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JOHN DEWEY'S RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MENIAL MASSES

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ABSTRACT

JOHN DEWEY'S RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MENIAL MASSES

By

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John Dewey is best understood as a social theorist, not as a philosopher or even an educator. This thesis demonstrates that a series of popular essays, written by Dewey during the Great Depression of the 1930s, seek to orient America's government, political authority, and work ethic toward a new, universal class of workers. Yet "radical" as the depression years may seem, Dewey's ideology changed little from the previous decade. His full-length works of the 1920s present a social vision aimed at precisely the same end, though perhaps less forcefully. Scholars may therefore obtain a more accurate understanding of Dewey by beginning in his later years and "reading backward," rather than reading chronologically from the Progressive Era.

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Chapter I

John Dewey and the Historical Problem of Class

In the late 1920s John Dos Passos, a novelist-historian of anarcho-individualist sensibilities, gained a reputation as a proletarian ally among Marxist intellectuals. Incensed by atrocities committed by the ruling class of society, his iconoclastic writing style characteristically contains bitter outbursts of class hatred. Witness, for example, his rage emerging from the controversial Sacco-Vanzetti trial of 1927, involving the execution of two Italian laborers for their alleged murder of a Boston paymaster:

> they have clubbed us off the streets they are stronger they are rich they hire and fire the politicians the newspapereditors the old judges the small men with reputations the collegepresidents the wardheelers (listen businessmen collegepresidents judges America will not forget her betrayers) they hire the men with guns the uniforms the policecars the patrol wagons. . .
>
> we stand defeated America[1]

Such criticism would have little in common with the soft-spoken educator, philosopher, and university professor John Dewey--or so it would seem. As a foremost innovator of the Pragmatist movement in philosophy, Dewey's name often appears in the annals of American history next to that of William James. Both these philosophers are known

for developing the famous pragmatic notion of truth, which states that the validity of an idea depends upon the consequences resulting from its actions. Though James is perhaps more respected in philosophical contexts, Dewey's legacy endures as the father of "progressive education," which incorporated Pragmatist thinking. As author of the concise and lucid School and Society, first published in 1899 and reprinted almost annually for over a decade, Dewey pioneered the "learning by doing" method of pedagogy. The School and Society, along with his more mature Democracy and Education (1916), enjoy continued circulation within teachers' colleges and among educational theorists.[2]

In the realm of social history, Dewey is mostly noted as a middle-class reformer. Through his University Elementary School at the University of Chicago, he devised methods of acquiring knowledge which no longer depended upon regimented book learning or rote memorization. These antiquated techniques he considered part of "a medieval conception of learning," when knowledge was used by an esoteric class of leisured scholars. Instead he considered the desire for learning inherent within the child, as part of a natural energy promoting incessant curiosity and seeking its own fulfillment through action. No longer attaining knowledge for its own sake, the Deweyian child works with fellow students in participation and cooperation. In this manner, it is impossible for knowledge to become the possession of a traditionally learned, aristocratic class. During

this early Chicago period, Dewey is now remembered for coupling his efforts with settlement house pioneer Jane Addams, as well as the Superintendent of Chicago Schools, Colonel Francis W. Parker.[3]

Such an interpretation of Dewey, common as it is and true to certain key facts, is not the whole truth. In 1933, during the depths of the Great Depression, Dewey asked rhetorically "what are the most evident sore spots of the present?" His answer was clear:

> Unemployment, extreme inequality in the distribution of the national income; enormous fixed charges in the way of interest on debts; a crazy, cumbrous, inequitable tax system that puts the burden on the producer, and the ultimate consumer, and lets off the parasites, exploiters and the privileged . . . [paying] them a premium for imposing a burden on honest industry.[4]

Though certainly not as incendiary as Dos Passos, this class element is commonly not recognized by students of John Dewey who focus on his works during the Progressive Era.

Yet the radical tone and specifics of such writings were common for Dewey during the depression years. Frequently contributing to the New Republic, his attention turned to the hardships of the 1930s. True to his pragmatic manner, he focused on actual consequences of a broken capitalist system, and found the working classes to be the chief bearers of economic plight. He was quick to respond with a voluminous pen, and set his intellectual sights on the inequalities of a fundamentally competitive, laissez-faire society. He began writing for a non-academic

audience, though not particularly for the "proletariat."

