



Theories of general education : a critical assessment
by Craig Cozad Howard

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The quality of undergraduate education in the United States has been a recent subject of debate for public officials as well as curriculum planners. Much of that debate has focused on general education, but little of it has articulated the philosophical presuppositions of general education programs. The problem of this study is to articulate the philosophical presuppositions of the major approaches to general education in the United States and to suggest a ground from which to critically assess them.

The procedures used are both historical-hermeneutic, and critical. In articulating the four major approaches to general education (the Idealist, the Progressive, the Essentialist, and the Pragmatist), the procedures are historical and hermeneutic.

In developing a critical theory of general education based on the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas, the procedures are both historical-hermeneutic and critical.

The study provides a theoretical ground from which further empirical research may be conducted, as well as making the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas accessible to curricular reformers. The study further suggests ways to evaluate general education programs and suggests a new focus for curricular reform: communicative competence based on the traditional ideals of free speech and the "good life."

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Craig Cozad Howard

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of a thesis submitted by

Craig Cozad Howard

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

2/22/88 *Ed Stodmyr*
Date Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

2/22/88 *Donald L. Robson*
Date Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

3-4-88 *W. Mabe*
Date Graduate Dean

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ABSTRACT

The quality of undergraduate education in the United States has been a recent subject of debate for public officials as well as curriculum planners. Much of that debate has focused on general education, but little of it has articulated the philosophical presuppositions of general education programs. The problem of this study is to articulate the philosophical presuppositions of the major approaches to general education in the United States and to suggest a ground from which to critically assess them.

The procedures used are both historical-hermeneutic, and critical. In articulating the four major approaches to general education (the Idealist, the Progressive, the Essentialist, and the Pragmatist), the procedures are historical and hermeneutic. In developing a critical theory of general education based on the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas, the procedures are both historical-hermeneutic and critical.

The study provides a theoretical ground from which further empirical research may be conducted, as well as making the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas accessible to curricular reformers. The study further suggests ways to evaluate general education programs and suggests a new focus for curricular reform: communicative competence based on the traditional ideals of free speech and the "good life."

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

The quality of undergraduate education in the United States has recently been called into question by a series of national reports. In October of 1984, the National Institute of Education issued a report citing a series of warning signals indicating the quality of undergraduate education had declined (The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 24, 1984). In November of 1984, then chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, William J. Bennett, released an extensive report expressing concern for the lack of coherence and vitality in the undergraduate curriculum generally, and in the programs in the humanities in particular (The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 28, 1984). Finally, the Association of American Colleges released a report (The Chronicle of Higher Education, February 13, 1985) urging faculty to take responsibility for a return to quality teaching and curricular coherence in the face of increased emphasis on research, specialization, and fragmentation in the undergraduate curriculum.

All of these reports stressed the need for strengthening curricular coherence through some type of common general educational experience, and all of them lamented the specialized and vocational orientation of many undergraduate curricula. And

while none of them made clear the normative ground from which they launched their critique of the status quo, all made recommendations for "improving the quality" of education in the undergraduate colleges of America.

These concerns for quality in collegiate education are also articulated by writers and researchers of the nation's public schools. Ernest Boyer lists nine recommendations for improving the quality of education (1983: 7), and argues that our future as a nation depends on the quality of our nation's public education. John Goodlad (1984) also expresses concern for the quality of public school education and its articulation with the college experience. Mortimer Adler (1982), from a different point of view, would restructure public education so radically that its current practitioners would hardly recognize it. There is, has been and will doubtless continue to be, increasing concern for questions of quality at all levels of public education in the United States.

These concerns are at least as old as the Yale Report of 1828 (Hofstadter and Smith, 1961: 275), perhaps the first American apology for a classical and common curriculum to hold together the moral fabric of the republic. Since the Yale Report, there have been several periods of curricular reform in response to the several vagaries of American history (Rudolph, 1978), and at least three periods in the twentieth century when general education was the special domain of curricular discussions (Boyer and Levine, 1981), both periods corresponding

to the time of troubles immediately preceding and following the World Wars. The most recent revival of interest in general education follows the end of the Vietnam War, and the curricular dissolution of the 1960s. The period from 1975 to the present has been marked by a revival of interest in general education and in restoring integrity to the undergraduate curriculum through recourse to core curricula and other strategies of insuring a broad general, and in some cases, liberal education. Gaff (1983: 207-220) lists over 300 American colleges and universities who at the time of his survey, were reviewing general education.

Despite all the current interest in general education, there is little agreement on what constitutes a viable general education program for any given institution. The disagreements center on questions of content, structure, process and implementation, and range across the spectrum of curricular philosophies and institutional types. There is a coherent body of literature that questions the advisability of general education in any form (Hall and Kevles, 1982), and there are those who believe that assumptions of general education, insofar as they are articulated at all, need to be subjected to a radical criticism (Gros Louis, 1981).

The three twentieth century revivals of general education have focused on what might be called "shared cultural values," including notions of a common history, common political and economic attitudes, common languages, and a common vision of the

future. During periods of world war and the economic dislocation attendant to them, these common values became "lost" or at least overshadowed by more pressing and immediate problems of national survival, only to be regained with the return to better times that our national optimism assures us are immanent. This posture toward curricular change suggests that there is always something to go back to, that there is a common set of cultural artifacts we periodically recover and reaffirm through reinstating general education programs which acquaint and inculcate those values in college students. Such values were called into question, however, in the most recent fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum that occurred in the milieu of the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and the student revolts of the 1960s.

Any attempt to recapture the unity of cultural values formerly expressed by general education curricula may be doomed to failure, however, if there is no longer any basis for asserting such unity. R.R. Gros Louis, for example, argues persuasively that fragmentation of American society did not cause the collapse of common culture, but rather that the collapse of common culture caused the fragmentation of American society (Gros Louis, 1981: 33). Such a "reversal," if true, has important implications for general education since there is nothing to return to after collapse; nothing except the project of making a common culture anew, and of instituting the processes under which such a project might be successfully realized.

The critical theory of Jurgen Habermas (1971, 1975, 1979) is particularly helpful in analyzing both common cultural values, and the processes which form them. Habermas's critical theory aims at restoring the background consensus which is implicit in the processes of human discourse. Its aim is the liberation of human consciousness from the unnecessary restraints of ideologically rigidified and uncritically internalized human relations in whatever forms they may take--cultural, economic, pedagogical, political, and so on. The liberation is grounded in the communication processes undertaken at both the reflective level, where the rules for discourse are made, and at the unreflected level where most discourse actually takes place. When we engage in criticism, we are announcing a position from which we view the reality criticized; that position itself may or may not have been critically formed or rationally discussed, and it may or may not be reflectively acknowledged in the course of the criticism. To the extent that it is uncritically accepted, it becomes an obstacle to cultural change, and a limit to freedom of thought and communication.

The fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum and the dissolution of general education programs during the 1960s and 1970s may be seen as symptomatic of a larger cultural malaise only from a point of view that finds such fragmentation problematic, and that finds in the history of American higher education something of an original unity. Neither point of view, of course, is without certain philosophical presuppositions. The

project of realizing curricular coherence must be preceded by a critical analysis of the philosophies of general education that have served to inform twentieth century discussion. An examination of the articulated and hidden assumptions of the predominant philosophies of general education can facilitate a more rational, open, and authentic dialogue on their efficacy and utility in the reconstruction of the undergraduate curricula in general, and of general education programs in particular.

