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1977

"CATEGORY CONTINUITY" AS A KEY TO
UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATION OF
DEWEY'S SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

by

DAVID WIDOMLANSKY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
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INTRODUCTION

The thesis here proposed is complex; I will make two statements of it. The first statement will be in simpler terms than the second. After analysis and discussion of certain operative terms, a second statement involving these terms is formulated.

Before making the first statement it will be helpful to present some ideas by way of a point of departure. That John Dewey's philosophy can be brought under the general philosophical heading "naturalism" is not only asserted by others in their writings about Dewey but by himself.¹ However, the various meanings that the term naturalism has had indicates that for Dewey's naturalism to be made clear, some analysis of the sense in which he is using the term is in order. It is here proposed that analysis of one important sense of Dewey's naturalism will shed much light on the foundations of his social psychology.

Before making the initial statement of my thesis, a word of caution is in order to those who think the statement is suspiciously similar to idealistic positions.² The relationship between Dewey's later "naturalistic" philosophy and earlier "absolute idealism" is a thorny

¹John Dewey, "Anti-Naturalism in Extremis", in Naturalism and the Human Spirit, ed. Y. H. Krikorian (N.Y., Columbia Press, 1944, pp. 1-16.

²Bertrand Russell, "Dewey's New Logic" in The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. P. A. Schilpp (N. Y., Tudor Publishing House, 1951) pp. 137-140.

question. We know by his own words that the emotional satisfaction and intellectual insight that resulted from his early adherence to absolute idealism had a lasting effect upon his world outlook.³ Indeed, in an important sense Dewey's later philosophy developed aspects of the earlier idealism deemed valuable. Talk of "continuity" and "category development" may sound like the talk of absolute idealism. However there is an important distinction that will be made clear in a later section of the introduction, and which makes such an interpretation impossible.⁴

The first statement of my thesis is: The continuity at the heart of Dewey's naturalism consists in Dewey's view that the world exhibits at least three levels of activity, the physical, the biological, and the psycho-social, and that the later forms of activity are "higher" than, but continuous with, the "lower" forms.⁵ The question of whether the implied "Hierarchy" is or is not Dewey's own will be discussed below.⁶ Suffice it to say at this point that I believe this ordering into an hierarchy to be an important and authentic aspect of Dewey's philosophy. Indeed, it is at the center of his naturalistic approach to human activity, as I shall attempt to show.

To claim that one form of activity is "higher" than, and continuous with, another form, means that it possesses the same generic traits

³John Dewey, On Experience, Nature and Freedom, ed. by Richard Bernstein, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1960) p. 11.

⁴cf. Below, p. 22.

⁵H. S. Thayer, Meaning and Action. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1968), Appendix I.

⁶cf. Chapter Note 1.

as the lower form of activity, but in a wider and more refined form. For example, on the human level of activity the generic trait of temporality will involve all the psycho-social-historical aspects that make up human life as we know it. On the level of physical processes, on the other hand, the trait of temporality would manifest itself in the form of physical indeterminism involved in such processes. In accordance with Dewey's evolutionary perspective, higher levels of activity develop or grow out of lower levels.

Before commencing a discussion of key terms in the first statement of my thesis, a few general comments are in order. First, the theory of naturalism operative in the statement precludes the description of human behavior, either in general or in specific parts, in terms that are discontinuous or break with lower forms of activity. Conversely if a trait is found to characterize a lower form of activity then it must also, in some form or other, characterize human activity. Secondly, the first statement is one interpretation of the term naturalism. It doesn't in itself rule out other interpretations in other fields. For example a naturalistic theory of 'good' in terms of pleasant feeling may or may not be true, even if the first statement were true.⁷ In short, there are varied meanings of naturalism, and whether the concept that is being used here is inconsistent with any other is a question that must be dealt with on other grounds than are used in this dissertation.

The first statement of the thesis is: Dewey views the world as exhibiting three interdependent levels of activity; the level of physical

⁷G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 37-58.

process, the level of biological activity, and the level of psychosocial activity. This is, of course, not to say that there is an absolute separation of levels, that physical processes do not influence human activity and vice versa. For Dewey the contrary is the case. It is, however, to claim that human activity does emerge out of the lower levels of behavior and its general outlines can best be understood as a "development" of general features of the lower forms of behavior. What the specific nature of these general features are, and how they are developed on the level of human activity I leave for a later section of this introduction and indeed this will be the basic theme of the body of this dissertation.⁸

I will now try to explicate certain key terms in the first statement. First, by "categories" I mean linguistic descriptions of generic traits of nature. When making claims about categories, we are involved in talk about language and its possible relationship to the world. Generic traits on the other hand are the facets or aspects of the world that categories describe. Hence when referring to language and its descriptive function, the term "category" will be used, and when referring to nature and its processes the term "generic trait" will be used.

The term naturalism must be clarified. Part of the meaning of naturalism as used here is that the level of physical process is prior to biological activity and both are prior to human activity. The higher levels grow out of or develop out of the lower levels. This attribute of naturalism distinguishes it from idealistic world views where the natural material world is thought of as having arisen from some concep-

⁸cf. Below p.13.

tion of a spiritual or idealistic world. That there are similarities between the two approaches is admitted, and to an extent Dewey's approach cannot be viewed as novel. There are, however, basic differences.⁹

Another, and for the purpose of this thesis, the major part of what I mean by naturalism is that not only do higher levels grow out of lower ones, but that the former are continuous with the latter. What this means is not that Dewey's naturalism requires no difference between, say biological process and human activity, but rather that the same general concepts or categories that describe what exists on the biological level also describe features of the human level, even if their specific manifestation is different. "What Dewey and Mead called "the active process" seemed to them so comprehensive, embracing both nature and human experience, that no theory of it as a whole was either needed or possible."¹⁰ According to Schneider, then, "the active process" manifested in human experience, for Dewey (and Mead, but more of that later), is an "active process" that exists independently in nature as well. This continuity at the core of Dewey's naturalism is what I will attempt to show in the body of this dissertation. In sum, it is my claim that Dewey's naturalism, as a world view, yields a conviction that the active process involved in human social psychological activity is describable in the same general terms as the active process existing on the lower levels of physical and biological activity.

⁹cf. Chapter Note III.

¹⁰Herbert Schneider, A History of American Philosophy (New York, Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 473.

The concept of continuity as here used deserves some explication. The first and most important point about the notion of continuity as used in what follows is that it is to be distinguished from the notion of identity. If "identity" is interpreted to mean that no difference at all exists between the identified elements, then we have a different notion than continuity. To say, for example, that human meaningful activity is continuous with biological activity is not to say that there is no difference between the two. Dewey was well aware of the futility of the attempt to interpret human life in purely physical or biological terms. Those philosophers who wish to discredit naturalism by pointing to the differences between mental functioning and natural processes, set up a straw man in some cases, since the idea of continuity in this case involves differences.

The point must also be stressed that similarity is also necessary if we are to say that two states or levels are continuous. If the life of reason and intellectual practical activity with one's fellows were radically different from animal life and processes, then all talk of continuity becomes meaningless. If I am then correct in asserting that Dewey's naturalism centers around the idea that human life is continuous with lower levels of activity, then a very subtle task arises for Dewey and those who wish to understand him. This task amounts to taking the major characteristics of human activity and relating them, in a continuous way, to lower forms of activity. It does no good for Dewey to call himself a naturalist if he develops a theory of man's activity that has no relation to physical and biological

processes. In sum, our task becomes the explicating of the nature of the similarities and differences involved in the relation.

To answer the question of the actual nature of the similarities and differences of the idea of continuity, a few new concepts will be introduced. First, the physical, biological, and human modes of activity I shall call "levels of activity". This concept is introduced because it is between the various levels of activity that the continuity basic to Dewey's naturalism exists. I choose the term "level" because I believe that Dewey held to what may be called a dynamic or processive hierarchic ordering of natural activities; one that included a real sense of lower and higher levels.

Secondly, I introduce the idea of "generic trait" to mean the formal characteristics of each level of activity. Physical processes, as described in the light of mathematical physics, occur in distinctive ways. Biological processes, as described in evolutionary biological theory, occur in distinctive ways. Human activity, as described in the light of functional and social behavioristic psychology, occurs in certain ways. The general distinctive ways that characterise these levels I call the generic traits of the respective level. Categories are those general concepts of speech and science that describe these generic traits or distinctive ways of behaving.¹¹

The way that the idea of continuity involves similarities and differences can now be seen. The generic traits that characterize the three levels of activity are the same. The way a biological organism

¹¹cf. Chapter Note II.

functions is generically the same as the way a humane organ is in functions for Dewey. But the generic traits at the higher human level exist in a "more refined form" than at the lower levels. It is my contention that Dewey believed that while the same categories apply to all three levels of activity, they refer to progressively more refined generic traits as we move up the scale of levels. It is in this sense that the idea of difference comes into play in Dewey's view of continuity.

More specifically, what are these categories and in what sense do they refer to more refined forms as we move up the scale of levels? Dewey's claim is that there are really three generic traits of activity: qualitative uniqueness, temporality, and what is called at various places interaction, transaction, and/or association. These justify the use of these categories to characterize physical, biological and human activity, but they may be used in a more refined way as we move up the scale of levels. Interaction, for example, is a generic characteristic of natural processes and human activity, but it does not appear in identically the same form on both levels. In essence, the interaction that appears on the level of nature will involve the continuum existing between the members of an interactive system; while on the level of human life, interaction manifests itself in the rich inter-personal intercourse that characterizes social relations.

That Dewey believed that interaction, or as he here calls it, "association"; is a continuous trait of nature and human life may be illustrated by examining his article "The Inclusive Philosophic Idea".¹²

¹²John Dewey, "The Inclusive Philosophic Idea," in Philosophy and Civilization (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), pp. 77-92.

There Dewey argues precisely that social life, which includes the distinctive trait of meaningful experience, is to be conceived as continuous with the rest of nature, because it exhibits a "refined" form of association that exists universally in nature. In this sense social life, or social psychology, is just as much a part of nature as natural interactions, and just as "real".

A start may be conveniently made by noting that association or conjoint behavior is a universal characteristic of all existences. Knowledge is in terms of related objects and unless it is supposed that relations are a subjective intrusion, or that, à la Hume, only ideas are associated, relation as the nerve of science correlates with association among things. . . . This statement is only a formal way of calling attention to the fact that we characterize an element, say Hydrogen, not only as the name implies, in terms of its water forming potentiality, but ultimately in terms of consequences effected in a whole range of conjoint behavior. ¹³

In short it is clear that Dewey accepted the objective existence of association or interactive behavior in nature.

But the second part of my claim, that Dewey believed that the associated form of human life i.e., social relation is continuous with natural association, and indeed is a more refined form of the latter, is also exemplified in this article. In my view the major purpose of the article cited was to assert and argue that human life, characterized by social relation, is the "highest", most "perfect" form of association known to man. As such, social life can be looked at, in a sense, as "more real" than natural process, if we were inclined to define "more real" as "more perfect". Quoting from the same source:

If social phenomena are not an exemplification upon the widest and most intricate scale of the generic trait of associated behavior or interaction what do they signify? I see but one

¹³Ibid., pp. 77-78.

kind of answer open to them covering two alternatives: either social phenomena are anomalous, an excrescence or intrusion, supervening in an accidental and meaningless way upon other phenomena, or else they have no distinctive import, being in reality nothing but, physical, vital or physiological phenomena. Does not each of those views contradict the observable traits of social phenomena.¹⁴

In the passages quoted at length some points are made by Dewey that are essential to my argument. First, Dewey clearly affirms the view that there are generic traits in nature and social life; the one pointed out in this example is interaction or association. Secondly, Dewey conceived his naturalistic approach to social life and social psychology, to be bound up with the view that they are continuous with natural processes. This means here that there is no sharp gap between the interaction on the natural level and the interaction on human level. It also amounts to a rejection of the view that social life is "nothing but", or is identical with, natural processes; a point I made above.¹⁵ Dewey's view of continuity is seen to be the empirically correct alternative.

Thirdly, the passage indicates that Dewey did accept the idea that there is a dynamic or processive hierarchy in forms of activity.^{15a} What else are we to make of the phrase, "widest and most intricate scale", when referring to the operation of association on the human level? In the context of the problem dealt with in this article, the reality or non-reality of social relations, Dewey clearly presents the idea that, in a sense, social relations are more real because more perfect. The rela-

¹⁴Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁵cf. . Above, p. 6.

^{15a}. cf. Chapter Note III.

tionship between the hierarchy manifested in this article and Dewey's general anti-hierarchic bent I will attend to below.¹⁶ Suffice it to say now that I have given an example where it clearly exists.

I will use the form "higher level continuum" to refer to the operation of the same category on a higher level of activity. Taking the passage quoted above¹⁷ the trait of association provides a good example. This trait exists both on the level of those natural processes studied by the physical sciences, and on the level of human activity studied by the social and psychological sciences. As we saw from that article, however, the category when applied to social reality exists "upon the widest and most intricate scale". I can therefore say that the category applied to the higher levels of activity is continuous but not identical with the category as exemplified on the lower levels. It is this that I mean when I say that the trait of interaction or association manifested in social life, is a higher level continuant of the trait of interaction or association as manifested in biological activity or physical process and justifies the use of a single category in dealing with all levels.

It must be stressed that the subject that the term "higher level continuant" is applied to is the trait exhibited by a level of activity and not the level of activity itself. For example in the body of this dissertation there will be references to the way that the temporal quality of human life is a higher level continuant of the temporal quality of biological activity; temporality being the generic trait of

¹⁶cf. Below, Chapter Note I.

¹⁷cf. Above, p. 10.

interest here. There will not be references to the mode in which human life is a higher level continuant of animal functioning. In short the terms are used in such a way that while it is incorrect to say that social psychology is continuous with biological functioning it is only correct to say that a particular trait of the higher level is a higher level continuant of the lower level trait.

I will now restate my thesis in the light of the discussions above; it must be remembered, however, that the terms of the statement are mine even if I believe that I express the substance of this area of Dewey's thought. I contend that for Dewey there are at least three levels of activity: the physical, biological and human, which exhibit certain generic traits and may be expressed by certain categories. These levels are continuously related in the sense that a trait of a lower level of activity has a higher level continuant, a more refined form, at a higher level. It will be the purpose of this dissertation first to demonstrate the truth of this assertion and secondly to use the categories developed as a key to understanding Dewey's writings on the nature of human life in general and social psychology in particular. Implicit in this statement of my thesis are claims that to some will appear questionable. First I claim that Dewey did believe in a processive hierarchy of activity. Only if this is true is my analysis of Dewey's concept of continuity meaningful.¹⁸ Secondly, I claim that Dewey did accept categories that characterize these levels of activity. I will attempt to justify these implicit claims below and also in the body of this dissertation by demonstrating the truth of my thesis.¹⁹

¹⁸cf. Below, p.6.

¹⁹cf. Chapter Note II.

Now that I have introduced in general terms the idea of continuity between the categories of the various levels of activity, it remains to make more definite the categories I believe essential. I claim they reduce to three: qualitative uniqueness, interaction or transaction, and temporality. I believe that much light can be thrown on Dewey's philosophy if we view it as an attempt to interpret the data at the various levels of activity with these categories as guides of analysis.

By the category of temporality I understand Dewey's reference, on all levels of activity, to considerations involving time, change, history etc. It refers to something broader than mere mechanical time sequences, including emphasis upon analysis of change and processes on all levels. Temporality manifests itself in a constant critique of theories and approaches that post a changeless "reality", whether in nature or mind. A clear example of Dewey's approach can be seen in his on-going critique of formal logic, which he felt rested on the ancient belief in eternal forms. Logic as a human activity must be interpreted in the form of inquiry which possesses temporal dimension.

If this be granted, it follows at once that a philosophical discussion of the distinctions and relations which figure most largely in logical theories depends upon a proper placing of them in their temporal context; and that in default of such placing we are prone to transfer the traits of the subject-matter of one phase to that of another - with a confusing outcome.²⁰

Such emphasis upon temporal contexts can be seen upon all levels of activity, along with the criticism and rejection of approaches that

²⁰ John Dewey, Essays in Experimental Logic (New York: Dover Publications, 1916), p. 1.

violate temporalistic considerations.

By the category of qualitative uniqueness I mean Dewey's emphasis upon the concrete, individualized, immediate aspect of processes at all levels. The emphasis also appears in the criticism of philosophies that seek to deny the "reality" of concrete qualities in nature, life, or human activity. An example of such an emphasis can be seen in Dewey's rejection of the primary-secondary quality distinction when applied to nature.²¹ This distinction rests upon the assumption that individualized qualities can only be given a "subjective" reality in the form of secondary qualities that occur "in the mind". Primary qualities, on this view, are "objective" relations that exist in nature as proven by the physical sciences. Dewey criticized such views and proposed the idea that individualized qualities are an essential aspect of all "real" physical processes. Higher level continuants of the qualitative unique phase of physical processes can be found in the concrete character of organismic-environmental interactions and also in the unique quality of a concrete situation of a child in the educational process.

Finally by the interactive, transactive or associative category I mean Dewey's emphasis, on all levels of activity, upon the ties or relations of elements within a process. This category in a sense is the opposite of the category of qualitative uniqueness, since the latter stresses the unique phase of a process while the former stresses the relational associative phase of activity. An example of the interactive associative category was seen above in Dewey's treatment of association as a trait of nature.²² There Dewey pointed out that in, let us say,

²¹John Dewey, Experience and Nature (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1925), pp. 81-82.

²²cf. Above, p. 8.

chemistry an element is conceived in terms of its consequences upon other chemical substances. An element, in short, is defined by its interactive or associative effects. Hydrogen is defined "in terms of consequences effected in a whole range of conjoint behavior." The trait of interaction has its higher level continuant on the biological level in Dewey's use of the organismic-environmental interaction as the basis of a theory of biological processes. On the level of human activity the trait appears among other places as the emphasis upon the social-individual interaction at the heart of Dewey's theory of meaning.

For the purpose of clarification, Dewey's contribution to philosophy and psycho-social science may be viewed as an attempt to revolutionize these disciplines. By scientific or philosophical revolution I mean basic and fundamental changes in the methods, goals assumptions, and categories, etc., of a science or a field of philosophy. That Dewey applied certain categories to generic traits in the world is one aspect of what follows, but that these categories were taken to be fundamentally different from preceeding approaches and world views is another aspect. It is this second feature of Dewey's thought that the term "revolutionary" is applied.

However, it is a scientific revolution of a special sort; because it can be looked upon as extending the categories found useful at physical and biological levels of activity. As I will attempt to demonstrate in the body of this dissertation, Dewey believed that the revolution in the physical sciences that occurred in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries led to a view of physical processes along the lines of the

three categories. In a similar way Dewey believed that Darwin's "revolution" in biology allowed the approach found successful in the physical sciences to be applied in the biological sciences. To use the concepts developed earlier, the philosophical significance of Darwin's revolution was that it enabled higher level continuants to be found on the biological level of functioning for the categories discovered present at the level of physical process, as a result of the above mentioned revolution in physics.²³

Accordingly, Dewey can be approached as trying to apply the categories of lower levels of activity to understanding human activity. His distinctive naturalistic theory of human processes, may be interpreted as an attempt to find higher level continuants of categories discovered in physical and biological processes. Dewey's "scientific revolution" in social psychology may then be looked on as a completion of the revolutions in physics and biology which occurred before him.

That Dewey thought his distinctive approach to human activity was an extension of the categories productive in physics and biology can be seen in his work on Darwin's influence on philosophy.²⁴ Dewey there asserts that Darwin's accomplishment in biology was made possible by applying the logic developed in the physical sciences centuries earlier, "When Descartes said:

The nature of physical things is much more easily conceived when they are beheld coming gradually into existence, than when they are only considered as produced once in a finished and perfect state", the modern world became self-conscious of the

²³cf. Above, p. 7.

²⁴John Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1965), pp. 1-19.

logic that was henceforth to control it, the logic of which Darwin's 'Origin or Species' is the latest scientific achievement. Without the methods of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and their successors in astronomy, physics, and chemistry Darwin would have been helpless in the organic sciences.²⁵

It is clear that Dewey believed Darwin applied the logic of activity developed by "Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and their successors".

It is however, a key to understanding Dewey's theory of human activity, the foundations of his social psychology, that he was attempting to institute the same logic, apply the same categories, to man and his activities. In this sense Dewey's theory of human activity his "revolutionary" naturalistic approach to man, was actually the completion of a revolution he felt began many centuries earlier. It was not that Dewey believed he was introducing a radically new categories to social psychology, but rather that he was applying established categories to a new area of activity. This point may be seen in part, in Dewey's claim that Darwin's importance resides in his having logically allowed the categories of change to be applied in human concerns by applying them in biological inquiry. The latter was a necessary step to the former.

The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle or transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life.²⁶

By now I hope that the nature of my thesis is reasonably clear to proceed with this introduction; with questions of method and the consideration of certain problems that may arise in the dissertation.

²⁵Ibid., p. 8

²⁶Ibid., pp. 8-9.

I will now outline the method used in the body of what follows.

Given my thesis and subject matter, the method of procedure suggests itself. Since it is my claim that a continuity exists between the levels of activity that I have distinguished in Dewey's philosophy, I will analyze each level of activity with the goal of demonstrating the importance of the three categories mentioned above and demonstrating the continuity with other levels of activity. At the higher levels of activity I will attempt to show that the categories there are actually higher level continuants of the categories that exist at lower levels. The major aim of this dissertation is the analysis of the foundations of Dewey's social psychology; hence, the major portion of the text will dwell there.

I will proceed by a "Synthetic method", in the sense that I will attempt to study the foundations of Dewey's theory of human activity, by developing categories from and placing it in the context, of a broad theory of nature and biological functioning. As an example of this method, consider Dewey's concept of habit. I believe that it is extremely difficult to understand the role of this concept in Dewey's theory of human activity, if we don't understand the category of interaction or association characteristic of lower forms of activity. Attempts to understand -- Dewey's concept of habit in isolation from its biological and social relations must be unproductive, because, in my opinion, this is not the spirit that he presented it. My method of procedure, then, I call synthetic, because it seeks to place the "crucial" concepts of Dewey's theory of human activity in a wider context than just psychology; it is related to natural and biological levels of activity.

CHAPTER NOTES

I. That Dewey accepted a form of hierarchy can be seen from a few quotes. In one article Dewey argues for a "naturalistic" conception of a social activity, which he asserts means that social activity is continuous with lower forms of activity. In fact Dewey even proposes the idea that social life possesses a greater degree of reality than other forms.

Since things present themselves in such fusion that narrower and wider ranges, simpler and more complex ones, are readily distinguished, it would appear that metaphysical description is demarcated at that which has to do with the widest and fullest range of associated activity. And I remark that if the phrase 'Degree of Reality' can be given an empirically intelligible meaning, that meaning would seem to depend upon following out the line of activity thus suggested.²⁷

More specifically, that Dewey believed social life was a higher form of activity, at least with respect to association or interaction can be demonstrated from the same article.

And the implication of our argument is that in such a comparison of definite types of association, the social in its human sense, is the richest, fullest and most delicately subtle of any mode actually experienced. There is no need to go through the form, discovering as if for the first time, the different typical modes which are to be compared and contrasted. . . . Aside from the social, whose through-going admission still awaits adequate acknowledgment, there are the physical, the vital or organic and the mental. The gist of our problem consists in deciding which of these forms presents the broader and fuller range of associations. Association in general is but a matrix; its filling is the facts of association actually displayed in nature.²⁸

It is clear from the above quotations that Dewey did accept a view of world that included the idea of higher and lower forms of activity.

²⁷Dewey, "Inclusive" in Philosophy and Civilization, p. 28.

²⁸Ibid., p. 80.

Similar ideas are expressed in Dewey's Logic, The Theory of Inquiry.

The primary postulate of naturalistic theory of logic is 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 or identities on the other, it precludes reduction of the 'higher' to the 'lower' just as it precludes complete breaks and gaps.²⁹

The nature of the level of activities can be seen in Experience and Nature. There, Dewey distinguished four levels of activity; the social, the physical, the vital, and the psychological. Other places in that work Dewey talks of the three levels of activity that I made central:

In general, three plateaus of such fields may be discriminated. The first, the scene of narrower and more external interactions, is physical. . . . The second level is that of life. . . . The third plateau is that of association, communication, participation.³⁰

II. Unlike generic traits which are actually characteristics of the world, categories are symbolic descriptions of these generic traits.

Each one of these levels having its own characteristic empirical traits has its own categories. They are, however, categories of description, conceptions required to state the fact in question. They are not 'explanatory' categories, as explanation is sometimes understood, they do not designate, that is, the operation of forces as causes.³¹

The generic traits that Dewey emphasized are: qualitative uniqueness, interaction or transaction. It is essential to Dewey's empirical method that it be pointed out that knowledge of the specific form these generic traits exhibit on a particular level of activity

²⁹John Dewey, Logic, The Theory of Inquiry (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1939), p. 23.

³⁰Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 222.

³¹Ibid., p. 223.

must be the result of empirical research and not of a priori theorizing. Association for example is a general matrix that exists on all three levels of activity; how it exists, however, can only be known as a result of concrete research of the forms of activity.

III. I use the term "processive hierarchy" because, while relations of higher and lower do characterize forms of activity, these forms are not fixed and isolated. All sorts of dynamic transactions between levels of activity take place. To claim that human activity is a higher form of activity than physical process and biological functioning is consistent with the claim that human is influenced throughout by biological and physical processes.

It is also true that social activity influences physical and biological processes to a large extent. Man transforms his environment by directing processes to a valued end. This dynamic transaction between human social activity and the lower forms of physical and biological functioning is what will be referred to by the term "processive hierarchy".

IV. Is not my talk of Dewey's category development blurring the distinction between Dewey's thought and Hegelian Absolute Idealism? Now, in short, does my claim about the nature of Dewey's naturalism, centering on the idea of category continuity and development essentially differ from Hegel's idealistic logic of category development? Such a question is a sensitive one to one interpreting Dewey, since Dewey was charged by some highly astute philosophical minds as being nothing more than a Hegelian in naturalistic clothes.³²

To this I think it is proper to respond in a way similar to

³²Russell, "Dewey's New Logic," pp. 137-40.

Dewey's response to Bertrand Russell, who made a similar criticism of Dewey. To Russell's objection that Dewey's holism was a mild form of Absolute Idealism, Dewey responded:

Mr. Russell, however, finds that what I write about situations as the units of experience springs from and leads directly to the Hegelian variety of absolutism. One indirect reason he presents for this belief, when it is put in the form of an argument, runs somewhat as follows: Mr. Dewey admits not only that he was once an Hegelian but that Hegel left a permanent deposit on his thought; Hegel was a thorough-going holist; therefore Dewey uses 'situation' in a Holistic sense.³³

I wish also to respond that the idea of category development, even if it originated, as it probably did, in Hegelian thought does not necessarily have to be interpreted in Hegelian terms. In fact Dewey gives a "naturalistic" twist to this idea.

