religious interests and had little or no connection with his epistemology.

Dewey on the other hand emphasizes the importance and influence of the social and cultural factors upon what the individual knows, because they are in some sense the instigation of his more significant inquiries and are the reference frame within which his inquiries move.

In the last analysis James's and Dewey's preoccupation with psychology and logic respectively probably account for the varied emphases. Psychology led James to see the importance of the individual. Dewey says that instrumentalism is the logical version of pragmatism. It

(1) R.B. Perry, The Thought and Character of Wm James, II, p. 380.
(2) Ibid., II, p. 315.
(3) Memories and Studies, p. 102.
is to be expected then that he should be more keenly aware of the social connections. This does not mean to say that either totally neglected the other's point of view, and it does not seem that the emphases are incompatible. It does, however, account for their respective emphases in the field of religion.
IV

James' Philosophy of Religion as a Consequence of His Pragmatism

In undertaking a discussion of James' Philosophy of Religion, we are embarrassed by an overabundance of source material. Nearly everything that James wrote contains references to and inferences on moral and religious subjects. Besides the number of books and articles which he wrote specifically on those topics, his methodological works are interspersed with sidelights on ethics and religion; His Pragmatism, Radical Empiricism, and even his Principles of Psychology. In the latter there are paragraphs that seem almost to be soliloquies. In the former, he seems to be anxious at times that his arguments should not be prejudged by his more pious hearers, who might make hasty conclusions from them; at other times he seems eager to determine for himself their consequences for religion. In any event his interest in religion followed him into every field of his thought.

Metaphysics

"Damn the Absolute", James is said to have exclaimed to his friend and colleague, Josiah Royce. He shocked the audience of his public lectures at Oxford by saying, "Let the absolute bury its absolute."(1) These and other like statements serve to show James' concern to provide a place in his metaphysics for moral and religious values. His rejection of absolutism was not, however, as impassioned as these passages might lead us to believe. He would not quite close the door on the Absolute. For the weary, sick soul the Absolute has a definite pragmatic spiritual value. 'The everlasting arms' are not unattractive (1) Quoted from Bixler, Religion in the Philosophy of Wm James, p.21.
to James in some moods. In what is known to be an autobiographical note in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James writes:

"...fear was so invasive and powerful that if I had not clung to scripture texts like 'The eternal God of my refuge,' etc., 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden,' etc., 'I am the resurrection and the life,' etc., I think I should have grown really insane." (1)

However, he seems to have felt that Absolutism and pluralism were mutually disjunctive, and that he was called upon to take up an option on one or the other. In his 'healthy-minded' and vigorous moods, he chose pluralism as being the more fruitful for morals and religion.

While James' frontal attack on the problems of metaphysics were made from spiritual values, he made a flanking approach from psychology and Radical Empiricism. "The deeper features of reality," he writes,"are found only in perceptual experience. Here alone do we acquaint ourselves with continuity, or the immersion of one thing with another, here alone with self, with substance, with qualities, with activity in its various modes, with time, with cause, with change, with novelty, with tendency, and with freedom." (2) In his notes on *Philosophical Problems of Psychology*, an article which he apparently never finished, he wrote:

"The primal facts which the pure experience hypothesis must recognize are, first, the continuity of experience in concrete (giving systems...); second, its decomposability into objects; third, the identifiability of these objects in different fields — or, in other words, the noetic function of fields relative to each other; and fourth, the discontinuity of the various sorts of... relation on which the different systems are based." (3)

The stream of consciousness is essentially a continuity. It flows through the organism's perceptual experience. By forming concepts we gain more knowledge of its particulars. By this operation knowledge becomes

"additive". James calls this "noetic pluralism", which is a way of

(1) p. 161.
(2) *Some Problems of Philosophy*, p. 97.
"concatenated knowing, going from next to next." (1) The formation of concepts indicates the decomposability of the field of the continuum of experience into discrete objects. Concepts are 'selected' out of the continuum and yet are a part of it, for experience comprehends both the neutral continuum and the differentiated concepts.

"...We humanly make an addition to some sensible reality, and that reality tolerates the addition. All the additions 'agree' with the reality; they fit it, while they build it out...In our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We add, both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands ready, waiting to receive its final touches at our hands." (2)

This is possible because the mind has that about it which permits volitional attention, which, as we have seen (Cf. p. 11), is for James "the pivotal question of metaphysics."

To the degree to which he is aware of the principle of his selection the thinker will be able to embody a more inclusive and adequate synthesis of the multiple differentia which he has conceived from and in the neutral continuum. The real world comprehends the continuity of our pure experience and the discontinuity which our selective attention injects into that experience. To be living means to strive for and in some measure achieve the higher syntheses. In some sense the real, the true and the zestful are the same.

"There is something in life, as one feels its presence, that seems to defy all the possible resources of phraseology...." (3)

And metaphysics is thrown back upon the ineffable.

To return to the "pivotal question of metaphysics", in the pure experience of radical empiricism, "The existence of...effort as a phenomenal fact in our consciousness cannot, of course, be doubted or

(1) Some Problems of Philosophy, p. 129.
(2) Pragmatism, pp. 252, 257.
denied."(1) And again, in another connection, "We feel as if we could make it really more or less, and as if our free action in this regard were a genuine critical point in nature."(2) Thus the experience of the existence of a free, undetermined will within consciousness is one of the indubitable facts of experience. This fact explains at once an important problem in psychology, selective attention, and the genesis of moral and spiritual values. James thus removes two metaphysical obstacles in one swoop: determinism and monism.

"On the pragmatist side we have only one edition of the universe, unfinished, growing in all sorts of places, especially in places where thinking beings are at work." (3)

Theory of Value

The possibility of value stems also from the empirical fact of volitional selection, or interested attention. A thing is valuable in so far as it is consciously desired. By attention we eliminate those elements of our experience which are valueless. What a person eliminates or retains as valuable depends upon his specific interest in a specific situation. Values, then, depend upon personal interests, which may and do vary from individual to individual. What the interest of any one person will be depends upon his habits and previous experience, or in other words upon the character of his whole concrete nature. But besides being personal, values are individual. While James did not overlook the social environment of the individual, he saw that the individual was the basic locus of value. Each individual is to "seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and act as to bring the very largest total universe of good which we can see." But such a total can be nothing more than the sum of the values achieved by individuals.

(2) Talks To Teachers, p. 191.
(3) Pragmatism, p. 259.
Individuals seek by attention and interest the unification of the personal self. While agreement and sharing of those values which produce such unification are the basis of society, the individual who achieves new and higher values and syntheses in disagreement with his fellows and at his own risk is the sole means of social progress. As we have seen, unity and synthesis are not found ready-made in our experience, but are the fruits of our effort, and as we shall see, of our faith. Far from seeing precious values in social mediocrity, James asserts: "I have preached the right of the individual to indulge his personal faith at his own risk." (1)

Ethics

Ethics, says James, is the plane "where choice reigns notoriously supreme."

"To sustain the arguments for the good course and keep them ever before us, to stifle our longing for more flowery ways, to keep the foot unflinching on the arduous path, these are characteristic ethical energies. But more than these; for these but deal with the means of encompassing interests already felt by men to be supreme. The ethical energy par excellence has to go farther and choose which interest out of several, equally coercive, shall reign supreme." (2)

But if we let the situation stand at this point, the ethical energy par excellence seems to be in check between two or more 'equally coercive' interests. James seems to feel, in one mood, that personal desires will activate the volitional selection which will solve this impasse.

"The best, on the whole, of these marks (for distinguishing what is good) and measures of goodness seems to be the capacity to bring happiness. But in order not to break down fatally this test must be taken to cover innumerable acts and impulses that never aim at happiness; so that, after all, in seeking for a universal principle—that the essence of good is simply to satisfy demand." (3)

But, if any of a number of equally coercive interests can satisfy

(1) The Will To Believe, Preface, p. xi.
(3) The Will To Believe, p. 201.
demand, then they are equally good, and there is no true ethical situation. Elsewhere, James, drawing on pluralism, delineates what, for him, was a more satisfactory ethical situation. This is -

"...A moral postulate about the Universe, the postulate that what ought to be can be, and that bad acts cannot be fated, but that good ones must be possible in their place." (1)

"If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally to be gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals...But it feels like a real fight, as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulnesses, are needed to reform. For such a half-wild, half-saved universe our nature is adapted."(2)

Good, then, is not that which satisfies a demand indifferently, but that which satisfies a certain kind of demand. There is something really wild in the universe, something evil, subversive and destructive to human values and syntheses. The moral postulate which will determine our ethical choices, then, is that the purposive will seeks to gain not more happiness and satisfaction, but to redeem the half-saved universe by conquering and defeating the wild half.

James saw that such a moral postulate required a frame or point of reference. If this life is a real fight, how shall we know when we are enlisting our energies on the right side of the battle? "Infratheistic conceptions, materialisms and agnosticisms, are irrational because they are inadequate stimuli to man's practical nature." (3) But -

"...Theism stands ready with the most practically rational solution it is possible to conceive. Not an energy of our active nature to which it does not authoritatively appeal, not an emotion of which it does not normally and naturally release the springs. At a single stroke, it changes the dead blank of the world into a living thing with whom the whole man may have dealings." (4)

What makes theism rational for James is that it satisfies man's psycho-

(2) The Will To Believe, p. 51.
(3) Ibid., p. 134.
(4) Ibid., p. 127.
logical demands; theism releases ethical energies, gives direction and purpose to man's will, permits appropriate choice, and inspires man with confidence and hope. Theism is, needs be, reasonable not in an intellectualistic sense, but practically and pragmatically.

**Religion**

J. S. Mill, in his book, *Religion in the Philosophy of William James*, points out that a development can be discerned in James' conception of God. According to his analysis, this development contained three stages. The first stage is marked by the postulation of a God, because such a postulation, as we have just seen, was the condition of the truly moral life. God in this sense was by no means an Absolute Being, existing in plenary perfection, but a companion, a co-fighter in the real struggle going on in the universe, so that God himself...may draw vital strength and increase from our fidelity."(1) God is a kind of call or stimulus to activity, the source of the aspiration that lifts up and unifies our individual powers. "'Son of Man stand on thy feet, and I will speak with thee! ' is the only revelation of truth to which the solving epochs have helped the disciples." (2)

James admitted "in sad sincerity" that religion was not demonstrable but the faith necessary for the significant use of human energies borrows its evidence. And for all that, is not less respectable than knowledge based on evidence.

"This feeling forced on us we know not whence, that by obstinately believing that there are gods (although not to do so would be so easy for our logic and our life) we are doing the universe the deep- est service we can, seems part of the living essence of the religious hypothesis....When I look at the religious question as it

(1) The Will To Believe, p. 61.
(2) Ibid., p. 83.
really puts itself to concrete men, and when I think of all the possibilities which both practically and theoretically it involves, then this command that we shall put a stopper on our heart, instincts, and courage and wait—acting of course meanwhile more or less as if religion were not true—till doomsday, or till such time as our intellect and senses working together may have raked in evidence enough—this command, I say seems to me the queerest idol ever manufactured in the philosophic cave....Since belief is measured by action, he who forbids us to believe religion to be true necessarily also forbids us to act as we should if we did believe it to be true."

With his Varieties of Religious Experience, James entered a second stage of his religious thought. In these Gifford Lectures James set out to explore the psychology of the religious experience, and to indicate the metaphysical sources of religious satisfactions. The former he did thoroughly, the latter remains to us only in suggestions. There is a notable shift, as Baxler points out, between the conceptions set forth in the Varieties and those just mentioned. The real fight is carried in from the outside universe, into the heart of man, and we find sick souls and healthy-minded souls. God now becomes real because his effects in human experiences are real. Whereas God had been a point of reference for the release and direction of the energies of men, now He becomes a power operating efficaciously upon men. God is no longer a reasonable postulate, but a real Worker doing a real work, which can be observed and described. "God comforts the sick soul, encourages the healthy-minded, knits up the divided self, accomplishes conversion, leads on to saintliness, communicates with mystics, and is the author of saving experiences in which work is undeniably accomplished." (2) The sick soul, rather than being pathological, may find, this sickness is "possibly the only openers of our eyes to the deepest levels of truth." The basic elements of religion, of whatever form, are 1. An uneasiness; and 2. Its solution.