Four Approaches to General Education

Gaff cites four distinctive philosophical approaches that ground the wide variety of general education models, proposals and polemics (1983: 2-8). Each approach has identifiable philosophical mentors and literatures, and each has its modern adherents and advocates.

1. The first philosophical school is the Idealist School, founded by John Henry Newman (1873, 1947), and most recently articulated by Leon Botstein (1979a, 1979b), President of Bard College and nationally known educational commentator and critic. Newman saw the college as a community of scholars whose primary function was teaching undergraduates in an atmosphere conducive to learning. The goal of a proper education was the liberation of the student from prejudice, ignorance and the provincialism of the immediate environment, but without the socially didactic emphasis characteristic of many of the other philosophical approaches. The traditional content of such a program, the

humanities, had no specifically vocational purpose, but was rather designed to educate the whole person for all of life. Liberal education, for idealists like Newman and Botstein, may or may not be synonymous with general education, but in the optimal case, certainly would be.

2. The Progressive School* founded by philosophers Alfred North Whitehead (1929) and John Dewey (1916), and recently Stephen Bailey (1976) has as its central tenet the notion that education must be relevant to the student's everyday life. For Bailey that means that education must be conceived from the point of view of the student. What is not relevant to the immediate present has credence only insofar as it can be made to shed light on the future. Utility is the watchword for these Progressives, a utility that is not altogether mundane--that which has no relevance to the student's immediate situation, has relevance to someone else's immediate situation and so is in some sense exploitive of what must be the ultimate arbiter of curricular matters, the student's interest.

3. The Essentialist School of Robert Maynard Hutchins (1936) comes immediately to mind when one speaks of a core curriculum. The belief that there is a common and essential core

*In this study the term "Progressive" is applied to the philosophy of John Dewey and his followers, while the term "Pragmatism" is implied to the philosophy of education that appears in the work of Clark Kerr. John Dewey was a member of the American philosophical movement known as Pragmatism, but his educational philosophy was part of the political movement known as Progressivism. To avoid confusion I refer to Dewey's educational philosophy as "Progressivism."

of knowledge that every educated person should somehow "possess" is the guiding principle behind the Essentialist creed. To the extent that there are essential texts that are relevant for all times and in all situations, the Essentialist argues for their use in the training of the mind, the goal of a general education. The Great Books program at the University of Chicago is perhaps the most widely known Essentialist approach to general education, although great books are not the only manifestation of the approach. Any approach that requires the mastery of an essential core of information or processes is philosophically akin to the Essentialist perspective. Thus Ernest Boyer, Martin Kaplan and Arthur Levine (1977, 1981) are advocates of the Essentialist position, as are many others. There is a sense in which the Essentialist presuppositions are present in all programs of general education.

4. The philosophical movement known as Pragmatism is normally associated with William James, but in the history of American higher education, the movement has contemporary voices in Clark Kerr (1966) and David Riesman (1981). This school recognizes the pluralistic character of American higher education, and celebrates it as a positive development indicative of a robust technological society. Kerr uses the term "multiversity" to describe the environment of contemporary higher education, its competing and often contradictory interests, and its diverse student population. The Pragmatists advocate incremental changes that recognize the legitimate interests of

the several communities that comprise the contemporary multiversity, and situational curricular reforms that fit the special and unique environments of individual institutions. The central tenet of Pragmatism is the realistic evaluation of the possible, as opposed to ideal critique based on utopian visions.

Regardless of the form general education may take, the philosophical justification for the program calls on one or more of these four philosophies of education for its legitimation. The careful explication and critique of these philosophies is an over-riding concern of this study, whose general purpose is three-fold:

1. to explicate the hidden and acknowledged philosophical assumptions of general education,
2. to develop a critical perspective from which to evaluate these philosophical assumptions using the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas (1971, 1975, 1979),
3. to judge the extent to which the various assumptions are vitiated or confirmed by the developed critical theory.

Investigative Methods

Jonas Soltis (1984) has recently tried to put all of the current research methodologies in education into a coherent conceptual framework utilizing the work of Richard Bernstein (1978) as a guide to their epistemological histories. In so doing, Soltis develops three categories of contemporary

educational inquiry: the empirical, the interpretive, and the critical.

Empirical inquiry employs natural science methodology from "naturalistic descriptions, survey data gathering, and correlation studies to control-treatment experiments and meta-analyses of empirical findings" (Soltis, 1984: 6). Empirical inquiry is fundamentally quantitative, and employs the language of logical empiricism; though there are many different interpretations of what constitutes a true science among its adherents, and there are many contradictions between what passes muster as proper procedure in theory, and what is actually practiced. Nevertheless, there seems to be a consensus that educational research ought be empirical, objective (though there are conflicting definitions and standards for objectivity) and essentially value free.

Interpretive inquiry, by contrast, is qualitative rather than quantitative, and depends on the methodologies of such disciplines as anthropology, sociolinguistics and ethnography to direct value-free inquiry into the realm of intersubjective meanings. Ordinary language analysis, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, the social science equivalents of interpretive inquiry, investigate human intersubjective meanings as keys to the relationships between education and culture. The interpretive approach insists on an understanding of the ways in which human consciousness operates in and upon the world. The study of human consciousness, in turn, presents special

methodological problems since that which is investigating is also that which is being investigated, and therefore the investigation is not purely "objective" from the point of view of empirical science.

Critical inquiry, the third research methodology, has an ideological content that is specifically recognized, even celebrated, and that sees other methodologies as ideological moments in the unfolding of the human experience. The notion of a value free science is, to such scholars, an expression of the denial of the unity of theory and practice, and itself an ideological form of inquiry. The object of critical inquiry is the realization of a better form of life that serves our emancipatory interests. The critical scholars emphasize the historical- ideological content of our present institutions in an attempt to demystify them and make them more responsive to the people and ideals they serve.

Soltis is anxious to point out that all three methods of educational research are necessary and desirable elements of the associated community of which we are all part. No one scholar can do all three, but all scholars have an interest in seeing that all three get done properly, and all scholars have an interest in seeing the gulf between theory and practice, between what ought to be and what is, appreciably diminished.

The methodological approaches described above are borrowed from Richard Bernstein (1978), who interprets the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas (1971). In Habermas's philosophy, the tension

between theory and practice plays a major role in the development of a critical theory of society. The project of the Frankfurt School, to which Habermas is heir, was to develop a critical theory of society that took as its starting point the critique of logical positivism (Jay, 1973). In an age of technology, the practical (i.e., the ethically and morally desirable), tends to be proscribed by the objectively possible such that the technically possible, and perhaps only the technically possible, ought to be desired. Politics, for example, is no longer the classical extension of the good life, a continuation of ethics, but rather a science--the science of the possible. What is technically possible is done, and what is not technically possible is not only not done, but is not the object of "rational" desire either.

So the problem for the modern social scientist, as Bernstein points out (1978: 186-187), is how to reconcile the practical and the technical in a way that sacrifices neither. How can the "good life" be defined in terms of its own internal necessity and at the same time within the context of the technically (objectively) possible? If the logic of technological rationality is dominant in our culture--that is, if instrumental reason is the dominant form of reason, and if all other forms of reason (critical and individual) are outside reason and therefore to some extent "irrational" from the point of view of the dominant logic--then how is criticism of the dominant culture possible? Where do the social theorists, of whom the educational

researcher may be one, stand when they address the status quo?
And what methodology do they employ?