That the notion of category development attributed to Dewey in this dissertation is different from Hegel's, may be demonstrated by a few points. First, and foremost, the categories as I conceive them, have no logical progression. I do not wish to engage in the practice of interpreting Hegel, but one aspect of his idealism that seems clear is that categories by their own 'dialectical' logic develop on their own in a necessary 'logical' way. With the idea of category used in this dissertation, on the other hand, the development has no logical impetus. That human activity can be interpreted by same categories of description that biological functioning does, is a fact of natural and social history; it is not required by any "logical" development. While it is essential for Dewey's naturalism, that the same categories, as a general descriptive matrix, exist on both levels, of activity, the specific form these cate-

³³John Dewey, The Philosophy of John Dewey ed. Schilpp, p. 544.

gories take on any specific level is not determined by any logical sequence. Such an idea conflicts with Dewey's view that precariousness was a universal feature of all natural and social processes.

Another aspect of the logical development of categories that I believe it is safe to say is an essential aspect of absolute idealism is that the categories have motive force in nature and human life; in fact reason in the form of dialectic and reality are one. By this assertion, I do not believe Hegel merely wished to make the unarguable but weak claim that ideas, purposes, ideals, etc., have an effect on human activity and history. Hegel appears to be making the much stronger claim that ideal categories in their logical dialectical development 'control' nature and human history. Indeed in the final analysis the dialectic of categories constitutes natural and historic development. As Ernst Cassirer observes:

Logic and dialectics were now no longer to be regarded as a mere organon for a knowledge of reality, but were thought to contain this knowledge in all its fullness and totality and to allow of its being made explicit. Herewith the realm of philosophic thought appeared to be fixed for the first time, and its goal attained the identity of reality and reason.³⁴

Needless to say the conception of categories attributed to Dewey in the following do not possess this motive power. Categories or characteristic traits of the levels of activity, are descriptive not explanatory as Dewey states above.³⁵ Categories describe traits of processes, they do not cause, force, or even constitute the basic reality of these processes. Nature, life, and social activity are what the sciences

³⁴Ernst Cassirer, The Problem of Knowledge, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 2.

³⁵cf. Above, p. 8.

show them to be, and if the general descriptive traits on the lower levels can be applied in a more refined form to the higher levels, then we have the continuity that is essential to Dewey's naturalism. This position certainly does not imply that the category development is the cause of the processes under consideration.

The final way that I believe Dewey's naturalism can be distinguished from Hegelian Idealism, is on the question of priority of spiritual and ideal activity as compared to natural and biological process. If I understand Hegel correctly in the Phenomenology of Mind,³⁶ he is saying that when one dialectically considers the categories of natural process, one can observe that the contradictions which arise can only be resolved in a metaphysically prior spiritual order. It is the essence of this position, that, by a process of arriving at contradiction in a certain order, metaphysical (and also I believe temporal) priority may be established.

Dewey, however, with the category development that I have ascribed to him makes a different claim. In determining metaphysical or temporal priority, Dewey uses methods and conclusions developed in the sciences. Temporal priority is easily determined by evolutionary theory. It is clear from this theory, that human life, with all its spiritual qualities, arose after natural and biological processes. Taken seriously evolutionary theory, seems to me and I believe Dewey, to mean that natural and biological functions must not be viewed as pointing toward a prior spiritual force that accounts for them. In fact, rational,

³⁶G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind. trans. J. B. Baillie New York: Harper and Row, (1967), p. 212.

intelligent, activity arises "out of" and certainly after the lower forms of activity.

On the question of metaphysical priority Dewey's position is ambiguous depending upon the meaning attached to the term "metaphysical priority." We saw above³⁷ that in a sense Dewey did believe that social life was more "real" than natural processes and biological life. What he meant there was that social life exhibited the trait of association in a more complex manner than the former levels of process. Such a conclusion is arrived at by the methods of observation associated with science and common sense.

If however, metaphysical priority means that social, spiritual life is necessary for natural and biological activity to have their dialectical contradictions resolved, then Dewey and Hegel part company. The idea that the lower forms of activity cannot consistently exist unless they "have their being" in spirit is a view that Dewey, on the basis of physical and biological science, must deny. The notion of category development that I have outlined in this introduction does not at all imply this notion of "metaphysical priority." In sum I conclude that it would be a mistake not to distinguish very sharply Dewey's naturalistic continuity from Hegelian Absolute Idealism, even though many concepts present in the context of the former worldview find their origin in the context of the latter's worldview.

³⁷cf. Above, p. 8.

Before developing the application of the three categories to the level of physical process, it will clarify matters if we recognize the relationship between Dewey's idea of continuity, as it relates to the major philosophical results of the revolution in physics that occurred in the 16th and 17th centuries, as Dewey sees it. It is my contention that the theory of natural process, which includes the three categories, was a major result of that revolution. If I am correct in asserting that for Dewey these categories provide a major part of the content of his naturalistic worldview, the importance of the revolution in physics to Dewey is underscored. The revolution in the physical sciences paved the way for Dewey's naturalistic view of human activity.

According to Dewey what was the nature of the change that occurred in the view of physical process as a result of the work of Galileo, Kepler, and the rest? First what was the old theory that was replaced? On the old theory, existing behind the "chaos" of change, of coming into being and passing-away, were "fix ends". That is to say changes and processes were looked upon as being guided and ordered by a reality, unchangeable over time, that operated behind the scenes, so to speak. Because these ends that guided changes stood outside the flux of change, time in a real sense was not a factor in their existence. Change as a result of interactions with other systems, was certainly excluded from its possibilities. To use Aristotle's well known example, the end of the acorn, passing into an oak tree exists all during the development, but itself does not develop and is not influenced by other developments. It also is not influenced by the concrete situation of a particular acorn, even though the process itself may be influenced.

Dewey described the belief in these ends or species, which not only guided change, but were believed to be what made change rational and were therefore the ultimate object of knowledge, as follows:

The conception of eidos, species, a fixed form and final cause, was a central principle of knowledge as well as of nature. Change as change is mere flux and lapse, it insults intelligence. Genuinely to know is to grasp a permanent end that realizes itself through changes, holding them thereby within the metes and bounds of fixed truth.³⁸

As long as natural processes were conceived on the model of fixed ends, concrete unique interactions, occurring at specific times and places, could not be taken as truly real in the hierarchy of being. Their existence had to be of secondary importance when compared to the form or species behind these changes. If concrete interactions had any significance it was as an exemplification of a higher universal form.

It is my contention that Dewey believed the main philosophic import of the revolution in mathematical physics that occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was that concrete interactions could be studied on their own account without searching for an "end" behind the process. With the emergence of experimental procedures at this time the emphasis of science, as well as the implied view of physical change, was on natural interactions under specific circumstances and not on "essences" behind these interactions. Permanent substances or ends played no role in the practice of the new sciences.

Hence with the revolution in physics came the importance for physical science of the three categories mentioned above. The subject matter and goal of science instead of fixed ends and species became con-

³⁸Dewey, Influence of Darwin, p. 6.

crete experimental interactions, occurring at specific times and each interaction qualitatively unique. When viewed from the standpoint of Dewey's naturalism the new idea of physical process, that resulted from the revolution in the physical sciences, provided the lowest level of our hierarchy with its basic categories. For a thoroughly naturalistic worldview to arise, characterized, as Dewey thought it must be, by the idea of continuity, a similar revolution had to occur in the biological and human sciences. The role of fixed ends as the guides of biological and human activity, standing behind these phenomena, had to be eliminated in favor of an experimental approach parallel to that which exists in the physical sciences. Much light can be thrown upon Dewey's thoughts on the foundation of social psychology if we view them as a continuation of the revolution started in the physical sciences.

Qualitative Uniqueness in Physical Activity

I start now with a discussion of the three categories on the physical level.

The first aspect of nature that came to play an important part in Dewey's philosophy was what came to be called the "qualitative immediacy" or uniqueness of natural occurrences. Dewey discussed this characteristic of nature in his key metaphysical work Experience and Nature. Dewey's basic point can be seen from the following passage:

. . . In every event there is something obdurate, self-sufficient, wholly immediate, neither a relation nor an element in a relational whole, but terminal and exclusive. Here as in so many other matters materialists and idealists agree in an underlying metaphysics which ignores in behalf of relations and relational systems, these irreducible and indescribable qualities which a thing must have, in order to be, and in order to be a subject of relations and a theme in discourse.³⁹

³⁹Dewey, Experience and Nature, p.. 73.

In Dewey's view then, each natural event, each history, has an immediacy, a finality, an integrity, if you will, about it; that sets it off from all other events.

Let me try to clarify this category or trait of qualitative immediacy or uniqueness that Dewey thought characterizes all natural occurrences. Let us take, for example, a rock in free flight. It is possible to regard this object with respect to its interactive relations with the earth, which the science of physics does. But what Dewey seems to be driving at with his talk of qualitative immediacy and uniqueness, is viewing the rock with respect to its quality of sheer "thereness," of being concrete, something more than interactive relations. It is not that relations and interactions with larger systems do not exist, but rather that there is more to the rock falling than that. There is also the rock looked upon as existing. The rock considered in its qualitative immediacy, is an individualized, unique affair; it is in a sense unlike any other. In short the rock can be conceived along the lines of interactive relations with other systems, or along the lines of qualitative immediacy.

It may perhaps be objected that Dewey, by incorporating the category of qualitative immediacy into his theory of natural process, is taking a trait characteristic of human experience and projecting it on nature and the real world. What right, the objector may conclude, has Dewey to take the finalities, the uniquenesses, found in our experience of the world and attribute it to nature itself. In response it must be pointed out that Dewey did not accept the ultimate separation of experience

from nature that the objection assumes.

It is not experience which is experienced, but nature-stones, plants, animals, diseases, health, temperature, electricity, and so on. Things in interacting in certain ways are experience; they are what is experienced.⁴⁰

The answer to the question of which approach: separating or uniting experience and nature, is more adequate, must be decided on the fruitfulness of the respective approaches, and not on any pre-existing judgments.

Dewey's inclusion of the trait of qualitative immediacy in his analysis of natural processes derives from his adherence to a metaphysics that he claims is based on empirical foundations. The claim is made that any person who impartially surveys the processes in his experience will find this trait or category. To say as a result of such a survey that the category of qualitative immediacy was not really applicable to an aspect of nature, would be to deny the sort of empiricism that Dewey explicitly ascribes to; one major factor of this empiricism being that what experience reveals must be regarded as real. To understand Dewey's justification for claiming that the category of qualitative immediacy or uniqueness, holds of natural processes, it must be remembered that Dewey rejected the view, held by some, that experience was a subjective affair. Dewey argued that experience, common experience if you will, revealed nature and the world because it arose out of concrete dealings with the world.

It is the fact, I repeat, that so many philosophers (e.g. those that deny the reality of qualitative immediacy - D.W.) terminate in conclusions that make it necessary to disparage and condemn primary experience, leading those that hold them to measure the sublimity of their 'realities' as philosophically

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 4.

defined by remoteness from the concerns of daily life, which leads cultivated common sense to look askance at philosophy.⁴¹

In short, Dewey's contention is that a sound metaphysic must respect the observations of common experience. If problems later arise due to this respect it is up to Dewey and those who agree with his method to solve them.

According to Dewey, the recognition of individualized qualities in nature was a rather novel idea with respect to the mainstream of metaphysical analysis; at least from the time that seventeenth century rationalist and empiricist thought superseded the medieval view of the world as a hierarchy of qualitative forms. Dewey conceives one of the philosophical achievements of the seventeenth century scientists to be, that ends, finalities, qualities etc. were driven out of the realm of physical science. This was an advancement on medieval science which considered qualities as central. In fact Dewey argues that the removal of specific qualities from scientific conceptions was a reaction against an ancient Greek tradition, fostered by the prestige of Aristotle, which described and explained the world in terms of qualities.

Many seventeenth century and later philosophers, because they were operating with a science that had little use for qualities as these are known in common experience, and because physical science was viewed as revealing the world the way it really is, the conclusion was drawn that the qualities of common experience cannot be truly real. If they exist anywhere, and experience suggests they do exist, it must be in a shadowy "mental" form. The effort to find a place for facets of experience not needed in physical science is part of the import of the primary-secondary quality distinction, that is a major strand of modern

⁴¹Ibid., p. 10.

philosophy.

Dewey by emphasizing the existence of unique qualities in nature presented an alternative worldview to that which included the primary-secondary quality distinction. While Dewey would agree with the idea that the physical sciences have little use for the qualities of common experience, he would add that to conceive science as revealing the world in its reality is a misconception. The function of science, if my understanding is correct here, is to guide man out of concrete problematic disjointed situations to a harmonious resolution of such situations. On this view it is a mistake to place the conclusions of scientific procedure in contrast to the world of common experience, since scientific procedure is an instrument to resolve difficulties in common experience. In this way Dewey offered criticism and a counterview of some traditional views on the existence or non-existence of unique qualities in nature.

It may be objected however that Dewey's genetic approach to this and other questions is useless and indeed cavalier. Why present his case as a critique of past, usually Greek, philosophical tradition. Wouldn't it be better and safer if Dewey or anyone else for that matter, merely presented their ideas with the supporting reasoning and let them be judged on their merits. It is clear that Dewey believed that deep-seated philosophical errors were operating in the system of beliefs that characterized "western civilization" for centuries. Also clear is Dewey's belief that not only did errors seriously distort man's view of the world and his place in it, they were also harmful in that they fostered behavior not adapted to current realities and practice. Fruitful inquiry is aborted by some errors in the conception of the nature and function of

science. Widespread beliefs such as these are then in a sense habitual conceptual disorders, which cannot fully be remedied by discoursing on the evidential basis of a particular claim. For the cure and reconstruction of a wrongheaded conceptual habit, the origins of the habit must be located along with the reasons why the habit was appropriate at an earlier time. Ideas are here viewed as ways of fostering human activity in particular situations whether practical or theoretical. Hence, it is in the attempt to overcome systems of ideas that do not apply to modern activity and modern reality, whether social, political, scientific, etc., that the search for the historic origins and functions of ideas are of use.

Now as to the question of the accuracy of Dewey's particular analysis of the role of seventeenth century mathematical physics in relegating qualities of experience to a subjective realm, I do not think there is much room for doubt. Primary qualities, the mathematically describable properties studied in physics, as opposed to secondary qualities, the sensuous qualities not so describable, was a distinction that resulted from the rising confidence that physical science would reveal the world with no remainder. Unique sensuous qualities so apparent in experience seem like an alien intruder when compared to the precision and certainty of mathematical analysis.

Considering the consequences of recognizing the category of qualitative uniqueness in natural processes that will have importance on the level of human activity, I think two points may be stressed. First, the qualitatively unique aspect of nature implies a pluralism in nature that must be recognized and appreciated. To say that the sheer

immediacy or uniqueness of an event is a main feature of that event is also to say that the event cannot be totally subsumed under any natural system of events.

The pluralism implied by Dewey's idea of qualitative immediacy can be illustrated by the example used earlier of the falling rock. Part of what Dewey means by this category is that the rock considered in its aspect of sheer "thereness" as opposed to its relations and interactions with other natural systems, is that the rock is there in its own peculiar way, as opposed to any other rock which would be there in a different way. Another rock, say a heavier, darker, longer rock would be there in its own distinctive way. In short, to consider the rock as a qualitatively immediate or unique event is to consider it as a particular, concretely unique affair, which differs from all other affairs, including all other rocks.

Dewey himself passed through an early stage of absolute idealism, where unity, oneness is given more weight than the pluralism outlined above. Like James, Dewey came to feel uncomfortable in the idealistic "block universe", which they felt did not do justice to the undeniable variegated richness of common experience. As Richard Bernstein writes in his article on Dewey in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

In this respect, he (Dewey) displayed an increasing sympathy with the pluralism of the British Empiricists. He insisted that life consists of a series of overlapping . . . situations or contents, each of which has its internal qualitative integrity.⁴²

At this point I will just mention that this "natural pluralism" plays an important role when it appears on the level of human activity.

⁴²Richard Bernstein "John Dewey", Volume 2 of Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. P. Edwards (New York: MacMillan Co., 1967), p. 381.

For example, James urged teachers and citizens to have a deep respect and delight in the distinctive experience of others, no matter how strange. Psychological pluralism, which is the higher level continuant of this natural pluralism, does not lead necessarily to emotional and social anarchy, but with proper pedagogic method can lead to tolerance and expansion.⁴³ That such a consequence is found in Dewey's philosophy I shall argue below.⁴⁴

The second point of importance here is that to draw attention to the individualized aspect of natural processes is not necessarily to deny the relational, interactive aspect. Dewey while a pluralist, was not an atomist who asserted that relations are not essential to a concrete existence. Indeed, for Dewey there is in this instance a dual aspect to natural events neither of which can claim to be more real than the other. Relational interactions between processes must also be admitted in any empirical metaphysics.⁴⁵

Again the example of the rock freely falling can help fix the ideas here. The falling rock, as we have seen, is a qualitatively unique and immediate occurrence - it is that rock with just those properties. At the same time the rock is interacting with a whole system of other occurrences, e.g., the gravity of the earth, air currents, etc.; the rock also has a history of such interactions which in part determine its

⁴³cf. Above p. 11.

⁴⁴cf. Below p. 137.

⁴⁵Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 352.

current unique qualities. The interactive and the qualitatively unique characteristics of natural processes are then not two inconsistent traits, but rather two complementary aspects of one process, the falling rock. Only when these categories are conceived as being categorically contradictory, is a choice forced between individual uniqueness and relational interactions. According to Dewey, however, nature forces no such choice.

The attempt to isolate or create an unbridgable gap in nature between unique qualities and relational system stems from, on Dewey's view, the misconceiving of abstractions as concrete reality. The "nominalist" who asserts that only sheer individuals exist, no matter how these may be conceived, tells part of the truth, but is incorrect in denying the interactive relational aspect of nature, so universal in common experience. On the other hand, from Dewey's perspective, the "realist" philosopher, who asserts that only universals or essences or relations, exist, likewise misses an aspect of concrete experience. Experience must be conceived in such a way that both individualized qualities and relational interactions have a place. Those philosophers who regard one or the other of these categories as primary or "more real", exhibit a disregard of the richness Dewey found in common experience.

Dewey's contention is that if experience is approached without preconception, especially the preconceptions that arise out of long-standing philosophical traditions, then experience will reveal the need for employing both categories in dealing with natural processes.

As direct appreciating enjoyment exhibits things in their consumatory phase, labor manifests things in their connection with one another, in efficiency, productivity, furthering, hindering, generating destroying. From the standpoint of enjoyment a thing is what it directly does

for us. From that of labor a thing is what it will do to other things - the only way in which a tool or obstacle can be defined.⁴⁶

I do not believe that for the purposes of this dissertation, which after all seeks to focus upon the level of human activity it is necessary to determine the precise nature of the quality-interaction relationship, as Dewey conceived it.

There is however, one question with Dewey's approach to natural process that I will consider. The question I have in mind is that in asserting that qualitative uniqueness and interactive relations are both part of the natural world, is not Dewey really asserting that the world contains contradictions? So habituated have some philosophers become to the decision between universals and particulars that the position that both traits can characterize real activity may seem odd.

I must respond that I do not believe that there is any logical contradiction in Dewey's position. The question itself arises from what may be called, "philosophical closed mindedness" born out of the habit of conceiving these traits as inconsistent. The "oddness" in question is not, I contend, a logical oddness but rather a psychological or habitual oddness.

Dewey's point of course is that if nature is observed with an empiricism not limited by traditional prejudices, both categories will appear as useful. The trait of qualitative immediacy, for example, is revealed by experience, direct perception and involvement.

Empirically things are tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled disturbed, comfortable. . . ; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf. If we take advantage of the word esthetic in a wider sense than that application to the beautiful and ugly, esthetic quality, immediate final self-

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 72.

enclosed, indubitably characterizes natural situations as the empirically occur. . . . If experienced things are valid evidence, then nature in having qualities within itself has what in the literal sense must be called ends, terminals, arrests, enclosures.⁴⁷

Interaction or Transaction as Generic Traits

Dewey's writings upon the interactive phase of physical processes, I must say at the beginning are complex and sparse. Part of the problem of the complexity involved here may be reduced if we view interaction as a continuation of Dewey's early holistic organism approach to philosophical problems. The sparseness of writings will have to be dealt with, at least in part by the use of secondary sources.⁴⁸

Dewey's Early Organicism

The early Dewey, along with other absolute idealists in England and the United States, was part of a movement of thought, reacting to the excesses of the British Empiricist influence. Along with his teacher George Sylvester Morris,⁴⁹ Dewey was attracted to Hegelian idealism, with its rejection of the bias for the atomistic individual and its acceptance and stress of the reality of relations. While Dewey eventually rejected his early idealistic approach, which he held as a philosophical student of T. H. Green, that only the relation was real, he never lost the belief in the reality and importance of relational interactions in understanding natural and human activity. The early attraction of a purely relational worldview, became, in the mature Dewey, the emphasis upon interactions and transactions.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 81-82.

⁴⁸cf. Below P. 48.

⁴⁹White, Origins, pp. 7-22.

That Dewey was greatly attracted to Hegelian absolute idealism for its theory of unified reality, where all gaps and contradictions are overcome, we have Dewey's own testimony in his autobiographical article "From Absolutism to Experimentalism". At this early stage, Dewey's rejection of nominalism, where only the sense atom was real, took the form of an emotional rejection of the spiritual poverty involved in a world where atoms existed in total isolation, separated by impassible gaps. Hegel, by presenting a world where unity replaced discontinuity, served as a liberating force in the mind of Dewey. Of Hegel, Dewey writes:

. . . It supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet was a hunger that only an intellectual subject matter could satisfy. . . . Hegel's synthesis of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a special attraction for me.⁵⁰

The organismic approach of breaking down walls between atoms, was, in part, as accepted by Dewey, due to the writings of T. H. Green, the British idealist, who presented a world view based on relations exclusively. With Green the metaphysical atomism, presented classically by Locke and Hume, was rejected completely, in favor of a world where to think of a fact was to think of other facts it was related to. Even in terms of feelings, Green asks what it means to say that a feeling, an impression is real objective, and concludes that the answer involves a consideration of whether or not the feeling is related in the way one

⁵⁰Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" in Dewey, Experience, Nature, ed. Bernstein, p. 11.

thinks it is. "It is a question whether a feeling is what it is taken to be; or in other words whether it is related as it seems to be related."⁵¹ In short, Green argues that to assert the reality of a feeling is to assert its relationship to things other than itself.

In a similar way whenever we inquire into the real nature of an event the question presupposes an order of relations. Green's break with Hume is then complete, since the very conception of an isolated individual implies a relation to a whole system.

But that there is an unalterable order of relations, if we could only find it out, is the presupposition of all our enquiry into the real nature of appearances; and such unalterableness implies their inclusion in one system which leaves nothing outside itself.⁵²

The final upstart of all these arguments for Green, and those who followed him, was that the world was to be conceived as a single system of relations, where all particulars had an active place. The isolation of the particular, so apparent in British Empiricism, had been given up for a unified world.

The central conception is that the universe is a single eternal reality or energy of which it is the essence to be self-conscious, that is, to be itself and not itself in one. Or this activity, the self-distinguishing and self-seeking, ever particular existence is a limited manifestation, and among other such existences those we call ourselves. . . .⁵³

From these passages the conclusion that seeming particulars must be viewed

⁵¹T. H. Green, Prolegomena to Ethics (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969), p. 16.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁵³Nettleship "Introduction" in Volume III of T. H. Green; The Collected Works of T. H. Green, ed. Nettleship (London: 1890-1893), p. lxxu.

in the light of the matrix of relations, is clearly present.

At this early stage Dewey was quite influenced by Green and adhered to a worldview which in essential points was identical with the latter. In his early Psychology, Dewey presents the idea of an absolute personality in which each particular self finds its meaning and happiness. On this view the existence of the particular self is conceived in the light of its struggle to realize its identity with a universal and unified personality.⁵⁴

In his Psychology Dewey affirms the idea that the value and fulfillment of individual feelings and thoughts can come about only through an identification of the individual self with an absolute personality or universal mind. The following is a typical example:

In social feeling we merge our private life in the wider life of the community, and in so doing, immensely transcend our immediate self and realize our being in its widest way. In knowledge we take the universe of objects into ourselves; in aesthetic perception and creation we take the universe of ideal worths into ourselves; in social life, we make to be an element the universe of personal and spiritual relations. Only thus do we live the life of a developed personality at all, and thus it is this realm of experience is the widest and most varied on its emotional side.⁵⁵

The attitude expressed in this passage is of interest here because it indicates a persistent strand in Dewey's philosophy in a clear manner. This "holistic" approach later manifested itself on the physical level with what Joseph Ratner called "interactive continuums"⁵⁶ and also on the human level with Dewey's idea of the socialized individual, with its

⁵⁴John Dewey, Psychology, Vol. II of Early Works of John Dewey, (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967-72), p. 363.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 245.

⁵⁶cf. Below, p. 48.

emphasis upon participation in communal activity for personal development.

Morton White, in his work on the early Dewey, indicates the growth of Dewey's organicism to the idea of the socialized or cultured individual. It will be remembered⁵⁷ that White held that Dewey's stress upon the environment, especially the social environment, when analyzing human activity, was in part the development of the early organicism. I would extend White's insight to include also Dewey's interactive analysis of physical processes as also being an outgrowth of that early theory. Talk of interactions between physical processes as being essential to understanding a given process is similar, and indeed, if my thesis is accurate, is continuous with the importance Dewey attached to including the social environment in an analysis of human activity. Hence, like Morton White, I consider Dewey's early writings a source which helps to clarify his later writings.

Finally, it is well to emphasize that when Dewey reached his more mature stage of thought, where the experimental mode of inquiry reigned supreme, this early idea of the world as universal mind or relation was not so much dropped as reconstructed to correspond more closely with the revelations of experience. Dewey grew increasingly uncomfortable with the idea that there existed, or rather pre-existed, a perfected form of reality that was the goal of our finite human endeavor. Dewey's major motive, in my opinion, for persistently combating such ideas, is that by regarding perfection as somehow already existing, actual concrete human endeavor is in a real sense cheapened and made a joyless affair. By the conception of a pre-existent infinite perfection, real human goals and

⁵⁷cf. Above, 42.

pursuits, which common experience regards as dignified and important and in many cases joyful, loses its dignity and joy.

It is for that reason that Dewey regarded transcendentalists, which in this context means those philosophers who place the perfection of human activity in a world beyond experience, as implying a joyless view of human life.

It has even become in many philosophical circles a sign of lack of sophistication to imagine that life is or can be a fountain of cheer and happiness. . . . The transcendental philosopher has probably done more than the professed sensualist and materialist to obscure the potentialities of daily experience for self-regulation.⁵⁸

In short Dewey's program for a later philosophy, can be seen in part as the development of a theory of natural process and of human activity, which is continuous with it, where ends and perfections do not exist in a world beyond the processes of experience. Ends must arise in and give value to nature and experiential processes. To this end a world of pure relations must be limited to a world of interactions or transactions.