(1) Ibid., pp. 29-30.
(2) Baxler, Religion in the Philosophy of Mr. James, p. 129.
First, we sense that there is "something wrong about us." Note the personal pronoun; the wrong is with us, not now with the universe. This troublesome sense, vague and undefined but none the less real, is alleviated or replaced by a sense that we are "saved from the wrongness" by connecting ourselves properly with a power or powers higher than ourselves. (1) When the individual can consciously suffer from his wrongness and can criticize it, he has asserted a better part of himself and is beyond the wrongness. By identifying his ego with his higher self,

"He becomes conscious that this higher part is continuous and continuous with a MORSE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck." (2)

The positive content of religious experience, then, for James, is this feeling of being "continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come." This, he holds, is "literally and objectively true as far as it goes." (3)

The higher part of the universe James chooses to call God. "We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled." (4) In a letter to R.P. Bome, James wrote, "I myself have... old Lutheran sentiment in my bones." (5) The schemes of the Varieties verifies that fact. While the religious field does contain a moral element, it is something more than moral; it consists of "over-beliefs", flights of the go beyond moral postulates into spiritual hypotheses.

It is interesting to note that these two stages in James' development of the idea of God are paralleled by a significant development in

(1) The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 503.
(2) Ibid., p. 518.
(3) Ibid., p. 518.
(4) Ibid., pp. 516-517.
(5) Perry, The Shorthand and Character of the James, II, p. 370.
his pragmatism, during the first period, covering roughly from 1880-1895. Pragmatism was developed as a method for testing the meaning of concepts, by means of their practical consequences in experience. The second stage, about 1902, shows the influence of Pragmatism as a method of determining truth and reality in terms of value. In the Varieties, James applies the pragmatic test to the traditional attributes of God and finds them meaningless. Thereupon he uses Pragmatism as a method of determining truth, and finds that God is something more than traditionally conceived.

The third and last stage was marked by the publication of A Pluralistic Universe in 1909, This stage seems to combine the principal elements of the foregoing stages. First, the experience of God does call forth our best efforts. This is a pluralistic world, of which God is a part, a real, a finite part, just as we are parts of it.

"We are indeed internal parts of God and not external relations. Yet because God is not absolute, but is himself a part when the system is conceived pluralistically, his functions can be taken as not wholly dissimilar to those of other smaller parts, - as similar to our functions consequently."

"Having an environment, being in time, and working out in history just like ourselves, he escapes from the foreignness, from all that is human, of the static timeless absolute." (1)

In a pluralistic universe, nothing includes everything else or dominates the whole. When the best effort is made for attaining all-inclusiveness, it stops just short - 'Ever not quite'. "The word 'and' trails along after every sentence." Yet this multiverse, James says is a universe by virtue of the mediated connection of each part with each other part. This union is "...What I call the strung-along type, the type of continuity, contingency, or concatenation." (2)

(1) A Pluralistic Universe, p. 318.
(2) Ibid., p. 325
Within this strung-along type of union, however, specifiable religious experience is possible. It is not a quality of other more mundane experiences, although it may accompany them. It need not be immediate, although it may be and on occasion is.

"Religious experience of the lutheran type brings all our naturalistic standards to bankruptcy. You are strong by being weak, it shows. You cannot live on pride and self-sufficingness... Sincerely to give up one's conceit or hope of being good in one's own right is the only door to the universe's deeper riches."

"...There are resources in us that naturalism with its literal and legal virtues never reckons of, possibilities that take our breath away, of another kind of happiness and power, based on giving up our will and letting something higher work for us, and these seem to show a world wider than either physics or philistine ethics can imagine." (1)

Logic and psychology, no matter how adept, could not predict or infer such religious experiences. They are not continuous with 'natural' experiences, or at least the continuity is not yet evident to us. In fact they seem to invert the values of 'natural' experiences. The natural aims at adjustment, survival and satisfactions, while the religious prods the will into seeking after the 'Ever not quite'.

"Here is a world in which all is well, in spite of certain forms of death, indeed because of certain forms of death - death of hope, death of strength, death of responsibility, of fear and worry, competency and desert, death of everything that paganism, naturalism, and legalism pin their faith on and tie their trust to." (2)

Those who live in such a world, are unmoved by criticism, whether academic or scientific. By their experience they know - "that we inhabit an invisible spiritual environment from which help comes, our souls being mysteriously one with a larger soul whose instruments we are."(3)

This third stage seems to hinge upon the pragmatic doctrine of meliorism, which was developed in the last chapter of Pragmatism.

(1) Ibid., p. 305.
(2) Ibid., pp. 305-306.
(3) Ibid., p. 308.
According to this doctrine reality and truth are in the balance, we can make or destroy them as we co-operate or refuse to co-operate with God.

James, writing 'off the record' for pragmatism, said -

"I am willing that there shall be real losses and real losers, and no total preservation of all that is. I can believe in the ideal as an ultimate, not as an origin, and as an extract, not the whole. When the cup is poured off, the dregs are left behind forever, but the possibility of what is poured off is sweet enough to accept."(1)

This doctrine of meliorism does not imply a monotheistic idea of God. James is careful to point out. In both his *Pragmatism* and *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, he toys with the idea of polytheism.

"The original polytheism of mankind has only imperfectly and vaguely sublimated itself into monotheism, and monotheism itself, so far as it was religious and not a scheme of classroom instruction for metaphysicians, has always viewed God as but one helper, primum inter pares, in the midst of all the shapers of the great world's fate."

"...I firmly disbelieve, myself, that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe... We may well believe, on the proofs that religious experience affords, that higher powers exist and are at work to save the world on ideal lines similar to ours."(2)

James' God is designed to fit the whole range of human development. He is finite without being humanistic; He is ideal without being supernatural. He is supra-human without being absolute. He has been pragmatically tested and has been found adequate.

**Immortality**

James' concern about immortality follows a somewhat similar course to that of the development of his idea of God. In the first volume of *The Principles of Psychology*, he quotes from Lotze without committing himself; in the second volume he states as a principle that "Every existing thought in the natural man carries credence with it." and

(1) *Pragmatism*, p. 296.
(2) *Princ.*, p. 300.
illustrates it by saying, "The surest warrant for immortality is the yearning of our bowels for our dear ones." (1) His interest in psychic research during that period is well known. Whether he ever gained anything from it toward a belief in immortality, beyond exercising his interest, is not indicated in his works.

In 1882, while he was in London, James received word that his father was not expected to live. In response, he wrote his father a letter of which the following is an excerpt:

"As for the other side, and Mother, and our all possibly meeting, I can't say anything. More than ever at this moment do I feel that if that were true, all would be solved and justified." (2)

In the Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality of Man, which James delivered in 1897, he said at the outset that—

"I have to confess that my own personal feeling about immortality has never been of the keenest order, and that, among the problems that give my mind solicitude, this one does not take the foremost place." (3)

Nevertheless, in the process of the lecture, he defended the belief on the grounds that immortality is "not incompatible with the brain-function theory of our mundane consciousness, "since the brain might, for all we know, be as well transmissive as productive of thought.

Prof. J. B. Pratt's questionnaire was sent out in 1904. James' replies were in part as follows:

Q. Do you believe in personal immortality?
   A. Never keenly; but more strongly as I grow older.

Q. If so, why?
   A. Because I am just getting fit to live. (4)

Pluralism carried with it no assurance of immortality. But it did demand that the moral issue of the individual human life should

---

(3) Human Immortality, p. 3.
be preserved. This James recognized, without, however, committing himself to an opinion as to whether this fact had any bearing on personal immortality.

"The notion of God...however, inferior in clearness to those mathematical notions so current in mechanical philosophy, has at least this superiority over them, that it guarantees an ideal order that shall be permanently preserved. A world with a God in it to say the last word, may indeed burn up or freeze...This need of an eternal moral order is one of the deepest needs in our breasts." (1)

As with many of the problems that came to James' mind, the problem of immortality was left open. He neither affirmed or denied it. It would seem from the tendency indicated in the above passages that as he grew older he felt a greater need for a belief in it, even though it was not demonstrable. Apparently, however, so far as we know from his works, he was never able to formulate a belief that satisfied his need.

(1) PRAGMATISM, p. 106.
V.

Dewey's Philosophy of Religion as a Consequence of His Instrumentalism

In our survey of the statements which Dewey makes about religion specifically, we may also note some other aspects of his thought which concern closely his philosophy of religion. These are his metaphysics, his theory of value, and his ethics, which we shall consider in that order.

Metaphysics

"This is the extent and method of my metaphysics," writes Dewey, "the large and constant features of human suffering, enjoyments, trials, failures and successes, together with the institutions of art, science, technology, politics, and religion which mark them, communicate genuine features of the world within which men live." (1)

The keystone of Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics, as well as of his naturalistic theory of logic is what he terms "the primary postulate"—continuity of the lower (less complex) and the higher (more complex) activities and forms." The idea of continuity is not self-explanatory. But its meaning excludes complete rupture on one side and mere repetition of identities on the other; it precludes reduction of the 'higher' to the 'lower' just as it precludes complete breaks and gaps" (2) No one, he he a trained scientist or a plain man of undisciplined mind, recognizes a transition from one kind of existence to another when he thinks or reflects. There is no neat division of his world into two spheres, the real and the subjective.

(2) Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, p. 23.
"The fundamental assumption is continuity." (1)

According to Dewey, both mechanistic and spiritualistic metaphysics fall into a common fallacy in that they attempt to explain existence by a non-historical interpretation of causality. Mechanistic metaphysics points out that the more recent event could not have occurred without the previous condition, and follows naturally from it. On the other hand, spiritualistic metaphysics indicates that the earlier, grosser conditions lead up to the ideal. Dewey says that both are true as descriptions, but neither is true as an explanation of a causal process. "The reality is the growth process itself; childhood and adulthood are phases of a continuity...The real existence is the history in its entirety, the history as just what is is." (2)

Metaphysics, then, is nothing more or less than a purely descriptive statement of generic properties exhibited by things without regard to the levels of nature to which we may assign them. (3)

"To me human affairs, associative and personal, are projections, continuations, complications, of the nature which exists in the physical and pre-human world...For this reason, there are in nature both foregrounds and backgrounds, heroes and heroines, centers and perspectives, foci and margins. If there were not, the story and scene of man would involve a complete break with nature, the insertion of unaccountable and unnatural conditions and factors."

Lost this, written as it was in the heat of argument, seem too extreme, perhaps it should be tempered by another passage:

"Instrumentalism...assigns a positive function to thought, that of reconstituting the present stage of things instead of merely knowing it. As a consequence, there cannot be intrinsic degrees, or a hierarchy of forms of judgment. Each type has its own end, and its validity is entirely determined by its efficacy in the pursuit of its end. A limited perceptual judgment, adapted to the situation which has given it birth, is as true in its place as is the most complete and significant philosophic

(1) Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 87.
(2) Experience and Nature, p. 275.
(3) Ibid. p. 412.
or scientific judgment. Logic, therefore, leads to a realistic
metaphysics in so far as it accepts things and events for what
they are independently of thought, and to an idealistic
metaphysics in so far as it contends that thought gives birth
to distinctive acts which modify future facts and events in such
a way as to render them more reasonable, that is to say, more
adequate to the ends which we propose for ourselves. This ideal
element is more and more accentuated by the inclusion progressive-
ly of social factors in human environment over and above natural
factors; so that the needs which are fulfilled, the ends which are
attained are no longer of a merely biological or particular
character, but include also the ends and activities of other
members of society. (1)

What is important to note is that the task of metaphysics is to
understand the integral relation and interaction of man, any man or
group of men, with his hopes, fears, his wants, his yearnings, his
faltering, limited capacities, and the environing nature in which he
developed, and with which he remains and must remain continuous. For
instance, "Fear, whether an instinct or an acquisition, is a function
of the environment. Man fears because he exists in a fearful, an awful
world. The world is precarious and perilous." (2) As one becomes
more and more certain that nature, in which he exists, is of a certain,
definite character, he will attempt proportionately to mold the conduct
of his life and that of his fellow beings to that character which he
has discerned in nature. This fact holds, according to Dewey no matter
what character one may assign to nature. (3)

Any supervening metaphysical "fiction" such as God, the Absolute,
reason, mind, matter or nature, can become at most only special cases
subsumed under the above generalization. Such is, in Dewey's judg-
ment, a source of confusion and trouble, since those notions require
far more explanation than they give. More often than not they pose

(1) Philosophy and Civilization, pg. 31-2.
(2) Experience and Nature, p. 42.
artificial problems which become stumbling blocks for the unwary.