Habermas argues, and this study also argues, that instrumental reason is indeed the dominant form of reason in contemporary society and that

. . . the relationship of theory to praxis can now only assert itself as the purposive-rational application of techniques assured by empirical science. The social potential of science is reduced to the powers of technical control--its potential for enlightened action is no longer considered. The empirical, analytical sciences produce technical recommendations, but they furnish no answer to practical questions (Habermas, 1973: 254).

In a culture where the control of nature is also the control of human nature, and where the techniques necessary for that task are in place, questions of practical import tend to be reduced to questions of technical application. Rational consensus is replaced by efficient administration whose legitimating power is technological rationality.

A scientific interpretation of epistemology results in an epistemology in which all knowledge is measured by the standards of an empirical and objective science. Such an epistemology ignores the connection between knowledge and what Habermas calls "human interests" (1971: 301-317). It ignores, put simply, the fact that the questions one asks of nature determine the answers one hears from nature, and that the method of science is not itself at all disinterested. The project Habermas launches details the process by which reason becomes self-conscious; i.e., how self-reflection, (one hears the Socratic dictum to know thyself) becomes the foundation for a critical theory of society.

In doing this, he analyzes the three forms of cognitive interests that human consciousness takes, and shows how each is appropriate to a particular science and a particular dimension of human social existence. These three cognitive interests correspond to the methods of educational research presented by Soltis.

Human cognitive interests (see definitions) are exclusively determined neither by an organism's interaction with its environment, nor by pure rational thought, but rather by the interaction of both in the act of reproduction and self-affirmation of the species. Habermas focuses upon three basic cognitive interests: the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory. Each of the three interests is reflected in a corresponding human science: for the technical interest, the empirical-analytic sciences; for the practical interest, historical-hermeneutic sciences; and for the emancipatory interest, the critically oriented sciences. The dimensions of human social existence upon which the cognitive interests are grounded are, correspondingly, work, interaction, and power.

Technical interest, which is rooted in work as the fundamental human activity, is primarily concerned with how individuals reproduce themselves materially, through manipulating their environment. Such activity is both social and individual; it results in the perpetuation of both the species and the individual member of the species. The tension that exists between what satisfies species existence and that which at any particular time satisfies individual existence but violates

species existence, is inherent in the dynamic character of the relationship between work as social and individual activity. The cognitive interest involved in satisfying material needs incorporates instrumental action governed by technical rules, the object of which is the efficient manipulation of the environment for the satisfaction of human needs. The technical rules for the manipulation of the environment are based on empirical knowledge and involve predictions (Habermas, 1971). This technical control over the environment is made possible by the rigorous application of rationally derived and empirically verified rules, and the continuous investigation into that which is unknown.

Practical interest, which is rooted in interaction is distinguished from the technical interest which is rooted in work in that

. . . the meaning of the validity of propositions is not constituted in the frame of reference of technical control Access to the facts is provided by the understanding of meaning, not observation (1971: p.309).

The interpretation of texts, hermeneutics, has its own set of socially accepted and verified rules based on the interest in establishing an intersubjective realm rooted in consensus. As with the empirical-analytical sciences, the historical-hermeneutic sciences have a context from which they inquire into reality, and that context colors the results of their inquiry no less than the context of the individual empirical scientist colors his. In the empirical-analytic sciences the danger is scientism, in the historical-hermeneutic science, historicism. Both dangers are rooted in the intentional nature of human

consciousness by which it projects itself into the inquiry by which it seeks to understand reality. We re-write the history of the French Revolution every generation not because the "facts" have changed, but because the meaning which we attribute to them has been reshaped by our future intentions, and because we implicitly acknowledge the possibility of reaching a consensus concerning our visions of the future. The aim here is not control and manipulation, but establishing and reaffirming the conditions for authentic forms of intersubjectivity.

Emancipatory interest, which is rooted in the critical social sciences, aims at a different level of knowledge from the nomological knowledge sought by the empirical-analytic historical-hermeneutic sciences. The critical social sciences are concerned with going beyond the goal of nomological knowledge to

determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed (Habermas, 1971: 310).

The reflexive nature of human consciousness allows consciousness to take itself as an object of reflection, but that reflection is colored by the facticity of the situation that called it forth in the first place. The critique of ideology on the social level has psychoanalysis as its counterpart on the individual level--the desired result is emancipation of the unreflected levels of social and individual consciousness through self-reflection. Metaphorically speaking, the same critical distance provided the patient by the analyst is provided society

by the critical theorist, with the same risks and provisos, and the same demands for authentic communication.

Significance and Statement of the Problem

The significance of the present study is, therefore, its thesis: that without general education there is no ground in which we find the common elements of discourse within the undergraduate curriculum. This does not mean that there is no common ground for discourse, it means that the ground is unarticulated, and therefore uncriticized, and consequently outside the realm of reflective consciousness. General education, at least potentially, brings within the purview of critical reason the unexamined elements of individual and collective consciousness that constitute, through daily application, the fabric of our cultural lives.

In an advanced technological society, reason itself has become a tool used to realize the goals one holds at any given time (Horkheimer, 1974). Instrumental reason is reason directed at defined ends and propelled by the logic of efficiency. It assumes that nature and man are manipulable and transparent to human purposes, and that any other form of human thought not dictated by the logic of efficiency is outside the realm of reason and therefore irrational. Thus, the problem of the study will be to determine the extent to which instrumental reason distorts the communicative processes necessary for the formulation of a critical theory of general education.

Metaphorically speaking, one could say that instrumental reason is to general education what ideology is to culture, insofar as both instrumental reason and ideology are legitimating forces for established ways of doing things.

Contributions to Educational Theory and Practice

This study contributes to educational theory and to educational practice and to the unity of theory and practice in four ways:

1. It provides a theoretical ground from which further empirical research may be conducted.
2. The study makes the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas accessible to curricular reformers.
3. It suggests ways to evaluate general education that eschew rhetoric and polemic and are grounded in a coherent philosophical position.
4. By facilitating an authentic dialogue concerning the philosophical roots of general education, the study frames a context for all curricular reform.

Method for Investigating the Problem

1. The investigation is historical-hermeneutic and serves a practical interest in developing a background consensus from which an evaluation of the epistemological presuppositions of four approaches to general education is possible.

2. The investigation is historical-hermeneutic and serves a practical interest in explicating the critical philosophy of Jurgen Habermas.

3. The study is critical and serves an emancipatory interest as it develops a critical theory of general education based on the critical theory of Jurgen Habermas.

Limitations

1. The study is limited to historical-hermeneutic and critical methodologies.

2. The study is limited to the philosophies of undergraduate general education in institutions of higher education in the United States currently granting the Bachelor's degree.

3. The study is not institution specific, i.e., it does not attempt to analyze specific general education programs, but rather the philosophies that inform them.

Delimitations

1. The explication of the philosophies of general education are delimited to the four approaches enumerated in the introduction and their major spokespersons.

2. The explication of the philosophy of Jurgen Habermas is delimited to the following philosophical works: Knowledge and Human Interests (1971), Legitimation Crisis (1975), Communication and the Evolution of Society (1979).

Definition of Terms

1. Communicative action: Speech as well as other non-verbal forms of communication that require a background consensus of meaning that is either accepted or taken for granted, and that results in action.

2. Communicative discourse: Speech and non-verbal forms of communication that occur when the background consensus is disturbed or no longer taken for granted. Communicative discourse tests competing truth claims with the force of the better argument, and therefore produces arguments but not action.