I now will present an aspect of Dewey's theory of natural process that is of decisive importance in understanding the concept of continuity and in understanding much of what I believe is obscure in Dewey's writings on human activity and character - and that is his interactive or transactive approach to certain concepts. First I will present the distinction between interaction and transaction, and why I don't believe the difference is relevant to my thesis.

The difference between the concepts of interaction and transaction as explained by Dewey seems to me to be one of clarity, i.e., Dewey later felt that the word "transaction" more clearly expressed the idea

⁵⁸Dewey, Experience and Nature, pp. 38-39.

he held, for "interaction" has unintended implications. Dewey most precisely defined the distinction in Knowing and the Known, jointly written with Arthur F. Bentley; here three types of analysis are marked off: self-action, interaction, and transaction. Self-action is the way of conceiving processes such that the source of motion is internal to the individual in motion. It is a way of conceiving action without reference to outside forces. The individual moving is emphasized to the extent that it is conceived as a power unto itself.

Interaction, on the other hand, as a way of conceiving processes, refers to the influence of one individual upon others to explain the motion. Things, individuals, exist but they move only under the influence of outside forces. In causal interactions for example, the entities interacting have prior and independent existence to the processes and forces involved. Dewey tersely explicates the notion of causal interaction as: ". . . where thing is balance against thing in causal interaction."⁵⁹ Interaction, then, conceives process in a way more related than self-action, in that things are in motion due to balances and lack of balances with other things.

The series is completed with the notion of transaction. Here not only are outside forces needed to explain the process but the very existence of a thing or individual is dependent upon its existence in a network of forces. Descriptive names refer not to individual entities but to aspects of systems of activity and hence can change with the system of activity. It was because the idea of interaction seemed to refer in part to elements that had prior existence to the process under considera-

⁵⁹Dewey and Bentley, Knowing, p. 108.

tion that the need for a new term "transaction" was felt by Dewey.

Transactional analysis is presented by Dewey as:

. . . systems of descriptions and naming are employed to deal with aspects and phases of action, without final attribution to 'elements' or other presumatively detachable or independent 'entities' 'essences', or 'realities' and without isolation of presumatively detachable relations from such detachable 'elements'.

It is to be noted that in Dewey's favored notion of transaction, systems of relation and activity are primary; elements and activities are conceived as aspects of the relational system.

This idea is also what Dewey seems to have in mind when he talks of a functional analysis of certain concepts. Part of what is meant by this idea is that concepts mark out distinctions within a relational process, and not pre-existing elements in reality. Such an approach can be seen in Dewey almost throughout his philosophical career. The functional approach of Dewey's to psychological concepts such as "motive" or "sensation" is indeed a distinguishing feature of Dewey's psychology. It also, however, is a distinguishing feature of his analysis of physical processes.

I will use the term interaction to mean what Dewey presented above as transaction because I think the latter is what he had in mind through much of his philosophical career by the concept of interaction. It is because Dewey later came to feel that the term interaction had unfortunate associations as to the prior existence of elements, that the need was felt to distinguish between interaction and transaction. Since, however, in much of Dewey's writings, of which I shall draw upon in the following, the term interaction means what was later called transaction,

I shall work with that usage. Usually I shall refer to the concept as "interaction or transaction".

Dewey's interactive or functional approach to various physical, biological, and social-psychological concepts can be clarified by comparing it with the approach that it was in part designed to be contrasted with. I think of the type of "empiricisms" where ideas are analysed in terms of ready-made sensuous, physical, or logical atoms. Dewey presents the atomistic, anti-relational concept of experience in his presentation of Lockean empiricism.

Classical thought had glorified the universal and regarded the individual as valid only in the degree in which it was an organ of the universal. There was a growing tendency in the centuries preceding Locke to regard what had been considered as universal and objective as a kind of dead weight and imposed upon men from without, and to regard the individual as the seat of freedom and the source of all advance, intellectual and political.⁶⁰

Dewey, in the above passage, points to a view of experience and politics, where the pre-existent individual is regarded as the basic reality. Even though few philosophers held the extreme atomistic view, where only individuals are regarded as real or important, certainly many philosophers in the Lockean tradition approached that view, and it is helpful to set it up as an extreme case which these philosophers approached.

The individual atoms, on this ideally extreme type of theory, are real and they enter into relations which have no effect on their nature. These atoms, whether regarded as sensuous, physical or logical, remain the same during the time they are related to other atoms, and after such

⁶⁰Dewey, "An Empirical Survey" in Dewey, Experience, Nature, Bernstein, p. 79.

relationships, as they were before such relationships were entered into. In short the essential point I am trying to draw attention to by this extreme atomistic theory, is that according to it, the elements or atoms are really worlds in themselves, not affect by relations entered into; in a real sense they satisfy man's historical quest for certainty.⁶¹

Contrast the extreme view just presented with Dewey's interactive approach. On Dewey's theory the interaction, transaction or function is primary, and elements are seen not as existing prior to the interaction but as arising in the context of the interaction. This approach does not mean that a world does not exist before a particular interaction; it does mean that in understanding a particular transaction, what existed earlier is irrelevant. The role or function of an element in the interaction becomes the basis for understanding. It is within the interaction that the special character of the element arises, and it is within, that it must be understood.

Of course Dewey's criticism and rejection of the ultimate existence and importance in science of empirical atoms resulted in a long debate between Dewey and those philosophers who believed that the analysis of all theoretical concepts of science to logical atoms could be accomplished e.g. The logical atomism of Russell. The charges and counter-charges of the debate I will not present. One criticism, however, of Dewey, I feel important to consider and that is that in rejecting the existence and importance of ultimate elements, atoms, or simples, in his theory of natural processes, Dewey was in some sense developing a non-

⁶¹ John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960), p. 120.

scientific theory. The criticism rests on the claim that it is the unambiguous interpretation of science and logic that such pre-existent atoms exist and are needed to clarify meaning.

Of course the interpretation of science and meaning is a most complex subject and I won't attempt to iron out its many problems. At this point I think all that needs to be said is that Dewey was presenting an alternative interpretation of science and its consequences. The criticism of Dewey outlined above rests on an assumption with respect to the nature of science that Dewey rejected. Suffice it to say that science and logic for Dewey are affairs of guiding progressive development in concrete disjoint human situations. The relationship between these two interpretations of science, whether they are in whole or in part inconsistent, or if one of them is adequate, which one, is another problem. It does not foster rational dialogue, however, to brand one theory "unscientific" before all the arguments are in.

I now will develop some of the specifics of Dewey's interactive or transactive interpretation of natural processes. I am hampered in this task by the fact that Dewey did not write much on this topic. However, it is recognized that the matter is central to Dewey's metaphysics. Joseph Ratner has made the point with admirable brevity, and I fully concur in his judgment.⁶²

Ratner puts it this way:

Whenever there is interaction there is also continuity. The interaction is the continuity taken laterally or cross sectionally; the continuity is the interaction taken longitudinally or histori-

⁶²J. Ratner "Introduction" in John Dewey, Intelligence in the Modern World ed. J. Ratner (New York: Random House, 1939), pp. 3-241.

cally. The maintenance of the interception and interaction constitute or create an interactive continuum.⁶³

In short the idea that interaction is a primary characteristic of physical processes is one with the idea that real continuity in natural processes exists and is of primary importance.

One way of making the idea of interactive continuum a bit clearer is to contrast it again with the atomistic theory that denies the type of continuity in natural processes affirmed by Dewey. The atomistic view in extreme, would have it that the atoms involved in change do not affect other atoms; the atoms, whether sensuous, physical, or logical, are not altered in the process. That is to say atomism denies the continuity Dewey posited in this regard.

Dewey's concept of interaction can be viewed as part of a reaction against extreme form of atoms outlined above. The reaction against the atomism of the British empiricists was of course not confined to Dewey. Earlier I mentioned the idealists. Ratner points out that a similar motivation was behind A. N. Whitehead's idea that 'societies' were of prime metaphysical importance.⁶⁴

We may, following Whitehead, call the billiard ball a 'society' instead of an interactive continuum, and the stable order interactions within the billiard ball, the personal 'order' of that society or billiard ball.⁶⁵

The precise sense of the way that an interactive continuum differs from processes conceived on atomistic lines is that the continuous process is

⁶³Ibid., p. 154.

⁶⁴cf. Above, p. 8.

⁶⁵Ratner "Introduction", p. 155. cf. note 66.

viewed as primary. What is then singled out as an element or "atom" is thought of as arising from its place in the interaction, not before the interaction. Parts or elements not only do not in a sense exist before the interactive continuum, they come into being as parts, elements, aspects within the interactive continuum. The interaction or transaction is primary in Dewey's approach; the elements and distinctions arise within or after the interaction and are in that sense secondary.

The primacy of the interaction and its relation to its elements or aspects can be illustrated on the level of physical process, by the example of colliding billiard balls. It is significant that this example is used, because the colliding billiard ball system was a paradigm of a mechanistic approach, which stressed the importance of atoms.^{65a} It is Ratner's contention that once the billiard balls form a system or interactive continuum, each member or element, distinguishes itself in the long run, due to its particular place in the continuum. In that way the interactive continuum gives rise to the specific nature of each of its elements.

Assume to start with that the billiard balls are all alike in every character of their composition. Just as soon as they are placed in line and the interactivity is set going between the cue and the first ball, the balls become differentiated from each other by the variations in their actions and interactions. Initially, these differentiations or variations are solely due (by hypothesis) to their respective positions in the line-up, their nearness to or remoteness from the starting interaction. But suppose that the interactivity continues for an appreciable length of time. What happens as a consequence? The differentiations result in internal changes in the balls themselves. At the very least, they wear out at different rates. . . . They become, in so forth, individualized.⁶⁶

^{65a} cf. note 66.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 154-155

The above example illustrates the relationship between the interactive continuum and element that Ratner asserts, and I believe, Dewey held. Again it is significant that this apparently mechanistic interaction is used as an example because if anywhere, that process seems to illustrate the idea that parts of processes do not change as a result of their participation in the process. However, extending the time-length that the interaction occurs, it can be seen even with billiard balls that individual differences arise as a result of the interactive process. The example makes clear the idea that the interaction or transaction is primary, individual uniqueness, must be viewed in the context of the overall interactive system.

A couple of important points can be seen from the billiard ball example. First it is through the interactive continuum that new qualitative individualities emerge and through which they can be controlled. This claim is in line with the point made earlier that for Dewey qualitative uniqueness and interactive relationships complement one another in natural processes.⁶⁷ Not only do interactive continua exist, but they can interact with other interactive continua. The new larger, so to speak, interactive system, will have a qualitative uniqueness all its own, which to an extent should not have been predicted from the earlier interactive histories. "New" individualities with enhanced meanings are thus intimately related to the building of new interactions and transactions.

To again use the billiard ball example to make matters a bit more concrete:

When the interactivities of the six billiard balls are kept going for a sufficiently long period of time, the consequence is the

⁶⁷cf. Above, p. 35.

creation of a new qualitative whole, a new interactive continuum, a new society. In the process of creation of the new society the members are changed, both as to their own individual boundaries and the personal order of each. The boundaries of the new society, or the interactive continuum are vastly different from boundaries of the members as constituent and interactive within the new society. The new society, taking it as a totality has its 'personal order', its 'causal law' its pervasive qualitative unity.⁶⁸

The following important points concerning Dewey's idea of interaction or transaction can now be made out rather clearly. First, the newly emerged qualitative unity, that arises after the billiard balls interact "for a sufficiently long period of time", is substantially different from the preceding "personal orders" or interactive systems. Novelty in an important sense really exists in Dewey's world-view. We shall see this more clearly in the next section.⁶⁹

Secondly, the new interactive continua, are not considered less real merely because it is temporally secondary, or is composed of more elementary interactions. In fact, if the prize of "greater reality" were to be given to any part of the interactive process described above, it would be given to the new, more comprehensive transaction that exists at the end of the process. This is true because as an interactive continuum it is wider and more refined than the systems that went before. It is on this basis that Dewey could later claim that human societies, as the most comprehensive interactive continuum known, can be conceived as "more real" than more primitive forms of interactive continua.⁷⁰ In sum, then, it is to be noted that the new interactions must be regarded as real on its level as the earlier interactions were on their levels.

⁶⁸Ratner, "Introduction", pp. 155-156.

⁶⁹cf. Below, p.58.

⁷⁰Dewey "Inclusive", in Philosophy and, pp. 77-92.

The reality of interactive systems is a crucial part of Dewey's theory of natural process. In the organization of billiard balls, it can be seen that it is not the case that all that exists are individual billiard balls which do not suffer any change by their place in the interactive continuum. Depending upon which interactive "society" the billiard ball is in, which set of transactive relations define its place, the particular billiard ball will at least wear out at a unique rate. Put in another way, in studying the change a billiard ball will undergo in an interactive system with other billiard balls, the transaction between that billiard ball and its "environment", i.e. the organization and movement of the other billiard balls on the table, will be of prime importance.

Thirdly, another important point of example is, the individual continua, that enter into the wider continuum, are changed by that very transaction, and are not left in changeless stability. Here is a major difference between Dewey's position and the atomism it was contrasted with above.⁷¹ The individual atoms of, say, Moore were complete and finished, unopen to change, no matter what relation they enter into. Even in Moore's theory of "organic wholes" as presented in his Principia Ethica, the intrinsic value of the element of the organic whole is unaffected by being so placed.⁷² For Dewey, however, an interactive continuum, a qualitative whole, is by its nature an incomplete, moving affair, and is transformed by its interactive relations. In Dewey's worldview there are no unchangeable substances or elements. On the contrary, we are presented with a world which, even though possessing relatively stable continuities, can

⁷¹cf. Above, p. 46.

⁷²Moore, Principia, p. 27.

develop new qualities with enlarged interactions.

The stablest thing we can speak of is not free from conditions set to it by other things. That even the solid earth, mountains, the emblems of constancy, appear and disappear like the clouds is an old theme of morealists and poets.⁷³

The final point of this section is that not only are the qualitative immediacies correlative to the interactive relations, but it is through the latter that the former may be controlled and generated. Interaction is the handle we have to develop desirable qualities in nature, and indeed in human personality. The existence of desirable qualities is notoriously insecure, and it is only by knowing the interactive conditions that account for the generation of such qualities, that the precariousness can be lessened.

While 'consciousness as the conspicuous and vivid presence of immediate qualities and of meanings, is alone of direct worth, things not immediately present, whose intrinsic qualities are not directly had are primary from the standpoint of control. For just because the things that are directly had are both precarious and evanescent, the only things that can be thought of is the conditions under which they are had.⁷⁴

In short, on the level of natural processes, as on the level of human activity, the relationship between qualitative immediacy and interactive continua is such, that it is only by the proper understanding and manipulation of the latter that desirable results are reached with respect to the former.

Temporality

Certainly one of the most distinctive aspects of Dewey's metaphys-

⁷³Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 61.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 97.

ics is the emphasis on the reality of temporal events. In fact Dewey conceived of this emphasis, along with some of his contemporaries; as marking a major shift in Western philosophy, at least in the mainstream. The shift basically is from an outlook where time was taken, in some sense, as being not real. Time was viewed as characterizing a relatively unreal and unimportant realm of being, with respect to true reality or the absolute.

As usual Dewey found the source of this difficulty in ancient Greek philosophy with its great influence on subsequent theorizing. It is Dewey's contention that the Greeks supplied the theoretical legitimacy for the primacy of the immutable; change, where time is all important, is associated with a lower realm of being, associated with the world of mere opinion and appearance.

They supposed that they could correct these defects and supplement their lack by purely 'logical' or 'rational' means. They supposed that thought could take the material supplied by ordinary perception, eliminate varying and hence contingent qualities, and thus finally reach that fixed and immutable form which makes particulars have the character they have; define the form as the essence of true reality of the particular thing in question, and then gather a group of perceived objects into a species which is as eternal as its particular exemplifications are perishable.⁷⁵

In this passage Dewey describes the traditional "realm of being" approach, involving gradations of worth in regard to change: the most changing or "mutable" at the bottom and the most changeless and "immutable" at the top. The view is easily recognizable, but what Dewey is about is to point out the obsolescence of the idea that reality is immutable, whether conceived with respect to nature or human life. This fight against modern mani-

⁷⁵Dewey, *Quest*, p. 90.

festations of the idea of immutable reality, marks a long strand in Dewey's philosophical career.

A central aspect of Dewey's genetic approach to certain ideas, was not merely to trace the idea back to its historical origins, but also to show the function the idea accomplished in its historical context. By so doing the idea can then be criticized on the basis of changed contexts, demanding changed ideas. Dewey argues that the idea of a changeless immutable reality is a product of a society, which, because it has not developed science and technology to a very refined level, has little ability to influence the course of events. As a result the belief in a changeless reality operates as a relieving compensation for the lack of control of change. The quest for certainty, the positing of a changeless reality in whatever form, is for Dewey the product of, and appropriate to, the time when change was virtually beyond man's power to control. Practical activity, along with all generation and decay, as a result came to be deemed inferior in value to the immutable world of reality.⁷⁶

Dewey's genetic analysis of certain ideas, as outlined in the preceding paragraph has been subject to great criticism. The use of Dewey's method in philosophical investigations, it is argued, disregards the truth value of a particular idea. An idea either has convincing or unconvincing arguments; its origin seems to be singularly irrelevant. All this talk of pointing out the role played by an idea in slave-holding Greece, is an unwarranted intrusion of politics and ideology in philosophy.

To this I think Dewey would respond, and I must add that I would agree, that certain basic ideas cannot be fully understood if they are viewed out of the social context they function in. That ideas play a

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 19.

leading role in helping adjust behavior to given situations, which are in many cases social and even political, cannot be denied. If ideas do play this adjustment role, then it follows that they can be criticized by failure to meet adjustment requirements. All talk of shifts in fundamental social reality becomes relevant, because with such a change, new ideas, new modes of adjustment will be needed to secure harmony in activity.

In this case of immutable reality, the relevant question is, is the social adjustment factor basic in understanding the import of this idea? Dewey, of course, argued that a traditional goal of speculation has been such a changeless reality, not affected by the battering of time. This is obviously true of the platonic tradition but also of Aristotle, who, while giving change a central place in the scheme of things, held that all change was guided by changeless forms and essences.

Dewey argues that all the evidence of modern science, with its ubiquitous experimentation points toward the view that there is no changeless reality that is the basis of, or guides, change. In area after area Dewey argues convincingly that the idea of a changeless reality has no place in the modern world. Since such a program is so obviously a part of Dewey's program I will not bother to present sources.

The question then becomes, why do philosophers persist in seeking and positing immutable reality, if they do not fit in the modern world? Dewey's answer is that this idea in the modern world is a manifestation of a habit or custom that developed in different social conditions. Since Dewey feels that the evidence against immutable reality is so overwhelming, what other source for its persistence can be found than habit or custom.

Further, how can the success of habits and customs be viewed, without taking into account adjustments to social environments. In short Dewey's use of his genetic method in analyzing the quest for immutable reality, is in my eyes justified, and really the only way this idea can be accounted for in a world where change is ubiquitous.

In the modern world the quest for certainty, the denial of the ubiquity of change, takes many sophisticated forms. Since the conditions in which the idea arose have changed so significantly, the idea of immutable reality takes the form in Dewey's eyes, of a "superstition".⁷⁷ Dewey lists such manifestations of this superstition as: "to deny the existence of change, to mumble universal and necessary law, the ubiquity of cause and effect, the uniformity of nature, universal progress, and the inherent rationality of the universe."⁷⁸ With this criticism in mind, then, it was Dewey's task to develop a theory of natural change, that possessed no changeless aspect. In a word, the reality of time, with all its inherent uncertainty, had to be a guiding principle in his theory.

Part of Dewey's metaphysical doctrine of natural temporality involves the rejection of determinism as an outmoded restriction on natural change. Only when the future is more or less "open" can a real sense be given to the idea of "individuality", both on the level of natural genus, as well as on the human level. Dewey's major point here is that individuality only has meaning when change is real, and change is real only if real possibilities exist, and outcomes can be put in doubt.

⁷⁷Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 41.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 41.

For change and time to be real, determinism, either of the mechanical or teleological sort must be rejected. If natural change were the determined unfolding of a mechanical cause or teleological end, then the notion of real possibility, the idea that each moment can be a new beginning, in fact the idea of change or history itself, would be meaningless.

Both (mechanism and teleology) isolate an event from the history in which it belongs and in which it has its character. both make a factiously isolated position a mark of true reality, one theory selecting the initial place and the other the final place. But in fact causality is another name for the sequential order itself; and since this is an order of a history having a beginning and ends, there is nothing more absurd than setting causality over against either initiation or finality. . . . Empirically, however, there is a history which is a succession of histories, and in which any event is at once both beginning of one course and close of another.⁸⁰

What Dewey seems to mean here by the empirical reality of histories, is that it distorts the understanding of a time segment to view it out of the context of the larger process in which it is functioning. For example to describe a concrete process such as a billiard ball interaction as the effect of an earlier cause or a plant growing as the reaching of a pre-existent final end, is to forget that each billiard ball collision is part of the larger interaction, and can be viewed as the completion of an old interaction or the initiation of a new one. Dewey's point is that it makes no sense to say that the motion of one billiard ball is the cause of another determining the latter's motion, if that first billiard can be viewed as a completion of an earlier process, an initiation of a new process or the midpoint of a process. All that exists is the billiard ball interaction; whether a particular point is viewed as the initiation of a course of events, or the end of a course of events,

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 84-85.

depends upon its interests of the one making the analysis.

In sum Dewey viewed natural processes, not as affairs where causes or ends necessarily determine the outcome of processes, but as histories, where separate states do not exist and where real possibilities do exist. Dewey argued against what he called "the superstition of necessity" in a relatively early article.⁸¹ There Dewey argues that the idea of necessity, causal determination in science, is an obsolete approach to natural processes. It will be replaced by the conception of processes as unified wholes or histories with various aspects.

Only as the consciousness of the unity grows still more is it seen that instead of a group of independent facts, held together by "necessary" ties, there is one reality, of which we have seen various fragments in succession and attributing to them a spurious wholeness and independence. We learn (but only at the end) that instead of discovering and then connecting together a number of separate realities, we have been engaged in the progressive definition of one fact.⁸²

Further, Dewey asserts in a not often discussed article "Time and Individuality", that not only does the notion of individuality presuppose the existence of histories, but time itself would have little meaning in the world if histories weren't basic. It is argued that if time is to make a real difference in the world, the world must contain histories which contain real possibilities. From Dewey's perspective, to say as mechanical and teleological determinists do, that what happens is the necessary result of another state or force, either past or future, is to say that time is not real, it is an illusion. Without Dewey's histories or courses of events, where real future possibilities exist,

⁸¹John Dewey "The Superstition of Necessity" in Vol. 4 of Early Works of John Dewey, p. 21.

⁸²Ibid., p.

time would be, in a crucial sense, meaningless.

Genuine time, if it exists as anything else except the measure of motions in space, is all one with the existence of individuals as individuals, with the creative, with the occurrence of unpredictable novelties. Everything that can be said contrary to this conclusion is but a reminder that an individual may lose his individuality, for individuals become imprisoned in routine and fall into the level of mechanisms.⁸³

Without getting into the question of the correct interpretation of the statistical form of modern atomic physics, it is true that Dewey interpreted this statistical form to mean that "real possibilities," time, existed in nature. Dewey here follows those philosophers who interpret modern statistical physics as proof of individual indeterminacy. Such insistence upon natural indeterminacy, in this context, reinforces the idea of continuity as developed in this dissertation. Just as the interpersonal aspect of human activity is the "higher level continuant"⁸⁴ of the interactive or associative phase of natural activity, so Dewey's emphasis upon the reality of individual choice with respect to ends and ideal possibilities is the higher level continuant of the indeterministic aspect of natural histories.

In Dewey's interpretation, the future of an individual electron, for example, is not strictly determined; it could conceivably wind up in a variety of places. This indeterminacy is what the "reality of time" means at this level. Since the place of the individual electron is not determined, the passage of time with respect to where one can expect the electron to be is real. If determinism reigned in this context then the future state of the electron would be merely the working out of what

⁸³John Dewey, "Time and Individuality" in Dewey, Experience, Nature and Freedom, ed. Bernstein, p. 241.

⁸⁴cf. Above, p. 11.

existed earlier. The concept of real possibility would lose all meaning, since all events could conceivably be predicted from a knowledge of the initial state. In short Dewey's indeterminism can be viewed not only as a more or less cogent interpretation of the results of modern physical science, but also as pointing toward the real choices involved in human activity, which it is continuously connected with.

The idea that the "historical process" with its multiple possibilities and its initiations and culminations, is the key to understanding real individuality, on the natural or the human level, is crucial to understanding Dewey's temporalism. Individuality, the creative initiation forward in time, is not merely a generic trait of human experience for Dewey, but is really a trait of all natural processes. Human life represents this temporalism, this historical creativity, at its most heightened pitch.

In this insistence upon the reality of individualized histories, Dewey is very much in the center of the great "process" philosophers of the twentieth century: Bergson, James, and Whitehead, all of whom were opposed to relegating time and temporal considerations to an inferior or illusory status, both in the world at large and in human life in particular. Above all, the creative potentiality of time was emphasized and was at the center of the various conceptions of process or history.

With Dewey, however, the appeal to the continuity of the creativity involved in human activity, with the temporal aspect of physical processes, was central.

The difference between the inanimate and animate is not so easily wiped out. But it does show that there is no fixed gap between them. The conclusion which most naturally follows, without indulging in premature speculations, is that the principle of

developing career applies to all things in nature, as well as human beings - that they are born, undergo qualitative changes, and finally die, giving place to other individuals.⁸⁵

Natural temporality, as here conceived, is the existence of "histories," and is logically related to a theory of the reality of the individual, because part of what is meant by "history" in this context is the continuity of the process involving contingent possibilities in the future. It is true that Dewey believed that the future state of a system will be the result of interactions undergone, but each interaction is consistent with a range of possible outcomes. It is for this reason that Dewey stressed the statistical form of modern science.

To say this is not arbitrarily to introduce mere change into the world. It is to say that genuine individuality exists; that individuality is pregnant with new developments; that time is real. If we knew, for example, enough about Shakespeare's life we could doubtlessly show after Hamlet was produced how it connected with other things. But no one with the fullest knowledge of Shakespeare's past could have predicted the drama as it stands.⁸⁶

Dewey, in ascribing reality to "histories" and real possibilities arising seems to be projecting a vital aspect of human life onto the processes of nature. The question thus arises, is not Dewey guilty of anthropomorphism? All this talk of histories, possibilities and individualities may or may not be true of human activity, but what possible relevance can it have to the level of moving electrons and falling bodies?