Dewey rightly calls this phase of his thought Naturalistic
Metaphysics. Around the fact of physical action accepted for what it is
in human experience, revolves all that in common speech goes under the
name of spiritual and immaterial. The latter are simply to be understood
as functions, names or events within the arena of physical actions. As
a naturalist, Dewey can deploy himself into any sort of feelings,
imaginations, ideas, or ideals, so long as the Pegasus under him is a
physically active steed. He may refer to himself as a self or a person,
so long as he conceives of himself as a physico-neural organism, and
does not appropriate for himself a soul which should legislate or
supervene upon that organism. He may further recognize other organisms
as selves in so far as they are active bodies in the active world, since
they are "the natural moral transcript, like his own feelings, of
physical life in that region. Naturalism may, accordingly, find room
for every sort of psychology, poetry, logic, and theology, if only they
are content with their natural places." (1)

Dewey, is so sincerely and earnestly convinced of his metaphysics
that he becomes its prophet—

"The ulterior issue is the possibility that actual experience in
its concrete content and movement may furnish those ideals,
meanings and values whose lack, and uncertainty in experience
as actually lived by most persons has supplied the motive force
for recourse to some reality beyond experience; a lack and
uncertainty that account for the continued hold of traditional
philosophical and religious notions which are not consonant
with the main tenor of modern life. The pattern supplied by
scientific knowledge shows that in this one field at least it is
possible for experience, in becoming genuinely experimental, to
develop its own regulative ideas and standards....The conclusion
is a good omen for the possibility of achieving in larger more

(1) The Philosophy of John Dewey, p. 245; George Santayana's review
of Experience and Nature.
humans fields a similar transformation, so that a philosophy of experience may to empirical without either being false to actual experience or being compelled to explain every the values dearest to the heart of man." (1)

The warp of this metaphysics is the continuity of nature; its woof is the indeterminateness of natural events. The form and the character of nature are what we find them to be because they are continuous with and develop from their previous forms. There is and can be no break from form to form, nor can there be any supervening force or intelligence directing the development of the newer forms. The natural world, which is in fact the only world, is constantly agitated by inherent deficiencies. For while it is continuous with itself, it is inherently indeterminate; each new formation within nature is at once a reconstruction solving a deficiency, and the source of a new deficiency. It is at once sufficient and deficient. All activity strives vainly to attain a balance which would presumably be static. All that it is able to accomplish actually is to complicate and diversify its deficiencies. Why this should be, the case, Dewey's metaphysics does not explain, but is content simply to accept it as a fact. Still why reconstruction in nature should lead to more complicated forms rather than to simpler ones seems to demand some explanation. Why should not carbon be content to join with oxygen and remain forever carbon-dioxide, rather than be the basis for highly complex organic structures? Does the complicating and the compounding of the elements of the natural world increase the possibility of resolving its inherent deficiencies? The deficiencies in the natural world may accompany the continuum of the natural world, but they are by no means the same as the continuum.

Perhaps, they are not be divorced, but this fact does not explain why it is that values accrue, that truth and reality are enriching when the continuum in the organism and its situation become complicated, as Dewey asserts, rather than when it is simplified. Certainly enrichment and value are not the fruit of the continuum, nor of the reconstruction of the continuum with its fleeting satisfaction after the indeterminate has disturbed its equilibrium. Values and spiritual enrichment are possible precisely because this world has that about it which will not permit it to be content to remain as it is, because "Man shall not live by bread alone." This world is an awful world, "precious and perilous." It is also a wonderful world, a world wherein loyalty, devotion, adoration, worship, aspiration and inspiration, sacrifice and martyrdom are possible and real. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than reinsent?"

Theory of Value

We have already touched upon Dewey's theory of values critically. It remains to treat this matter in greater detail. Dewey offers his naturalistic metaphysics as a "ground-map", for the procedure for attaining values. Among the existential traits of nature are: "qualitative individuality and constant relations, contingency and need, movement and arrest." These traits are ineluctable characteristics of nature. "This fact is the source both of values and of their precariousness; both of immediate possession which is casual and of reflection which is a precondition of secure attainment and appropriation." (1)

(1) Experience and Nature, pg. 413.
As has been stated before, and as Dewey repeats in every context of his thought, the very existence of man centers in values. Whenever and wherever values are threatened, inquiry and thinking are set in motion. This counts value with the satisfaction which is the meaning of a determinate situation. It also serves to indicate the centrality of value judgments for human living.

"Our constant and inalienable concern is with good and bad, prosperity and failure, and hence with choice. We are constructed to think in terms of values, of bearing on welfare." (1)

"Reflection also implies concern with the issue - a certain sympathetic identification of our own destiny, if only for dramatic, with the outcome of events... We desire this or that outcome. One wholly indifferent to the outcome does not follow or think about what is happening at all." (2)

In any event all disciplined inquiry and warranted assertion necessarily contains a practical factor. Living is a doing and a making which endeavors to reconstruct antecedent existential material in which the problem of inquiry arises into a more serviceable situation.

In human beings, however, the achievement of a more reconstruction is not enough; the reconstruction must be of a certain kind. In any deliberative situation, there are almost always alternatives at each step of the reconstruction. Each alternative has different probable consequences. In order for the inquiry to proceed to action, a choice must be made. Such choices are what Dewey calls judgments of practice, or evaluation. On the basis of the analysis and understanding of the elements of the existing situation and reflection on past experience, one of the possible alternatives is selected as being most likely to yield the most unity and satisfaction, that is, determination in the specific

(2) Democracy and Education, p. 172.
indeterminate situation. Deliberative choosing is, then, operating on the factors already in operation so as to give them a direction which they would not normally take. (1) Such judgments are made upon propositions concerning matters of fact and alternative courses of action. These propositions are neither self-determined nor self-sufficient. They are only instrumental, because they are framed with reference to a desirable outcome. They are not in themselves valid, but depend upon the consequences which result from acting upon them for their validation.

"Judgments about values are judgments about the conditions and the results of experienced objects; judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments. For whatever decides their formation will determine the main course of our conduct, personal and social." (2)

In substance, evaluation is the wedding of logical theory with scientific practice, or more particularly with the experimental method. It is inference reaching outward and upward from grounded determinations accomplished by operations of doing and making. (3)

Dewey admits that there may be enjoyments (values) in the equilibrated situation, where there is no occasion for inquiry. But such are only casual, merely feelings. "There is no value except where there is satisfaction, but there have to be certain conditions fulfilled to transform a satisfaction into a value." (4) Among these conditions is the requirement that the activity which produces the enjoyment should be of the sort which one can continue to use enjoyably, that can continue to give enjoyment. The fable of the cricket and the ant illustrates the point. Even casual enjoyments must take a long-view into account. As we shall later see this fact is of importance in religion for Dewey.

(1) Ibid., p. 164.
(2) The Quest For Certainty, p. 265.
(4) The Quest For Certainty, p. 268.
Before passing on to the theory of morals, we may digress for a moment to consider what may be an inconsistency in Dewey's theory of value. As we have seen, Dewey has emphasized that: "Our constant and inalienable concern is with good and bad..." "We are constructed to think in terms of value, of bearing upon welfare." (cf. p. 60) Or again: "That physical science and its conclusions do as a matter of fact exercise an enormous influence upon social conditions need not be argued.... Change in methods of production, distribution, and communication is the chief determining condition of social relationships and, to a large extent, to actual cultural values in every advanced industrial people, while they react intensively into the lives of all 'backward' peoples. Moreover, only an arbitrary, or else purely conventional point of view.....can rule out such consequences as these from the scope of science itself." (1) On the other hand Dewey states: "To accomplish its tasks (intelligence) must achieve a certain detached impartiality....(A man) will think ineffectively in the degree in which his preferences modify the stuff of his observations and reasonings....The value of the reflection lies upon keeping one's self out of the data." (2) And again-

"It is one thing to say that all knowing has an end beyond itself, and another thing, a thing of a contrary kind, to say that an act of knowing has a particular end which it is bound, in advance, to reach. Much less is it true that the instrumental nature of thinking means that it exists for the sake of obtaining some private one-sided advantage upon which one has set one's heart." (3)

If the latter two passages are true, then values, if any, cannot accrue from personal interest, free choice, but are determined solely by the data and the context. Or, in other words, value inheres in understanding the necessities involved in a problematic situation and its widest

(2) Democracy and Education, p. 173.
(3) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 146.
context. This view is further confirmed in the following statement:

"Serious social troubles tend to be interpreted in moral terms... That the situations themselves are profoundly moral in their causes and consequences... need not be denied. But conversion of the situations investigated into definite problems, that can be intelligently dealt with, demand objective intellectual formulation of conditions; and such formulation demands in turn complete abstraction from the qualities of sin and righteousness, of vicious and virtuous motives... Approach to human problems in terms of moral blame and moral approbation... is probably the greatest single obstacle now existing to development of competent methods in the field of social subject-matter." (1)

Dewey seeks to escape this difficulty by applying his logic of experimental behavior to the problem of value. Not all experiences of satisfaction are valuable. "...It is a matter of frequent experience that likings and enjoyments are of all kinds, and that many of them are such as reflective judgments condemn." (2) The standard by which any given activity is to be judged is not an absolute standard purportedly derived from some extra-experiential source, but whether or not the proposed activity results in further and consistent growth for the actor and for society. Activities are to be judged by their fruits, personal and social. This test finds a prominent place in his educational theory.

"Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions? What is the effect of growth in a special direction upon the attitudes and habits which alone open up avenues for development in other lines?" (3)

But meanings and values do not unfold spontaneously and naturally in the uninhibited activities either of children or adults, but are conveyed by education. They are the creation of organized social life. They are the outgrowth of the communication made necessary by communal

(2) The Quest for Certainty, p. 263.
(3) Experience and Education, p. 29.
life and conjoint behavior. Hence the supreme test of value in an activity is whether it makes for the growth and development of society. Dewey is a champion of Democracy, because he is convinced that it is the form of social organization which permits the freest and most significant growth.

"Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-round growth of every member of society." (1)

Before passing on to the emergence of the moral situation, it should be pointed out that: "The entertaining of ends, the adjudging of values are character phenomena." (2) What a man chooses as being significant and valuable reveals his character. Character is the continued operation of all a man's habits in every act; it is "the interpenetration of habits." Character would not exist if each habit existed in isolation from each other habit, and if habits did not mutually act and react upon each other. (3) While Dewey does not specifically state it, it may be inferred that a man's habit-pattern, his character, is determined by the character which he assumes that his environment, nature, has. (cf. p. 56) He observes a significant pattern in the forms, interactions, and interpenetrations of the processes of nature. His task, then, is to bring his character into conformity and harmony with the character which he discerns in nature, both physical and cultural or social, since he is a part of that nature. It seems that this fact should provide man with a standard of value. Those habits and activities are good which do conform to the character which nature is assumed to have. Contrariwise, disvalue results from a mistaken

(1) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 186.
(2) Logical Conditions of a Scientific Treatment of Morality, p. 133.
(3) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 35.
judgement of the character of nature and its consequent activities which are out of harmony with nature. This seems to come very near to admitting a latent absolute in nature toward which we strive by a series of progressive approximations. Dewey escapes by asserting that: "Integration is an achievement rather than a datum." Still, since nature on its various levels is actively striving to achieve just that integration, the universal goal of nature, it seems to be a fixed, absolute goal, though, perhaps, from the human point of view a dynamic one. The lesser values and integrations may be relative and contingent, but that is because they are parts and not the whole of nature. This Dewey recognises - "Even in the midst of conflict, struggle and defeat, a consciousness is possible of the enduring and comprehending whole." (1) This seems to say, unless I misinterpret Dewey, that there is inherent in every value-choice a faith that there is, or is possible, an enduring whole, which includes nature and human life in it, together with the intellect, human personal and social values, man's sufferings and his aspirations, his hopes and yearnings, a whole for which "the whole creation groaneth and travailleth in pain together until now." This faith is possible for Dewey because of his interpretation of nature. He writes:

"...While the theory that life, feeling and thought are never independent of physical events may be deemed materialism, it may also be considered just the opposite...Historically speaking, materialism and mechanistic metaphysics - as distinct from mechanistic science - designate the doctrine that matter is the efficient cause of life and mind, and that "cause" occupies a position superior to that of effect. Both parts of this statement are contrary to fact. As far as the conception of causation is to be introduced at all, not matter but the natural events having matter as a character, "cause" life and mind." (2)

(2) Experience and Nature, p. 262.
"If the term 'matter' is given a philosophic interpretation, over and above its technical scientific meaning...this meaning, I believe, should be to name a functional relation rather than a substance..... It is quite possible to recognize that everything experienced, no matter how 'ideal' and lofty, has its own determinate conditions without getting into that generalization beyond limits which constitutes metaphysical materialism." (1)

The conclusion, then, is that natural events as they are experienced provide for that function which we call 'matter' without involving us in the pitfalls of traditional materialism, and also provide for a function that we may designate as an "enduring and comprehending whole" without involving us in traditional spiritualism.

In this connection Dewey's conception of the freedom of the will finds place for consideration. Dewey holds that within nature and yet not determined by the basic continuity of nature is the possibility of choice between alternatives by intelligence. "Whether or not indeterminateness, uncertainty, actually exists in the world," he says, "is a difficult question...In any case the question is an objective one. It concerns not man in isolation from the world, but man in connection with it. A world that is at points and times indeterminate enough to call out deliberation and to give play to choice to shape its future is a world in which will is free, not because it is inherently vacillating and unstable, but because deliberation and choice are determining and stabilizing factors." (2) Freedom of choice liberates man from monotonous repetition and makes possible the achievement of new and higher values. Freedom makes values possible because it allows man to select and enlarge the environment within which he will act. "...The road to freedom may be found in that knowledge of facts which enables us to employ them in connection with desires and aims. A physician or

(2) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 310.
engineer is free in his thought and his action in the degree in which he knows what he deals with. (1) The parallel at this point with the Stoic doctrine of freedom as 'understood necessity' is interesting. Here, apparently, is the answer to the question raised in the criticism of Dewey's metaphysics, namely, why values accrue when nature unfolds into more complex organisms having greater and more difficult problems. The larger the environment comprehended by the deliberating, choosing intelligence, the more unity and integration it brings into nature, the nearer it approaches the absolute, the ideal unity, that is to say, the higher value it achieves, and the clearer consciousness it has of the 'enduring and comprehending whole'.

But Dewey will not own this implication of his thought. He insists that—“Whatever men have esteemed and fought for in the name of liberty is varied and complex—but certainly it has never been a metaphysical freedom of the will.” (2) He is content to call attention to the fact that there is such a thing as freedom in experience and that it has three important elements:

"(1) It includes efficiency in action, ability to carry out plans, in the absence of cramping and thwarting obstacles. (ii) It also includes capacity to vary plans, to change the course of action, to experience novelties. And again(iii) it signifies the power of desire and choice to be factors in events." (3)

How all this emerges from and is continuous with the "selective biases" of lower biological forms and inorganic elements is never explained or accounted for. To deny a metaphysics is not to say that one does not need one. Though human intelligence is in the world, this physical, natural world, it is not therefore necessarily of it, or admitting of only a physical, naturalistic account.

(1) Ibid., p. 303.
(2) Ibid., p. 303. (italics mine)
(3) Ibid., pp. 303-304.
Freedom demands that there should be an otherness about the human intelligence and the human self in which desires arise and satisfactions become facts. Dewey himself says:

"Few men would purchase even a high amount of efficient action along definite lines at the price of monotony, or if success in action were bought by all abandonment of personal preference. They would probably feel that a more precious freedom was possessed in a life of ill-assured objective achievement that contained undertaking of risks, adventuring in new fields, pitting of personal choice against the odds of events, and a mixture of success and failures, provided choice had a career." (1)

Heretofore, Dewey seems to have held that the situation in which the organism and its environment interact and are integrated so as to permit action to continue is the source of satisfaction which is the terminus of deliberation, inquiry and the denotative method. Accordingly, a "high amount of efficient action" is equivalent to a high amount of satisfaction. But now we find that no man, worthy of manhood, would be satisfied with such satisfaction. Great men are those who leave the comforts and complacencies of satisfaction behind and launch out into a sea of risks, committing themselves to a faith that their "choice has a career" which is something more than "high efficiency in action." Dewey asserts: "Intelligence is the key to freedom. We are likely to go ahead prosperously in the degree in which we have consulted conditions and formed a plan which enlists their consenting cooperation." (2) Intelligence is indeed the key to freedom, but not because it takes conditions into account alone, but because it can bring out of conditions that which is not yet. No amount of consulting of the block of marble would have brought forth Michaelangelo's David. Intelligence is the key to freedom because it is not bound by its satisfactions. It does not wait

(1) Ibid.
(2) Ibid.
for problems and disturbing factors to force it into further inquiry, but generates its own problems out of the consciousness that it is able to create and generate novel and higher values.

Ethics

In what might be called the formative period of Dosey's life, that is, before he began producing his systematic works, he published a little booklet entitled, The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus (1) In its preface he stated his conviction that "and the prevalence of pathological and moralistic ethics, there is room for a theory which conceives of conduct as a normal and free living of life as it is." This conviction found expression in his Ethics (2) in 1903 and has colored nearly all, if not all, his thought. His basic thesis is that moral theory is continuous with and an integral part of inquiry at any stage and in any field, hence he is disposed to treat morality by the scientific method. "Moral science is not something with a separate province. It is physical, biological and historic knowledge placed in a human context where it will illuminate and guide the activities of man" (3)

Significance and meaning are attached to an activity when its consequences, at least in part, can be foreseen and predicted. Value is a property assigned to an activity, which is acted out, because its consequences are preferred to the consequences of alternative activities within a given situation. When a value is chosen by itself, without considering its relationship to the value-ends of other activities in other situations, it is only an intellectual or an esthetic matter.

(2) Ethics, by John Dosey and James H. Tufts, N.Y., Henry Holt & Co., 1903.
(3) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 296; cf. also p. 15.
Dewey begins his ethical thought with a generic account of the moral situation. The interpenetration of habits within the individual is never complete. But strong, master habits arise which absorb the power of the other habits into themselves. We say men who have strong, master habits are strong characters. Contrariwise, those who vacillate between several habitual modes of behavior which do not comprehend each other are said to be of a weak or 'wishy-washy' character, or those having strong, conflicting habits and passions are called 'tempestuous' men.

There is a passage from Dewey that will be of importance later, but which will bear quoting at this point:

"Routine specialization always works against interpenetration. Men with 'pigeon-hole' minds are not infrequent. Their diverse standards and methods of judgment for scientific, religious, political matters testify to compartmental habits of action." (1)

The interpenetration and the mutual modification of habits are the ground for defining the moral situation. Most habits are so assured that they may carried on without any consideration of their effect upon the character. But when an act is seen to have consequences that are out of harmony with the rest of the actions produced by other habits, it is then scrutinized in the light of the whole body of conduct. This is a moral situation, and the scrutiny is a moral scrutiny. No habit is sacrosanct; any habit may be examined at any time to test its relation to other habits.

What has happened is not that something evil has arisen which threatens the good, but that two values which are incompatible have presented themselves for choice. Now the problem is which shall be chosen? Which is the most adequate to the character of the habits and

(1) Ibid., pp. 38-39.
values already acquired? What kind of character shall the person doing
the choosing assume in his choice?

"Moral theory begins, in germ, when anyone asks 'Why should I not
thus and not otherwise? Why this is right and that wrong? What
right has any one to frown upon this way of acting and impose that
other way?.... Moral theory cannot emerge when there is positive
belief as to what is right and what is wrong, for then there is no
occasion for reflection. It emerges when men are confronted with
situations 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." (1)
The solution depends upon the "development of inclusive and enduring
aims," which, "is the necessary condition of the application of
reflection in conduct.... There can be no such thing as reflective
morality where there is no solicitude for the ends to which action is
directed."(2) A predetermined, though not necessarily an actualized, end
is necessary not only to have moral reflection, but to have a moral
situation on which to reflect. There is nothing which would inherently
prevent a man from enjoying two incompatible goods in succession, except
that the enjoyments would cut under the enjoyment of a higher good. Yet
Dewey asserts that, "Conscientiousness... will always be on the outlook
for the better. The good man not only measures his acts by a standard
but he is concerned to revise his standard... The highest form of
conscientiousness is interest in constant progress."(3) In another
connection Dewey defines conscience as knowing with others(4). By the
same token, conscientiousness should be defined as knowing one's present
activities and choices with an unrealized ideal or end, an ultimate,
though a dynamic, good. Such a goal is the final cause of a persons
conduct and significant choices, not the first cause. If Dewey would

(2) Ibid., p. 198.
(3) Ethics (1903 ed.), p. 422.
(4) Human Nature and Conduct, p. 315. (Note: This closely resembles the
socialized view of the German, materialistic positivist, Ludwig
Feuerbach — "Gewissen ist Mitwissen."
agree with this, he would agree with the main tenet of Howison's Creative Evolution. Nor is this far removed from the personal idealism of T.H. Green. But, perhaps, Dewey wrote better than he knew -

"Pragmatism is content to take its stand with science, for science finds all such events (Lies, dreams, deceptions, myths) to be subject-matter of description and inquiry - just like stars and fossils, mosquitoes and malaria, circulation and vision. It also takes its stand with daily life, which finds that such things have to be reckoned with as they occur in the texture of events." (1)

There is neither first cause nor final cause in science. And apparently daily life is not a quest, but considers each day's evil is sufficient unto itself.

One other aspect of the moral life of man remains to be treated. At the present time almost all important ethical problems arise out of the conditions of associated life." (2) Dewey even does so far as to suggest that a man's intelligence is not his own but comes to him "by education, tradition, and the suggestions of the environment", and from "deep unconscious sources." 'It thinks', he says, is more accurate than 'I think'.

"Our intelligence is bound up, so far as its materials are concerned, with the community life of which we are a part. We know what it communicates to us, and know according to the habits it forms in us. Science is an affair of civilization not of the individual intellect." (3)

In the case of conscience we know with someone else, how they will react to our behavior, and we adjust our behavior so as to elicit a favorable reaction from them. The individual is held accountable for the effect, good or bad, of the consequences of his actions upon others. Praise and blame are means used by the community to shape the habits and the character of the individual. The community gains its authority by offering

(1) Creative Intelligence, p. 55. (Italics mine)
(2) Ethics (1932), p. 312.
rewards of cooperation for those who conform and resistance and non-
cooperation for those who do not conform. (1) While this may be accepted
as a fact, it does not follow that it is an unmitigated good. Jerusalem
still slays her prophets, and it is still true that "A prophet is not
without honor, save in his own country."