3. Consciousness, reflective: The operative mode of intentional consciousness that takes itself as the object of its intention.

4. Consciousness, unreflected: The operative mode of intentional consciousness that has objects of intention other than itself.

5. Critical reason: Reason that serves the interests of individual and species emancipation from the economic, political and cultural strictures of the status quo.

6. Facticity: The obstacles to human freedom such as place, past, surroundings, fellow human beings, and death--those dimensions of human existence over which the power to affirm or negate has no effect.

7. Human cognitive interests: The knowledge-constitutive interests that define both the objects and categories of

knowledge and the procedures for discovering and validating truth claims.

8. Human interests: Habermas defines human interests as: "The basic orientations rooted in specific fundamental conditions of the possible reproduction and self-constitution of the human species, namely work and interaction" (1971: p.196). Such human interests do not aim at the satisfaction of empirical needs per se, but at the solution of systems problems in general.

9. Instrumental reason: Reason that organizes efficient means appropriate to the effective control and manipulation of reality.

10. Nomological knowledge: Knowledge which relates to or expresses physical laws or rules of logic.

11. Technological reason: A special application of instrumental reason that orders and consolidates productive techniques for the purpose of manipulating and controlling nature, including human nature.

THEORIES OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Idealism

The four approaches to general education, Idealism, Progressivism, Essentialism, and Pragmatism are explicated in this chapter. These approaches to general education fall into a chronology that begins in the mid-nineteenth century and ends in the present debates, but they are not exhaustive of all possible variations and combinations of specific general educational programs throughout American curricular history. Nevertheless, the philosophical presuppositions of these approaches are present in all general education programs in one form or another, and it is the presuppositions, sometimes articulated and criticized, sometimes hidden and assumed, that are the concern of this study.

Historical Background

John Henry Cardinal Newman was an Englishman, educated at Oxford, and one of the major proponents of the forces of religious orthodoxy at that institution during the first half of the nineteenth century. He converted to Catholicism in October of 1845 and asked to be dropped from the roles of Oxford that same year. His conversion and his defection from Oxford can be understood as an affirmation of the values of the older and now dying tradition of education wherein religion played a central

role. Newman always held that education was more properly the training of minds and the forming of character than it was the imparting, much less the discovery of new information in the sense of the new sciences. Religion, obviously, played a central role, one which he was to argue forcibly in The Idea of A University, written in 1851.

But in 1845 the population of Ireland was approximately 8.5 million, of whom 7 million were Roman Catholic and .75 million were Anglican. Higher education was provided only the Anglican minority, however, since an act of formal apostasy was required for admission of all Catholics to the University of Dublin, the only institution of higher education in Ireland at the time (Culler, 1955: 124). The political situation became volatile during the 1840s when O'Connell and the Young Ireland Party were agitating for repeal of the Union at the same time the United States had engaged England in a possible military confrontation over the Oregon territories. This combination of circumstances led to a policy of conciliation on the part of the English government, the result of which was the Queen's College Scheme.

The Queen's College Scheme embraced the principle that public education must be neutral--especially with regard to religion, and that in order to be neutral, it must be thoroughly secular. This amounted to "mixed education," i.e., the educating of students of all religious persuasions in the same institution and at the same time, a notion whose time had not yet come in Ireland, and a notion to which Newman was unalterably opposed. A

compromise proposal that would establish colleges of university standing in several communities, while leaving the University of Dublin unchanged, these Queen's Colleges were soon dubbed by their detractors the "Godless Colleges," and the opinion was, as were most opinions in the Ireland of the day, divided to say the least (Culler, 1954: 123-130). But following the great potato famine of 1845, all proposals emanating from England were critically scrutinized.

This reluctance to accept English proposals, combined with a greater reluctance to take a chance on mixed education, held the issue in abeyance for the two years it took the Catholic Church to reach a decision on the propriety of the Queen's Colleges. That decision came in October of 1847, and while it was not viewed by the Irish clergy as final, it most strongly disapproved of the notion of mixed education in the colleges, and ordered the Catholic prelates to take no part in them.

It is in this context that Newman, in 1851, was asked by Dr. Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, to give a few lectures regarding the nature of education generally and the proper role of the university particularly. The lectures were to be given in the face of the strong possibility that a Catholic institution of higher education might soon be founded. The lectures were originally known as the "Discourses on University Education," and later as The Idea of A University (Newman, 1947; orig. 1873).

The "Discourses" deal with two basic questions, and the ancillary questions surrounding them. The first question, and the one most prominently featured in the popular debates on the nature of the Irish university, was whether a university was the proper place for the teaching of theology. Newman held that it was, of course, but for different reasons than might be argued by a purely sectarian advocacy. These arguments constitute the core of the first four discourses and the last two. The second question, which is answered in the remaining discourses, concerns the objects of knowledge and their utilitarian applications (Culler, 1954: 184).

These were the questions of the age, and their satisfactory resolution determines the line of demarcation between Idealism and the utilitarian philosophies of Mill and, in America, Dewey and the Progressives. Should the university focus its teaching on the special studies which have immediate practical application, or should it focus on those studies which improve and develop the mind? The question is really one of whether truth is validated by correspondence theory (that is, by an investigation of the connection between the mind and its objects, in this case an empirical investigation), or coherence theory (that is, by an investigation of the rational, logical and aesthetic coherence of the mind and its ideas). Newman comes down firmly on the side of coherence. In fact, for Newman, the recombination of the distinct sciences, the reconstitution of the

whole from which they are abstracted, is the major task of the University.

Newman's idealism is a cultural idealism in which he attempts to synthesize existing knowledge into a coherent whole that illuminates a reality whose constituent parts are knowable to finite minds only as fragments of a larger whole. The fragmentation of knowledge gives the illusion of control, it makes knowledge synonymous with power; more knowledge means more power. But as Newman clearly sees, this fragmentation also does violence to man's understanding of himself as part of a larger whole for which modern thought no longer has proper reverence. To this extent, Newman's work is an attempt to rectify the excesses of the scientific age, and it is ironic that the university he finally helps found bears such little resemblance to his own ideal.

The Ideal University

The view taken of a University in these discourses is the following: That it is a place of teaching and universal knowledge. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science (Newman, 1912: ix).

In the preface to the Discourses, Newman notes that the university in its essence, and without the Church has the above characteristics. But it cannot fulfill this mission without the Church because it needs the Church for its integrity. So when

the Pope called for the establishment of an Irish University, he was calling not for the importation of the English University onto Irish soil, but for the formation of a uniquely Irish institution that addressed uniquely Irish problems. This meant, in part, that the Irish youth be educated at least as well as their English counter-parts in the instrumental skills necessary to compete in the world of men, but more, that Irish youth be educated into the "culture of the intellect." The "culture of the intellect" is the ". . . force, the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass before us" (Newman, 1912: xvi). The mind is like the body, it needs to be disciplined, formed carefully so that it develops a connected view or grasp of the world. For this kind of education, the Irish University would be peculiarly suited, in part because the functions of teaching and research ought to be clearly distinguished, the latter having no proper place in the University (Newman, 1912: xiii). This frees the faculty from the division of attention characteristic of research oriented institutions, and at the same time remains consonant with the avowed coherence theory of truth that is the epistemological foundation for Newman's idealism.