This objection misses a central theme of this dissertation and that is that the category of temporality as it applies to the level of natural process, even though the same word "history" is used, is not the

⁸⁵Dewey, "Time and" in Experience, Nature, p. 236.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 240.

same in form as its human continuant. Certainly Dewey felt the word "history," referring as it does to the continuity between past, present, and future, and the existence of real future possibilities, existed in the form of indeterminism on the physical level. If history in a weak form would not be found on the level of physical process Dewey's naturalistic continuity would have to be abandoned. But when it is remembered that by "history" on the physical level Dewey means something less refined and hence much different, from the rich cultural significance of human history, the sting of the objection vanishes.

Finally, I will note again, in Dewey's analysis of time and individuality, is the consistency of the ideas of individualized uniqueness and relational interactionism, that is a current theme in the corpus of Dewey's writings. Here, again, Dewey's advance on many of his predecessors can be seen. The natural individual is not a ready-made simple, which can at most only change in spatial position, but is rather the result of an interactive system, a relational process. The idea of substance, conceived as an absolutely self-dependent compilation is denied in favor a "moving" temporal conception of the individual, which is constantly being created or made by the various interaction it enters into. The consistency of these two aspects of natural processes will be fruitful if not a central vantage point, to understand the foundations of Dewey's social psychology.

The Social Act as Dewey's Basic Paradigm

Perhaps at this point the direction my dissertation is taking will be clear. It appears that Dewey's key idea of the "socialized,

individual" as it appears in the foundations of his theory of human activity emerges out of a nature that is "continuous" with it. It might be objected that Dewey only presented the view of nature that he did because he wanted to see nature as continuous with human life. By his theory of continuity Dewey overcomes the dichotomy of human life and nature that affects much of modern philosophy. The question is, is he doing it legitimately?

In my opinion, Dewey acquired the basic categories of his world view from a social paradigm. This fact, however, cannot be used to criticize Dewey's theory, because such criticism would be a clear instance of the generic fallacy (which Dewey is constantly criticized as committing), in that the basis of the criticism derives from the source of the idea, and not from the available evidence. This being said, I do think it would help the understanding of Dewey's (or Whitehead's or Mead's) worldview, if we briefly sketch the paradigm from which the categories arise. This is an exercise in interpretation, not in truth, which must be judged on independent grounds.

First, in the social act, activity is central; hence there is no place for static timeless attributes. Here temporalism as a category assumes key importance. With the act, time, in the "real" sense of histories with real possibilities becomes of decisive importance, for the notion of act as here used includes the ideas of real possibilities and novelty.⁸⁷

Secondly, using the social act as Dewey's paradigm, points toward the category of interaction. By use of the term "social" in the suggested

⁸⁷Above, p. 58.

root metaphor, attention is drawn toward the idea that activity does not occur in isolation, but is conditioned by other activities. The act itself can only be understood in context, in its place in a system or continuum of interaction. That the act, on the human level, is social is a prime factor that sets Dewey's theory of action apart from other theories, where action is analyzed in terms of subjective psychological states or of behavioral responses, seen out of social interactive contexts.

Thirdly, the social act points toward the category of qualitative uniqueness. It is a matter of course, in Dewey's view, that acts do not occur in a purely formal realm, but in particular circumstances, and manifesting particular qualities. The qualitative uniqueness of the act, as a category of Dewey's root metaphor, can help us understand the importance Dewey attached to this notion in his most important metaphysical project, Experience and Nature.

The "social act" thus serves as a paradigm on all three levels of activity; physical, biological, and human. On the human level, the social act exists in its most refined and complete form. On the lower levels, the social act exists in a less developed form, but still exhibiting the categories that determine the structure of the social act. It is because of this continuity that Dewey was able to claim that he set the foundation for a "naturalistic" conception of human activity and social life.

CHAPTER II

GENERIC TRAITS ON THE LEVEL OF BIOLOGICAL PROCESS

The level of activity that traditionally stood in the way of interpreting human life as continuous with nature was the biological level.⁸⁸ For the categories of qualitative uniqueness, interaction, and temporalism, to be applicable to the biological sphere a revolution in biological science was necessary. Using Kuhn's language⁸⁹ a new paradigm had to be formed in biology that would have these categories as primary presuppositions.

I contend that it is Dewey's position that the main philosophical importance of Darwin's work on evolution was that he provided such a new paradigm. Philosophically Dewey argues that Darwin's importance lies in his applying the same categories to the biological sphere that the great initiators of the revolution in physics applied to the physical realm.⁹⁰

The biological realm is, however, not "merely" the physical realm; the former manifest the categories of qualitative uniqueness, interaction, and temporalism in more refined form than the latter.

⁸⁸Dewey, Influence, p. 8.

⁸⁹cf. Above, p. 26.

⁹⁰cf. Above, p. 13.

The very fact that at the level of biological activity, ends and primitive forms of communication arise, indicate a more sophisticated form of activity than could ever exist on the physical level.

In terms of a revolution in science and philosophy, Darwin's importance for Dewey, and American philosophy and science, was crucial if not always recognized. Before Darwin's work, Dewey asserts, the biology of fixed ends and essences governed. On the pre-Darwinian theory, the processes of biological functioning and growth were thought to be controlled and determined by an immutable changeless form, operating outside of the particular process.⁹¹

In an important sense the biological approach that is associated with Aristotle denied essential change, i.e. that the essence of anything undergoes substantial change. This does not mean of course that particular changes found no place in Aristotle's system. Aristotle did indeed note, analyze and categorize many types of changes. In the sense, however, of the forms or ends of changes, the Stagyrte left no room for change. All acorns, for example, wherever they may be always tend toward an oaktree end. As Dewey understands Aristotle, with regard to the form and end of these process, we are involved with an immutable reality.

In pre-Darwinian biology the form exists behind the actual concrete processes of life. The reason why, for example, an acorn grows in its "natural" development into an oak tree, is that part of the acorn's substance includes a guiding form, which if the material conditions are conducive, will steer the growing seed along the natural path. On Dewey's

⁹¹Dewey, Influence, p. 5.

view, basic to the pre-Darwinian viewpoint is the idea that the natural form exists, independent of interactive natural processes, which occur at specific times, and exhibit qualitatively unique features. The sole function of the latter "situation" is to serve as the breeding ground where the changeless form might find concrete expression.

As long as it was believed that behind the concrete interactive processes of nature there existed immutable essences, determining the ideal activity of a given process, then for so long concrete interactions could only be of limited importance.

The formal activity which operates throughout a series of changes and holds them to a single course; which subordinates their aimless flux to its own perfect manifestation; which transcends the boundaries of space and time, keeps individuals distant in space and remote in time to a uniform type of structure and function: this principle seems to give insight into the very nature of reality itself. To it Aristotle gave the name Eidos. This term the scholastics translated species.⁹²

As long as the biology of fixed species was maintained, continuity between physical processes and biological functioning, and later between biological functioning and human social activity, could not be maintained. The continuity cannot be maintained because, in the sense that I am using the word continuity in this dissertation,⁹³ two levels are continuous if the same categories are applicable to both levels. We saw in the prior section⁹⁴ that Dewey felt three categories were applicable to physical level owing to the generic traits manifest there: qualitative uniqueness, interaction, and temporalism. It is precisely

⁹²Ibid., p. 6.

⁹³cf. Above, p. 6.

⁹⁴cf. Above, p. 94.

these categories and the traits they refer to that are denied by the "fixed species" biology. The interaction between the organism and the environment is not central because attention is drawn to it only as a means of manifesting activity in accordance with the basic fixed end. The concrete quality of interaction is lost sight of in favor of a general definition of the species. All temporal considerations are lost sight of in the search for immutable universal species. Until these characteristics were regarded as central in the biological sciences, the naturalistic worldview, as held by Dewey, was quite impossible.

In Dewey's interpretation of the history of philosophy, it was mainly the work of Darwin that succeeded in revolutionizing biology from its quest for fixed species to its study of concrete interactions. Darwin's theory replaced the notion of species as changeless forms to the pursuit of concrete interactions of the organism and the environment. The specific conditions in the struggle for existence that gave rise to a species and accounts for its change were now regarded as basic.

Darwin temporalized the idea of species. The species "horse" can serve as an example. Pre-Darwinian biology, according to Dewey, would aim at an analysis of the species horse that would include elements that would not vary over time or space. Once the notion of horse was defined and classified, any talk of origin or interaction in a temporally particular environment would be incidental. Dewey's claim is that this emphasis is reversed in Darwinian biology. Horses are there analyzed with respect to the concrete interaction between organism and environment in which they were generated. The emphasis is on the origin and change of species with regard to the specific conditions that gave rise to the

species. In the Darwinian analysis of the species "horse" it is the historically specific nature of the environmental-organismic interaction that assumes the place of central importance.

In sum Darwin's revolution in biology was philosophically significant because it did away with the need for fixed ends or species standing behind concrete biological functions. The variations and changes in organismic-environmental interactions were considered central and not a pre-existent form.

The Darwinian principle of natural selection cut straight under this philosophy. If all organic adaptations are due simply to constant variation and elimination of those variations which are harmful in the struggle for existence that is brought about by excessive reproduction there is no call for a prior intelligent force to plan and pre-ordain them.⁹⁵

Dewey's acceptance of the implications of Darwin's theory of evolution is particularly evident in Dewey's use of the concept of function. Before entering into an analysis of Dewey's use of this concept from the perspective of my thesis, I must consider the question of whether my proposed analysis of function is correct or central. The criticism, that it is not, is in my view inaccurate. It is correct, however, that the use I outline, is not the only one to be found in Dewey's writings. On some occasions, for example, Dewey uses the term "function" in the Jamsian sense, of the context of relation of an experience.⁹⁶ But even there Dewey uses the concept of function to argue against the notion that mental operations, are substantial beings. "To be 'in the mind' means to be in a situation in which the function of intending is

⁹⁵Dewey, Influence, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 104.

directly concerned."⁹⁷

But that does not preclude the use of the concept of function in the biological sense. Dewey clearly uses the term function in the way I have stressed in what follows. Such is the case when Dewey refers explicitly to the functioning of biological organisms and organs. It is also true when Dewey discusses the foundations of social psychology, which were conceived as continuous with biological activity. It seems therefore unfair to criticize my use of the term function as not Dewey's if on occasion Dewey uses the term in another sense. I do, of course, claim to be offering a major use of the term.

It is interesting for one concerned with Dewey's idea of continuity that Dewey's fullest discussion of the concept of function, appears in his early ethical writings.⁹⁸ On Dewey's view, a biological organism is a functioning organism; that is to say, most fundamentally the organism and the environment are in dynamic interaction. By saying "most fundamentally" I mean that Dewey wished to deny that any form or substance stood behind the interaction, giving it direction. On the contrary, if we are to keep such terms as form or individuality they must be defined in terms of the interaction. The active relation of an organism to its environment is considered primary, and anyone who thought there is a need to posit a form or substance behind this relation, particularly with respect to the human organism and his environment,

⁹⁷Ibid, p. 104.

⁹⁸John Dewey, Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics in Vol. III of Early Works, pp. 301-10

was the subject of Dewey's criticism, from the time he was a leader of the "functional" school of psychology.⁹⁹

An organ such as the stomach, for example cannot even be conceived as a stomach unless the specific way it interacts with food is taken into account. The basic fact about the stomach is its functioning, its interacting with its environment, food, in a specific way, digestion. To attempt to analyze the nature of "stomach" in terms of some internal organismic structure or form is really missing the major biological aspect of the stomach; the specific way it interacts with its special environment, food, to maintain the life of an organism. It is clear the biological organs, as functioning organs, can only be conceived in terms of ways of interacting between the organic structure and its environment.

The human organism, as continuous with biological organisms, also must be analyzed in terms of organismic-environmental interactions if it is to be correctly understood. Human capacities and habits are unthinkable without taking into account the specific environmental conditions needed for their proper functioning. Talk of an internal self that can develop without relating to environmental influences, can be criticized on the grounds that it does not recognize that human functioning, like biological functioning, can only be thought of in terms of organismic-environmental interactions. In human activity:

Let the gift be what it may (amiable or irascible, a talent for music or for abstract science, or for engineering) its existence, to say nothing of its culture, apart from surround-

⁹⁹J. Angell, "The Relations of Structural and Functional Psychology to Philosophy" in Chicago University, Decennial Publications (Chicago: University Press, 1903) Series I, Volume III.

ings is bare nonsense. . . . The important point is that the manner and the purpose of exercising his capacity is always relative to and dependent upon the surroundings. Apart from the environment the capacity is mere emptiness. . . .¹⁰⁰

On Dewey's view, even the environment considered as environment, cannot be conceived, without taking into account the organ or organism functioning in it. The functioning interaction is more basic than either the organ or the environment, because both concepts cannot be defined without taking into account the mutual interaction.

It may seem odd, on a common sense level, to say that the environment cannot be conceived without the organ or organism functioning within it. Wouldn't food, for example, still exist even if all organs were eliminated.

On reflection, the perplexity is cleared up. Food, for example, to be conceived as food, must be viewed as an environment for an organism, whether actual or possible. The idea of food has at its center the idea of an interaction with an organism, for the purpose of maintaining the existence of that organism. Also the particular interaction defines the type of environment that is being referred to. An insect, for example, that uses a carrot to run across and a rabbit that uses the same carrot to eat have different environments, because the type of interaction, of functioning differs. The carrot for the insect is a means of locomotion; while the carrot for the rabbit is a food, a source of nutrition. In short the idea of functioning, the concrete interaction of the organ or organism with its environment is primary; the organ and environment are secondary in the sense that they cannot be con-

¹⁰⁰Dewey, Outlines, p. 302.

ceived without the functioning.

In the same way the human organism determines different environments by interacting with the environment in various ways. It is with the environment as it is with the organ; both are defined in terms of the interaction which they participate in.

The environment is not simply the facts which happen objectively to lie about the agent; it is such part of the facts as may be related to the capacity and the disposition and the gifts of the agent. . . . The moment we realize that only what one conceives as proper material for calling out and expressing some internal capacity, is part of his surroundings, we see not only that capacity depends upon environment but that environment depends upon capacity. ¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 303.

DEWEY'S CONCEPT OF BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION AND THE THREE CATEGORIES

We can now see why the three categories developed at the level of physical processes apply to the biological level. Particularly is this true after we recognize the relevance of the notion of interactive continuum in the latter realm. The concept refers to the real relation the members of the continuum have to one another as participants in this interaction. Dewey's concept of transaction brings out more clearly the idea that the individuality of the participants of an interaction, is determined by the mode of participation and is not an independent, pre-existent fact. To emphasize this continuum is to deny the existence of independent and immutable forms, essences or souls that lie behind the concrete interactions in nature and life. Dewey's idea of function thus incorporates Darwin's theory in a form that accentuates the idea of interactive continua, but also makes the notion of function applicable to human activity.

Qualitative Uniqueness

This aspect of functional biological processes can be seen clearly when we remember that an organ functions not in a general way, but is always a specific organ functioning in a concrete environment. Each functioning interaction is in an important sense unique, because it is this organ, functioning in this environment, in just this way.

It is this unique particular quality that characterizes each interaction that Dewey believed was a major implication of Darwin's work. Dewey asserts that any scientist or logician that takes Darwin seriously will concentrate not on searching for general definitions, but will inquire into specific and unique interactions that generate organs and species and indeed whatever is under investigation.

Once admit that the sole verifiable or fruitful object of knowledge is the particular set of changes that generate the object of study, together with the consequences that then flow from it, and no intelligible question can be asked about what, by assumption, lies outside.¹⁰²

To clarify the manifestation of qualitative uniqueness on the biological level, I will present an example. A biologist in a pre-Darwinian inquiry into the nature of the species "dog" would aim at a definition of "dog" that was final and immutable, whether or not this aim was fulfilled. The definition would not vary in different environments, nor would it be subject to change. A particular dog, which interacted in a unique way with its environment, would be of interest to this inquiry only as a manifestation of the general definition of the species dog.

The post-Darwinian biologist, according to Dewey, would aim at an understanding of the particular dog's functions and changes in particular unique environments. The inquiry of the post-Darwinian scientist differs in aim and emphasis with respect to the importance ascribed to unique qualities. It seeks to understand not dogs in general but the particular origin and consequence of say this particular dog's or this particular type of dog's nose for example. To a scientist who has learned Darwin's lesson, there will be a shift of interest "from the wholesale essence

¹⁰²Dewey, Influence, p. 14.

back of special changes to the question of how special changes serve and
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 defeat concrete purposes. . . .

It is to be noted that the type of qualitative uniqueness that exists on the biological level of activity is in an important sense more complex and refined than what exists on the physical level. While it is true that on the physical level unique qualities exist, at the biological level these qualities take place in the context of goal directed behavior. It is essential to the concrete nature of biological functions that each organ serve the purpose of the survival of the species. It is not merely that an organ possess this quality in relation to its interactions, but that its quality depends upon its specific purpose in maintaining the existence of a particular species in a concrete environment.

Temporality

With the notion of function, Dewey introduces novel and more refined meaning into the category of temporality. In the first place, functioning, as was pointed out in the immediately preceeding section does not occur in a universal form; it occurs and changes in concrete transaction with the environment, at specific times. An interactive system or continuum, by its very uniqueness, involves reference to the specific time that the functioning occurs.

This point can also be illustrated by recalling that Dewey's idea of function was designed also to incorporate the Darwinian rejection of fixed, immutable forms. The functioning of an organ that is characteristic of a particular species, is open to change with a change in the

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 15.

environment. Of course biological change is a relatively slow process, when compared to human history, but there is no place for immutable forms.

The change in functioning, of the organ or organism--environmental interaction, is the main way that time is a factor on the biological level. To view functions as peculiar ways of interaction between organism and environment is also to say that these interactions may be upset by a change in either the organism or the environment. The feathers, for example, of some species of bird may function harmoniously in a tropical environment, but if biting cold sets in, the interaction will be upset. At that temporal point, either adjustments in organismic functioning are made over time, or the species will become extinct. Changes that occur at specific times, and for specific lengths of time, mean life or death to biological organisms.

Fruitful functioning between organism and environment, then is not an immutable state, but rather a delicate balance that if upset must be re-adjusted. Time, especially future time, is extremely important to biological functioning, because the future can bring extinction or harmonious readjustment. In short, then, Dewey's concept of function is also characterized by the temporality that was evident on the physical level of activity.¹⁰⁴

Organic-environmental interactions are also characterized by temporal considerations in another important sense, in Dewey's view, and that is the "rhythm" of need-satisfaction involved within any particular function. Time is important to biological functioning not only because it can bring change or even extinction, but also within the functioning there is this rhythm.

¹⁰⁴cf Above, 54.

Just as Dewey argued for the existence of "histories" on the physical level of activity,¹⁰⁵ he is also believed that temporal continuity, a fusion of past, present, and future, characterizes much organismic-environmental interaction. To use Dewey's example, a bird builds a nest when internal organ and environment do not interact in harmony. The need of the instinct of mothering, if such there be, is not answered by what exists in the environment. Certain patterns of behavior, guided by the need, are then engaged in. Temporal considerations are of the essence in this need-satisfaction rhythm in that the past, the point of initiation of the need, controls present activity, for a satisfactory future.

A bird builds its nest and beaver its dam when internal organic pressures cooperate with external materials, so that the former are transformed in a satisfactory culmination.¹⁰⁶

It is because these rhythms, these initiations and consumations, exist on the biological level of functioning, that Dewey can claim that human activity, which is characterized by a more refined form of rhythm, is continuous with the biological order of activity.

Interaction

The interactive or transactive phase of the functional process stands out clearly. In fact the very explanation Dewey gives of biological functioning centers upon the interaction of the organ with the environment.¹⁰⁷ Unlike the billiard ball model used by Joseph Ratner to illustrate Dewey's idea of interaction on the physical level, biolog-

¹⁰⁵cf. Above , p.62.

¹⁰⁶John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), p. 25.

¹⁰⁷cf. Above, p. 67.

ical interaction aims at a state of harmony between the organ and the environment, that tends to insure the survival of the organism and species. The biological and physical levels of activity can then be distinguished by Dewey with reference to the type of interaction involved. For the physical level, we do not have the use of environmental factors for the purpose of maintaining the being of a, say, billiard ball, while interaction does tend to maintain the existence of the organism.¹⁰⁸

Dewey's emphasis upon the importance of functions in understanding biological as well as human activity, can be viewed, in part, as an attempt to take into account the philosophical significance of Darwin's theory. As was pointed out above ¹⁰⁹pre-Darwinian biologists searched for fixed and immutable forms, which were thought to guide biological processes. As fixed and immutable, these forms were not affected by the concrete and varied process that actually occur in the world. The forms control life processes distant in time and space, irregardless of special interactions. Concrete interactions, therefore, were of little scientific and philosophic account.

This formal activity which operates throughout a series of changes and holds them to a single course, which subordinates their aimless flux to its own perfect manifestation; which leaping the boundaries of space and time, keeps individuals distant in space and remote in time to a uniform type of structure and function; this principle seemed to give insight into the very nature of reality itself.¹¹⁰

Dewey's concept of biological functioning and also the idea of habit, which is continuous with biological functioning, was thought to

¹⁰⁸John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 1.

¹⁰⁹cf. Above, p. 67.

¹¹⁰Dewey, Influence, p. 5.

reflect Darwin's rejection of the idea of fixed forms. Dewey explains functioning in terms of concrete interactions between the organism and the environment. No place is left for changeless forms, because functioning can always change, given a variation in the environment or the organism. In taking the idea of functioning seriously, attention is drawn to concrete forces, that either help or hinder a particular interaction.

If a mode of functioning is upset, the interactive continuum is disharmonized, then either new forms of interaction are developed or the species will be hurt or become extinct. When the quest for generalized forms is given up, the only alternative is the study of concrete interactions, with the forces that tend to stabilize or change such interactions. To accept Darwin's conclusions and Dewey's theory of biological functioning, means that:

Interest shifts from the wholesale essence back of special changes to the questions of how special changes serve and defeat concrete purposes; shifts from an intelligence that shaped things once for all to the particular intelligences which things are even now shaping. . . .¹¹¹

This passage indicates the theory of human activity that will arise out of the theory of biological functioning. Because human functioning, the latter level of activity can provide the basis for understanding Dewey's theory of human activity, and indeed the ethics, logic, etc., that revolves around human activity. Dewey develops a psychology, based on functioning and habit that is a refined form, a higher-level-continuant, if you will, of concrete biological functioning. Dewey's idea of continuity, as developed in this dissertation can serve as a key to understanding the basis of his social psychology.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 15.

Mead's Contribution to the Concept of the Social Act

It was seen above that Dewey's theory of physical processes could very well be investigated by using the paradigm of the "social act".¹¹² It was there suggested that the three basic categories analyzed could be viewed as aspects of the "social act", taken as paradigmatic. By using the "social act" in this way, the basic continuity between the three levels of activity, could also be made manifest, since the same social act, can serve as a model on all three levels.

It would certainly be a serious obstacle to my thesis, if the "social act" had no relevance to biological functioning, for how could the continuity claimed be affirmed if the intermediary link was missing. The problem is further complicated by the fact that Dewey, offers us very little in this area. What we are given is an analysis of natural processes which, very comfortably, fits into a 'social act' model, and then given a theory of human activity, which takes social activity as the point of departure. A more detailed analysis of biological functioning, while hinted at, is not forthcoming. My problem then becomes: can a philosophy of biological activity be made out, in some detail, that would have as its model, the "social act?"

Fortunately, we have more detailed account of biological function, with a view of showing its continuity with meaningful human activity, not by Dewey, but by his friend and co-worker George Herbert Mead. In the introduction I asserted that Mead must be used to supplement Dewey, if Dewey's notion of continuity, as developed in this dissertation is to be fully understood.

Charles Morris describes the relationship of Dewey and Mead as a

¹¹²cf. Above, p. 67.

division of labor.¹¹³ Dewey, while delving deeply into question of psychology and human activity, did not concentrate on questions concerning the development of human social activity out of biological functioning. While Dewey profoundly applied the model of concrete social activity to many areas of human endeavor, the application of this model to biological activity was a task he did not, for the most part, concern himself with. Mead did attend to this question of continuity and can thus be taken as a necessary supplement to Dewey's naturalistic worldview.

If Dewey is at once the rolling rim and many of the radiating spokes of the contemporary pragmatic wheel, Mead is the hub.¹¹⁴

The problem of how meaningful human activity could be continuous with biological activity, was one which Mead made a lifelong project to solve. It was plain that Dewey left a gap between natural transactions and human associations, namely the origin of meaningful activity from biological forms. Dewey, himself, recognized Mead's problem and value:

The individual mind, the conscious self, was to him the world of nature first taken up into social relations, then dissolved to form a new self which then went forth to re-create the world of nature and social institutions.¹¹⁵

Unless the realm of meaning is shown to arise in a credible way out of biological activity, unless meaningful behavior can be significantly analyzed in terms of the three categories presented above, then the "principle of continuity" as analyzed in this dissertation, must be denied. Mead's problem then was really Dewey's problem and the goal of this section

¹¹³C. Morris "Introduction" in Mead, *Mind, Self*, ed. Morris, p. xi.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. xi.

¹¹⁵G. H. Mead, "Genesis of the Self and Social Control," International Journal of Ethics 35 (1924-1925), pp. 263-264.

is to outline Mead's solution to a point where I can show in outline how Mead filled this gap in Dewey's worldview.

Mead not only used the social act as a paradigm and incorporates the concept at the center of his social psychology. On his view, the social act in its most primitive form does not wait for the human species to develop, but in fact exists on the level of biological activity. As a primitive form, however, the essential variables of Mead's idea of social act can be isolated in a clear fashion.

Mead uses the example of a dog fight to analyze the idea of a "social act". The social act refers to a system of behavior, involving at least two organisms, where the controlling stimulus of one organism is the behavior of the other organism. In the example of the dogfight, the behavior of each dog is controlled by the movements, attacks and defenses exhibited by the other, with the goal of winning the dog fight. The goal of the social act, is the goal of the behavior; in this case, winning the dogfight.

In one passage Mead defines his basic terms.

A social act may be defined as one in which the occasion or stimulus which sets free an impulse is found in the character or conduct of a living form that belongs to the proper environment of the living form whose impulse it is. . . . I mean by a social object one that answers to all the parts of the complex act, though these parts are found in the conduct of different individuals. The objective of the act is then found in the life of the group, not in those of the separate individuals along.¹¹⁶

In short the social act is defined in terms of interactions between living forms.

Given the fact that Mead believed that the social act was basic to the behavior of higher animal organisms, how does it give rise to any sort of "meaningful" behavior? The social act as Mead's basic concept sounds

¹¹⁶Mead, Mind, Self, p. 45.

promising enough, but how does "sign" regulated behavior arise.

To understand this question, Mead's notion of "gesture" must be understood within the framework of the social act. It must be first noted that only organisms, with nervous systems sufficiently developed to allow "consciousness" of the future, and hence be involved in the temporal dimension of the social act, can participate in such acts, because the organism must "forsee" the end of the behavior of another organism, given its beginning. If a dog starts to lunge at the throat of another dog, the attacked dog must "forsee" the danger and regulate its behavior accordingly.