Nevertheless, Dewey's socioeconomic vision aimed at restructuring society on the basis of a universal class of workers. He hoped to eliminate what are usually considered the "middle classes" of professionals (e.g., doctors, lawyers, scientists, etc.) by orienting their endeavors toward a nonprofit end. To achieve his goal, he called for an end to the system of manipulating capital for personal gain. He believed that not only did the use of capital drive society into invidious class distinctions, but it also led to the catastrophic conditions of the depression. In transforming the middle classes, Dewey did not seek to eliminate their occupation, per se, but hoped their status distinctions in society. More importantly, he did not distinguish the "middle" classes from the "elite," since both manipulated capital. In Dewey's mind there were only two types of socioeconomic groups: non-manipulative, laboring producers, and capitalist, leisured individuals; that is, upper classes and lower classes.[5]

Considering the 1930s in Dewey's long career (he continued writing until his death in 1952 at age ninety two), it is difficult, therefore, to perceive him as a mild, "middle-class reformer." He did not seek to balance the economic scales by merely removing the vestiges of aristocracy. Nor did he merely promote facile "reform legislation" that was characteristic of such Progressives as

Theodore Roosevelt or, say, the Bull-Moose Party of 1912. In short, he sought more than remedial aids to uplifting the unemployed poor suffering from what were commonly held as "temporary" economic ills.

Instead, Dewey saw the economic depression as part of a broader, more seriously flawed social structure and ideology. The jobless and the poor were the products of social hierarchy, both in terms of status and wealth. The true course to "recovery" thus depended on a radical overhaul of all aspects of a bourgeois society, since the very notion of a "bourgeois," or middling, sector of society involved more than economic factors. At the base of laissez-faire capitalism lay the notion of a competitive individual, one who would use any available resource, including human labor, as a means of advancement. Supporting this archetypal individual was a set of carefully devised legal and political institutions. For Dewey, true equality, and hence true democracy, depended upon the removal of capitalism. But above all, the supporting elements of the upper classes--legal, political, and even philosophical--must be dissolved by a methodology designed to promote humanitarian conditions and non-competitive ends.

Thus, on the one hand, Dewey foresaw a restructuring of the entire political system. The "state," he argued, must no longer be considered an abstract protector of individual "rights," since property ownership inevitably took precedence over what was to be protected in a capitalist

system. Nor should the state be defined strictly in terms of jurisprudence, since the conditions of the depression proved that nominal legislative protection of rights was no guarantee against de facto deprivation. Political science must instead correspond to the associations formed in industrialization, with its cooperative integration of raw materials, machinery, labor, and management. Under the old legal system, "sacred" documents such as the American Constitution, with their pre-industrial conception of legalistic, formal liberty, served only to protect the "vested interests" of the upper classes.

On the other hand, Dewey believed the subconscious notions of competition and hierarchy that paralleled this political structure must also be eliminated. All of his social theory revolves around challenging the conception of "rugged individualism," a term used during the depression and signifying the work ethic of the aspiring middle classes in America. This ethic, extremely effective in the small, agrarian communities in the nineteenth century, was no longer applicable in the amalgamated, corporate world of the twentieth. Americans had mistakenly, out of sheer habit, carried competitive individualism into the realms of "supply and demand," finance, stock trading, and production. Recurring depression, the worst of which had struck in 1929, was the devastating outcome.

In Dewey's view, rugged individualism was a cultural phenomenon that could best be overcome through education.

For this reason, this paper will sketch the outlines of Dewey's educational ideas of the '30s. He believed education must provide a "learning environment" in which knowledge would no longer be treated as something attained for the sake of personal advancement. Students in this environment would learn from each other, fostering cooperative habits of exchange and mutual help. The teacher-to-student relationship would not be premised on that of a superior to an inferior, similar to way a boss instructs an employee. Nor would the student be "taught" subjects in a manner that required a complacent attitude. These methods, Dewey argued, were counter to the active, inquiring processes of the mind. What is more, they left the child ingrained with a predisposition toward either complacent labor or competitive striving--the two basic principles of a capitalist economy.

He even extended his views on pedagogy to knowledge itself, which he felt was a subtle means of "inculcation" by businessmen seeking to maintain a hierarchical, class order. Knowledge, given as "ready-made" fact to the child, implied that the present economic patterns of production, exchange, and consumption were the "right" modus operandi of society. Should actual conditions be wanting, even to the degree experienced during the Great Depression, students were made to believe it was the fault of themselves, not the system of private profit. So, too, did ready-made information leave unchallenged the supporting

political and legal structure. The Constitution was readily accepted, despite its protection of class interests, since it was presented as a factual, rational "Truth."

The entire system of schooling, therefore, must be used to set the child free from this oppressive education which bred anonymous, irresponsible "captains of industry." Dewey did not, however, become very specific in his details for a better society. He was primarily concerned with demonstrating to both teachers and informed citizens that the educational system was a function of capitalist hierarchy. He continually suggested that the child in the school, like the worker in the world of production, must continually be aware of the "actualities," or concrete realities, in existence. Only then could the child recognize private profit system for what it was--unequal in material wealth, manipulated by the upper classes, and inherently undemocratic.