This is not to say, however, that Newman is open to the charge that his educational theory will produce students of vacuous and general knowledge, for while these discourses concern the aims, rather than the modes of education, nevertheless,

". . . I hold very strongly that the first step in intellectual training is to impress upon a boy's mind the idea of science, method, order, principle, and system; of rule and exception, of richness and harmony" (Newman, 1912: xix). In other words, Newman advocates at least study about science, if not the real thing itself. He goes on to advocate the study of Grammar and Mathematics (to give the student a "conception of development and arrangement from and around a common centre"), Chronology and Geography, which are necessary to read History, as well as Metrical Composition necessary to read Poetry (Newman, 1912: xix).

In the first and introductory discourse, Newman is concerned to provide some sort of ground for his discussions. He feels the tension between faith and reason, but more he feels the tension between religion and instrumentalism. He knows that the education provided by Protestant institutions has a practical advantage over that proposed by the Pope in the new Catholic University, but Newman argues that the practical advantages of a secular education are not comparable to the intellectual advantages of a Catholic education. Newman remains true to the principles of Catholicism and the wishes of the Holy See, but he nevertheless seeks to legitimize his arguments by appealing to the history of the English University and the dictates of common sense.

Let it be observed, then, that the principles on which I would conduct the inquiry are attainable . . . by the mere experience of life. They do not come simply of theology; they imply no supernatural discernment; they have no special

connexion with Revelation; they almost arise out of the nature of the case; they are dictated even by human prudence and wisdom, though a divine illumination be absent, and they are recognized by common sense, even where self-interest is not present to quicken it; and, therefore, though true, and just, and good in themselves, they imply nothing whatever as to the religious profession of those who maintain them. They may be held by Protestants as well as by Catholics; nay, there is reason to anticipate that in certain times and places they will be more thoroughly investigated, and better understood, and held more firmly by Protestants than by ourselves (Newman, 1912: 5).

Catholics, Newman argues, have been sheltered from the storm by their faith, and Protestants, as a consequence, are better equipped to deal with the "science of education." For them knowledge is power and nothing else, but for the Catholics who have been protected by a special spiritual coherence, the "science of education" is new ground. So Newman proceeds by the force of the better argument as determined by human reason and wisdom.

Theology and the Proper Role of the University

Since the Queen's College Scheme proposed the effective exclusion of theology as an academic discipline from the university curriculum, Newman is compelled to deal with the issue of the proper relation between theology and the University. In doing so he advocates the inclusion of theology as an academic discipline, and develops a curricular epistemology based upon a rational and ideal conception of the nature of human knowledge.

If a University, as its name implies, ought to teach universal knowledge, and Theology is a branch of that knowledge, then it follows syllogistically that a University ought to teach

Theology. The argument assumes that the University teaches universal knowledge, an assumption not shared by all parties to the dispute, and it also assumes that theology is a legitimate branch of human knowledge, an assumption that the epistemology of the time was beginning to question. These assumptions are not hidden, Newman makes them explicit in the introductory passages, and they are not unexamined; but Newman is an Englishman and a recent convert to Catholicism, and is arguing before Irishmen who have been Catholic since the beginning of time. He argues simply that religion and theology are a part of the human experience, and they ought to be accorded at least as much importance as those other parts of the human experience included in the university curricula. His argument is generic at this point, he is not arguing for Catholic theology as opposed to Protestant or Anglican theology, he is merely arguing that Theology, as a legitimate field of human inquiry, ought to be included in the curricula because to exclude it would be to exclude an essential element of human knowledge, and therefore render the institution less than universal in its scope.

In word, indeed, and in idea, it is easy enough to divide Knowledge into human and divine, secular and religious, and to lay down that we will address ourselves to the one without interfering with the other; but it is impossible in fact. Granting that divine truth differs in kind from human, so do human truths differ in kind one from another. If the knowledge of the Creator is in a different order from knowledge of the creature, so, in like manner, metaphysical science is in a different order from physical, physics from history, history from ethics. You will soon break up into fragments the whole circle of secular knowledge, if you begin the mutilation with the divine (Newman, 1912: 26).

The relations among the different disciplines, among the different dimensions of human knowledge, hinge on the way in which truth is conceived. For Newman, truth is the object of knowledge of whatever kind, it has to do with facts and their relations, "which stand toward each other pretty much as subjects and predicates in logic" (Newman, 1912: 45). The truth forms a continuous whole, whose parts are defined by human convention, and from the point of view of the whole (from the Divine point of view) those conventions are arbitrary. There is one reality, one whole, one ideal cosmos, that is apprehended by human consciousness only partially and inadequately. The human mind can never take it all in at one glance, or ever "possess" any sense of the whole complex of relationships defined by the various sciences. The sciences are partial views, abstractions, by means of which human consciousness penetrates the various aspects of a single reality, and they are "true" so far as they go.

The truth of human knowledge about the world, for Newman, is contingent upon the mastery of the various partial views, upon the mastery of the sciences. The sciences are interdependent, they are the results of mental processes directed at one reality, and consequently human knowledge is adequate only insofar as it embraces the range of the sciences in their inter-relatedness.

Viewed altogether, they approximate to a representation or subjective reflection of the objective truth, as nearly as is possible to the human mind, which advances towards the accurate apprehension of that object, in proportion to the number of sciences which it has mastered (Newman, 1912: 47)

Newman is not saying that knowledge is merely additive, but rather that knowledge is knowledge of something IDEAL, and is therefore always and everywhere incomplete. Human beings can approximate universal knowledge only at the species level, so what Newman argues is proper for a University to teach, might not be possible for an individual to know.

Newman reserves a special role for philosophy as the science of the sciences, that branch of knowledge that synthesizes the parts into a coherent whole. Philosophy analyses the limitations of each of the sciences, their relations one to another, and their relations to the whole. Theology, on the other hand is defined by Newman as the "Science of God" (1912: 61); the truths that it is possible for man to know about God put into some sort of rational system, so that the parts are coherent in the human understanding. The God Newman conceives is the life principle that lies behind the veil of the visible universe and acts through it much as the human life principle lies behind the visible manifestations of the human world and acts through it. These conceptions are far from clear. There is a sense in which Theology is inferior to Philosophy when Newman conceptualizes human knowledge as a hierarchy, and a sense in which Philosophy stands outside the sciences when Newman characterizes them as a "circle of sciences." Nevertheless, it is clear that Newman conceives human knowledges as interrelated, so that no one of them can be neglected without doing violence to all the others. Each has its special vision, each its power to illuminate a part

of the whole, the neglect of any one science results in a shadowy and fragmentary and therefore untrustworthy understanding of the others.

Thus far Newman has been considering the bearing of Theology on the other branches of knowledge. He now turns the inquiry around and considers the bearing of the other branches of knowledge on theology, with essentially the same results. The exclusive cultivation of any of the sciences results in an impoverished understanding of the truth, that truth seen as the apprehension of the Ideal whole (which, we must remember is really outside the capacity of any particular individual). The perception of truth is further clouded by the exclusive application of one science because the legitimate boundaries of that science are soon breached and it encroaches on territory not its own, and attempts the solution of problems for which it has no proper instruments (Newman, 1912: 74). This instrumental objection to the extension of the sciences into realms (such as the theological) where they are inadequate to the task, obviates the moral argument that the sciences ought not encroach on areas of divine revelation by making the encroachment by Biology on Theology of a kind with the encroachment of Biology on any other science. Yet it is common, even inevitable, that men are called upon to speak and act outside their narrow disciplines about things which they know little. In such instances, the danger is that they have little trouble deciding, and usually deciding wrongly and at the time, quite convincingly.