The moral situation for the individual (and there is no other
moral situation) develops when he finds a problem of his personal con-
duct complicated by social conditions, since his personal conduct must
be enacted in a community of persons upon whom he must depend for the
opportunity to achieve further values. This complication of his problem
has the following form: "What attitude shall I adopt towards an issue
which concerns many persons whom I do not know personally, but whose
action along with mine will determine the conditions under which we all
live..... Unless men are to surrender to chance, to caprice, to prejud-
ience, they must have some general moral principles by which to guide
themselves in meeting such questions." (2) Here, as always, the
scientific method is the saving grace. Society, which consists of the
active connections of men with each other, and the mutually shared
consequences of their life-activities such as desire, belief, judgment,
satisfaction and dissatisfaction, forms fixations, norms, and codes
from time to time. These codes, however, are relative to the existing
social conditions. Dewey's hope is that men, recognizing the moral
principles generated by society as relative, will observe, plan and
experiment with the social data of their time with a view to providing
adequate moral principles for that time and that situation rather than
to allow the moral principles of society to develop accidentally. (3)

(1) Ibid., p. 316ff.
(2) Ethics (1932), p. 353.
"In questions of social morality more fundamental than any particular principle held or decision reached is the attitude of willingness to revise current convictions, even if that course entails the effort to change by concerted effort existing institutions, and to direct existing tendencies to new ends." (1)

Dewey will have none of Reinhold Niebuhr's thesis that men is moral but society is immoral. For Dewey, men, both as individuals and as a society, can and do improve and enrich their lot, provided they avail themselves of the proper method, the scientific, denotative method. "Against the social consequences generated by existing conditions there always stands the idea of other and better social consequences which a change would bring into being." (2) Man's moral life is an unrelenting quest for the better, the ideal, the more inclusive and integrated whole. With all the fervor of a Christian's vision of the Kingdom of God, Dewey yearns for the Great Society which is to become the Great Community; "A society," he says, "in which the ever expanding and intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities shall be known in the full sense of that word, so that an organized articulate Public comes into being. The highest and most difficult kind of inquiry and a subtle, delicate, vivid and responsive art of communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and circulation and breathe life into it....Democracy will come into its own, for democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion. It has its seer in Walt Whitman. It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication." (3)

Religion

In an address made to the Religious Education Association in Chicago in 1903, Dewey said:

"To attempt to force prematurely upon the child either the mature ideas or spiritual emotions of the adult is to run the risk of a fundamental danger, that of forestalling future deeper experiences which might otherwise in their season become personal realities to him. We may make the child familiar with the form of the Soul's great experiences of sin and reconciliation and peace, of discord and harmony of the individual with the deepest forces of the universe, before there is anything in his own needs or relationships in life which makes it possible for him to interpret or to realize them.... If methods of teaching...are being subjected to careful and systematic scientific study, how can those interested in religion— and who is not?—justify neglect of the most fundamental of all educational questions, the moral and religious?" (1)

In 1905 he wrote an article primarily to explain to a British audience the difference between their attitude toward teaching religion in the public schools and the American attitude in which he advised that: "...Until the non-supernatural view is more completely elaborated in all its implications and is more completely in possession of the machinery of education, the schools shall keep hands off (religion) and shall do as little as possible."(2) In the same article he says that the increase in the knowledge of nature has rendered the supra-nature of traditional religion, if not incredible, at least difficult to believe. "We measure the change from the standpoint of the supra-natural and we call it irreligious. Possibly if we measured it from the standpoint of natural piety it is fostering, the sense of the permanent and inevitable implication of nature and man in a common career and destiny, it would appear as the growth of religion." The fact that the institutions fostering the traditional type of religion are confounded and are losing influence because of the decay of cohesion, rather than being evidence that

(2) Religion in Our Schools, Hibbert Journal, July,1905, VI, this and the other quotations immediately following may be found on pp.796-809.
Religion is in decadence, makes "a broader and more catholic principle of human intercourse and association which is too religious to tolerate these pretensions (of traditional religion) to monopolize truth and to make a private possession of spiritual insight and aspiration" a consummation for which we are to hope devoutly. This is an age containing a tremendous intellectual readjustment than which in recorded history there is no greater, according to Dewey. At the moment we are in an epochal transition. Because the change shakes the very foundations of human life and things as we have conceived them, it is bound, Dewey says, to make for a "loss of joy, of consolation and some types of strength, and of some sources of inspiration... There is some paralysis of energy, and much excessive application of energy in a materialistic direction." So eager is he, however, for the new order that, in spite of the laissez faire advice, he writes—

"Why, then, should we longer suffer from the deficiency of religion? We have discovered our lack; let us set the machinery in motion that will supply it. We have mastered the elements of physical well-being; we can make light and heat to order, and can command the means of transportation. Let us put a similar energy, good-will and thoughtfulness into the control of the things of the spiritual life. Having got so far as to search for proper machinery, the next step is easy. Education is the modern universal purveyor, and upon the schools rests the responsibility for seeing to it that we recover our threatened religious heritage."

(1)

In the foregoing passages, we have witnessed what must have been the birth of Dewey's philosophy of the religious. (The phrase, "philosophy of the religious", is used advisedly, for as we shall see there is for Dewey no philosophy of religion). Perhaps, this will in years to come mark the beginning of a new era in religious history. In any event, it is bound to mark the beginning of a new stream of religious thought.

(1) Ibid.
whose future we cannot now conjecture.

Dewey rejects the supernatural in any form as being unnatural since it is admittedly outside of nature, according to his understanding. And in its stead he makes human intelligence, its proper use and its abuse, a thing of religious significance.

During the war years and up to 1920 Dewey scarcely enlarged upon his philosophy of the religious. By this time he had put off some of the assurance that by using the proper "machinery" we could "recover our threatened religious heritage." Now he writes:

"Poetry, art, religion are precious things....They are the out-flowing of thought and desire that unconsciously converge into a disposition of imagination as a result of thousands of daily episodes and contacts. They cannot be willed into existence or coerced into being. The wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth and the Kingdom of God in such things does not come with observation. But while it is impossible to retain and recover by deliberate volition old sources of religion and art that have been discredited, it is possible to expel the development of the vital sources of a religion and art that are yet to be. Not indeed by action directly aimed at their production, but by substituting faith in the active tendencies of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the courage of intelligence to follow either social and scientific changes direct us. We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration." (1)

Two years later, in Human Nature and Conduct, at the conclusion of a discussion of the place of aims and purposes in human life, Dewey points out that when, after deliberation, one foreseen consequence is selected to become a stimulus to present action, that consequences does not become more real because it has been chosen. It is and remains a part of an "indefinite context of other consequences" which are as real as it is. The choosing is only instrumental in liberating action and leading it out of a problematic situation. "This service constitutes the sole meaning of aims and purposes." (2) But this service is

(1) Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 212. (Italics mine)
ephemeral at best, "For the sense of an indefinite context of consequences from among which the aim is selected enters into the present meaning of activity." The particular activity and its 'end' is like a spotlight of intelligence, Dewey says, fixed for a moment in a "supporting background in a vague whole, undefined and undiscriminated." This spotlight allows us only to illuminate the next step. The aim of any particular act, then, is of slight significance when viewed as a very small part of the whole concourse of natural events. Nothing but conceit could convince us that our best efforts will change the cosmos. But, Dewey thinks, it is as unreasonable to embrace a philosophy of despair and pessimism because of the limitations that are placed upon our efforts, as it is to depend upon the illusion of external importance that the idea of the supernatural gives our actions. He would disagree as much with Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Leopardi as with Christian theists. Whatever part of nature, how ever small, can be modified by our efforts is continuous with the whole of nature. In a very real way every act has infinite consequences. Dewey thinks that small effort which we can put forth is in turn connected with an infinity of events that sustain and support it. The consciousness of this encompassing infinity of connections is ideal. When a sense of the infinite reach of an act physically occurring in a small point of space and occupying a petty instance of time comes home to us, the meaning of a present act is seen to be vast, immeasurable, unthinkable. This ideal is not a goal to be attained. It is a significance to be felt, appreciated. Though consciousness of it cannot be intellectualized, yet emotional appreciation of it is won only by those willing to think." (1)

It is not to be supposed that Dewey has been forced to abandon his instrumentalism because of the meaning of a particular act is unthinkable in its fullest context, for it is only by the instrumentality of

the mind that we are able to see such visions and behold such infinite vistas.

In a sense, however, Dewey does lay aside the denotative method. The consciousness of the "encompassing infinity of connections" is not a goal to be attained; it denotes nothing specifiable. It is not a satisfaction that comes of bringing the determinate out of the indeterminate. Rather it is the supreme value which is the fruit not of the determinate, but of the indeterminate! It is the pearl of great price for which we would sell all that we have that we might possess it.

"...There is a point in every intelligent activity where effort ceases; where thought and doing fall back upon a course of events which effort and reflection cannot touch. There is a point in deliberate action where definite thought fades into the ineffable and undefinable - into emotion." (1)

Ends-in-view now become petty and inconsequential. At this point I believe that Dewey would agree with B.P. Bowne that "Life is greater than logic." Science and methods of inquiry give way to the sense of awe and wonderment. A man's character is not now so much molded by what he judges the world to be, as by what he judges, even though vaguely, that it can be for him and for his fellows. The great and precious values of life are no longer the by-products of achievement, but the very essence of attaining, striving activity. What we may achieve or what we may fail to achieve are not important except as nodes which indicate the direction in which we are moving. The factual and the denotative are only calibrations on an infinite scale by which we measure our progress.

While Dewey does not commit himself to any such statements as are contained in the foregoing paragraph, they seem to be fair implications of the following statement, which is, perhaps, one of the most

(1) Ibid., pp. 263-264.
significant anywhere in Dewey's written work:

"The religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in fecklessness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole. Peace in action not after it is the contribution of the ideal to conduct." (1)

There is nothing in this passage with which the mystic or the Christian theist would radically disagree. The 'enveloping whole' is thought of symbolically by the latter and called God. Even with this Dewey would agree. But the theists further claim this symbol to be existentially real. This is, to Dewey's mind, idolatrous; "men have been idolaters worshipping symbols as things."

The function of art and religion is to make manifest the sense of the whole, to nurture the appreciations and intimations of it, to bring such to bear vitally upon the lives and conduct of men. In this sense, religion cannot commit itself to any dogmas or appropriate for itself any sort of immutability. Rather it is devotion and loyalty to the possibility of a higher good, of higher values. It is not dogged clinging to the fixed, the static, but supreme devotion to the outreach of human aspiration, the dynamic. "Religion has lost itself in cults, dogmas and myths", Dewey says. That which seeks by such means to satisfy is not religion but irreligion. It binds and throttles life instead of freeing and enriching it. True religion for Dewey might be epitomized in Jesus' words: "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Further, the consciousness of the whole is intimately connected with and, perhaps, best understood in the communal life of men.

(1) Ibid, p. 264.
Generically religion and tribal honor, patriotism, and the social consciousness of the community were not to be differentiated, as, for instance, the Pers Revanu, the local Egyptian dieties, and the early Hebrew monotheism. The person was not a part of the community and its religion practices by choice, but by birth. Religion was and is, says Dewey, a "sense of community", of mutual dependence, of sharing, of intimate social relationships. Schleiermacher's conception of religion as a sense of "infinite dependence" comes close to the heart of the matter. At the same time, "Religion as a sense of the whole is the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied. For individuality signifies unique connections in the whole" (2) But the significance of the efforts of the individual, his defeats, his struggles and his conflicts is only felt in connection with the sense of community, of the "enduring and comprehending whole."

"Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal. The life of the community in which we live and have our being is the fit symbol of this relationship. The acts in which we express our perceptions of the ties which bind us to others are its only rites and ceremonies." (3)

In this connection, Dewey's estimate of immortality might be mentioned. For its Easter issue in 1923, the New York Times interviewed Dewey along with others as to his belief about personal immortality. His opinion was expressed in four or five lines. He states simply that he finds no evidence for the belief, and that the matter is for psychical science to investigate. This was apparently an unwilling statement. It is perhaps the only mention of the subject to be found in his written works. Judging from the sense of the

(1) Ibid., p. 307.
(2) Ibid., p. 331.
(3) Ibid., pp. 331-332.
passage quoted in the foregoing paragraph, the efforts and activities
of the individual acquire their greatest value in their social context.
The higher human values are not so much personal as they are social.
Whatever immortality, then, the individual is to have, he is to enjoy
through the influence his conduct and achievement may have upon the
future of society, upon the future culture of his community. In this
sense the individual puts off mortality and consigns himself to the
future history of mankind. While his life consists of "flickering
inconsequential acts", he is conscious that those acts which make up
his life, though flickering, are not to be comprehended by darkness,
and though inconsequential are to have infinite consequences. The
prospect is that human values will persist and be preserved so long as
the human race and a human society or community continues to exist.
But if ever the sun should cool, or the earth cease to turn, or for
any reason the human race should become extinct, then human values,
whether individual or social, would vanish. Such an expectation is
eschatological, it is true, but it is also scientific. This earth
was once inhospitable to life and it is scientifically predicted that
in the process of time it will become inhospitable again. Since, then,
the whole of nature as we now understand it with the human race as one
of its parts is not expected to be "enduring", it is hardly comforting
or reassuring to human values. If our consciousness of an "encompass¬
ing infinity of connections" and of "encompassing continuities" is
connected finally with a cold, barren, lifeless Earth, how tragic it
is that values exist for men now or in any limit of time for they are
doomed to dust. Dewey holds that the future ideal is effective only
in present conduct, but unless the ideal has some point of reference, it is groundless. Further, it seems that this point of reference must be at least a person capable of appreciating the encompassing, enduring whole the consciousness of which sustains and underlies human value judgments. Henry Nelson Wieman in interpreting Dewey’s philosophy of the religious says:

This religion which Dr. Dewey advocates consists in giving supreme devotion to the highest possibilities of value which the existing world can yield without knowing specifically what these possibilities are. We do not know them because we do not know, except in a very partial and tentative manner, what is the nature of this existing world which carries the possibilities...our religion must be a striving to actualize the highest possibilities of value even when these possibilities extend beyond the scope of our knowledge and imagination, and even when the process which carries these possibilities is but dimly or incorrectly discerned by us". (1)

But Dewey also stated that a person will mould his character and direct his conduct according to the character which he recognizes in his world. (Cf. pg 56). While such a judgment may not be based upon knowledge and may be thought to extend beyond imagination, it is a judgment of belief or faith. And this faith for Dewey, as well as for Paul, must be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.", not forgetting with James the Apostle that "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

Dewey is right in withholding himself from a doctrine of personal immortality, so long as he rejects a transcendental God. (A theologian need not accept Dewey’s assumption that God is supernatural.) But he is also bound not to commit himself to the idea of social immortality or the social conservation of human values, unless he is willing to assert that this world will be endlessly and continuously hospitable

to the human organism, or conjecture on faith the possibility of man's transferring himself to some other hospitable planet. The alternatives seem to be that, either there must be some agency in nature which will guarantee the reality and conservation of human values, personal and social, or we must resign ourselves to a cosmic pessimism. In a sense, Dewey espouses neither, but remains agnostic. (Dewey would not appreciate the use of the term 'agnostic' to indicate his position.

"Agnosticism is a shadow cast by the eclipse of the supernatural...Its meaning departs when the intellectual outlook is directed wholly to the natural world." (1) Perhaps, it would be fairer to say with Santayana that Dewey gives dominance to the foreground. With Voltaire he is content to cultivate his little patch. In a spirit somewhat different from Keats he could say:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

In any event Dewey feels that he is not committed to the alternatives. Consequently, he need neither affirm or deny a doctrine of personal immortality. In 1925 he wrote in Experience and Nature:

"Fidelity to the nature to which we belong, as parts however weak, demands that we cherish our desires and ideals till we have converted them into intelligence, revised them in terms of the ways and means which nature makes possible. When we have used our thought to the utmost and have thrown into the moving balance of things our puny strength, we know that though the universe slay us still we trust, for our lot is one with whatever is good in existence. We know that such thought and effort is one condition of coming into existence of such thought and effort is one condition of coming into existence of the better. As far as we are concerned it is condition, for it alone is our power. To ask for more than this is childish; but to ask less is a recreance no less agnostic, involving no less a cutting of ourselves from the universe than does the expectation that it meet and satisfy our every wish. To ask in good faith as much as this from ourselves is to stir into motion every capacity of imagination, and to exact from action every skill

(1) A Common Faith, p. 86.
and bravery." (1)

In 1934 Dewey published a little book entitled *A Common Faith*, which is at once an apologetic of his views of the religious experience and a polemic against supernaturalism and realistic theism. There is little in it that cannot be found or inferred from statements elsewhere in Dewey's works. However, some points are made more explicit and several are rather strikingly put, and for those reasons demand our further consideration.

Dewey is always very cautious of substantives and is especially so in his treatment of the religious. The first of the three chapters of *A Common Faith* is devoted to differentiating between a religion, religion and the religious.

"I am not proposing a religion, but rather the emancipation of elements and outlooks that may be called religious...a religion (...there is no such thing as religion in general) always signifies a special body of beliefs and practices having some kind of institutional organization, loose or tight. In contrast, the adjective 'religious' denotes nothing in the way of a specifiable entity, either institutional or as a system of beliefs. ...It denotes attitudes that may be taken toward every object and every proposed ideal or end." (2)

The religious is, then, simply a quality or property which emerges over and above the ordinary satisfactions of creating a determinate situation, or the usual judgments of value in the ordinary activities of human living. While it is not a specifiable entity, neither does it seem to be a specifiable property for Dewey.

As was pointed out very early in the discussion of Dewey's Instrumentalism, the human organism, along with other organisms, an interaction with its environment has two possible methods of adjusting itself. Either it can accommodate itself to the environment, or it

(1) *Experience and Nature*, pp. 420-421.
(2) *A Common Faith*, pp. 8, 9, 10.
can operate upon the environment as to adapt and modify the external conditions to its wants and purposes. Such adjustment goes forward in particular instances. But, Dewey points out, there is a further sense in which we modify ourselves in relation to the world. This modification comprehends our whole being, and is, therefore, enduring. "It lasts through any amount of vicissitude of circumstances, internal and external. There is a composing and harmonizing of the various elements of our being such that, in spite of changes in special conditions that surround us, these conditions are also arranged, settled, in relation to us." (1) While this plenary modification is submissive, it is also voluntary: not voluntary in the sense of a specific act of the will, but a complete change of the will. The Christian religion has recognized this as the illumination by the Holy Ghost and conversion. Dewey says, "An 'adjustment' possesses the will rather than is its express product."

It is by means of this modification of the whole personal being that we arrive by imaginative extension at the idea of the whole, or the Universe.

"Neither observation, thought, nor practical activity can attain that complete unification of the self which is called a whole. The whole self is an ideal, an imaginative projection...And it is pertinent to note that the unification of the self throughout the ceaseless flux of what it does, suffers and achieves, cannot be attained in terms of itself. The self is always directed toward something beyond itself and so its own unification depends upon the idea of the integration of the shifting scenes of the world into that imaginative totality we call the universe." (2).

Note:
The parallel between this statement and one of Luther's is interesting. Luther said: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength come to the Lord Jesus Christ or believe in him, but that the Holy Ghost hath called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and preserved me in the true faith..."

(1) Ibid, p. 16.
(2) Ibid, p. 19.
Since this unification of the self cannot be willed into being, Dewey says, religionists have been right in assuming that it arose from sources outside of conscious deliberation. But, he infers, they were misled in supposing that those sources were supernatural. He himself does not account for them, but it is to be supposed that they are inherent in nature. It is difficult to understand what these sources beyond conscious awareness might be if "the unification of the self cannot be attained in terms of itself" and if "the self is always directed toward something beyond itself". Certainly the personal, evaluating self could not direct itself toward something impersonal and insensible to human values to attain unification. Dewey seems to disinherit humanism and yet not accept theism.

One is impressed with the just criticisms which Dewey makes of supernaturalism, especially of some modern remnants of its earlier crassness. But one also feels that he has thrown the baby out with the bath water. He writes: supernaturalism "consists in administration of the temporal, finite and human in relation to the eternal and infinite, by means of dogma and cult, rather than the regulation of the events of life by understanding of actual conditions." (1) Certainly he does not mean to say that there is nothing more to theism and supernaturalism than dogmas and cults. To be sure they have been abused and perverted by such, but so was science thwarted and abused by the same men in the same milieu. Dewey seems to want to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. Supernaturalism is not the only thing that has been invaded by dogmas and cults.

(1) *Experience and Nature*, 1925, pg. 55.
Concerning the moral import of belief or faith Dewey writes:

"...There is a difference between belief that is a conviction that some end should be supreme over conduct, and belief that some object or being exists as a truth for the intellect. Conviction in the moral sense signifies being conquered, vanquished, in our active nature by an ideal end; it signifies acknowledgment of its rightful claim over our desires and purposes. Such acknowledgment is practical, not primarily intellectual. It goes beyond evidence that can be presented to any possible observer...The authority of an ideal over choice and conduct is the authority of an ideal not a fact, of a truth guaranteed to intellect, not of the status of the one who propounds the truth." (1)

A few pages further on he expands upon the same theme:

"The reality of ideal ends and values in their authority over us is an undoubted fact...Any other conception of the religious attitude, when it is adequately analyzed, means that those who hold it care more for force than for ideal values—since all that an Existence can add is force to establish, punish, and to regard." (2)

Dewey would have us believe that the love the Christian Gospel teaches is forced upon its believers by an Existence, that it is not a conviction, a being conquered and vanquished by an ideal. He would have us assume that no other interpretation of the Ten Commandments is possible except that they are the fiats of an Existence, into obedience of which human beings are unnaturally forced. Such an existence, properly understood, could, however, furnish a point of reference for the ideal ends and values, which Dewey prizes, beyond a society of psycho-mental organisms whose very existence is contingent upon astrophysical factors beyond its control, and could furnish some semblance of a guarantee of the reality of those ideal ends and values beyond an ephemeral and pathetic complacency.

But, "Dependence upon an external power," Dewey says, "is the

(1) A Common Faith, pp. 20, 21.
(2) Ibid, p. 144.
counterpart of surrender of human endeavor." (1) Men have never accomplished much because they have passively waited for an external power "to do the work they are responsible for doing". According to the same reasoning governments should be abolished because the dole makes men inactive and dependent upon them.

While rearranging its content radically Dewey retains the term 'God'. "It denotes", he says, "the unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action." (2) The idea of God is grounded in natural forces and conditions which are the sufficient conditions of the realization of the ideal. These are, of course, primarily social. And it is projected in imaginative rehearsed not-yet.

"We are in the presence neither of ideals completely embodied in existence nor yet of ideals that are more rootless ideals, fantasies, utopias. For there are forces in nature and society that generate and support the ideals. They are further unified by the action that gives them coherence and solidity. It is this active relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name 'God'." (3)

This is not a pantheism, nor a humanism. It might be called Anthropotheism, providing man is thought of as a society and not as an individual. Though this is not far removed from the old tribal worship, Dewey does not mean to limit it to any class or group. It is to be as universal as nature is universal. Democracy is to be its temple and scientists its teachers, and artists its priests. Its predominant feature seems to be brotherhood, cooperation, tolerance and mutual regard, sharing and friendship. The new Jerusalem is to be a Great Community, one wholesome, integrated, harmonious society of all men. Intelligence will be at once the priest and the sacrifice.