It is within the interactive, temporal framework of the social act that Mead defines his notion of "gesture," which is the beginning of meaningful behavior. The gesture is precisely the beginning phases of an act of one organism, that serves as a sign to another organism of what is to come. An organism could not participate in a social act, unless it could be guided by the gestures of another organism, because it is by means of such gestures that the behavior of the organisms are regulated. "Gestures are. . . . Those phases of the act which bring about the adjustment of the response of the other form."¹¹⁷

Mead's concepts of social act and gesture can be seen clearly in the example of the dogfight. By using the idea of the social act Mead intends to point out that the locus, if you will, of the act is not inside any particular dog, but rather resides in the interaction between the dogs involved. It is within the dogfight, interacting as participants, that each dog plays a role in the act. The gesture, which to Mead is the most primitive form of meaning, also cannot be referred to the internal workings of any particular dog. Gestures only have meaning within the interactive

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 6.

coordination of, in this case, one dog with another. However, meaningful behavior may manifest itself in higher forms, including human activity, its original form manifests itself in the context of an interactive coordination of more than one organism.

Particular social acts are the biological form of activity from which human meaningful activity arises. It is by recognizing the primitive biological form of meaningful behavior that some ideas about the nature of meaning and meaningful behavior are eliminated. The main idea, about meaning which is eliminated is that meaning has its source and nature in the internal workings of the organism or the mind. It is by stressing the importance of the social act on the biological level that the importance of social activity and interpersonal communication on the human level is understood. To achieve a "continuous" naturalistic conception of meaningful human activity, the locus of ones analysis will not be the internal functioning of the mind, but rather in the social behavior of the human organism. Interactive coordination for common goals will be the basic factor in understanding meaning and will be continuous with biological manifestations of the social act.

Mead's idea of the social act also exhibit the three categories outlined above.

Qualitative Uniqueness

The category of qualitative uniqueness is manifested in Mead's idea of the social act, in that the act occurs in particular circumstances and with particular organisms. There is something unique about each dogfight, for example. Each fight varies according to the, say food fought over, the size of the dogs, the species of dogs involved, etc. Even though there are many dog fights, there is no dogfight in general. Each fight possess its own peculiar qualities, and the coordination of each by means of

gestures differs with the different circumstances.

To make social acts the locus of a theory of the origin and nature of meaning, is to draw attention to the essentially concrete and practical side of meaning. Meaning arises and functions not in acts-in-general, but in particular social acts, and serves to coordinate particular interactions between organisms. Since each social act has its own unique qualities to it, meanings, if they are to guide and coordinate social acts, must have a concrete practical side, so they can relate such social acts.

The social act whether it exists on the biological or on the human level is an affair that has its own unique qualities. That is to say each social act, is in its own way unique, and since meaning, or Mead's theory, develops as a way of coordinating these qualitatively unique acts, it must be analyzed in such a way as to allow meanings to be used to guide these concrete acts. The gesture, as defined by Mead, is not a gesture-in-general; it is this specific gesture guiding this concrete social act.

Hence meaning, even on the human level, must have a concrete practical side, that will allow meaning to guide specific acts; if meaning was defined in the sphere of human activity, without regard to practical activity, the continuity that is central to Dewey's naturalistic view of man, would be lost. No matter how refined the systems of meaning, unless it was related in some way to qualitatively unique situations of social activity, it would be discontinuous with meanings that develop on the biological level. In short Dewey's and Mead's naturalism, rule out ideas about meaning, which could not relate to

concrete practical activity.

Interaction

Mead's central concept of the social act clearly highlights the importance of interaction on the biological level. The priority of the social act, means that what goes on in the internal workings of any particular organism is of secondary importance. What is important is the interaction between organisms. In the example of the dogfight, Mead is not mainly concerned with what goes on inside, physiologically, within any particular dog. He is concerned with each dog as a participant in the fight, which in this case is the social act under consideration. Gestures, then, which arise in the context of the social act, cannot be understood by merely studying the internal workings of any particular dog. It is for this reason that Mead referred to his analysis as "social behaviorism."

An interactive theory of meaning based on the social act, is inconsistent with views of the origin and nature of meaning which take into account only internal, mental or physiological, considerations. That Mead was concerned about the social, interactive aspect of activity, can be seen from his criticism of the behaviorism of Watson. It was Mead's contention that Watson, by emphasizing the internal physiological responses of the organism, lost sight of the fact that it was the behavioral interactions between organisms that were basic to understanding meaningful behavior, whether biological or human. Watson restricted his concept of behavior, Mead argues, to the internal responses of the organism, leaving the interactive social aspect of behavior of activity

out. In Watson's account behavior is controlled basically by the response of the nervous system, which is analyzed in a way that does not take into account participation in an interactive system of social activity with common goals.

In any case, this approach (Mead's) is one of particular importance because it is able to deal with the field of communication in a way which neither Watson nor the introspectionist can do. We want to approach language not from the standpoint of inner meanings to be expressed, but in its larger context of co-operation in the group taking place by means of signals and gestures. Meaning appears within that process.¹¹⁸

By making the interactive system of the social and fundamental, Mead is able to present a theory of meaning originating in animal gestures. In Mead's account physiological responses are to be seen, not as isolated determiners of behavior, but as participants within the general context of the social act. Communication is thought of not as internal movements, but as a way of co-ordinating the behavior of organisms within an inter-organismic act, which has as a goal or object, a common end. The control of an organism's behavior then, is not in the final analysis to be referred to the internal workings of any particular organism, mental or behavioristic, but to the common goal of the social act which the organism is participating in.

To be sure, Mead and Dewey are not saying that "internal" considerations; whether physiological or conscious are not important in understanding meaningful behavior. What they are saying is that the social act, an inter-organic interactive, system, is the most basic concept in understanding this type of behavior. Conscious thinking, nervous responses, are obviously important, but the social act is necessary to understand the origin and nature of these areas. Mead's claim is that only by relating

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 86.

the development of the "individual" mind or self etc. to an original social act, can they be understood.

By analyzing biological forms of behavior in terms of the social act, Mead is able to present a theory of meaningful behavior as continuous with biological behavior. The interactive system that is basic to Mead's idea of gestures on the animal level, becomes in a more refined form, the basis for understanding meaningful behavior on the human level. Human activity with all its complexity, involving minds, selves, and symbolic behavior, will be seen in the final analysis to be a development of the social act, an interactive system, in an extremely refined form.

Temporality

The category of Temporality appears in Mead's notion of the social act in several ways. First, the very fact that the act occurs with specific organisms in specific circumstances, means that it occurs at specific times. Since each social act has its own unique quality, the passage of time means that qualitative different acts will take place. Even if the "same" organism acts in the "same" environment, time will make a difference, since the organism is at least different in that it has performed the act at least once before.

Secondly, time is involved in the elemental "time consciousness" of the various organisms involved in the social act. To be guided by a gesture of a second organism, means that the guided organism, must be able to interpret the present gesture in terms of future behavior. When one dog starts to attack, the other dog must be guided by the prospect that the attacking dog will soon be in for the kill. In the sense, then, that the idea of gestures operating in social acts, involves an elemental "time

consciousness," means that temporalism as a category manifests itself in a more refined way than at the physical level.

Mead explains the possibility of this more refined temporal aspect of some organic behavior, by the refined and complex nervous system. It is because this complex structure exists that certain organisms can exhibit the "time consciousness" noted in the last paragraph. The further refinement of the nervous system provides the material basis for the much more complex time consciousness associated with human activity.

Our ideas of or about future conduct are our tendencies to act in several alternative ways in the presence of a given environmental situation-tendencies or attitudes which can appear, or be implicitly aroused, in the structure of the central nervous system in advance of the overt response or reaction to that situation, and which thus can enter as determining factors into the control or selection of this overt response.¹¹⁹

The third way that time and change appear in Mead's concept of the social act, is evident once we remember that Mead proposed his idea of a social act within a Darwinian framework. That is to say the social act is a way of responding to an environment, which in certain ways is hostile. The social act of the dog fight may be appropriate in an environment of severe food scarcity, but in an environment where survival depends upon cooperation or mutual aid, unless this type of social act developed over time, extinction of the species would probably result. There is no fixed immutable ends in the Meadian Theory of the social act, anymore than there is in the Darwinian picture. Social acts are functional ways of adopting to the environment, and if that environment changes, new forms of social acts will have to be generated over time to accomplish the needed readjustment.

¹¹⁹Mead, Mind, Self. p. 99.

CHAPTER III

THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEWEY'S SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

In discussing the foundations of Dewey's approach to human activity, it will be helpful to continue the theme developed above, that Dewey was about reconstructing the basic "paradigm," used to analyse human behavior. Dewey can therefore be interpreted as participating in a "revolution" in psychology.

Dewey was trying to do for the human world what Galileo did for the physical and Darwin did for the biological; and that is to change the basic paradigm and categories which guide inquiry into a particular subject-matter. The change of basic "paradigm" is in the view of Thomas Kuhn what scientific revolution are all about. In the cases of Galileo and Darwin the shift was from a paradigm of immutable ends and forms to one of concrete interactions. Since these "revolutions" resulted in paradigms with the same basic categories, they can be viewed as introducing continuity between the physical and biological levels of activity. Biological processes could be viewed as containing categories that are a more complex and refined form of the categories that exist on the level of physical process.

Dewey can be looked upon as attempting to take part in a revolution which would result in a new paradigm in the area of psychology or human behavior. The paradigm that Dewey wished to replace was one where human activity was interpreted as a manifestation of fixed ends

or substances that existed behind concrete behavior and which was the object of inquiry. Whether the object of inquiry was the mind, soul, ego, emotions, etc., it tended to draw attention away from concrete human interactions. This was parallel to the way independent ends were the object of inquiry before the revolutions of Galileo and Darwin.

In place of such a view, Dewey sought to develop a theory in which human activity could be approached in terms of the concrete interactions between the human organism and its environment. With Dewey's mode of inquiry, activity would be the object of experimentation and not a fixed self that operated behind and guided behavior. This meant, of course, that all the concepts organized around the old paradigm had to be either eliminated or reinterpreted in terms of the new interactive paradigm. Also all consequences of a theory of a fixed self in philosophical disciplines, such as ethics, logic, esthetics, had to be reinterpreted on the basis of the new categories. In short, what Dewey was about in his theory of the foundations of social psychology, was the presentation of a "revolutionary" paradigm for the study of human affairs.

In an important sense, however, Dewey's scientific revolution was the completion of the earlier revolutions in the physical and biological sciences. Dewey, by interpreting the data of psychology according to a new paradigm of concrete interactions, characterized by the three categories of qualitative uniqueness, interaction, and temporalism, brought the field of human activity into continuous relation with the physical and biological levels of activity. With respect to

the lower levels, Dewey's revolution in psychology, amounted to a completion of what can be called the "naturalistic revolution," because if my thesis is correct, Dewey's naturalism consisted precisely in the continuous relationship between the categories that characterize human activity with the lower orders of process.

By rejecting the idea of a fixed independent substance standing behind the variegated forms of concrete human activity, attention of the inquirer was focused on real functionings, the doings and under-goings of particular organisms in specific environments. In sum Dewey's social psychology marked a Kuhnian "revolution in science" in the sense that behavior was approached in novel terms with respect to earlier approaches, but also it marked a completion of the physical and biological revolutions, since the same categories could be used to analyze human affairs.

Dewey's approach to human activity and social psychology can be illustrated in philosophical disciplines which presuppose the approach. In fields such as logics, aesthetics, philosophy of education, etc., Dewey criticized theories that had as their basis, non-interactive theories of man. Dewey's purpose in this regard is to demonstrate that 1) the key categories and concepts of a discipline can best be understood in terms of an organism interacting with its environment. In the course of this interaction there are such factors as intelligence, experimentation, growth, and consummatory experiences 2) theories which interpret aspects of concrete interactions, as existing independently, either before or after the interaction, are wrong-

headed. These theories take an aspect of concrete transactions, and conceive it as existing in the form of an independent object.

This is not the place to explore deeply Dewey's interactive analysis of certain philosophical concepts, but as a means of illustrating the point, Dewey's basic approach to logic and his criticism of formal logic may be used. Logic was approached as a theory of inquiry, partly because Dewey wished to place the discipline of logic within the framework of the organismic-environmental interaction.¹²⁰ Logic, conceived as a mode of inquiry, can then be conceived as a tool to facilitate fruitful interaction. It is difficult to understand the time and energy that Dewey consumed in criticizing Aristotlean logic and modern formal logic, unless we realize Dewey's basic commitment to an interactive view of human activity. In a larger sense, for Dewey to admit the validity of a purely formal approach to logic would be to violate his naturalist commitment to the idea of continuity. Unless human activity could be viewed in terms of concrete interactions the continuity with physical and biological processes, which were so viewed, would be lost.

At this point I will explain how the three categories that were seen to lie at the core of Dewey's idea of physical had biological process exist on the level of human activity.

Interaction and/or Transaction

In the section on the biological level of activity the notion of function was seen as central.¹²¹ At that point biological functions were

¹²⁰Dewey, Logic, pp. 23-41

¹²¹cf. Above, p.81.

seen as concrete forms of interaction. On the psychological level Dewey uses this interactive idea of function to analyze human behavior. The biological idea of function applied to human behavior was at the center of the Functional School of Psychology of which Dewey was a most important member.

Because the idea of function was so useful in analyzing concrete forms of human behavior, the continuity between biological activity and human activity was affirmed by the "Functional School" of psychology. As Professor Angell pointed out in describing the central tenets of this movement in American psychology.

That the biological idea of function is applicable in a general way to the life of consciousness is hardly open to question. The precise lines of classification sometimes employed in biology . . . may not be immediately available, but the general biological notion of organic activity certainly requires no essential transformation.¹²²

Before the functional approach could be used fully on the psychological level the same change of emphasis had to occur there as had occurred in biology; that is to say the idea of a fixed immutable self or substance, somehow operating behind concrete interactions between the organism and the environment, had to be forsaken as an object of inquiry. Dewey believed that the full significance of Darwin could only be appreciated when the results he obtained for biological species could be applied to human affairs.

Dewey asserted that the road to a functional interactive psychology was opened to him, in part, by the writings and teachings of William James. Specifically Dewey appreciated those sections of

¹²²Angell, "Relations", p. 57.

James' writings, where a Darwinian emphasis upon the interaction between the organism and the environment could be detected. Dewey believed that James made it possible for him to fully apply Darwinian categories in analyzing human activity.

The other strain is objective, having its roots in a return to the earlier biological conception of the psyche, but a return possessed of more force and value due to the immense progress made by biology since the time of Aristotle.¹²³

In short, Dewey gained from James a belief that biological categories could be fruitfully used in interpreting human behavior, and that concepts of fixed ends and substances guiding concrete interactions from behind or above could be eliminated from psychological discourse.

But, unfortunately, Dewey believed that while James pointed the way, he did not completely walk the road. Dewey argued that there were major portions of James Principles of Psychology, where categories of concrete functional interactions were forsaken in favor of the categories of fixed ends and selves. For, while James argued convincingly against the need for positing a fixed self behind theoretical activity, he seemed, at least to Dewey, to posit such a self when discussing practical activity. It is in the later sphere that the functional approach had to be established, before interaction as a category could get its full use in analyzing human activity.

It is strange that Professor James who recognizes so far as knowledge is concerned the entire uselessness of an ego outside and behind, who indeed has given that theory the hardest knocks it has yet received from the psychological side, should feel bound to set up its correlate when he comes to

¹²³Dewey, "From Absolution", p. 15.

deal with will. If the stream of thought can run itself in one case, the stream of conduct may administer the other. Why should he deny to the transcendental ego in knowing a power which he claims for attention in acting.¹²⁴

For purposes of understanding Dewey's idea of continuity it is important to note the reasons why James biological approach to psychological concepts was important to Dewey, and why Dewey would criticize James for not applying this approach to all areas of psychology. Dewey felt that James' pioneering study opened up the psychological world to the same categories that Darwin made central in the biological. It will be remembered that this "category continuity" is the crux of Dewey's naturalistic world view.¹²⁵ If, however, there is an area where fixed ends or substances find a place, then there is a breach in the continuity central to Dewey's naturalism. It is partly because of the commitment to a naturalistic worldview, that Dewey felt compelled to criticize and reject, analyses of human behavior, whether offered by James or others, that would posit a fixed end or substance behind concrete interactions. Such fixed ends or substances can take many forms, such as transcendental egos, souls, attention etc., but their distinguishing trait is that they stand behind concrete transactions between man and his environment and guide these interactions in some more or less obscure way.

I say that it was "partly" the reason why Dewey rejected such

¹²⁴John Dewey "The Ego as Cause" in Vol. 4 of The Early Works of John Dewey, p. 95.

¹²⁵Above, p. 4.

concepts as the "transcendental ego" due to his naturalistic commitment to continuity, because the final standard of validity of psychological concepts is their fruitfulness in inquiry. I do not think that these reasons, in essence, conflict. It is clear that Dewey thought his functional approach the most fruitful way of dealing with the psychological data that he was aware of. The organismic-environmental interactive model was not a system of concepts that Dewey felt were suspended in mid-air. Its purpose was to guide psychological experimentation along fruitful channels.

At the same time Dewey had to criticize alternate models of interpreting psychological data. Of particular importance were those models which posited a substantial form behind concrete earlier ways of viewing human behavior. As long as Darwinian categories were not consistently adhered to, Dewey felt it incumbent upon himself to criticize as obsolete pre-Darwinian concepts.

Character, then, as a psychological concept cannot be interpreted as a fixed entity standing behind concrete interactions. Because Dewey rejects such ideas as self or ego when interpreted as independent entities with respect to interactions, does not mean that Dewey did not accept a transactional view of character. If Dewey did not accept an idea of character in any form, there would be a serious difficulty in his use of such concepts as character-growth and self-development in his educational and ethical writings.

Dewey does, however, offer a theory of character that is consistent with his criticism of non-interactive theories of the self.

Character is viewed not as a separate entity with respect to conduct, activity, but as central to conduct. The separation of character from concrete interactions, conduct, was rejected by Dewey, and viewed as an inheritance of an earlier day when the source of human activity was thought to reside in an entity behind the activity. Character in fact was defined as an organization of habits.¹²⁶ Below it will be seen that habit is conceived, by Dewey, in functional interactive terms.¹²⁷ Hence, Dewey's rejection of fixed entities operating behind human activity was consistent with his stress upon character, because the latter concept is interpreted in terms of interactions.

Dewey's interactive interpretation of human activity can be made clearer when viewed after the model provided by Joseph Ratner to analyze physical interactions.¹²⁸ There Ratner proposed that interaction be interpreted in cross-sectional terms; i.e., as having a latitude and a longitude, a width and a length. At the higher level of human activity, this same model may be used. If we call the temporal continuity of the act the length or latitude, then the interaction between the organism and the environment becomes the width or the longitude. The fact that human behavior has a temporal dimension, reaching back into the past and future oriented is a point stressed by Dewey on numerous occasions, but that the act has width incorporating the environment as well as the organism is another basic factor. Human activity con-

¹²⁶John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1922), p. 38.

¹²⁷Below, p. 107.

¹²⁸Above, p. 48.

ceived as a function, is a system involving temporal and spatial dimensions. It is the interaction, the organismic-environmental system that is the central focus, and not an entity, behind the organism, whether conceived in terms of brain events, or psychic states.

Human behavior, for Dewey is a very complex development of the biological functioning prevalent at a lower level of activity. In one concrete example of human activity such as a man going to the store to buy food, there is a complex interactive system, unknown in the animal world. There is a temporal dimension; the past of the man, which determines his need and his end-in-view in going to the store. There is the interaction between the organism and the desired food. Also there is the interaction of the man with the whole complex set of social rules that determine behavior in the buying transaction. All these factors are involved in the width of the activity under consideration, and problems arise when any factor is stressed or isolated from the whole interactive system called human behavior. In short it is human behavior with its temporal length and its interactive width that is the point of departure in Dewey's approach to human affairs, and all concepts must be seen with respect to this complex interaction.

As the example of the man going to the store to buy food illustrates, functioning with respect to human activity is a much more complex affair than biological functioning. The major difference between the type of interaction or adjustment between organism and environment, is that for man the environment is social. That is to say the type of interactive system involved in human activity includes a whole range of

social factors, such as, rules, ideals, goals, expectations, customs, etc. By conceiving such social factors as aspects of the complex interactive systems that defines human behavior, they become not external to the activity, but its very nature includes these social factors, and questions about the way an act becomes social do not arise. Hence for Dewey there is functional interactivity between organism and environment in the sphere of human activity as in biological activity, hence the continuity, but the interactivity involved in human activity is so much more complex, that new concepts are needed to reflect it.

The idea of adjustment between man and his environment in human interactions is complex. Because human practice is characterized by social and conscious factors the idea of adjustment cannot merely be conceived along lines appropriate to lower species than man. If Dewey is to provide an interactive analysis of human activity, he will have to explain the organismic-environmental transaction in terms more complex and refined than biological functioning.¹²⁹

I shall quote at length what Dewey says about the notion of adjustment in his Outlines of A Critical Theory of Ethics, because the organismic-environmental interaction is the heart of Dewey's theory of human activity, but the complexity of the concept when applied to human affairs should be appreciated.

But admitting that environment is made what it is by the powers and aims of the agent, what sense shall we attribute to the term adjustment? Not bare conformity to circumstances, not bare external reproduction of them even when circumstances are taken in their proper moral meaning. The child in the family who simply adjusts himself to his relationships in the family, may be living a moral life only in outward seeming. The citizen of the state transgresses no

¹²⁹John Dewey "Body and Mind" in Philosophy and Civilization, p. 308.

laws of the state, he may punctiliously fulfill every contract and yet be a selfish man. True adjustment must consist of willing maintenance and development of moral surroundings as one's own end. The child must take the spirit of the family into himself and live out this spirit according to his special membership in the family. . . . Adjustment to the intellectual environment is not mere conformity of ideas to facts. It is the living assimilation of these facts into one's intellectual life. . . .¹³⁰

In the above discussion of "adjustment" it is obvious that when Dewey talks of analyzing human behavior in terms of organismic-environmental interactions, there is something much more refined being talked about than mere "biological" interactions. Environment for example, includes not only physical factors, but such areas as "moral surroundings" and "intellectual environment." To adjust to this interaction means in its most developed form not merely surviving but internalization of the "spirit" of the social group the person is a member of. With the development of the power to inquire into one's surroundings. Dewey leaves open the possibility that the environment, physical, moral intellectual, aesthetic etc. may be critically analyzed and improved. Dewey thus takes into account in his application of the category of interaction on the level of human activity, many factors that some may call distinctly human, such as; moral and intellectual environment, creative potentiality etc. To conceive Dewey's talk of interaction, when applied to human behavior, on lines appropriate to biological functioning would be a misrepresentation of Dewey, besides being patently absurd.

Dewey's functional interactive approach to human behavior is a

¹³⁰Dewey, Outlines, p. 313.

"continuous" development of the interactive categories as they appear on the physical and biological levels of activity. Because of this continuity Dewey's naturalistic approach to human behavior cannot be rejected on the grounds that it is a mere mechanical application of biological and physical concepts to human affairs.

The continuity involved in Dewey's "category development", excludes the idea that biological categories and concepts are applied uncritically to human reality. The Social Darwinists, who in their own way applied biological concepts to the study of human life, also made much of adjustment. But no refinement of these concepts were made when applied to human activity. Instead of continuity, in Dewey's sense, there is identity. Adjustment was interpreted in terms of the survival of the fittest just as it was in the biological realm, and all the factors of human life, moral, intellectual, conscious etc., were merely means to this goal. For the Social Darwinists, and those who founded their ethics on the basis of Social Darwinist theories, interaction and adjustment mean the same thing in human life as it does in biological functioning. They do not allow for the differences between biological and human interaction that obviously exist. The Social Darwinist in a real sense did not even accept the idea of interaction, if that term includes the idea of transforming the environment for ends in view.

From the opposite side, Dewey's idea of continuity allows him to stand clear of those who argue that because human experience includes aspects that are different from what exists in lower forms of life,

human behavior must be described and analyzed in terms which are discontinuous with lower forms of activity. This approach assumes that because such spheres as logic, art, science, etc., are radically different from what exists on the level of biological functioning, no interactive approach to these activities is impossible. T. H. Green, who had an early influence on Dewey, argued in this way. He reasoned that because man's most distinctive activities exist within a social framework, where the member of a group acts for goals accepted by many it cannot be described in terms appropriate to natural objects. Natural objects have their forms and goals within, while only self-consciousness can explain areas that point to forms outside themselves.¹³¹ Because Green could not conceive natural interactions in a form appropriate to human social activity, Dewey's brand of naturalism, based on the idea of continuity was closed to him.

Dewey avoids the Social Darwinist mechanical method as well as T. H. Green's "discontinuity" method by offering a more penetrating analysis of interaction and adjustment. All natural and biological processes possess a transactive or associative side, so the basis of continuity exists with social life. But continuity does not mean the mechanical "nothing but" approach of the Social Darwinists. Continuity involves the weaker claim that on the higher level of activity the categories of the lower levels will play a crucial role. Hence the claims of the principle of continuity can be met in a theory of human behavior by defining adjustment in a way that includes the organism-

¹³¹Green, Prolegomena, p. 130.

environmental interaction, but not necessarily in the same exact way as the biological level.

This is done in the passage quoted above¹³² by defining adjustment in part as the internalization and subsequent creative reaction of a human organism to the social life of the community. The distinctive human environment then becomes the social life of the community in which the organism is participating. Dewey's approach stresses the "self-conscious" aspect of human behavior that T. H. Green believed so important, without sacrificing the continuity of human social activity with biological functioning. Like Green, Dewey believed that the social interactive aspect of human activity is a central feature of the latter, but it is because of this factor that Dewey can claim to have developed the outlines of a "naturalistic" approach toward behavior.

At the heart of Dewey's functional approach stands the concept of habit. This concept, as used by Dewey, was designed to do a variety of jobs, and as a result is highly complex. Perhaps the aspect of "habit" that I wish to highlight can be developed by considering the question of why the old unit of behavior, the reflex arc, was not adequate to serve as a basis for explaining real human activity.

Without going into much detail, the questionable part of the concept of the reflex-arc that is here of interest is: the concept does not recognize the all important interactive "longitudinal dimension"¹³³ of behavior. That is to say, part of Dewey's early attack on those who use the reflex-arc as the basic unit in psychology, was due to their

¹³²cf. Above, p. 103.

¹³³cf. Above, p. 101.

insistence upon limiting behavior and its unit to the confines of the organism, and not to the interactive system between the organism and the environment. It was Dewey's belief that the stimulus-response model lost sight of the coordination of such an interactive system. The environment was not considered an essential part of behavior, but rather as an external trigger to "real" behavior.