This leads Newman to his major objection for the exclusion of Theology from the curriculum:

. . . it is not only the loss of Theology, it is the perversion of other sciences. What it unjustly forfeits, others unjustly seize. They have their own department, and, in going out of it, attempt to do what they really cannot do; and that the more mischievously, because they do teach what in its place is true, though when out of its place, perverted or carried to excess, it is not true. And, as every man has not the capacity of separating truth from falsehood, they persuade the world of what is false by urging upon it what is true. (Newman, 1912: 78)

Furthermore, a man who has never studied Theology, may stray unwittingly into matters of Theological dispute and never be aware of it. He has no "landmarks" to guide his inquiries and to measure his life. There is a sense in which Newman and Plato are quite close insofar as they both see evil as a function of ignorance. The man who does not know the boundaries of the sciences, and the instruments appropriate to them, may indeed do evil and socially destructive things as he wanders and bumbles through life. Such a man has no awareness that there is a background consensus against which inquiries are properly conducted. He is unaware that the consensus is socially developed, often at great cost, by those interested in Truth. He cannot even communicate his deficiencies because he does not see them.

It was apparent to Newman that the unity of knowledge had been lost. It was to be the function of the university to restore the integrity of all knowledge, to seek after its unity and to reflect upon it. The loss of unity was due to the increasingly popular notion that knowledge was power, and that

more knowledge was more power in a purely instrumental sense. The most efficient way to produce more knowledge, had its parallel in the industrial model: the division of labor. This intellectual division of labor gave rise to the division of the sciences, and to the popular notion that all knowledge could be arbitrarily divided according to human convention. One of the most appalling developments of the time, and according to Culler one of the most troublesome popular attitudes with which Newman had to deal (Culler, 1955: 174), was the notion that all of human knowledge could be divided alphabetically and arranged in volumes for popular consumption. Encyclopedias were originally cyclical, i.e. unified; their fragmentation according to the dictates of the alphabet reflected the loss of unity that the original cyclical organization implied.

If what was needed was not more knowledge, but the effective synthesis of all existing knowledge, the relation between Knowledge and Utility needed clarification. This Newman proceeded to do in Discourses V, VI, and VII.

Knowledge, Utility and the Role of the University

I have said that all branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject-matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator. Hence it is that the Sciences, into which our knowledge may be said to be cast, have multiplied bearings one on another, and an internal sympathy, and admit, or rather demand, comparison and adjustment. They complete, correct, balance each other (Newman, 1912: 99).

All sciences are inadequate by themselves, without the corrective perspectives of the others. The knowledge they impart

is particular, uninformed by a global view, and insofar as utility determines the value of the particular sciences, their true ends are occluded. The particular sciences are necessary for the true ends of University education (which Newman calls variously Liberal or Philosophical Knowledge) for without them University education would have no content, no anchor in the world. But the end of University education cannot be separated from knowledge itself, for knowledge is its own end. "Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward" (Newman, 1912: 103). If this be true of the particular sciences, it is even more true of the Science of Sciences, Philosophy. The acquisition of this kind of knowledge satisfies a deep and abiding need in human nature.

The Liberal Knowledge (or Philosophical Knowledge) which satisfies such a human need, is knowledge which "stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be informed . . . by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation" (Newman, 1912:108). Newman's ideas are thoroughly Aristotlean, particularly with regard to his definitions of useful and liberal knowledge, which he quotes directly from Aristotle's Rhetoric. Those things that bear fruit and yield revenue are useful, those which lead to enjoyment and accrue nothing of consequence beyond their using are liberal (Newman, 1912: 109). Knowledge, to be liberal, must have no use beyond

itself, i.e. it must be philosophical in the sense that it relates to the interconnectedness of particular knowledge. As it becomes more utilitarian, as it becomes tied more intimately to a particular end, it ceases to be Knowledge. Newman argues against a utilitarian standard for knowledge, which is consonant with his coherence theory of truth. "Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence" (Newman, 1912: 121).

When Newman considers knowledge in relation to learning, Philosophy, Philosophical Knowledge, Enlargement of the Mind and Illumination, all become terms synonymous with the perfection or virtue of the intellect. The University, considered prior to its use as a tool of the Church (which it will certainly become for Newman) has as its end the perfection of the intellect. As such its object is to educate the intellect in proper reasoning and expose it to established truths. But the particular truths are inferior to the larger truths to which philosophy leads.

Knowledge in the sense of Wisdom, transcends the narrow confines of specificity; the contents of the several sciences, which while important prerequisites for Knowledge, are not Knowledge in the larger sense. The mere communication of factual knowledge is methodologically necessary but not by itself sufficient to accomplish the ends of University education.

The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are

rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow (Newman, 1912: 133).

There is no enlargement, Newman argues, unless the mind compares ideas one with another and systematizes them by referring them to what it knows already. If it does not know anything, if there is nothing with which to compare and into which to systematize, the mind is not rooted, it has no point of view from which to launch itself, or at least the point of view it has is accidental and inadequate. Newman does not discuss how this process is initiated from birth, but it is clear that he is not sympathetic to the tabula rasa theory of learning, at least insofar as that theory leads to a passive conception of mind. To this extent his thought has a familiar modern ring. The great intellect, the one to which all ought aspire, is that which takes a connected view of reality, one in which the object is to understand rather than to manipulate, to know inquisitively, rather than acquisitively ". . . the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a University is not Learning or Acquirement, but rather, is Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge, or what may be called Philosophy . . ." (Newman, 1912: 139). Newman's conception calls for the generalist, the theorist, the seeker after roots and first principles, the global and encyclopedic mind.

Knowledge is additive. One who would aspire to Philosophical Knowledge, would apply oneself diligently to the distinct sciences, mastering their content and comparing and synthesizing their particular insights into nature as one proceeds. Newman must argue this way, because the only other way that he sees to achieve enlightenment is through an intuitive insight which he seeks to avoid because of the difficulty of reconciling such intuition with his coherence theory of truth. One must build systematically and in a disciplined fashion from ignorance to a more or less adequate notion of the whole--a rather large order for a University, an impossible one for an individual.

Having shown that Liberal Knowledge and Liberal Education is education for itself, without an end beyond itself, Newman now proceeds to show that it also has a curious utility, if by utility we mean ". . . not what is simply good, but what tends to good, or is the instrument of good; and in this sense also . . . I will show you how a liberal education is truly and fully a useful, though it be not a professional, education" (Newman, 1912: 163, 164). Professional education is not the sufficient end of a university education, though it might not be excluded from a university curriculum (indeed, Newman founds a medical school at the Catholic University of Ireland). The irony is that while the individual sciences are undoubtedly advanced by specialization, the individual scientist is often retarded thereby, particularly if the special utility of a Liberal

Education is lost in the advance of the scientific and specialized knowledge of the scientist. Liberal Education facilitates the proper discharge of the individual's obligations to society, it makes him a better, more productive and happier citizen, not to mention a more prudent Christian.

If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Works of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a University is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations . . . But a University training aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life (Newman, 1912: 177, 178).

In these and passages of similar tone, Newman sounds very much like certain advocates of general education in the twentieth century. The program might vary in specific content, and certainly in the theological tone with which Newman imbues his philosophy, but there is nevertheless a set of assumptions at work in both.