"One of the few experiments in the attachment of emotion to ends that mankind has not tried is that of devotion, so intense as to be religious, to intelligence as a force in social action. (4)

(1) Ibid, p. 46.
(2) Ibid, p. 42.
(4) Ibid, p. 79.
"The community of causes and consequences in which we, together with those not born, are enmeshed in the widest and deepest symbol of the mysterious totality of being the imagination calls the universe. It is the embodiment for sense and thought of that encompassing scope of existence the intellect cannot grasp. It is the Matrix within which our ideal aspirations are born and bred. It is the source of the values that the moral imagination projects as directive criteria and as shaping purposes.

The continuing life of this comprehensive community of beings includes all the significant achievement of men in science and art and all kindly offices of intercourse and communication. It holds within its content all the material that gives verifiable intellectual support to our ideal faiths. A 'creed' founded upon this material will change and grow, but it cannot be shaken. What it surrenders it gives up gladly because of new light and not as a reluctant concession. What it adds, it adds because new knowledge gives further insight into conditions that bear upon the formation and execution of our life purposes". (1)

"The things in civilization we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by grace of the doings and sufferings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we have received it. Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant. (2)
VI

A Critical Comparison and Estimate of These Two Interpretations

Of Religion

Metaphysics

Beginning from a biological, evolutionary hypothesis about nature and man as a part of nature, both James and Dewey recognize two fundamental characteristics of the whole situation: a continuity in nature and a discontinuity in nature. Their respective interpretations of these observed characteristics mold their metaphysical views.

The very fact that James and Dewey recognize a discontinuous character in nature precludes their being identified with the mechanistic naturalism of Laplace. Their biological, evolutionary interpretations of nature place them in some respects with the biological naturalists. Both assume the category of organism and the irreversibility of the biological evolutionary processes. While both would arrange themselves with the views of the vitalists rather than the mechanists within the school of biological naturalism, this point of view characterizes Dewey more especially. James belongs rather more to a third type of naturalism - psychological naturalism, which recognizes that the 'higher' forms in nature such as self-conscious activity cannot be reduced to the lower forms of biological response. Dewey also very definitely aligns himself with this point of view, but his emphasis on the stability or instability of the organism makes him have somewhat more in common with the biological naturalists than does James. On the whole, however, both are psychological naturalists.
The recognition of levels within nature and the irreversibility of biological development, that the 'higher' forms are not reducible to the 'lower' forms, gives rise to the doctrine of levels, which is in the last analysis a metaphysical problem. It revolves around an interpretation of the continuity and the discontinuity in nature. Briefly the problem is this: If nature is continuous, what accounts for the observed difference between the 'higher' and 'lower' levels? And if the levels in nature are discontinuous, what and whence is the new factor at each higher level? Emergent evolution holds that the new levels are new relation-patterns within the neutral elements of nature, and that these new patterns are new characteristics which cannot be predicted from a knowledge of the previous patterns. This appears to argue for a basic discontinuity in nature. At the same time, if it appears that the same laws or basic principles apply at all levels in nature, there seems to be a basic continuity in nature. If one assumes that nature is a continuous development from one level to another, then one must be prepared to account for the new characteristics at new levels and the non-mechanical, unpredictable emergence of the new levels. If nature is discontinuous, then one must be prepared to give his reasons for denying the intervention of an extra-natural, creative and directive power.

As we stated at the outset, Dewey and James hold that there is at once a continuity and a discontinuity in nature, but their interpretations of these characteristics are radically different. James holds that the continuity is psychological; he calls it the stream of thought or of consciousness. The discontinuity for him is in external
nature—the pluralistic universe. Whatever continuity exists is introduced by the operations of conscious intelligence, 'composing' upon and bringing new relations and continuities out of the vast unrelatedness of nature. He has no hesitancy in assuming a superhuman intelligence to account for the relatedness which exists in nature apart from that achieved by human intelligence.

Dewey, on the other hand, makes his primary postulate the continuity of nature. He is, then, relieved of the necessity of introducing a supernatural agent to account for the emergence of new and higher levels. However, in order to explain this he introduces the idea of discontinuity which is a precariousness as a quality of relatedness at any level in nature, but more particularly at the psycho-physical level. Discontinuity or indeterminateness is a problem of an organism, and apart from an organism has no meaning. True enough, by inquiry or by instinct the organism reconstructs the determinate, or recaptures the continuum of nature, frequently at higher, richer levels, which are at the same time more precarious. But this only explains how the 'higher' level is attained; it does not explain in what sense one level is 'higher' than another in terms of continuity. Organization for its own sake is meaningless. It certainly is a matter of indifference to a carbon molecule whether it is a part of an organism or not. It obviously makes no difference to the sun whether its rays maintain the temperature of the earth's surface just a few degrees above the freezing point or not. The point is this—the continuum of nature may account for the necessary conditions of higher levels within it, but it does not provide the necessary and sufficient conditions. Nor does
the complications introduced by discontinuity, unless, as James says, there is a consciousness at the very beginning that purposely injects the observed discontinuity as a kind of 'divine discontent' into nature. If 'higher' and 'lower' are to mean anything more than more complicated and less complicated, that is, if there is to be any significant novelty in the former, it seems inescapable that there must be in this world but not of it an agent, a personal force, for whom the 'higher' is higher and more significant. Otherwise, forms and relations of whatever sort are only, as someone has said — merely cosmic weather. It stands as an incontrovertible fact that:

"Our ultimate standard of worth is an ideal of personal worth. All other values are relative to value for, of or in a person."(1) To be sure the determination and stability of the levels in nature and their integration to the continuity of nature are significant for an organism since they are the necessary conditions of its existence as an organism. But that its existence should be significant depends upon its being in turn the necessary condition for the attainment of some value for someone.

James posits his pluralistic universe not upon a logical need, but in order to meet a spiritual need. When Dewey makes progressive integrations within nature a scale of values he approximates the same thing, since the directive power of the ideal does not need a logical warrant. On the other hand, James' relegating the soul to neural processes between the head and the throat exposes him mechanistic difficulties. But usually he was aware of a central nucleus of "palpitating inward life." It was on this that he built his

metaphysics. Perhaps, Dewey means the same thing by 'the striving organism', but the organism is derived through natural processes for Dewey, while the inner self seems to be undesired for James.

**Theory of Value**

It is in a nature characterized by "contingency and need, movement and arrest" that values arise for the human organism according to Dewey. As we have seen, he recognizes two types of value: the values which accompany the satisfaction which is experienced when the determinate is wrought out of the indeterminate, a situation and its solution. And the values which accompany the sense of continuity and growth through the endless fluctuations and indeterminations of nature. Both types are the result of intelligent choice on the part of the human organism. Perhaps, they are in the final analysis the same. In point of fact, every bit of proper thinking has a practical factor—to preserve and extend the integration of the organism in interaction with its environment. The human organism identifies its own destiny with the outcome of events. Necessarily, the kind of choices which the organism makes and the actions to which it commits itself are determined by the character which the whole of nature is assumed to have. (Cf. Pg. 56) Dewey's esthetics probably best illustrate the value situation. The problem of art is to make explicit the implicit coherence in any problematic situation and in the individual's total experience. The wider the context and the longer the prospect of continued and intelligent action the more valuable the activity is to the individual and to society.

On the whole James would agree with the foregoing analysis, with
an important difference, however, which perhaps cannot be adequately proved, but which seems nonetheless evident. While James recanted publicly and changed the title of his essay, *The Will to Believe*, to *The Right to Believe*, I do not think that he ever entirely banished the former from his thought. With James, as with Dewey, value emerges as a quality of events when an individual is confronted with the necessity of making a choice. Indeed, for James, where there is no choosing there is no mentality. For Dewey, however, mental operations might produce the determinate out of the indeterminate situation without encountering the necessity of making a choice of means, hence a fact might be true without being valuable. (Cf. pg. 36) Thus a plan of action might be merely an expedient. The difference seems to resolve itself into this — for James what a man does and what he chooses to do is determined by his estimate of himself. "The problem...with man is less what act he shall now choose to do, than what being he shall...now resolve to become." While for Dewey a man's estimate of the character of the world in which he lives and moves and has his being, determines what he shall choose and do. According to James, man fashions and creates values out of a vast neutral, pluralistic nature or environment. What he creates depends upon his inner convictions. Values are impressed upon, or wrought out of the neutral elements of experience. Hence a man can will into being that which does not presently exist, and once it exists it is just as real as any other part of existence. Of course, what is created in any specific situation is limited by the elements of that situation. One could not build a good house with one brick, but that would not prevent him from making other bricks and using that one brick
in its walls. The brain is possibly a necessary condition for thinking, but it is not therefore the only means by which the thinking activity may proceed. What is created out of nature depends upon some intelligence, but what intelligence creates does not depend wholly upon external nature.

It seems that Dewey, on the other hand, looks upon man as a creation of nature. The organism is precipitated into an unstable situation from which it must extricate itself. If it is successful, the method that it used to do so is practical. But beyond being practical the method must produce such consequences as are tenable in the long run, which are, in other words, in gear with nature. When different sets of consequences are available the organism must choose with as much foresight as possible those consequences which are most coherent with the whole of nature in which and by which he must live. Hence, the individual's estimate and understanding of the character of the natural world determines which set of consequences he should choose. The natural values of man, then, are the wider and deeper adjustments and integrations to his natural environment. Such adjustments, rather than being the express products and creations of the will, possess the will. A value, then, appears to be an understood necessity. Values are nature's imperatives and emerge under the duress of unstable conditions. Dewey's own estimate of nature is that it is characterized by "contingency and need, movement and arrest." Those activities, then, that consistently disperse need and overcome arresting obstacles, that promote growth and continued movement and action, are valuable. Consciously or unconsciously the goal of life is survival, and he who understands
what he is and what he must do, physically and socially, can make
significant, valuable choices to that end. Man does create, but he must
create within the limits of what he understands and estimates the
natural world and his place within it to be. To survive, a man must
recreate and readjust so as to produce the widest and deepest integra-
tion in nature that he can. This is not a mechanistic point of view,
but it is thoroughly naturalistic. Obviously there is no place in
nature, as Dewey understands nature, for the supernatural. Nor is there
any necessity for extending the natural to include any transcendent
principle or power.

Ethics

Necessarily the differences of James' and Dewey's theories of
value are reflected in their respective ethical theories. Both begin
from a statement that the moral situation arises when the individual is
confronted with the necessity of deciding, choosing between the
possible values which will accrue from alternate modes of conduct,
particularly when these values are incompatible, incompatible either
with each other or with the character of the chooser. Both James and
Dewey recognize that supreme aims and interests, having been developed
prior to the moral situation, are the preconditions of the moral
situation. Some prior value is at stake in the moral crisis. But the
source or seat of these supreme values is different for each of them.

Before entering upon that comparison, it is necessary to contrast
their respective views of the moral situation. The moral attitude for
Dewey is conscientiousness, which means that man must constantly strive
for the better - "The highest form of conscientiousness is interest in constant progress." The moral problem lies within the scale of good-better-best. It is not a matter of what is right and what is wrong in conduct. Indeed, Dewey says, "Moral theory cannot arise when there is positive belief as to what is right and what is wrong..." The moral situation may shake the character of the whole person to its very foundations, because it might well involve a radical change of view as to what is better than the presenting body of habitual modes of conduct. Then the old habits have to be torn out and replaced with new ones which will comprehend the better mode of conduct. The morally good man not only gauges what he does by a standard, but is eager to revise and improve his standard. In the social context he may seek to "change by concerted effort existing institutions, and direct existing tendencies to new end." Since society furnishes the individual with his standards and his supreme ideals and aims, his moral life is inextricably bound up with his communal life and the better which he seeks is social betterment. But not infrequently when an individual seeks to better the aims and interests of society, the existing social standards overpower him. The radical of one generation is the next generation's conservative. Even so, his revolutionary effort is not insignificant and can be morally ennobling, depending upon the judgment of his colleagues and of future generations. Education is therefore a great moral force, since it passes on the best achievements of the past and inspires the search for the better in the future. Once again, peace and assurance comes in moral action not after it. It is based upon the conviction that life can become better. There can be no absolute standard; what is good and
what is better depends upon the concrete situation and the achievement up to that time. Laws as standards of conduct are made for man in a society, not man and society for the laws; - The "Sabbath was made for man not man for the Sabbath."