The process, and to a lesser degree the content, of learning was thus the critical element in preparing the child for a new, labor-based society. Dewey devised his educational process from the methods of science, in which no abstract "laws" were deduced a priori. In the dispassionate world of the scientist, knowledge was considered a means of obtaining results, leading to tentatively held hypotheses. Ideas and any supposed "first principles" of "Truth" were continually scrutinized by an academic community and, if need be, challenged by counterfactual

evidence based on direct observation. In all cases, the emphasis remained upon the consequences of the action prescribed by an idea. Knowledge was not dogmatically presented as "right," with an air of certainty, but as a possibility containing what Dewey called "warranted assertibility."

Scientific method, however, applied to more than epistemology or even the child in the schoolroom. Dewey advocated that the nation's entire economy be controlled intelligently through scientific, centralized planning. Experts who were capable of comprehending the magnitude and intricacies of industrialization would be best able to govern production. Individuals adhering to a blind desire for personal wealth should not and, in fact, could not deal with the community's material needs. The ruthless competition and risky speculation that had caused the depression was unnecessary, according to scientific methods, and contrary to the corporate tide of industry. Outmoded, preindustrial forms of state institutions and government must therefore be adjusted similarly.

From Dewey's 1930s analysis, it is clear he did not premise his social theory on any tenets of the bourgeoisie. His theoretical proposals prevented every means of the usurpation of laborers by those who did not actually produce. Scientific method would orient society's upper classes to the actual needs of the lower classes. Meanwhile, laborers would use method to obtain a more egali-

tarian degree of political, economic, and intellectual authority. In essence, Dewey's social theory, carried to its logical extent, leads to a unification of all social levels based on the transformed, menial masses.

Several of these elements in Dewey's social thought may be traced to his earlier writings of the Progressive Era. Yet during the 1920s and '30s his arguments became broadest in their scope and most refined in their logic. It is, therefore, during this later period that one obtains true insight into the mind of John Dewey. Accordingly, he may not be considered a technical philosopher. Nor may he even be considered an pedagogue. He is instead most accurately understood as a radical social theorist.

Dewey, however, was no Karl Marx seeking a violent class overthrow through fiery revolution.[6] His writings in the New Republic and his works in the '20s were clearly intended for a highly literate audience, and do not contain any language of "proletariat" upheaval.[7] Nevertheless, the very nature of the changes he promoted, as well as the extent to which those changes applied, make him a "radical." Though his vision of a planned economy depended upon those with specialized knowledge, his social theory was not elitist. He was confident a new, cooperative individual, educated and living in a society no longer based on formal political rights, would ensure actual subservience of "leaders" to common citizens.

In addition, Dewey's ideas during the depression were

not simply the product of the depression. All of his radical social theory may be found in a several important works which were published before the great Stock Market Crash of 1929. These sources begin with the seminal book Reconstruction in Philosophy (1920), in which the impact of modern scientific methods upon western philosophy is fully elaborated. All traditional thought, he argued, was embedded within an elaborate system of "Reason" that was used to uphold authority. Reason was necessary to maintain social order and to ensure that the members of a community would follow the facts of nature that led to successful patters of survival. In this way, society was assured a relatively stable and certain existence.

During ancient times, however, this theory of retaining "tried and true" knowledge quickly stagnated. It lost its innovative capacities and came to abhor change. "Reality" was ignored to protect the "superiority" of what had been useful in the past. Dogmatism eventually spread to the realm of political authority. The rise of experimental science, however, challenged the very basis of this stagnation. Hypotheses based on observable evidence disproved old knowledge both in the field of natural science as well as ideas of the state. Adaptation and creativity became the criteria for all innovation. This scientific revolution undeniably proved that, in terms of social institutions, "fixed" principles could only lead to class oppression.

In Experience and Nature (1925), Dewey focused on

the importance of recognizing empirical methods in any philosophical endeavor. He reinforced his belief that to deny the importance of science was to be "indifferent to human interests." Knowledge of existence and the process of its attainment must no longer be based on purely subjective means. Instead, the individual must obtain knowledge through the interaction of both the natural and human environment. In short, mind and matter must become one.

Interaction, though more at the societal level, was the critical factor in The Public and Its Problems (1927). This book most nearly approached what could be considered a political treatise written by Dewey. In it, he argued that the individual could not perform a completely "private" act, such as a business transaction, without indirectly affecting others. This phenomenon was due to a "universal trait" of association existing among all things. The consequences of any single act varied, but actions which affected large groups of people entailed the definition of "public" matters. The rise of industrialization, with its unprecedented intensity in the exchange of materials, wealth, and ideas, vastly enlarged the scope of the public. On this large scale, it was impossible for any single person to identify the ramifications of so many new transactions. Thus, the notion of "private" must be eliminated and an enlarged "state" must be created to monitor the public. Should society fail to promote these changes, the public would continue to be "eclipsed" by ruling elite.