Principles and Assumptions of Newman's Idealism

1. There is an absolute and transcendent source of Truth whose truths are accessible to human Reason, as well as Divine Revelation.

2. While scientific truths may be discovered inductively, Philosophical Truth is validated through the logical coherence of its propositions.

3. Finite minds do not know Philosophical Truth through an intuitive grasp of the whole of reality, but through an additive process by which they build an Ideal and logically coherent Truth.

4. Knowledge (Truth) is not synonymous with Power, i.e., Newman's conception of Knowledge and Truth is ideal, not instrumental, and while truths may have instrumental benefits which are incidental to them, the danger of instrumental reason is that it reifies knowledge, making it a thing capable of both possession and manipulation.

5. The mind can (and needs to be) "disciplined" and "formed" so that it develops a connected view of things. The absence of a connected view is the source of much evil. In this respect, Newman is Platonic: evil is a function of ignorance.

6. The mind, while capable of being formed and disciplined, is nevertheless not passive, but active.

7. Knowledge is both hierarchical and circular. Newman speaks of both a hierarchy of knowledge, with Philosophy at its pinnacle (and informed by the Catholic faith), and of a circle of sciences where Philosophy is the Science of sciences.

8. Excessive specialization in any one of the sciences, while advancing the science, retards the individual scientist and

leads to an impoverished understanding of the connectedness of things.

9. The University is a place of teaching and Universal Knowledge whose object is intellectual, not moral; its object is the diffusion and dissemination of Knowledge, not its advancement. This implies that there is and ought to be a pedagogical distinction between teaching and research.

10. The true end of the University is Liberal or Philosophical Knowledge which is its own end.

Progressivism

Historical Background

John Dewey's productive life spanned the years 1882, when he published his first article ("The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism"), to his death in 1952. He was prolific throughout his entire life; always the philosopher in process, constantly changing and revising his views, adapting to a world that was undergoing transformations of epochal proportions. His thought, therefore, changes as dramatically from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth as the world of which it was a clear, if peculiarly American, expression.

Hahn (1970) divides Dewey's work into three periods reflecting his metaphysical point of view. Early in his career Dewey was heavily influenced by Kant and intuitionism, arguing forcibly against the materialist metaphysics which denied intuition, and in favor of religion and values. Later, as a

graduate student, Dewey discovered Hegel, and adapted Hegel's idealism to the experimentalism of the 1890s, and eventually to the instrumentalism that gave way, in his mature phase, to "empirical naturalism, or pragmatic naturalism, or contextualism" (Hahn, 16). Dewey's thought was thus influenced by the major thinkers of the 18th and 19th centuries, and represented an attempt to ground philosophy in ordinary experience, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the discipline. Human values, for example, were to become for Dewey, part of a reconstructive reflective inquiry in which dualisms were imploded, rather than the expressions of a transcendent reality on the one hand, or of an absolute spirit making itself manifest through time, on the other. The recognition that the human intellect acts in an interested way in the world did not mean, for Dewey, that philosophy was impossible; but it did mean that philosophy as traditionally practiced, as the "quest for certainty" would have to be abandoned, and a new and more vital motivation substituted in its place. The question of the nature of that motivation, the idea that human motivation can be, and indeed often is, utterly perverse, was foreign to Dewey's optimism and places his thought in the "pre-Holocaust" period of bourgeois philosophy.

Dewey's Quest for Certainty

In The Quest for Certainty (1929), Dewey articulated the role of philosophy for the Progressive age, a role that rehabilitated the material against the ideal, and the practical

against the purely intellectual. The hazardous and fragile nature of human existence forces man to seek security in two ways: by appeasing the gods, and by developing the tools to master the environment. In the first way, man attempts to change his "self," i.e., his emotional and spiritual nature, and to bring it in line with the powers of an inhospitable fate; in the second, he attempts to change the world through action in and upon it. The tension between these two ways of confronting the reality of human temporality are part of the history of the species, and can best be expressed by wondering at whether the invention of tools offends and invades the prerogatives of the gods, and thereby further endangers an already insecure future. The estrangement of theory from practice is rooted in the cultural traditions of western man, and is justified by philosophy as necessary to preserve the sacred from contamination by the mundane. In fact, the mundane matters of life are better left to the care of a slave class, whenever possible, and at any rate are never to be elevated to the status of matters of the intellect, matters suited to a leisured and educated aristocracy. At least, Dewey argues, so it was in Greek society, where the life of the polis was carried out by the intellectual elite, on the backs of an unlettered and devalued populace.

The depreciation of action, of doing and making, has been cultivated by philosophers. But while philosophers have perpetuated the derogation by formulating and justifying it, they did not originate it. They glorified their own office without doubt in placing theory so much above practice. But independently of their attitude, many things conspired to the same effect. Work has been onerous, toilsome, associated with a primeval curse. It has been done under

compulsion and the pressure of necessity, while intellectual activity is associated with leisure. On account of the unpleasantness of practical activity, as much of it as possible has been put upon slaves and serfs. Thus the social dishonor in which this class was held was extended to the work they do (Dewey, 1929: 4, 5).

The cause of such an attitude is tied to the quest for certainty which in turn recognizes the inherently uncertain nature of practical activity in all its forms. As man struggles to survive the vagaries of material deprivation, he recognizes himself as tenuous, as an inessential and fleeting moment in an uncertain scenario.

Man seeks self-transcendence as a way to anchor himself in the face of change and uncertainty. Change and uncertainty infect everything man does, so he attempts to avoid doing in favor of thinking, in favor of contemplation in the Aristotlean sense.

The quest for certainty is a quest for a peace which is assured, an object which is unqualified by risk and the shadow of fear which action casts Quest for complete certainty can be fulfilled in pure knowing alone. Such is the verdict of our most enduring philosophic tradition (Dewey, 1929: 8).

Modern man, of course, has surrounded himself with the many protections of modern science, and has therefore created a degree of security for himself that earlier times did not know. He has achieved this security even though the tradition out of which such security evolved still dictated a contemptuous attitude toward the practical.

But early man nevertheless attended his daily affairs with a certain grudging reverence. Ceremony and ritual were likely to

surround such vital functions as hunting and farming, paying homage to the power of the extraordinary to invade and destroy the ordinary. While the measure of security gained thereby was, from the modern rational and scientific point of view, accidental, it nevertheless created for man two overlapping cultural categories, "the holy and the fortunate, with their opposites, the profane and the unlucky" (Dewey, 1929: 11). These cultural categories were attitudes that characterized dependence and control respectively, and that eventually became distinct realms the superior of which represented "occurrences so uncontrollable that they testified to the presence and operations of powers beyond the scope of everyday and mundane things" (Dewey, 1929: 13). That left an "inferior" realm where a degree of control and prediction was possible, but it was the realm of changing, unstable and profane reality historically denigrated by Plato and Aristotle and the entire tradition of western philosophy. "Prosaic beliefs about verifiable facts, beliefs backed up by evidence of the senses and by useful fruits, had little glamour and prestige compared with the vogue of objects of rite and ceremony" (Dewey, 1929: 13).

The point of all this, Dewey argues, is that philosophy (taking its cue from Euclidian geometry) inherits the "superior realm," the realm previously ruled by religion and regarded as the depository of the sacred and eternal truths, now told not in the language of imagination and myth, but in the language of rational thought and ruled by the canons of formal logic which

define the structures of reality such that the illogical is unreal. In fact, the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are really rational formulations of Greek religion and myth (Dewey, 1929: 16).