The older dualism between sensation and idea is repeated in the current dualism of peripheral and central structures and functions. The older dualism of body and soul finds a distant echo in the current dualism of stimulus and response.¹³⁴

The reflex-arc concept, then, retained certain philosophical categories that tended to perpetuate the radical separation of the "internal" behavior of the organism and the "external" environment. Dewey formulated this criticism in a later article entitled "Body and Mind".

For the stimulus-response theory, as usually held, cuts off the environment from behavior. It treats environment simply as an external occasion from which behavior proceeds. Behavior is thus treated exclusively as going on inside the organism, something which is set off or initiated by the environment. In reality its environment is just as much comprised within behavior as are organic processes. Behavior is not something that goes on in a surrounding medium. If it were, behavior could be studied and described as something which goes on in the organism or which goes forth out of it in total neglect of the environment, save as reference to some part of the latter as a touch and go stimulus. Behavior in fact is a continuous interaction in which the environment as well as organic factors are included.¹³⁵

In sum, then, the stimulus-response approach does not take into account this organismic-environmental interactive system and if Dewey is to

¹³⁴John Dewey, "The Reflex-arc Concept in Psychology" in The Early Works of John Dewey, pp. 96-97.

¹³⁵Dewey, "Body and Mind," in Philosophy and Civilization, p. 311.

improve on the "old" view, a new interactive unit of behavior should be proposed. It was the purpose of the concept of habit to serve as a new unit of behavior, based on the interaction of the organism with its environment.

The recognition of the role of habit as Dewey's proposed unit of behavior, was first indicated in the penetrating article on Dewey by Gordon Allport.¹³⁶ Allport observes Dewey was certainly interested in restoring the temporal continuity in behavior by the concept of habit. Allport, however, does not indicate an awareness that Dewey was also about focusing upon the continuity between the organism and the environment in his use of "habit". The reflex-arc unit of behavior was based upon the separation of behavior from the "external" environment. Dewey's "habit" unit of behavior was based upon the interactive continuity of the organism with the environment.

The lack of recognition that the concept of reflex-arc gave to the various continuities involved in real-life human practice was a major reason for Dewey's rejection of this concept.

A burn does not induce us to jerk our finger from the flame. It brings not only a withdrawal reflex, but at the same time affects the ocular perception of the inviting in such a way that its stimulating character is forever changed. Or we turn our head to catch a whisper. Is the act thus completed? No, our response is as closely related to the sound that is now becoming effective as it was to the unintelligible sound that served as the first stimulus. The stimuli of both the beginning and end situation belong to the same act.¹³⁷

It is Allport's suggestion, correct I believe, that the prime function

¹³⁶Gordon Allport "Dewey's Individual and Social Psychology" in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Schilpp, pp. 270-275.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 270.

of Dewey's concept of habit was to reintroduce the various continuities, temporal and interactive, broken by the reflex-arc concept in psychology. An analysis of the use that Dewey makes of "habit" shows that habit points to many continuities. If he had merely appropriated the notion of habit that was widespread with, say, Hume or James,¹³⁸ which focuses on the repetition aspect of habit, Dewey would not have advanced on the mechanical model he was trying to replace.

From the point of view of Dewey's notion of interaction, Dewey uses the concept of habit to combat the idea that behavior occurs in isolation from the environment. The reflex-arc, as I pointed out¹³⁹ above, not only conceived behavior to be disjointed with respect to time, but conceived behavior to be isolated from environing conditions. Couple this idea with the fact that man's most characteristic environment is the social order, and it can be seen how the reflex-arc concept isolated human behavior from its distinctive social environment.

Dewey, by making the interactive continuum between the organism and the environment the essence of "habit", was able to assert that his idea of habit was essentially a "social function".¹⁴⁰ Dewey substitutes for the then standard atomizing concept of the reflex-arc, his concept of habit, which allows among other things, "interactive continuities" between habits and the environment.

Habits, then, for Dewey, are in part interactions between the

¹³⁸cf. Below, p. 113.

¹³⁹cf. Above, p. 108.

¹⁴⁰Dewey, Human Nature, pp. 14-23.

organism and the environment. On the biological level of activity¹⁴¹ Dewey called such interactions "functions". With the human organism and in human behavior the same word "function" is used. The interaction involved in human activity, however, differs in an important respect from biological functioning, and that is that man's peculiar environment is social. That is to say, man as an organism, has developed to a point where his most usual interactions occur in the context of social conditions, involving customs, culture, morals, expectations etc. The peculiar form of interactive functioning that is involved in human practice is habit or social functioning.

To say that the relationship between the human organism and society is one of interaction is to say that in practice no sharp line can be drawn between the functioning organism and social "reality". The social environment is not an external "stimulus" to a purely internal area of behavior, but is on the contrary part and parcel of that behavior in the interactive system of habit.

If an individual were alone in the world, he would form his (assuming the impossible, namely, that he would be able to form them) in a moral vacuum. They would belong to him alone, or to him only in reference to physical forces. Responsibility and virtue would be his alone. But since habits involve the supporting environing conditions, a society or some specific group of fellowmen, is always accessory before and after the fact. Some activity proceeds from a man; it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share and resist. Even letting a man alone is a definite response. . . . Conduct is always shared; this is the difference between it and a physiological process. It is not an ethical ought that conduct should be social. It is social whether bad or good.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹cf. Above, p. 71.

¹⁴²Dewey, Human Nature, p. 17.

Hence, by using "habit" the way he does, Dewey is able to conceive human character and conduct in essentially social terms. Psychology, the science of human behavior, is one with social psychology.

The interactive basis of Dewey's concept of habit may be clarified by comparing it with Hume's concept of habit. Social customs on Hume's view are external triggers to the operation of habit. Dewey's idea that habit is a function between the organism and the environment is not there; no room is left for the reconstruction of the social environment to insure the harmonious functioning of habits. In short, Dewey presented an interactive idea of habit while Hume did not.

Dewey made interaction the defining characteristic of his notion of habit; the "internal workings" of the organism, whether neurological or conscious became important as factors in the organismic-environmental transaction. By using the biological idea of function as the key model, Dewey was able to stand clear of non-interactive approaches, since the idea of function was defined basically in transactive terms. To say, for example, that the function of the lungs involves only the inner-workings of the lung organs is one-sided and arbitrary. The air is just as involved in the functioning operation of the lungs, as the organ. Also for the activity of the lungs to proceed smoothly, the enviroing conditions must be of such a nature that they will work harmoniously with the specific lung organ. If the adjustment of the biological organ were upset by disrupting the interactive continuity, sickness or death would result. With such a model for habit, it is small wonder, why Dewey was able to stand clear of non-interactive

"internal workings" approaches to the concept of habit.

It is also of interest with respect to Dewey's concept of habit, that Hume's concept tends to isolate behavior from the social conditions of behavior. If habit is interpreted in terms of either conscious or neurological processes then social reality such as customs, meanings, etc., will appear as external triggers, to habits instead of as "part of" the habit itself. With Dewey however, behavior, based on habit, is essentially a social affair. Behavior must be seen as a constant adjustment to achieve interactive harmony between the organism and the social environment. On the basis of Hume's concept of habit, it makes sense to ask how behavior can change society. With Dewey, this question does not arise; the only question of relevance is what social activity, what habit, is most progressive. "Habits incorporate the environment in their very structure as well, they are adjustment of as well as to the environment."¹⁴³

Dewey's interactive approach toward habit and conduct, allows Dewey to present a theory of meaning and activity in such a way that meaning is not viewed as external to behavior, but rather as a part of behavior. In fact meaningful behavior becomes the highest type of interaction, because it is the most complex and refined. The interaction involved in meaningful behavior is interpersonal communication and this communication is not external to habits but part of their very interactive nature. Meaning for Dewey occurs within the context of interpersonal activity. The function of symbols in communication is to help coordinate social behavior for goals held in common. Meaning for

¹⁴³Ibid, p. 92.

Dewey is related to practice or action, but it must be remembered that the basis of practice for Dewey is habit and habit is conceived along social lines. It is important to note that when Dewey talks of the role of meaning in guiding activity, he is interpreting activity to mean social interaction. Meaning would have no place in human activity, if man did not engage in extensive interpersonal relationships.

Communication between various organisms involved in a common activity for generally accepted goals, is the paradigm case of meaning in action. Interaction between human organisms for common goals is the basis for meaning.

Language is made up of physical existences; sounds, or marks on paper, or a temple, statue or loom. But these do not operate or function as mere physical things when they are media of communication. They operate in virtue of their representative capacity or meaning. The particular physical existence which has meaning is, in the case of speech, a matter, but the convention or common consent which sets it apart as a means of recording and communicating meaning is that of agreement in action; of shared modes of responsive behavior and participation in their consequences.¹¹⁴

Meaningful behavior, then, is "continuous" with lower levels of activity, at least with respect to the category of interaction. It will be remembered that continuity in this dissertation means "category development". That is to say the same basic category of interaction exists on the physical, biological and human levels of activity, with this difference: the latter levels possess the category in a more refined and complex form. Interaction, while existing in the physical and biological levels, achieves its greatest refinement in human meaningful practice. Interaction is basic to biological functioning also,

¹¹⁴Dewey, Logic, p. 46.

and a primitive form of social life even exists there, as Mead points out. However, it is only with human practice, that interaction includes such factors as customs, self-consciousness, intelligence, moral rules, etc. In this way is human behavior continuous with lower levels of activity, but still more refined and complex than the latter.

Meaningful behavior is founded upon the interactive aspect of habit. While habits may be based, in a sense, on instincts and impulses, which are internal to the organism, meaning, as a factor of practice, depends upon interaction of one organism with another. Meaning cannot be said to exist on the level of brute impulse unchannelled by habit. When an organism reacts in a completely impulsive manner, out of blind rage, for example, the term meaningful behavior would certainly not describe this state.

When the impulse is channelled through habit, which incorporates the social environment, with its aims and rules, then on Dewey's analysis, we would by definition, be witness to meaningful behavior. It is because behavior is controlled by such social interpersonal contacts that such meaning can even exist. In this sense habit as a "social function" is the way social control is psychologically manifested, and the basis by which rules and procedures of meaning develop in common activity.

In short, the meaning of native activities is not native, it is acquired. It depends upon interaction with a matured social medium. In the case of a tiger or eagle, anger may be identified with a serviceable life-activity, with attack and defense. With a human being it is as meaningless as a gust of wind on a mudpuddle apart from a direction given it by the presence of other persons, apart from the responses they make of it. . . . And although these phenomena which have a meaning spring from original native reactions to stimuli, yet they depend also upon the responsive behavior

of others. They and all similar human displays of anger are not pure impulses; they are habits formed under the influence of association with others who have habits already and who show their habits in the treatment which converts a blind physical discharge into significant anger.¹⁴⁵

By interpreting meaning within the framework of the interactive system of habit, Dewey is able to present an approach to meaning that stands clear of those who interpret meaning as being nothing but biological responses, and those who argue that because meaning is not a characteristic of biological behavior, there is no continuity with biological behavior. Because Dewey interprets meaning as functioning in interpersonal relationships distinctive of man he can criticize the idea that meaning is essentially internal responses. Those who view meaning as operating mainly in the context of internal conscious states, or internal brain states, or even of internal neurological behavior, forget that human practice, based on habit, has its major operation in the social world.

In a distorted "naturalism" one may think that the only way to develop a "naturalistic" theory of meaning is in biological terms. To someone who may wish to remove any spiritual taint to the idea of meaning, the idea that meaning is essentially a state of the brain or a biological response to certain stimuli may be attractive.

The idea that a "naturalistic" view of meaning must study brain states or internal behavioral responses depends upon two basic assumptions. First it assumes that biological functioning has its major locus in internal states or internal behavior. To claim that meaning must consist of states or behavior of the brain or organs, if one is to hold to a consistent naturalism, is to claim that internal response is the

¹⁴⁵Dewey, Human Nature, p. 90.

world of biological activity. Secondly the position assumes that for a "naturalistic" theory of meaning to develop, meaning, must be interpreted in purely biological terms and distinctive human social relationships and behavior are left out of account.

Dewey's "naturalistic" approach to meaning challenges both these assumptions. The first assumption, that biological states and processes occur essentially "inside" the organism is denied by Dewey's emphasis upon biological functions. "Internal" behavior is not important in itself, but only as being a part of the organism-environment interaction which is "function". The function of walking for example is not "in" the feet or "in" the nervous system but rather in the nervous system-foot-ground system. It is not, necessary, to offer a "naturalistic" theory of meaning, to assume that the locus of meaning must be the internal behavior of the organism.

Also not necessary is the assumption that a "naturalism" requires that meaning be reduced to biological concepts. Human activity obviously has many distinctive features not present on the level of biological functioning. It does naturalism and science no good to deny these distinctive features. Dewey's naturalistic theory of meaning does not deny the novel features of human practice, namely the presence of meaning. The major requirement of Dewey's naturalism is that meaningful behavior is continuous with lower forms of activity. This means that meaningful behavior must be looked at in part as exhibiting a refined form of the interaction present at lower levels. The continuity essential to Dewey's

naturalism does not require the same concepts to be present at all levels of activity.

On the other side, Dewey's "naturalistic" approach toward meaning and habit, also challenges, those who argue that natural processes are unable to generate "meanings". In contrast to the people who reduce meaning to biological response, these philosophers claim that biological and psychological processes are unable to generate meanings, and therefore a non-natural realm is posited to account for the obvious existence of meaning.

In *Experience and Nature* Dewey calls philosophers who posit a realm beyond natural processes to account for meaning "transcendentalists". By this term Dewey is referring to such philosophies of meaning as Platonism which posits the existence of Forms, because natural biological and psychological process are held insufficient to account for the origin and nature of meaning.

Upon the whole, professed transcendentalists have been more aware than have professed empiricists of the fact that language makes the difference between brute and man. The trouble is that they have lacked a naturalistic conception of its origin and status. Logos has been correctly identified with mind; but Logos and hence mind was conceived supernaturally.¹⁴⁶

The focus of the transcendentalist's criticism of a naturalistic theory of meaning is that, biological and psychological processes are so different from what is conceived to be meaning, that only a realm beyond biology and psychology can account for meaning. The transcendental position, that Dewey is arguing against, then, consists of two related parts.

¹⁴⁶Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 140.

- 1) Biological and psychological processes are such that they can not account for the origin or nature of meaningful activity.
- 2) Meaning is interpreted in a way that has no relation to psychological processes.

1) What is it about psychological processes that make them unable to account for the origin and nature of meaning? The answer to this question, of course, depends upon the general approach taken to psychological states or processes. If psychological processes are interpreted as the "internal" behavior of a mind or organism, then Dewey would agree that there is small chance to account for language and meaning on a naturalistic basis.¹⁴⁷

The task for Dewey becomes: to derive categories of interpretation of psychological processes, such that these process can account for the origin and nature of meaningful activity. I contend that Dewey believed that the interactive account of habit, as the unit of behavior was Dewey's response to this task.

Habit, to Dewey, is the psychological side of human social activity. This means that the social side of practice, with its wealth of rules, customs, signs, etc., is involved in the very make-up of the habit. If behavior were interpreted in purely non-social "internal" terms, then those who say meaning cannot arise out of behavior would indeed have an obvious case. But, since Dewey interprets psychological behavior in social terms, the interactive system seems at least open to the possibility of generating meanings.

- 2) If "meaning" is interpreted to mean something that can have

¹⁴⁷cf. Above, p. 116.

nothing to do with habits, as conceived by Dewey, then, again, those who argue that psychological processes cannot generate meanings would win all arguments. If meaning were a static object for example, then a non-natural realm would have to be found to house such objects.

Dewey, however, offers an interpretation of meaning that has a place in his view of habit, and hence, gives a "naturalistic theory of meaning. Meaning, for Dewey, becomes interpersonal guides to foster common behavior. Communication of participants in common activity for a common goal is the paradigm of meaningful activity. The social psychological basis for this activity is habit. Because habits are interactive systems of interpersonal relationships, meanings that arise out of such interactions, arise out of habits.

Dewey argues that meanings arise out of and function in interactive systems of habits. Meaning and communication are thus involved in the interactive framework of human activity. This approach toward meaning is consistent with Dewey's naturalism because interaction as a category exists on all three levels of activity considered; physical, biological and human. Interaction as it exists on the level of human activity is more refined and complex than what exists on the physical and biological levels.

Interaction is a category in all levels of activity, and hence meaning, which arises from and function in human interactions, is continuous with lower forms of activity.

The interaction of human beings, namely association, is not different in origin from other modes of interaction. There is a peculiar absurdity in the question of how individuals

become social if the question is taken literally, Human beings illustrate the same traits of both immediate uniqueness and connecting relationship, as do other things. . . . Everything that exists in as far as it is known and knowable is in interaction with other things. It is associated as well as solitary, single. . . . Significance resides not in the bare fact of association, therefore, but in the consequences that flow from the distinctive patterns of human association. ¹⁴⁸

Dewey's "naturalistic" theory of human activity resides in his belief that human meaningful behavior is continuous with lower forms of activity and that an order of being discontinuous with lower levels is not needed. A discontinuous "transcendental" realm such as Plato's ideas or Hegel's Spirit, is not needed, since meaning is interpreted as operating in an interactive system which also exists on the physical and biological levels of activity in less refined forms. When nature is looked upon as a plurality of interactive, associative systems, meaning, which operates in a human interactive system, is not seen as radically different from the rest of nature.

Only within an interactive framework can social activity and meaning be interpreted as continuous with others levels of natural process, while at the same time not lose the distinctive refinements of human interpersonal relationships. Hence, Dewey can admit the reality of any level of nature that experience observes.

Now when we turn to the social, we find communication requires meaning and understanding as conditions of unity and agreement in conjoint behavior. We find, that is, meaning not an anomaly nor an accidentally supervening quality, but a constitutive ingredient of existential events. . . . We do not then have to resort to purely metaphysical or dialectical considerations, adopted ad hoc, in order to 'save' the reality and importance of the mental. The realm of meanings, of mind, is at home, securely anchored in an empirically

¹⁴⁸Dewey, Experience and Nature, p. 145.

observable order of existence. And this order stands in genetic continuity with physical and vital phenomena, being, indeed, these phenomena taken up into and incorporated within a wider scope of associated interactions.¹⁴⁹

In sum Dewey's interpretation of meaning in the context of habits:

1) makes room for the phenomenon of meaningful activity in the order of nature and 2) suggest a particular mode of analysis, the interactive, for the full explication of various manifestations of meaningful behavior.

Perhaps the clearest statement of the interactive or inter-personal approach to social psychology was made by Dewey's associate G. H. Mead, and can be used to see the direction that Dewey's views on habit and meaning were heading. In an earlier section we saw that Mead's theory of the origins of significant behavior in the gesture-controlled common activity was a crystalization of Dewey's interactive concept of function. Here we shall see that Mead's theory of symbolically controlled behavior is a crystalization of Dewey's inter-personal concept of habit. With the development of organization in man, especially in the nervous system and vocal apparatus there exists the potentiality of the social act developing into symbolic behavior. With the lower animals we saw that the social act went so far as to control the behavior of a second organism by the gesture behavior of the first organism. Now it becomes possible on the human level not only to gesture but to predict, due to the temporal dimension given by the more complex nervous system, what the other organism will do in response to the gesture. The response can then be evaluated as desirable or not and hence can become an important factor in the control of behavior.

¹⁴⁹Dewey, "The Inclusive," pp. 86-88.

The crux of this theory for my purpose then is the rather novel form that the idea of interpersonal control of individual behavior is given as a higher-level continuant of the interactive aspect of natural processes.

In a real sense, then, the organism takes on 'mind' only when he can internalize the response of another and then use this to control his own behavior.

He will act in such a way and I will act this way. . . . That is the general mechanism of what we term thought, for in order that thought may exist there must be symbols, vocal gestures generally, which arouse in the individual himself the response which he is calling out in the other, and such that from the point of view of that response he is able to direct his later conduct. It involves not only communication in the sense in which birds and animals communicate with each other, but also an arousal in the individual himself of the response which he is calling out in the other individual, a tendency to act as the other person acts. One participates in the same process the other person is carrying out and controls his action with reference to that participation.¹⁵⁰

It can be seen why such a theory is 'naturalistic' in Dewey's sense. Because mind and meaning are viewed as being generated and functioning in a context that is related to lower forms of interaction, the central principle of continuity applies. What appeared at the lower level as gesture controlled behavior, a simple interactive or functional system, appears on the more complex human level as the internalization of the response or 'role' of the other, and hence each organism at that level becomes a whole system of internalized social responses and attitudes. Such a theory gives at least a plausible beginning for a theory of human personality and meaning within a philosophic framework that allows

¹⁵⁰Mead, Mind, Self, p. 73.

us to view this personality as emerging out of other less complex levels of natural existence. Only when the interactive phase of natural processes is lost sight of, is the social phase of the human personality a mystery, and such concepts as 'the internalization of the other' appear as mystical or supernatural intrusions. While, indeed, the concept of "the internalization of the other", is vague and needs to be given more concrete expression, the approach followed is certainly legitimate, given the content of the theory of nature and biology presented above. In short, the former approach is the higher level continuant of the interactive and functional approach of the latter orders.

It now is clear that we have with Mead a refined version of the interpersonal theory of the human personality expressed by Dewey in a less refined way in his social functionalism with the concept of habit at its center. The reason why I call Mead's theory more refined is that it states in greater detail, just what the socialization of the organism and consequently the development of personality is all about. This can be seen in Mead's theory of personality development with increasing socialization. Basically there are two poles or stages to that development: the stage commensurated with the "play" of the child and the stage commensurated with "game" activity. Both of these terms for Mead signify types of socialization levels such that the game level indicates a level that at least lays the social psychological basis for refined human behavior.

The first stage of the child's interpersonal development is that of "play." On Mead's view play is the successive taking on of the role of other people with whom the child comes into contact.

Examples of Mead's concept of play can be seen in the child's imitation in succession of parents, relatives, fireman, etc. The significance of this behavior is that it is the first emergence in the child of behavior wherein the response of another is incorporated within the concern of the child and not merely the brute likings of the child. For example, when the child imitates the father figure he responds as he feels the father would respond if he were present in the situation imagined. Because of this elemental type of role internalization the child in a way is able to appreciate, if not gain a consideration for, the values and interests of other people. Also of importance is that this socialization process is an active or behavioral process; the child doesn't merely sit and imagine the initiated figure in a cold, mechanical way, but the act itself is social, drenched in the warm aura of emotion. The emphasis on behavior or the act is central and is identical to Dewey's emphasis upon personal dynamism and function. Such a dramatic conception of the social act lays the foundation for dramatic rehearsal of behavior involving the interests of others known as moral deliberation. But never the less the play level of behavior is limited in its scope of interpersonal relation in that the other incorporated is individual, taken one by one; it is a dramatic encounter that excludes general systems of activity involving social organization and rules. First one figure is imitated, then another and so on without reference to any general rules that guide and give meaning to the child.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 150.

The stage of behavior where this lack is overcome is called by Mead, the "game" level. The basic difference between play and game is that in play the individual internalizes the role of a particular other, while in a game the individual incorporates the attitude of the group in which he participates, in the form of general rules guiding his behavior. The form of social control here is not that of the incorporation of a particular other but the attitude of an organized "generalized other." The foundations of the highest level of interpersonal relations are thus set in game behavior.

The fundamental difference between the game and play is that in the latter the child must have the attitude of all others involved in the game. The attitudes of the other players which the participant assumes organized into a sort of unit, and it is organization which controls the response of the individual.¹⁵²

Each one of his own acts is determined by his assumption of the acts of the others who are playing the game. What he does is controlled by his being everyone else on the team, at least in so far as those attitudes affect his own particular response. We get them an 'other' which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the game process.¹⁵³

Hence at the 'game level' of interpersonal behavior, the individual sees himself as a member of an organized activity, he is to be judged from the viewpoint of this generalized attitude by his participation.

The stage is set to give an interpersonal theory of the origin and nature of the self, since the old substantial view was given up. Mead finds the origin of the self in the act of looking at one's activity from the standpoint of the generalized attitude of the group which is internalized. But quite significantly, not only does this internal-

¹⁵²Ibid., p. 153.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 154.

ization define the self, it also points to the conditions that must be fulfilled if the self is to develop in a meaningful way, and that is the fullest realization of the widest and deepest social activities in which one participates. By defining the structure of the self in such a way that it includes the guiding of action according to the organized response of a social group in which one is a participant, it follows that the only way that a self so defined can develop is by the widest and deepest participation and internalization of social activities.

These social or group attitudes are brought within the individuals field of direct experience, and are included as elements in the structure or constitution of his self, in the way that the attitudes of particular other individuals are; and the individual arrives at them or succeeds in taking them, by means of further organizing and then generalizing the attitudes of particular other individuals, in terms of their organized social bearings and implications. So the self reaches its full development by organizing these individual attitudes of others into organized social or group attitudes, and by thus becoming an individual reflection of the generalized systematic pattern which enters a whole into the individuals experience in terms of these organized attitudes. . . .¹⁵⁴

The development of the self, then, is a process that occurs in the interpersonal world of social activity, and is characterized by the widest and deepest participation, organization, and internalization of these activities. The similarity to Dewey's view is obvious, and such an interpersonal theory of the self and its realization lays a cogent foundation for an ethical and education theory that holds the concept of 'self-development' at their centers.

To develop this point, it is to be noted that Mead coins a term to refer to the internalized group attitudes, i.e., "the generalized

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 158.

other." The generalized other is precisely that presence in consciousness which represents the organized attitude of a group and which within the self takes an authoritative position. In its crudest form the generalized other arises within the interpersonal game situation and is psychologically a factor in "higher" activities such as science and art. As we saw earlier, the precise significance of the game situation is that the participant must view his own conduct from the wider vantage-point of the group - only when the 'generalized other' is internalized can he be said to be a participant in the game in the Meadian sense.

The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called the 'generalized other.' The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the whole community. Thus, for example, in the case of a social group as a ball team, the team is the generalized other in so far as it enters-as an organized process or social activity - into the experience of any one of the individual members of it.¹⁵⁵

By now it should be clear in what sense Mead's analysis of human behavior is clearer expression of Dewey's interpersonal analysis with respect to the centrality of meaning, operating in a matrix of co-operation, in that behavior. The concepts of "internalization" and the "generalized other" put into a clearer light the peculiar way in which meaning develops in an interpersonal matrix. The interactive phase of natural processes finds in this system of concepts a true higher level continuant and hence fulfills the key requirement Dewey sets for a naturalistic theory of the self. Like Dewey's interpersonal approach, Mead's "social behavior" forces attention away from any supposed fixed soul or transcendental ego, just as the interactive phase of natural

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 154.

processes forces attention away from self dependent atomistic substance. Meaning then must be defined in terms of its place in co-ordinated activity and this is what is done in Dewey's theory of habit and Mead's theory of the internalization of the generalized other.

Before moving on to other categories I will present an example of how Dewey's interactive approach to psychological concepts, influenced his interpretation of a very important Dewian psychological idea. The concept of "interest" plays a major role in Dewey's ethical and value theory. Unless the interactive basis of Dewey's psychology is remembered, serious difficulties arise.