James would agree that man's moral interest is constantly in the better, but, for him, moral action is for the better against active negative forces. For him, life is a "real fight" against "something really wild in the universe." The moral good is wrested from the forces amok in the universe. Moral values are achievements as well as constructions. They are reformations as well as reconstructions. To be sure we may too easily content ourselves with the merely good, and thus lose the better -

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.

The moral struggle is not a relative matter, however; it is a real struggle against a real force. Great sectors of the spiritual life are to be gained or lost. James' view of the matter is frankly dualistic, or perhaps better - pluralistic.

Whereas Dewey makes society the reference frame for moral activity, James is convinced that the moral struggle is a matter of cosmic importance and that it must refer to some higher personal power for whom the issue is significant.

"The capacity of the strenuous mood lies so deep down among our natural human possibilities that even if there were no metaphysical or traditional grounds for believing in a God, man would postulate one simply as a pretext for living hard, and getting out of the game of existence its keenest possibilities of zest. Our attitude
towards concrete evils is entirely different in a world where we believe there are none but finite demanders, from what it is in one where we joyously face tragedy for an infinite demander's sake. Every sort of energy and endurance, of courage and capacity for handling life's evils, is set free in those who have religious faith. For this reason the strenuous type of character will on the battle field of human history always outwear the easy-going type, and religion will drive irreligion to the wall." (1)

Being by temperament and conviction an individualist, James regarded the "dead blank it" of society as inadequate for moral endeavor and assumed instead "a living thou, with whom the whole man may have dealings" and who could sympathize with and appreciate moral achievements. Thus the grounding of the moral postulate demanded, James felt, that he should posit theism. In the passage just quoted James refers to "an infinite demander", later he discarded the idea of God's being infinite, for he believed that only a finite God, a co-warrior against evil, for whom evil was really evil, met the demands of man's moral nature. In a sense, James' God was not a supernatural God, but simply superhuman; God has to deal with the same half-wild, half-saved universe and strives to reform the universe even as we do. Without such an idea of God there would be no guarantee of the permanence of the ideal order (2). As long as we have the assurance that the moral struggle, though real, is not futile, but will in any case mean something for God, moral effort is worth man's suffering and his sacrifice. This argument as it stands can hardly hold together, for if the fight is to be a real fight for God, there must be the possibility of a real loss for God as well as of a real gain. Accordingly James holds that the ultimate outcome is not assured even for God. The crux of the matter is that our moral effort or the absence of it may ultimately be the decisive factor, since God

(1) The Will To Believe, p. 213.
(2) Pragmatism, p. 106.
may draw strength for us. In any event this world, its forms, organic and inorganic, its human societies may pass away, but the moral worth of our thoughts and deeds will remain.

The moral demand for God is not James' primary argument for the existence of God. It is only a supporting evidence. It is an inference from James' judgment of the character of the whole of nature and human life. The principal argument for God's existence will be treated a few pages further on. Suffice it to say for the present, that James would scarcely yield to Dewey in being naturalistic. To James' mind the supreme and demanding interests of men outrun the immediately experienced natural forces of this world, physical and social, and project themselves into a higher, though not a discontinuous, realm of nature. To him the inconspicuous moral efforts of the simplest day-laborer are as significant as the works of the most erudite moralist. One might produce morally good deeds with a minimum of intelligence, or intellectual skill. No amount of discipline in the scientific method could detract from the value of a morally good act. Morality, for him, depended not so much on method as upon devotion to the supreme ideals, which devotion in turn made those ideals real. Such devotion was as natural as the demand for truth or scientific fact.

Religion

In the field of religion proper the divergence in James' and Dewey's thought is seen at its widest cleavage. Their estimates of religious experience seem to differ radically and their conceptions of God seem to be at considerable variance. Since neither had any great
interest or decisive views on personal immortality, that subject can be omitted from the present discussion.

For James the religious experience is specifiable, distinct from any other type of experience, that is, the religious in itself can be experienced; it is not merely a quality of a concrete experience. This is argued on two grounds. First, the practical effects of the experience of the religious upon the conduct and emotional welfare of the individual having the experience, and second, the specifiable experience of inner, spiritual "wrongness" and the resolution of the sense of "wrongness" under certain specifiable conditions. Ultimately this experience is of a relation between an objectively real power or powers and the individual having the experience. The logic of the argument seems to run as follows: The meaning of a concept or idea consists of its practical consequences, what difference it makes. The idea of God has empirical consequences; it makes a difference in our conduct, our sense of values, and the inner harmony of ourselves, our personalities. Since the consequences of believing in God are significant, valuable, the idea of God is true. And since the idea of God has a determinate meaning in empirical experience and is true, therefore the idea must have or symbolize a reality which has an objective existence. Beyond this argument though, the compelling evidence was what James felt to be the direct experience of God, vague in himself and more clearly in others whose experience he investigated.

In contrast Dewey holds that the religious experience is not specifiable, but rather a qualitative property of human conduct and activity, a by-product of life-processes. He points out, in contra-
distinction from James, that there is no direct experience of religion of a religious object.

"It is the claim of religions that they effect this generic and enduring change in attitude (adjustment). I should like to turn the statement around and say that whenever this change takes place there is a definitely religious attitude. It is not a religion that brings it about, but when it occurs, from whatever cause and by whatever means, there is a religious outlook and function." (1)

So called religions do indeed produce profound changes in attitudes, but they are not the only means by which such changes can be produced. They can and can be accomplished without taking God, or any set of beliefs into account.

There is an interesting parallel between James' sense of wrongness and the consequent saving experience which comes from a "wider self" and the following statement from Dewey —

"Religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by a sense of an enveloping whole." (2)

At first glance these two ideas seem to mean the same thing and possibly they do pragmatically. But they are given a radically different content by their respective proponents. The sense of wrongness for James is a moral deficiency, while our feebleness and failure is for Dewey the limitation and inability of our powers to cope with certain problematic situations. By a wider self James meant a person's better self and the superhuman self, or God, with whom the human self was continuous and by whom saving experiences come. Dewey's "enveloping whole" means "all the conditions of nature and human association that support and deepen the sense of values which carry one through periods of darkness and despair". (2) "In its (the enveloping whole's) presence

(1) A Common Faith, pp. 16-17.
(2) Ibid., pp. 14-15.
we put off mortality and live in the universal."(1) According to
Peirce if what apparently are two hypotheses yield the same experienti-

cial consequences, the hypotheses are one and the same. In the main the

experiential consequences of James' and Dewey's hypotheses seem to be

the same. James' hypothesis calls for God in order to cope with the

personal moral and spiritual needs of men. Dewey's hypothesis calls for

an ideal society in order to square with the methods of science and

of education. Dewey's hypothesis is more naturalistic, while James'

is more mystical.

Dewey retains the term God and holds that it "denotes the unity of

each ideal ors arousing us to desire and actions."(2) "It is... (the)

active relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the

name 'God'". (3) The question of the truth, or practical value, or

objective existence does not enter into the matter. Dewey simply pro-

poses to let the term "God" mean the unity of all ideal ends. Such a

nominal extensive definition is neither true nor false and cannot be

argued. The active relation between the ideal and actual is first

experienced and then is named God. This relation is not an existence,

nor is it purely imaginative. "We are in the presence of a real ends

completely embodied in existence, nor yet of ideas that are mere root-

less ideas, fantasies, utopias."(4) Still this relation is not

entirely subjective. "For there are forces in nature and society that

generate and support ideals." (5) What these forces are Dewey never

explains; they were not recognized as being active in the pre-human or

pre-social levels of nature. He will not call them God in the theistic

sense because he feels that theism implies supernaturalism. But he

(3) Ibid., p. 51.
would scarcely deny that such "forces in nature and society" do transcend the individual. Neither psychology nor emergent evolution can explain what these forces are or whence they come. "I have nothing to do with the origin of the mental powers, any more than I have with that of life itself." (1) Darwin once wrote. It seems evident that these forces are at least superhuman, since -

"Neither observation, thought nor practical activity can attain that complete unification of the self which is called a whole....The self is always directed toward something beyond itself." (2)

Of course, that something external to the self may simply be society, but as we have seen the forces in question are in society but not necessarily of society.

If this is what Dewey means by God - forces in nature and society which are superhuman, objective to the individual, and which generate and support ideals - and although it is nowhere explicitly stated as such, but must be pieced together, it does seem to be what Dewey means, then he can be classed neither with the humanists or as a theist.

---


Conclusion

At the outset of this essay it was stated that its purpose was to determine the source of the apparent differences in the religious views of James and Dewey. The conclusion of the matter seems to be that the source of the differences lies finally in their differing judgments of the character exhibited in and by nature. James sees in nature as it is given for human experience a spiritual core. Dewey estimates nature as it is experienced to be a realm of potential value, carrying within itself its proper method and its inherent limits. While their temperaments may account in some measure for their respective judgments, the temperamental factor does not tell the whole story. Each judgment is nature and is based upon a careful scrutiny of all the available evidence.

James seems to have based his judgment of nature upon the following factors. In consciousness he discerned an inner core, a "palpitating, inner self," which was not reducible to organic interactions and integrations. The keystone of his metaphysics was personal value and the value of the person. Truth and reality depend from the presence of value for some personal self, human or superhuman. Value in turn was the creation of some self or selves out of neutral, pluralistic elements. His ethics was in the final analysis based upon a spiritualistic interpretation of human conduct. This life, this world, and this universe involve a real fight; there is real right and real wrong and a real struggle between them. Finally, his religious experience, and, so far as he could see, the religious experiences of others were empirically real and specifiable.
And he experienced higher powers in nature which he conceived to be a "Thou" and not an impersonal 'it'. He was convinced that our is not the highest experience in the universe. No one of these factors would have brought James to his final conclusion, but judging by the convergence of their various pointings, he inferred that nature was possessed of a spiritual core.

Dewey's judgment of the character of the world in which we live is that it is a realm of potential values. His evidence is taken at much the same points as that of James with, of course, a different understanding and interpretation. Human consciousness and experience is taken for what it immediately is. There is no evidence, however, of an 'inner self'; the evidence shows only a striving organism. The evidence of metaphysics shows nature to be the sort of thing that can get known by scientific methods. The method by which truth is attained is a more accurate indication of the character of nature than the truths so attained. Value results from understanding with what one is dealing. The potential and latent is developed and grows within the limits of nature. Ethics is as much a scientific matter as the physical sciences. No spiritual element supervenes. Moral problems are not a special kind of problems, but are like any other difficulties which arise in human experience and are just as amenable to the scientific method as the latter are. Finally, Dewey finds nothing in his experience which corresponds to a God operating on or through nature. All that he can honestly recognize is the rise of directing ideals in social experience. And these he finds adequate to the 'spiritual' needs of human living.
The task of the individual and of society is to make explicit the implicit and potential ideals and values which lie as yet unrealized in nature.

The problem with which this essay began is thus brought to a solution, which, at least in the writer's opinion, is a tenable position. Which of the judgments of the character of nature is the truer does not fall within the scope of our problem. In closing, it might be pointed out, however, that Dewey's judgment seems to be logically more rigorous, more detached, and, beyond all doubt, of scrupulous intellectual honesty. While James' judgment seems to be more sanguine, more responsive to that which escapes any method. Somewhere he wrote that the philosopher's task was to catch the glint of light on a humming bird's wing. It would be a fair analogy, I believe, to say that James would find his predominate interest in the song and the graceful flight of a bird. While Dewey's interest would lead him to the wonders of the bird's anatomy, the bird, meanwhile, would have lost its life and its song because of his incisive, anatomical inquiry.