So the tradition of western philosophy that modern man has inherited, Dewey argues, permits the possibility of physical science to the extent that the natural world confirms the dictates of formal logic.

Thus, along with the elimination of myths and grosser superstitions, there were set up the ideals of science and of a life of reason. Ends which could justify themselves to reason were to take the place of custom as the guide of conduct. These two ideals form a permanent contribution to western civilization (Dewey, 1929: 16).

But the contribution is an ambivalent one with drastic conditions attached. The two realms which divide reality into the unchanging and eternal truths of philosophy and the changing and temporal conditions of practical activity, mean that for western man, the purpose of knowledge is to uncover a pre-existing truth, rather than to bring truth into being through activity in the world. It further means that the operations of the intellect in the purity and security of abstraction have a higher order of priority than the practical activities of men in interaction with their environment, and it also means that there are two different orders of belief, one that concerns "actual existences and the course of events," and the other that concerns ends and values (Dewey, 1929: 18). For Dewey (and for Habermas as we shall see), the relation between these two modes of belief constitutes one of the major practical problems of our time. "How shall our most

authentic and dependable cognitive beliefs be used to regulate our practical beliefs? How shall the latter serve to organize and integrate our intellectual beliefs?" (Dewey, 1929: 18) The problem was also addressed by Edmund Husserl, the great German phenomenologist, as the crisis of the European sciences: their loss of significance for life (Husserl, 1936). How can the scientist, who lives in a life-world of passions, beliefs, governments, and economies and is subject to all of the claims such interests make on him as a citizen and an individual, maintain his "objectivity" in the science-world? It was obvious to Husserl, as it was obvious to Dewey (and Habermas) that he cannot, that the questions the scientist asks will shape the answers nature yields.

But, argues Dewey, the western philosophical tradition will not permit the question, since the two realms (of eternal and unchanging truths on the one hand, and of practical scientific possibilities on the other) are distinct. Moreover, the changing realm of practical activity, precisely because it does change, lacks Being, and therefore is less Real, and therefore of inferior status and not the proper subject of philosophical consideration. This gives the derogation of the practical a philosophical and ontological justification, and sanctifies the insulation of the practical from both the moral and the purely scientific; for both concern themselves with the immutable, unchanging and eternal truths of internal and external nature as they are defined by a pre-existing and transcendent order. That

order, of course, is utterly oblivious to individual human knowing; the act of human knowing, of human investigation and experimentation, does not alter or in any manner affect the pre-existing reality of which it is an imperfect reflection.

The inherited western tradition involves a number of philosophical conclusions: (1) The real is rational and the rational is real. There is a complete correspondence between what is cognitively known and what is objectively real. (2) Only the completely fixed and unchanging can be real, and the completely fixed and unchanging has antecedent existence unaffected by human production and human knowledge. (3) All special theories of knowledge, whether they be idealist which hold that the mind and the object known are one, or realist which reduce knowledge to what exists independently of mind or any variation or combination thereof, all hold

. . . that what is known is antecedent to the mental act of observation and inquiry, and is totally unaffected by these acts; otherwise it would not be fixed and unchangeable. This negative condition, that the processes of search, investigation, reflection, involved in knowledge relate to something having prior being, fixes once for all the main characters attributed to mind, and to the organs of knowing. They must be outside what is known, so as not to interact in any way with the object to be known The theory of knowing is modeled after what was supposed to take place in the act of vision A spectator theory of knowledge is the inevitable outcome (Dewey, 1929: 23).

Dewey's critique of traditional philosophy and its metaphysics is a critique grounded in the conviction that all thinking is interested thinking, that the quest for certainty that informs traditional epistemologies occludes reality and obstructs attempts to interact with the environment in socially

useful ways. Since all knowledge is interested, it is not absolute, and consequently must be of a practical nature, contingent upon the particular intentions of individual actors. The problem with philosophies that attempt to articulate timeless essences, is that what is defined as essential for one philosopher at a given point in time, is inessential from another perspective; in fact, what is defined as essential is merely the particular intention of a particular set of motivations held by particular groups, societies or cultures. That is why we continually re-invent the essential, and can even write histories of human thought according to what each epoch held "essential" (Hegel).

Dewey cannot hold to a strict correspondence theory of truth, one in which the truth of an idea depends upon whether it corresponds to an existential referent, because he has abandoned the traditional philosophical distinction between experience of nature and nature itself (Dewey, 1959). Neither can Dewey hold to a strict coherence theory of truth, such as that proposed by idealist philosophy, because if he does, the world disappears, and it is the world that Dewey and all the Progressive philosophers are most concerned to salvage. Dewey is, after all, a social philosopher of the first order, and insofar as philosophy illuminates the significant problems of man's existential life; it illuminates them in order to solve them, not merely understand them (although understanding is an important aspect of the solution, as we shall see). Dewey's thought seeks

to purge philosophy of such debilitating dualisms as the mind-body problem through an expanded analysis of the operational or behavioral dimensions of such concepts as habits, impulses, and intelligence.

Dewey's analysis of habits is his attempt to bridge, in the behavioral dimension, the traditional philosophical breach between the mind and the bodies or objects of which it has knowledge. In Dewey's analysis, however, the dualisms are recognized in terms of the relationship between an organism and its environment.

Habits may be profitably compared to physiological functions, like breathing, digesting. The latter are, to be sure, involuntary, while habits are acquired. But important as is this difference for many purposes it should not conceal the fact that habits are like functions in many respects, and especially in requiring the cooperation of organism and environment. Breathing is an affair of the air as truly as of the lungs; digesting an affair of food as truly as of tissues of the stomach. Seeing involves light just as certainly as it does the eye and optic nerve We may shift from the biological to the mathematical use of the word function, and say that natural operations like breathing and digesting, acquired ones like speech and honesty, are functions of the surroundings as truly as of a person. They are things done by the environment by means of organic structures of acquired dispositions (Dewey, 1922: 14, 15).

Habits are learned, they are either intelligent or routine, and are very much like arts in that they involve sensory and motor skills and a degree of finesse. All organisms behave habitually, of course, but the higher forms of organic organization have extremely complex and flexible habitual organization that permits them to function in increasingly complex environments.

Impulses are temporally prior to habits, and are part of man's "endowment at birth" (Dewey, 1922: 89). They are not specifically organized at inception, but become so only as the organism interacts with its environment, part of which includes other organisms who are acting habitually. Impulses, then, are plastic; they can be adapted to any situation which then bestows upon them meaning within a social context (Dewey, 1922: 95-105).

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 to it. It is a physical spasm, a blind dispersive burst of wasteful energy. It gets quality, significance, when it becomes a smouldering sullenness, an annoying interruption, a peevish irritation, a murderous revenge, a blazing indignation (Dewey, 1922: 90).

Intelligence is an acquired habit (Dewey, 1933).

Intelligence comes into play in human activity when other more routine habits fail to solve the immediate problem and bring about the desired result. Since man cannot live in a world of his own creation, since man cannot dominate nature with his will, and since man cannot separate himself from his environment through Olympian acts of pure contemplation, man must continually respond, react and readjust to what are often hostile forces in his environment. This requires flexibility and the ability to modify habitual behavior to influence changed circumstances--it requires the ability to reflect on one's circumstances and to arrive at a solution to whatever problem has arisen. Reflective thought does not occur without some environmental, social or