Dewey conceives human goods as arising in the context of interests functioning in concrete situations. If interests are defined in terms of the internal workings of a "mind" or organism, can't Dewey be said to have a "subjective" basis to his ethical theory. That is to say, if interest is interpreted in a non-interactive way, as the internal states or processes of a mind or organism, then won't an ethics and value theory that conceives human good in terms of interests, be placing ethical experience in a subjective internal setting.

To assert that Dewey, by viewing human goods in terms of interests, is subjectivizing the idea of good, is to forget an essential thrust of the foundations of Dewey's social psychology. Interest, for Dewey, does not mean "internal" conscious or behavioral states or processes. Given Dewey's interactive approach to psychological concepts, personal interests must be seen as arising and functioning within the context of concrete social activities. Interests, far from character-

izing internal psychological states, have their basic locus in the transactions of the human organism with the social environment; though this does not mean that interests do not have a conscious aspect to them.

It certainly would be perplexing if Dewey did not have an interactive basis for his idea of interest. Dewey's early criticism of Hedonism and Utilitarianism for example, rested on the argument that "internal" feelings of pleasure cannot serve as an adequate psychological motive for moral behavior, nor could it serve as a standard for moral rectitude.¹⁵⁶ Pleasures, conceived as subjective psychological states, could not explain the existence of moral duties held in common.

It certainly would be odd, if Dewey then interpreted human goods, and indirectly moral behavior, as arising from subjective interests. If, Dewey, viewed interest in these non-interactive terms, wouldn't he merely be replacing one subjective standard, pleasure, for another, interest.

When Dewey's basic interactive approach to psychological concepts is remembered, habit being his unit of behavior, the perplexity is removed. From this viewpoint, interests are seen to arise and function in interpersonal relations. Interests, to Dewey, were not "internal" states or processes, with their loci within the mind or the organism exclusively, but forms of behavior having goals shared by others in common activity. In his educational article "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will," Dewey argues that interests are signs of emerging power in a child's (or adult's) transaction with its environment.

¹⁵⁶Dewey, Outline, pp. 249-267.

But when we recognize there are certain powers within the child urging for development, in order to secure their own due efficiency and discipline, we have a basis upon which to build. . . . Adequately to act upon these impulses involves seriousness, absorption, definiteness of purpose. . . . But this effort never degenerates into drudgery or mere training of dead lift, because interest abides - the self is concerned throughout.¹⁵⁷

That the fulfillment of interest, the development of the power mentioned in the last paragraph, is realized in the process of participation in on-going processes, can be seen when Dewey's fundamental functionalist outlook is remembered. Human powers are not internal to the organism, but transactions between the organism and the social environment, just as a biological function is the interaction of an organism, the stomach, for example, and the environment, food, in the process of digestion. The powers that we regard as most distinctly human, however, develop within the context of social relations with common goals. The development of "individual" powers and interests and the participation in common activities with shared goals are two parts of the same process. Human goods, then, while on the first sight, having only to do with interests, on further analysis takes on a dual aspect they are both the self realization of human powers and the forwarding of the goals of social activity in which the power is developed.

The transactional nature of interest can be seen more clearly when an earlier section of this dissertation is remembered.¹⁵⁸ There it was pointed out that Dewey believed that ends of importance or interests, do not arise as mere subjective feelings. Looking at the genesis of

¹⁵⁷John Dewey "Interest in Relation to the Training of the Will" in Vol. V Early Works, p. 122.

¹⁵⁸cf. Above, p. 128.

goals in childhood, Dewey notes that, they arise in definite social contexts, say of the family, and goals must be studied, at least in part, from the point of view of how they contribute to the enhancement of that social activity.

There are environments existing prior to the activities of any agent; the family, for example, is prior to the moral activity of a child born into it, but the point is to see that 'adjustment,' to have a moral sense, means making the environment a reality for one's self. A true description of the case would say that the child takes for his own end, ends already existing for the will of others.¹⁵⁹

Interests and personal goals arise and function, in interpersonal activities, where an incipient power is brought to bear on the tasks of an ongoing activity. Misinterpretations of Dewey result only when the transactional basis of his psychological concepts, such as interest, is forgotten. Criticizing the idea that subjective fleeting sensations can offer a true basis for the moral life, Dewey developed the idea that interests, understood in interactive terms, could provide such a basis.

The point is made more evident if Dewey's idea of interest is translated into Meadian terms. Man's conscious life to Mead is developed by the internalization of social activities and rules in which, and by which, the organism is participating. Conscious experience, such as desires or interests, then points two ways. If viewed in non-interactive terms, interests are merely subjective states. It is when interests are conceived along these lines that the founding of an ethical theory on interests is taken as "subjectivizing" ethics. For Mead, however, conscious experience in general and interests in particular, point toward

¹⁵⁹Outline, p. 314.

an empirical social activity, with an organization and a set of rules that is internalized. The harmonization of interests on Mead's view, is not the removal of inner psychological stress, though this is part of it, but, rather, the removal of the conflict between different social activities participated in. It is the harmonization of the duties and goals of conflicting social activities, e.g. between the family and the state, that ethical conflicts and reasoning have their locus.

Finally, it can be seen that by analyzing 'interest' from this interpersonal approach the whole question of the subjectivity or objectivity of the good is restructured. Because interests were looked upon as subjective or at least as pertaining only to the individual irregardless of the social context from which they arose and function in, the problem necessarily arises as to how these interests could be reconciled with the wider demands of social welfare. Given this problem, historically all sorts of answers were suggested. Some held that divine intervention, in the form of a pre-established harmony, would make the pursuit of individual interest result in the public well being. Others thought that the deterrent effect of punishment would force interest in the desirable channels, but no matter which theory is suggested, the very problem rests on an assumption, that once questioned or replaced, leads to a restructuring of the question in such a way that more fruitful problems will result. If interests are not conceived as being merely individual at the outset and instead are viewed in terms of a transaction between the organism and the environment or the product of the internalization of definite social activities, then the problem

of how to make internal interests social disappears. The new restructured problem becomes what type of social activity will result in the interest which develops and fulfills the organism most fully and results in the greatest amount of social welfare. The locus of the problem shifts from the philosophical connection of the individual and society to the educational effect of certain activities on the development of the organism in the context of the use of that development in an ongoing communal process. That interests are social is admitted at the outset, the important question that results is: which interests and order of interests are most desirable to meet the peculiar demands of the modern democratic, industrialized, scientifically oriented world, which is constantly in a state of flux?

I will now offer an hypothesis of the relationship between Dewey and Peirce, with respect to the concept of habit. Peirce, of course, was the pioneer in viewing meaning as essentially related to activity and especially to the formation of habits. I think it correct to say that Peirce took as his model the activity of the experimental scientist, and interpreted meanings and habits in the context of experimental problems.

If this is so, what can be said with respect to the interactive or non-interactive nature of Peirce's concept of habit? I do not wish to assert that Peirce ever looked at the problem in this way, but from the point of view of this dissertation it is possible to throw some light on Peirce's concept of habit. If it is correct that Peirce was mainly concerned with habits of action in experimental situations,

then I think it is possible to conclude that Peirce held an interactive concept of habit. Peirce was not concerned with habits as subjective states or processes, but with habits as related to problems posed by the scientific environment. The formation of habits and the removal of doubt as Peirce used these ideas, refer to the relationship of an experimenter to the solution of problems posed by the scientific community and not to mere psychological satisfaction.

Dewey, at least with respect to the interactive aspect of habit and the behavior built upon habits, continued the Peircian approach. I think the major difference of the two is that where Peirce was basically interested with habits as interactions between an experimenter and his scientific environment, Dewey was trying to make the interactive idea of habit basic to human psychology, and thus available as a mode of analysis in all modes of human activity. Dewey used the functional interaction between organism and environment as a basis for studying not only logic and science, but also moral and artistic behavior. In sum, then, I would suggest that with regard to the interactive aspect of habit, Dewey extended Peirce's idea of habit to contexts where Peirce did not give his full attention.

2) Qualitative Uniqueness or Individualized Phase of Human Activity

The qualitative uniqueness that Dewey found throughout nature has widespread influence in Dewey's theory of the nature of man. In short the individualized qualities found in all natural processes has higher level continuants on the level of human conduct at its most essential point and much of Dewey's psychological writings can be looked upon

as an assertion and defense of the unique aspect of conduct as opposed to the standardized aspect. Just as on the physical process level Dewey saw no contradiction in recognizing the interactive or transactive aspect of nature and the qualitative uniqueness aspect so at the human level there is seen to be no contradiction between the basic interpersonal analysis of concepts and the recognition of the individualized phase of conduct. Hence those critics of Dewey who claim that he was sacrificing the claims of the individual to the needs of society or social claims to individual growth are not looking at the foundations of his philosophy from a wide enough viewpoint; actually Dewey stressed both aspects.

From the standpoint of human character and conduct qualitative uniqueness has a few higher level continuants.

First the concept of character itself cannot be understood unless the unique nature of each character is recognized. Earlier we analyzed "character" on interpersonal lines, by pointing out that its basic unit was habit which was in reality a social function. But given that, it is asserted that each character is different depending upon the structure of habits peculiar to it. A clear case of character uniqueness can be seen in comparing "character types" in different historical eras. To say that one society tends to develop a say communally oriented character type while another develops an avaricious type is to recognize the point under consideration.

On a less pronounced level it can be seen that each character, even in a single society is unique to a degree. Each character possesses

a distinguishing structure of habits and set of preferences that set it off from all others and indeed an ideal society, which Dewey felt synonymous with democracy, would make such individualized differences of character as pronounced as possible and try to use such differentiation in the cause of social progress.¹⁶⁰ This is not of course to say that societies don't exist where a large degree of character regimentation and conformity arise; what Dewey is claiming is that there is no metaphysical or psychological necessity for such conformity. Metaphysically it is pointed out that qualitative uniqueness is indeed a central feature of natural processes and not a mere qualitative monotony of mechanical motions. But also psychologically it is theorized that character, founded on habit correctly conceived allows a high degree of individuality, if nourished.

When it is remembered however that habits are social functions,¹⁶¹ it can be seen that the individuality of character Dewey is referring to is not a mysterious kernel of self, but arises and functions in a social context. It is the individuality of participation, the uniqueness of contribution to an on-going social process that Dewey stresses. Both ethically and educationally Dewey points out that the uniqueness of character and its development is meaningless and useless unless it provides an impetus to a co-operative activity. Hence again the dialectical harmony between the interactive and the qualitative unique phase of nature comes into play.¹⁶² The uniqueness of character stressed by

¹⁶⁰Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 353.

¹⁶¹cf. Above, p. 107.

¹⁶²Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 353.

Dewey only has meaning in the context of a social matrix.

This point is well put again in the social psychological writings of G. H. Mead. Mead's idea of the creative, individualized aspect of the "self" arises in the context of a discussion of the structure of consciousness in activity, with reference to the specific roles of the "I" and "me". If what was presented above as Mead's social psychology were all there were to it, the self would be nothing more than the passive receptacle of social attitudes and rules, and the Dewey-Mead correspondence would be broken on this point; since the Deweyian stress on personal creativity and uniqueness would have no place. But fortunately for my thesis Mead did develop this side of behavior in his theory.

We saw above that there is "a part" of consciousness that for Mead is the mere reproduction of the "generalized other;" it is that part of the self that is objective but passive - it is this part that Mead refers to as the "me". The self from this point of view merely internalizes the rules and generalized attitudes of the society or social group. In contrast, however, to the "me", there is a "section" of consciousness that stands apart from it, that reacts to and criticizes it, and ultimately reconstructs it according to its own standard or ideal. This creative part of consciousness Mead labels the "I". The "me" is precisely the organized group of responses that finds its highest development in the "generalized other," which is internalized and held before consciousness as passive. The "I" is the response, the creative reaction to the organized "me". It judges and reconstructs in a more or less individualized way.

Now in so far as the individual arouses in himself the attitudes of others, there arises an organized group of responses. And it is due to the individual's ability to take the attitudes of these others in so far as they can be organized that he gets self-consciousness. The taking of all of those organized sets of attitudes gives him his 'me'; that is the self he is aware of . . . that is the self that immediately exists for him in his consciousness. He has their attitudes, knows what they want and what the consequence of any act of his will be, and he has assumed responsibility for the situation. Now it is the presence of those organized sets of attitudes that constitutes the 'me' to which he as an 'I' is responding. But what that response will be he does not know and no-body else knows. Perhaps he will make a brilliant play or an error. The response to that situation as it appears in his immediate experience is uncertain, and it is that which constitutes the 'I'. 163

In short Mead presents the thought Dewey asserted above, and that is that there is a creative, unique aspect to behavior, the "I", which functions independent of the objective self, the me, as say Bergson would have it with his *elan vital*. The creative aspect functions in and reconstructs the passive realm and can only be understood in those terms.

In Dewey's analysis of character the creative, individualizing aspect takes the form of "impulse." It is in terms of impulse that Dewey concretizes this aspect of character and conduct, by analyzing it in a way that 1) makes it respond to the unique in the situation and 2) functions within the context of an organized set of habits and provides the impetus to adjust and reconstruct those habits when they fail to meet the individualized needs of that situation.

1) The nature and function of impulse in behavior can be gleaned by remembering that human activity was an interactivity or trans-

163 Mead, Mind, Self, p. 175.

activity between the organism and environment for Dewey. Habit refers to the achieved coordination between the two; it is organism and environment in a state of harmonious transaction. Looked at from the point of view of organismic impulse, habit is impulse that has found satisfaction in a fruitful channel in the environment. As long as that harmonious and satisfactory transaction is maintained, as long as habit smoothly functions in the world, impulse will reinforce that mode of behavior. Habit it will be remembered connotes a way of response and as long as that way is appropriate to the environmental conditions, impulse is satisfied.

But the environment is process, it is to an extent unstable, precarious, filled with novelty and unique situations. If habit were the whole story to human adaption, harmony would not be possible because habit as defined by Dewey does not include the seeds of change in itself, but growth in habits is needed if disharmony is to be corrected. It is impulse that provides the impetus to change, for upon contact with a unique situation, impulse cannot be satisfied upon traditional lines anymore, it is released in the form of energy used to reestablish harmony in the novel.¹⁶⁴ Hence impulse is that factor of character that responds to the unique individualities of the environment. It is for Dewey the higher level continuant of the qualitative uniqueness found on lower levels of natural process.

Dewey's emphasis upon the impulsive side of human behavior can

¹⁶⁴Dewey, Human Nature, p. 93.

be looked upon as related in two ways to the qualitative individualities he found so widespread in nature. First it is out of these uniquenesses that impulse arises. It is the essence of Dewey's naturalism that the higher levels of being are continuous with the lower levels and are an expression of the same categories operative on the lower level even if on a more refined level. It is because the lower and higher levels of being both possess this unique individualized aspect that Dewey calls his theory a naturalist theory of human activity. If it were believed that nature did not possess a unique qualitative aspect, and also that human nature did possess it, then on Dewey's terms his naturalism would be abandoned. Secondly impulse is related to the qualitative uniqueness of nature as something impulse must adjust itself to. It is because natural processes not only give rise to impulse but also set the conditions for adaption that impulse has such a key role in character and conduct. If the environment that man must adjust to were merely a mechanical series of repeating experiences, then habits and custom would be sufficient unto itself to achieve harmony. If the world were one in which processes flowed in such a mechanical manner, all that would be required on the part of the organism, would be a stimulation to get the habit operating and then let it mechanically operate. That refuting such a view of habit and conduct is not a merely academic affair is testified to by its strong adherents in philosophy and psychology. But nature as viewed by Dewey, does possess novelty and all kinds of qualitative uniquenesses, and unless character possesses a means of responding to them, adjustment would be impossible. Existence has its

precarious side as well as its stable, and while habit may be sufficient to adjust to the latter, something more is needed to adjust to the former. That "something more" is impulse.

2) With Dewey's concept of impulse we see again the higher lever continuant of the dialectical relation between the qualitative unique and the interactive phase of natural processes. Impulses, for Dewey, function in a context of changing habits; they provide the impetus for reconstruction. Hence impulse and habits can be looked upon, not as two separate parts, mechanically related, but rather as two aspects of one organic act; impulse pointing toward the individualizing phase while habit the interpersonal phase. In fact, at times Dewey writes as if habit were really the interpersonal phase of impulse.

This view is illustrated in Dewey's rejection of the idea that impulses, except on certain rare occasions, ever occur in a completely pure form.¹⁶⁵ Impulsive activity almost always is meditated by a specific channel of activity, a habit, governed by the participation in some ongoing social activity. The so-called aggressive instinct is a case in point. Many psychologists and philosophers talk as if there were some pure instinct or impulse toward aggressiveness, and that no matter what the social arrangement it would always manifest itself in a certain specified way, i.e. war. Dewey found such views objectionable on psychological grounds, in that such views fail to take into account the idea that impulses, while providing the basic impetus, almost always, function in the context of a matrix of social functions (habits), and

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 92.

that such matrices are extremely variable.¹⁶⁶ Hence we see that aggressiveness or sex or hunger as impulses are satisfied in every conceivable manner in different societies at different points of time.¹⁶⁷ It was this philosophical basis that provided Dewey with his great faith in progress through education, since impulses could be satisfied even in highly civilized ways.

Such arguments not only point toward the closeness of impulse and habit but also toward the manner of their independence. Dewey's view has it that impulse manifests itself in a more or less definite habitual structure, but also that that structure is extremely variable. It can be said that while impulse sets a certain limit to the range of variations, the extent of variation within that limit is rather wide. In a sense, to use Gordon Allport's term, there is a "functional autonomy" between the impulse and the type of activity that satisfies it. If sexual impulses have been satisfied in ways demeaning and painful to the female partner, it is possible at least theoretically, to create a social relation, an habitual structure, where it manifests itself in a way more democratically oriented. In short the peculiar relation between impulse and habit envisioned by Dewey provides a critical basis (or part of a basis) for the liberal and progressive faith he argued for, for such a long time.

Of course the above does not deny the possibility of impulsive behavior existing outside a more or less well defined system of habits. What it does argue for is that such behavior is a rare exception to the

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 109.

rule and it certainly rules out setting this "purely" impulsive behavior as an absolute ideal. That such behavior exists is obvious. When an impulse is "suppressed" long enough, when its expression is frustrated to a sufficient extent, it is possible that the response will be an eruption or orgy of impulse that is not directed along any habitual channel.¹⁶⁸ In such situations constructive action is virtually impossible, since by the very nature of intelligence it must work along a path, a flexible path to be sure, but not so flexible that a path does not exist. Those philosophers and psychologists who react against a mechanical industrial order by lauding an impulsive life, really make the opposite mistake of those they are attacking. On Dewey's view what is needed is the creation of a social order with institutions that will allow for the most harmonious and complete expression of impulse. So again the educational problem is central - in what way can customs be improved to allow a more complete functioning of impulse.

So far we have looked at the individual interactive relation on the human level in terms of the relation between impulse and habit. Coincident with this is the other key expression of the individual - interactive relation and that is character, conceived as a developing individual and character conceived as a participant in social processes. It is to be expected that this expression of the individual - interactive relation will correspond as harmoniously as we say impulse and desire did. And so it does. The necessity of social activity in character growth and the necessity of individual creativity in social growth

¹⁶⁸Ibid., p. 156

or progress are ideas at the very heart of Dewey's theory of the organic relationship of the individual character with society.

1) That social activity is an essential element of character growth for Dewey is a point discussed extensively earlier, and only slight mention need be made here. On Dewey's view, and the Meadian crystallization of it, character, or self arises in the context of social activity. The whole world of meaning has significance only on the dimension of co-operative behavior. All the types of quality that we associate with a fully developed personality, such as the pursuit of science, art, or morals, etc., are to Dewey components of an on-going social order. Enough on this topic has been said earlier, but suffice to say here that Dewey conceives individual character in such a way that its growth and development are meaningless apart from the participation in an on-going social order with common goals shared by many.¹⁶⁹

2) But the other side of the coin, the necessity of taking into account the creative contributions of the participants in the cause of social progress deserves further comment. Here we see a key expression of a higher-level continuant of what appeared at the level of simple natural processes as the harmony of the qualitative unique and interactive or transactive aspects of that process. Dewey, at an earlier point, recognized that society, any society, is an on-going process, which, if it is to survive, must constantly, reconstruct itself to meet the requirements of a new time. So, it is not a question of whether change will occur or not, but what type of change will there be, and how will it come about. It is here that Dewey's recognition of the crea-

¹⁶⁹cf. Above, p. 107.

tive potentiality of the individual member becomes significant.

One of the ideas that Dewey did battle with for a long time is that the self or character is a mere passive receptacle; even when the self is conceived on interpersonal lines, it is possible to conceive it as a mere rubber stamp, passively picturing the character of the society one is a member of. This view of character, which may be called the mechanical view of character, has it that the self is a blank tablet which has its nature determined totally by external forces. The idea that the character can in some sense play an active role in reconstructing these forces, in reacting to it in some creative fashion is foreign to this point of view. The relation between the individual and society here can best be conceived as a mirror which passively reflects whatever is brought in front of it. It is because of his conception of human nature that Dewey fought so strongly against what is usually referred to as behaviorism in the United States. On this latter view behavior patterns are built up as a result of a system of rewards and punishments determined by the original constitution of the organism and environmental influences. After it has been built up, the firing of a behavior pattern waits upon the presentation of a stimulus from the environment. The organism is treated as passive clay which might incidentally make a vital contribution to an on-going social process, but certainly such creative participation is not essential to its nature and development.¹⁷⁰

Dewey (and Mead) presents another theory of character; one in

¹⁷⁰Dewey, *the Reflex-art Concept*, p. 97.

accordance with his metaphysical and biological theories with their emphasis upon the significance of qualitative immediacies and uniquenesses in the scheme of things. On Dewey's view it is of the essence of character not merely to interact and reflect the various social institutions and customs that make up society, but also each member reflects and reacts to that environment in its own way. Character possesses a genuinely creative aspect since each character with its own special make-up and impulse responds to the environmental forces in a unique way. While its true, as we have seen, that Dewey conceived individual creativity as functioning in and arising out of a matrix of interpersonal relations, this does not exclude the possibility that that function is a real one. Each character then can be looked upon as a creative center, whose individuality indeed is "real". From the point of view of social reconstruction such uniqueness is of priceless value since it is a source of new ideas which could possibly be one of use in the never-ending process of social reconstruction. This is not the place to enter into it, but Dewey felt ideas had a crucial function to play in the process of adaption in proposing possible solutions to problematic situations. The source of these ideas must be the creative reaction of the participants of the social process, whether of the scientific community or the family group, and hence it is of the utmost importance to the cause of progress not to stifle the unique development of the individual member. Development, in short, on this view is not a process of passively internalizing the behavior patterns of a particular society, but involves the active response of the organism which will have the

effect of at least partially reconstructing that environment in a unique way.

This is of course not to say that it was Dewey's view that the creative uniqueness of the individual could not be stifled. Dewey saw, and indeed was inflexibly opposed to systems which did not allow for its development. It is possible to say that schemes and institutions of development that did not meet the requirement of the development of this very important aspect of character were immediately rejected by him. Dewey's importance, here, I believe is that he drew attention to the possibility of another, more flexible, freer method of development. He pointed out that a "regimented" system of education, that didn't allow for the creativity of school members, did not necessarily have metaphysical or social psychological foundation; that such a system was not necessary by the nature of the case and could be changed. It was in short Dewey's contribution by his philosophy of education, and if I am correct by his whole philosophy, to put forward this new possibility, to be tested in practice.

Temporality in the Foundations of Dewey's Social Psychology

Among Dewey's more controversial claims was his continued insistence upon time with respect to human activities and ends. Above Dewey's belief that the major motive for the idea and quest for immutable reality and good was the need to feel safe in a precarious world, was mentioned.¹⁷¹ The related belief that in a world controlled by science and intelligence, change could be turned to humane ends and hence not

¹⁷¹cf. Above, p. 57.

something to be denied, was also asserted. Consequently Dewey believed it time to do away with all ideas concerning human activity which asserted the existence of changeless aspects. In effect this task toward human affairs is an extension of the approach that was so successful in the biological order. There it was seen that the ancient idea of fixed species had to be given up in favor of a view that related concrete organisms to temporally specific environments, subject to change. In a similar way, Dewey proposed to set the foundations of psychology on a new footing by viewing man and his activities in terms of concrete historical social transactions - and not as changeless needs pursuing immutable goals.

A major part of Dewey's attempt to "temporalize" human nature was his belief that man's major goals and ideas develop in historically specific situations. Such a conclusion, Dewey believed, was founded in the conclusions of the social sciences. An example of this approach can be seen in Dewey's analysis of the "savage mind" which, because it involved a relatively simple society, places the key idea in a more pronounced form. It is Dewey's contention that the savage mind, in all its activities: dance, religion, myth etc., can only be understood in the light of the peculiar way in which the people, at this stage of development, interact with their environment.

Dewey argues that it is the general level of occupations that set the limits within which the savage mind develops. Occupations, the ways man squeezes a livelihood out of nature, change over time, and hence man's basic activities, needs, goals, thoughts, etc., will also

change over time.

If we search in any social group for the special functions to which mind is thus relative, occupations at once suggest themselves. Occupations determine the fundamental modes of activity, and hence the formation and use of habits . . . the occupations determine the chief modes of satisfaction, the standards of success and failure. Hence they furnish working classifications and definitions of value; they control the desire processes. Moreover they decide the sets or objects and relations that are important, and thereby provide the content or material of attention. . . . So fundamental and pervasive is the group of occupational activities that it affords the scheme or pattern of the structural organization of mental traits.¹⁷²

The claim that "structural organization of mental traits" is generated from occupations is indeed extreme. Its extremeness, however, indicates the importance that Dewey attached to temporal considerations when analyzing human activity. When Dewey asserts that "so fundamental and pervasive is the group of occupational activities that it affords the scheme or pattern of the structural organization of mental traits" he is saying that all organized mental traits must be seen in the light of occupational interactions. Occupational interactions between man and his environment change over historical time. Hence no mental trait is immutable on Dewey's theory; they are all developed in the context of historically changing patterns of interaction.

With Dewey's approach, no place is provided for changeless aspects of human nature. Dewey's social psychology denies that there is any desire or character trait or need or goal etc., that is not subject to change. If it is asserted, for example, that man is an "essentially" aggressive being, because of an unalterable aggressive instinct

¹⁷²John Dewey, "The Interpretation of The Savage Mind," in Philosophy and Civilization, pp. 75 - 76.

or impulse, Dewey would respond that such claims forget the foundations of social science. On the basis of Dewey's theory of human activity, it is the historically changing occupational interaction between organism and environment which provides the context in which organized mental traits may be understood. War-like activity as an organized mental trait, must be viewed, if the foundations of Dewey's social psychology are taken seriously, not in the context of an immutable instinct, but rather as generated from a type of interaction between man and his environment. Accordingly it is only by changing the mode of interaction, human "occupation", that aggressive behavior can be controlled.

Habits, then, interpreted as the unit of human behavior, change over time. In an earlier section the interactive or transactive aspect of habit was explored and its place as a social function was analyzed.¹⁷³ It was because Dewey conceived habit as the basic unit of psychology that the basic social interactive context of behavior could be understood. Now, another role the concept of habit performs can be seen. Habit refers to specific social functions, but these functions are always subject to change with changed environments. For Dewey an interaction-in-general existing out of time and history is not possible. Habits exist, develop, function in, and change in historically conditioned situations.

Habit as the interactive system between the organism and the environment changes with a change either in the organism or the environment. There is no mode of human behavior not developed according to

¹⁷³cf. Above, p. 107.

habits, and hence not subject to change with a change in the conditions in which habit functions. A man, for example, may be extremely acquisitive and this type of habit may allow him to function adequately in a specific environment at a specific time. Suppose, however, our Scrooge becomes caught on an island with only a few survivors. In that situation, acquisitive habits may be "out of place" or even fatal. New habits must be developed; his way of interacting with the world must change, or serious consequences will be the result.

Because habits were interactive functions to Dewey, temporalism became a central aspect of social psychology. It will be remembered that Dewey interpreted Darwin's conclusions to mean that fixed ends and species were given up in biology in favor of functions, which were concrete interactions between organism and environment.¹⁷⁴ The idea of habit as social function, in the same way, points away from changeless ends and essences in human psychology and towards historically changing concrete interactions between the organism and the social environment. Because Dewey rejected the idea of changeless essence on Darwinian grounds, habit, which allowed Darwin's ideas to be applied on the human level of activity, point toward a historical approach to human nature. The habit structure that makes up character cannot be studied in general or wholesale, but rather must be viewed in the context of specific transactions of a definite period. If a psychologist or philosopher speaks in terms of changeless human nature, he will at best be generalizing some well defined character-trait relative to the specific social

¹⁷⁴cf. Above, pp. 67-69.

conditions in which it is functioning.

The same historical approach to character arises when the idea of impulse is analyzed. Earlier the concept of impulse was explained in terms of the individualized reaction of the organism to the matrix of social interactions that make up character. As such reactions, impulses cannot be separated from the concrete social functions to which they are a reaction. To say, for example, that man has an essential impulse to violence regardless of social interactions and institutions, is to ignore the idea that impulses virtually always function through concrete, more or less definite, habits. When a psychologist or philosopher asserts that there is a "timeless" will to power or aggressiveness, he has forgotten the lessons Dewey learned. It was Dewey's conclusion that impulses express themselves in and react to definite social institutions of a particular era. In Dewey's analysis the problem of violent activity is not the problem of an innate changeless impulse, but the problem of shaping social institutions that would allow and foster the most peaceful and productive development of the character. From the side of war, to say that all wars are caused by the same impulse to violence, is to forget that different impulses arise in different historical settings. In sum, Dewey's concept of impulse, as well as habit, point toward a temporalistic historic aspect of character, as opposed to views that posit a changeless self that underlies human activity.

Dewey's concern for an historical developing approach to character, was heightened by his belief that change was, to an increasing ex-

tent, a central feature of modern society.¹⁷⁵

In an age like the modern one, where new scientific, technological and historical developments change society, the social conditions of activity, very rapidly, a theory of psychology that posits a changeless self or form would not only be false, but would be out of place. To meet the ever changing needs of modern society, Dewey believed it imperative to develop character types that could intelligently change to meet these new needs. If an educator, for example, operated on the idea that there was a changeless ideal human nature that was to be approached by education, it would be extremely difficult for a child to develop a character flexible enough to meet the changing needs of modern society.

Hence, Dewey's claim is not only that those who believe in a fixed human nature or form operating "behind" concrete interactions are not taking into account the best available biological and behavioral evidence, but that such a view has harmful consequences when used as an ideal of education. There is no social institution that is not open to change, hopefully intelligent change. The family, political structures, science, housing patterns, educational developments, economic arrangements, etc., are all changing at unprecedented speeds. Only an education that makes the development of a flexible, changeable character the goal, can adapt to such a world. Immutability is not a characteristic of the self that can be afforded in the modern world.

Dewey presents an example of a deep change that is needed to

¹⁷⁵ John Dewey, Problems of Men (New York: Philosophical Library 1946), p. 27.

meet the demands of society as he saw it develop. The example cited is the one of the acquisitive personality. There is a view of human nature, once argued for by many, but still clung to by some, that man is essentially self-seeking, only interested in personal gain. This view of "economic man," developed with great precision in the eighteenth century, purports to prove that human nature is essentially oriented by the profit motive. This interpretation of human nature has been called "individualistic," both by its proponents and opponents.

What Dewey does, with the aid of his social psychology, is to temporalize the acquisitive character. Dewey views this character type in the context of a set of social interactions and institutions, that existed at a certain point in the history of European and American civilization. And while Dewey may agree that such a character was most fitting, in, or best adapted to, that particular historical epoch, it does not follow that this character-type is best adapted to the new set of social conditions which exist in contemporary society.¹⁷⁶ The "individualistic" model of human nature, for Dewey, must be interpreted as a hypothetical character-type, which must be tested as to its adaptability to an historically novel matrix of social transactions.

In fact, it was Dewey's belief that such a character-type was indeed historically obsolete. The ideal human nature represented by the individualistic character-type was adopted to a peculiar set of conditions that characterized the highly competitive era of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries in Europe and the United States.

¹⁷⁶Dewey, Human Nature, p. 220.

The ideal individualist character must be changed to an ideal co-operative character to meet the demands of a changed historical situation. In today's "corporate" society a new "individuality" must be developed and instituted to develop types of character that would fit the novel picture.

The criticism of a certain theory of ideal human nature does not depend upon developing a counter theory of changeless human nature. Dewey bases his criticism on his proposed historicized human nature. It is the fact that the individualist character-type if not adopted to contemporary needs that is the basis and standard of criticism. Whether a particular character is identical or not with a non-temporal model of human nature is not a standard of criticism open to a philosopher who accepts the foundations of Dewey's social psychology. On such a basis the focus of concern is the adaptability of the human organism to a specific historical situation.

Another way that Dewey develops the idea that human activity is characterized by temporal considerations is his claim that the human act, in essence, is temporally continuous. The "reflex-arc" model of the human act would have that human behavior was a discontinuous affair, full of sudden starts and equally sudden endings. It is to be remembered that Dewey argued that natural processes were "histories" as opposed to causal sequences, with disjointed causes and effects.¹⁷⁷ There it was seen that Dewey felt it necessary to argue that physical processes occur in a temporally continuous way; that is to say each instant of the

¹⁷⁷cf. Above, p. 59.

process is not essentially an ending or a beginning, even though for practical purposes they may be so interpreted. What really exists at any particular moment of a process is a culmination of what went before and an anticipation of what is to come. It is this continuity between past, present and future, that Dewey draws attention to with his claim that physical process are really "histories."

A major aspect of Dewey's philosophy of human activity was that human activity was not a disjointed affair, but rather a temporally continuous relationship between past, present, and future. Human activity, in this regard as elsewhere, is conceived on the same categorial terms as lower levels of activity. Dewey criticized strongly the reflex-arc concept, because, if taken seriously, psychologists would operate on the belief that human activity was an affair of abrupt starts and abrupt endings. Just as in the level of physical activity the causal model that Dewey was trying to replace would break the process up into discrete temporal causes and effects, so at the level of human activity the reflex-arc model would break human activity up into equally discrete successions of stimuli and responses. Dewey argues that what was taken to be discrete are really two continuous points of one over-all "co-ordination". Each behavior point of the co-ordination can either be viewed as the residue of what went before or an anticipation of what will come.

Dewey argues that the temporal continuity of human activity is lost sight of in the reflex-arc model which stresses discontinuity.

The result is that the reflex-arc idea leaves us with a disjointed psychology, whether viewed from the standpoint of development in the individual or the race, or from that of

the analysis of the mature consciousness. As to the former, in its failure to see that the "arc" of which it talks is actually a circuit, a continual reconstruction, it breaks continuity and leaves us nothing but a series of jerks, the origin of each jerk to be sought outside the process of experience itself in either an external pressure of 'environment', or else in an unaccountable spontaneous variation from within the 'soul', or the 'organism'. As to the latter, failing to see the unity of activity, no matter how much it may prate of unity, still leaves us with peripheral stimulus . . . and motor response, or act, as three disconnected existences, having to be somehow adjusted to each other. . . .¹⁷⁸

Dewey's new unit of behavior, his coordination or habit, introduces temporal continuity in place of the discontinuity inherent in the reflex-arc model. This is to say that the basic model is an interactive system and all events past, present and future are viewed within that system. A particular point in the act, can be conceived for the purposes of analysis as the culmination of past events, or it can be viewed as the beginning of a new series of events. It is to be remembered, however, that these distinctions are made for the purposes of analysis and control and do not reflect the way the act, in reality, exists.

In reality each part of the act must be viewed in the context of the system of activity which is the act. The past events weigh down the present, while at the same time future possibilities guide the development.

It is the co-ordination which unifies that which the reflex-arc concept gives us only in disjointed fragments. It is the circuit within which fall distinctions of stimulus and response as functional phases of its own mediation or completion.¹⁷⁹

The coordination or circuit which Dewey argues is a better model of behavior than the arc, can become disjointed. In cases of

¹⁷⁸Dewey "Reflex-arc," p. 99.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

this kind, the past does not smoothly flow and highlight the present into future possibilities, but gaps, a breakdown in the coordination, occur. In such cases intelligent activity, which is a form of coordination, or habit, must be used to restructure the coordination. Where the reflex-arc concept would have us believe that the discontinuity in behavior is final, Dewey's "circuit" concept focuses attention on the attempt to re-coordinate behavior. The lack of continuity is not final, it sets a problem to be solved.

It is the temporary disintegration and need of reconstruction which occasions affords the genesis of, the conscious distinction into sensory stimulus on the one side and motor response on the other.¹⁸⁰

Habit, as the name Dewey eventually gave to the interactive continuum, which serves as the unit of behavior, points toward the temporal continuity analyzed above.¹⁸¹ The interactive system where the past is "funded" into the present and the present anticipates future possibilities, is habit. The problem of reconstructing co-ordinations to meet new needs, then becomes the problem of reconstructing habits. The growth and development of habit, means the freeing of the past in the service of present needs, to build conditions for a satisfactory future consummation. In conclusion, then, Dewey's category of temporality manifests itself on the level of human activity, not only in the sense of focusing attention on the "historical" content of character, but also in the sense of the "historical" temporally continues nature of the act. Significantly, it is the concept of habit that is the social psychological basis of both these senses of temporality.

¹⁸⁰Ibid. p. 152.

¹⁸¹cf. Above, p. 152.

The assertion that there is no changeless form that gives meaning to concrete human interactions means that there is no goal-in-general which is the object of all human strivings. It is true that characters and habits when confronted with novel situations will grow, but the growth will not occur in a way set by changeless features of human nature, mind, or spirit. Dewey's temporality cuts all the way through his theory of character, to the extent that not only is it seen as a moving, developing affair, but also the goals it sets itself change over time. Human ends, as Dewey interpreted them, are generated out of concrete interactions with nature and society, and cannot realistically be conceived outside these historically changing processes.

It was, for example, on the basis of this deep-seated temporalism that Dewey rejected many prior theories of self-development or self-realization. Dewey was very critical of T. H. Green's theory of self-realization on this basis.¹⁸² It was Green's belief that the self develops throughout history toward a goal set by the logic of the absolute self, which does not change over time. The absolute self is implicit in all the strivings of selfconscious concrete selves, and hence the strivings of real living selves are "really" the strivings for the changeless goal of the absolute self. The strivings of concrete selves, in an important sense, must lack fulfillment, since the goal of absolute self realization which is implicit in each concrete striving and goal, is essentially unreachable by living selves.

¹⁸²John Dewey "Self-Realization as the Moral Ideal" in Vol. IV Early Works, p. 43.

This changeless goal that concrete human selves strive for, but never reach, makes a tragic mockery of the real goals and achievements human beings set and achieve in life. Goals of concrete human strivings do change with a change in the conditions that gave rise to them. The historically changing goals of human activity set the standards of realization and not a wholesale goal standing outside that activity. Green, and other philosophers who make self-realization the goal of concrete human strivings, argue that human activity at its core seeks the goal of absolute self-realization or self-consciousness, but such a goal is essentially unrealizable by specific individuals, though it can be approximated to an ever greater degree. Human life in general, and the moral life in particular, becomes one huge torment, since not only is the major goal of human desire unattainable, but the joys that surround the achievement of the ends that arise in natural human intercourse, are paled in comparison to the absolute satisfaction of absolute self-realization.

Dewey would have nothing to do with such blows to the moral life and concrete human interactions. Such theories, he conceded, were correct with respect to the recognition of the role of striving and

development in the moral life. They were incorrect however in conceiving the goal of striving to be outside the temporally specific strivings that make up human life. Only when goals or ends are seen to arise out of and function in concrete interpersonal relations, where after all man has his being, can the moral life and self-realization be applicable to human activity as it exists. If educational philosophers, for example, set as a goal of moral education some state that cannot be reached, only "approximated" to a greater degree, can anyone doubt Dewey's claim that healthy-minded children (and adults, for that matter) will find the moral life a rather unattractive affair. Only when the moral life is seen as growing out of, and not imposed upon, the soil of real desires, will the moral life gain wide and generous support.

The goals of sexual living for example, on Dewey's theory, cannot be arrived at once and for all and applied to all situations, no matter how different from the conditions that existed when the original goals were constructed. Such goals and standards will certainly produce among other vices, hypocrisy. Goals of a sexual ethic appropriate to modern historical conditions must take into account all the interests that have arisen in the course of contemporary life, e.g. the value of pleasure, care of off-spring, economic changes, political interest in democratic relationships etc. Only when goods are constructed from the nexus of concrete interactions can the moral life develop out of real human desires and not be an external imposition on, and hindrance to, living.

Concepts that characterize the self or character must also be interpreted as consistent with a character that can constantly grow. Ideas, which in other philosophers thoughts, characterize a fixed substance or form, must be translated into Dewey's system by relating the idea to a historically developing character. Not only is character temporalized, conceived in historical terms, but all properties of it must also be seen in a temporal context. This translation must be accomplished, not only for concepts that immediately flow from psychological subject matter, e.g. perception, intelligence, habit etc., but must also apply to attributes of character that may play an important part in various philosophical concerns, such as ethics or aesthetics.

By way of example, take Dewey's idea of freedom, in the ethical sense i.e. freedom in the moral life, and not in the political sense, i.e. freedom as civil liberties. On the nontemporalized notion of freedom, freedom would be the possession of a changeless self. Freedom, on such an interpretation would be something that is possessed by a self, or soul, or "noumenal" self, prior to its involvement in concrete human interactions. It would be brought to interactions and not developed from them. It is Dewey's contention that concepts of freedom that characterize antecedently existing selves, such as the Thomast soul or Kants noumenal self are more similar than they are different.

There is no superstition more benumbing I think than the current notion that things are not what they are, and do not do what they are seen to do, because such things have themselves come into existence in a causal way. Water is what it does rather than what it is caused by. The same is true of the fact of intelligent choice. A philosophy which looks for freedom in antecedents and one which looks for it in consequences, in a developing course of action, in becoming rather than in

static being, will have very different notions about it.¹⁸³

It was precisely to a "developing course of action, in becoming rather than in static "being", that Dewey looked for his idea of freedom. Dewey interprets freedom in terms of a growing, changing character. Freedom becomes the ability of the character to grow in a way that meets the needs of a novel situation, which presents a problem to the "old" self or character. Freedom has a place in human experience because situations arise where the complex arrangement of impulse and habit, which defines the "old" character, can no longer meet the needs set by concrete interactions. The only way to re-establish co-ordination is for the self or character to develop in a certain way. Where the self for some reason is unable to intelligently grow in the direction that meets the needs of the novel situation, the self is, by that fact, unfree. The free self or character, on the other hand can develop, after intelligent consideration of emerging needs, in a way that fosters adaption to the novel situation.¹⁸⁴

Freedom to Dewey, then, is interpreted in the context of a changing world. Freedom is not the property of a changeless self or "ego" that somehow stands outside of the concrete natural interactions, and guides them along a dutiful path, Kant's idea of a noumenal self which, possessing freedom, stands behind the causal sequence of the empirical self is an example. Freedom is a characteristic that Kant's

¹⁸³John Dewey, "Philosophies of Freedom" in Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization, pp. 292-293.

¹⁸⁴Dewey "Time and Individuality" in Experience, Nature ed. Bernstein, p. 239.

noumenal self "brings to" natural causal chains and by that freedom somehow influences the empirical course of events. For Dewey, on the other hand, freedom characterizes a self or character in the course of its "becoming", its developing in natural interactions. The difference between Kant and Dewey on moral freedom is the difference between: "A philosophy which looks for freedom in antecedents and one which looks for it in consequences, in a developing course of action, in becoming rather than in static being, . . . 185

Human individuality, for Dewey, in its major sense, points toward the unique life history of a particular character. Individuality, like freedom, is not a property possessed by a self standing being change, but is expressed in change. Understanding what is unique or individualized in a person is not the understanding of a changeless inner core that somehow makes the person "tick". To understand what is unique, knowledge of the biography of the person through concrete changes in coming to terms with the world, is necessary. If it weren't for the fact that each organism develops and grows in its unique way, individuality as a factor in human interactions would have no meaning for Dewey, since there is nothing in human activity behind concrete interactions.

That uniqueness is expressed in concrete interaction is to be expected when it is remembered that human character has habit as its basic unit and habit is precisely an interactive system.¹⁸⁶ The historical temporalistic aspect of human activity is correlative to the qualitatively unique aspect of activity, since the latter expresses itself in the former.

¹⁸⁵cf. Above,

¹⁸⁶cf. Above, p. 107.

Return for a moment to the human individual. It is impossible to think of the historical career, which is the special individuality constituting Abraham Lincoln apart from the peculiar conditions in which he lived. He did not create, for example, the conditions that formed the issues of states' rights and of slavery, the issues that influenced his development. What his being as an individual would have been without these interacting conditions it is idle to speculate upon. The conditions did not form him from without as wax is supposed to be shaped by external pressure. . . . There were many other persons living under much the same conditions whose careers were very different, because conditions acted upon them and were acted upon by them in different ways. . . . The career which is his unique individuality is the series of interactions¹⁸⁷ which he responded to the occasions with which he was presented.

Finally, Dewey's basic concept of temporality is pointed to by his concept of impulse. In the first place, impulse provides the energy need to effect character growth. In a new situation where impulse cannot find an active outlet to manifest itself, character must change to allow the development of such habits. Impulse in a sense "forces" the character to take note of new elements in the environment and make the initiation of intelligent reconstruction of habits of prime concern.

Secondly Dewey asserts that impulse operates in a way not determined by the past. Time is important in human life, partly because real possibilities exist. The past does not make one end inevitable in Dewey's world and human view. After the event the action can be explained in terms of past experience, but before the action it is "contingent" which possibility will actually occur.

But there was nothing in Lincoln's own life to cause by itself the conjunction of circumstances which brought about any one of these events. As far as an individual was concerned, the events were contingent, and as far the conjunction of circumstances was concerned, his behavior at any given time in response to them was also contin-

¹⁸⁷Dewey "Time and Individuality", p. 240.

gent, or if you please fortuitous.¹⁸⁸

It is to be remembered that Dewey believed the reality of time on the level of physical process manifested itself by physical indeterminism.¹⁸⁹

It is because the future is open, not determined by causes or ends, that time makes a difference in physical process and human activity.

Thirdly impulse points toward the temporality of that impulse as in part a response to a concrete historically conditioned set of circumstances. Since each situation is characterized by its own qualitative uniqueness, which is related to the historically conditioned circumstances which make it up, it follows that the impulsive response to these conditions, will likewise be permeated by the same historical coloring. The impulses that arise, for example, in the warlike activities of the twentieth century will be different from those that arose in the warlike activity of ancient Greece. The impulses involved in the Battle of Troy will be different from the impulses involved in the Battle of the Bulge, because the historical conditions differ.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p. 240.

¹⁸⁹cf. Above, p. 58.

CONCLUSION

I will conclude my dissertation by making certain distinctions in the use I have made of the concept of continuity and then make observations of a general kind.

In the text of the dissertation I use the concept of continuity in three different contexts. The first use I call the major concept of continuity with respect to the purposes of the dissertation. The second and third uses I call incidental concepts of continuity with respect to the purposes of the dissertation.

The major concept of continuity is that which explains Dewey's basic naturalistic approach to the world and human activity. The concept of continuity that has been the basis of my dissertation is "category continuity,"¹⁹⁰ This idea, briefly, rests on Dewey's belief that the higher levels of activity manifest the same generic traits found on lower levels of activity and justify the use of the same categorical scheme.

The three categories that I believe Dewey felt basic are: the interactive or transactive, the qualitative unique, and the temporalistic or historic. It is because these categories manifest themselves on all levels of activity that the continuity basic to Dewey's naturalism exists. The three levels of activity I singled out; the physical, biological and human, all are approached by Dewey as areas where the three categories are employed in ways that are seen to be

¹⁹⁰cf. Above, p. 7.

fruitful. Rival approaches which deny that any one of these categories apply to any level was combated by Dewey because such ideas were not only believed to be inaccurate, but also because such ideas were damaging to Dewey's naturalistic commitment.

What makes the three levels of activity continuously related is that while they all possess the same characteristics, the latter exist in a "more refined" form on the higher levels than on the lower levels. Interaction between a biological organism and its environment is as fully an expression of interaction as that between a human organism and its social environment. The interaction on the human level of activity by possessing all sorts of complexities, such as meanings, intelligence, morals, etc., is more refined than interaction on the biological level.

The continuity then, basic to Dewey's naturalism and basic to my dissertation is category continuity. That is to say each level of activity justifies the use of the same categories, only the higher levels exhibit categorial traits in a more refined manner.

Beside the major use of continuity I distinguish two incidental uses. I call them incidental uses because they apply to an analysis of the categories and not to Dewey's basic naturalistic approach.

The first incidental concept of continuity is the continuity involved in the notion of interaction. It was Dewey's belief, and I hope this was demonstrated in the text, that interaction meant, not a relation between separate parts, but rather a continuum between elements of one process. The interaction for example, between a biological

organ and its environments is not the relation of a separate entity or substance, say the lungs, with another separate entity, the air. The interaction between lungs and air means that there is one basic process or function which both lungs and air are distinguishable elements.

It is this sense that I mean when it is asserted that the lungs and air are continuously related in one interaction, which in this case is breathing.

Another incidental use of continuity is that involved in the category of temporalism. There it was found that one of the basic aspects of Dewey's emphasis upon temporal considerations was that processes on all levels of activity are continuous or historical. This means that on all levels of activity Dewey reacted against dividing a process into temporally discontinuous, disjointed parts. Part of Dewey's objection to the reflex-arc model of human behavior was that it broke up human activity into discrete time-slots, the stimulus and the response. Such an approach, Dewey felt, denies the actual temporal continuity that exists in human behavior, or as he preferred to call it, conduct.

To Dewey each element of human behavior carries forward the past experience while projecting forward future possibilities. If parts of this "history" are singled out as discontinuous, say as stimulus, this is done for purposes of analysis and not because a discontinuity exists in behavior. Part of what Dewey means by temporalism is, then that in physical, biological and human process, there exists in reality temporally continuous histories and not discrete, disjointed lines of externally

related time elements.

I now consider the wider question of whether my dissertation presupposes the claim that Dewey accepted an over-arching philosophical system. The answer to the question, I believe lies in the meaning given to the word "system". If the claim that Dewey had a system is taken to mean that Dewey believed that every part of existence and every process, could be fit into some antecedently accepted theoretical structure, then the claim would certainly be false. Any causal reading of Dewey's philosophy will indicate a rejection of philosophical systems that are final, leaving no room for novelty or uniqueness. Over-circling systems in this sense are not only alien to Dewey's philosophic method but are positively rejected.

If however by philosophic system is meant general ideas which set the limits or basic direction in which philosophical analysis proceeds, then I think the case is otherwise. If Dewey's claim that he accepted a form of "naturalism" has any meaning whatsoever, it must set some general limits on the way he proceeds in interpreting and analyzing philosophical problems.

Even more, Dewey's naturalism suggests a certain direction to inquiry. Dewey believed that the world was composed of various forms of process and activity. That all levels and forms of process have interactive, temporal, and qualitatively unique aspects is an idea that guided Dewey's interpretation of all processes. This was the general framework or direction.. that guided inquiry. How these traits or aspects manifest themselves in a particular type of process, e.g., physical,

chemical etc., was to be determined by rigorous scientific inquiry in that subject-matter. How, for example, interaction exists on the level of physical process, is the subject-matter of the physical sciences. In sum then, if by system we mean that Dewey believed that there existed certain general characteristics that set limits and guide scientific research, the construction of a psychology, for example, then I think it correct to say that Dewey did present a philosophic system.

The last question I will consider is the still wider one, of whether philosophy gains or loses if it is pursued and studied along the "systematic" lines laid out by Dewey. In modern philosophy, at least as presented by some in the United States and England, there have been philosophers who argue that philosophical inquiry and investigation is best pursued without reference to general theories concerning processes, or the nature of human activity in general. These philosophers would have it that the best way to approach a particular philosophical problem is to analyze or clarify meanings, whatever this project is taken to mean, without reference to or guidance from a general view of, say, the nature of human activity or processes in general.

If the general thrust of my dissertation is correct, Dewey offers as alternative approach to the pursuit of philosophical inquiry. To understand and solve a philosophical problem, its place in human activity must be determined. To understand human activity, its continuity with lower forms of process must be understood.

Take the example used in the text - Dewey's treatment of the concept of interest.¹⁹¹ On Dewey's approach the concept of interest

¹⁹¹cf. Above, p. 129.

cannot be explained by breaking up the concept of interest into simple elements or atoms, whatever that means, nor can it be explained by looking to common language. What human interests are must be seen in the context of the place of interests in behavior and the latter must be seen in terms of interaction, for example. If interests are not seen in the context of the general interactive aspect of human activity, serious misinterpretations will result when interest is studied in ethics or value theory.

Dewey interprets philosophical concepts, then, at least in part in the context of the categories that characterize human activity. It is by relating philosophical concepts such as interest or freedom¹⁹² to the wider arena of human activity and process in general that its significance can be fully appreciated.

In short, it is my contention that to fully understand Dewey's writings on human activity it is necessary to grasp the basis of his ideas in a categorial scheme. It has been the purpose of this dissertation to provide such a scheme and to use it to interpret concepts employed in analysing human activity. Dewey's analyses must be seen in this wider categorial context or misinterpretations will be made.

¹⁹²cf. Above, p. 163.

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