In The Quest for Certainty (1929), Dewey elaborated on the importance of experimentation. He explained that the "laws" of science were continually broken by new discoveries. The need for an official "authority" to maintain established "principles," such as nature rights, was therefore unnecessary. To continue to do so was only an outmoded attempt by philosophy to cope with the uncertainties of survival.

Finally, Dewey presented many similar ideas in Individualism, Old and New (1930). This work itself began as a series of essays in the New Republic, written from early 1929 through 1930. It is therefore important as a transitional work from the 1920s to the depression years. The tone of these essays became increasingly one of disillusionment as Dewey observed the extent of economic hardship. What is noteworthy, however, is that there are no fundamental ideological changes from his pre-depression works in the 1920s pertaining to the use of philosophy in society. Dewey simply continued his assertion that antiquated forms of dogmatism, rationality, and a lack of experimentation had created a economically competitive, "individualistic" individual.

Many of these ideas live on in current debates regarding economics, politics, and public policy, having become the object of intense scholarly study. The subject of social class, however, with all of Dewey's supporting ideological threads, is often forgotten among students

of Dewey studies. Class is usually considered secondary to, or as a product of, his more technical philosophical writings. As a result, the core of his thinking remains buried within a dim fog of interpretations. Worse still, it is neglected entirely.[8]

In all fairness to many devoted scholars, the inaccurate perceptions surrounding Dewey's class insights are largely due to the nature of the secondary literature itself. It is voluminous, discussing Dewey at all different levels of sophistication and from widely divergent fields of study. Educators, for example, routinely trace their debates on modern educational practices to Dewey. Philosophers use his name as a watershed mark in many contexts: a decline of nineteenth-century idealism; an American revolt against British empiricism; a beginning of twentieth-century naturalism; a forerunner to logical positivism. Scholars of jurisprudence have also recognized Dewey for his influence. Even economists have found Deweyian ideas useful to policy makers.

Meanwhile, historians have traced these subjects in all of their manifold forms, and have become confused in the process. Surveys of American history tend to be much too general, leaving the reader with the ambiguous conception of Dewey as merely an "instrumentalist."[9] Biographies tersely present Dewey through his "life and mind," neither of which is explained by any unifying theme.[10] By contrast, specialized articles and essays narrowly focus on Dewey

at the microscopic level. In all cases, the novice is left devoid of Dewey's broader socioeconomic perspective.[11]

In general, the foremost deficiency among historians is to ignore the importance of political ideology emerging in his later life. As a result, they portray his ideas in terms of restoring some form of "community" that had been lost in America with the rise of urban industrialization. With the demise of small, agricultural-based towns, people no longer worked and interacted on a personal level. Through "learning by doing" the schools aimed at fostering cooperation in a new, mechanized society. The weakness of this interpretation is its emphasis on rehabilitating the capitalist system, rather than completely eliminating the basis of all economic manipulation on the part of the upper classes. It falsely associates Pragmatism with its contemporary, Progressive "reform," at the turn of the century. Dewey's scientific methodology, or what he specifically termed "instrumentalism," interpreted as a remedial measure seeking a "more exigent standard in philanthropic activities."[12]

Furthermore, this analysis considers Dewey fundamentally a pioneer in bureaucracy. Since he believed industrialization threatened the old agrarian patterns of life, it is argued that he focused on collective <u>organization</u>. All the while, however, he supposedly sought to preserve the notion of individualism. Dewey's founding of the American Association of University Professors, a group that

countered business influences in higher education, is usually cited as supporting evidence. In this context, scholars place him among a small group of academics who favored the use of government as a panacea for unequal standards of living. The actual process of government, however, with its elected officials of patronizing, upper-class background, remained essentially intact under his policies. The ideals of the nineteenth century, it is concluded, were to be maintained through notions of "pure, rational democracy."[13]

Well within the bounds of tradition, Dewey is scarcely an active "reformer" in the eyes of other historians. He supposedly saw change only in the distant future. Believing in Darwin's theory of evolution, instrumentalism would "dissolve away conservatism's steel chain of [absolute] ideas" at glacial speed. The changes in education promoted in School and Society would initiate this process by becoming "intelligently progressive." Rife with ambivalent discussions of "democracy," these histories often contain such statements as "equal opportunity for equal growth" in their summations. Dewey appears to be something of a modern utopian who benignly confronted socioeconomic problems within a conservative, "established institutional framework."[14]

Paul Conkin's classic, Puritans and Pragmatists (1968), readily illustrates this type of interpretation. Focusing on the period up to about 1915, Dewey is portrayed as moving

from "youthful idealism" to "a tremendously broad and humane form of naturalism." Much of his thought had "close parallels [to] . . . traditional Catholic theology." Dewey used reason to illustrate the flaws inherent to modern philosophy, and by the 1930s was "the pre-eminent American Fabian." On the other hand, Dewey was "often a conservative" since he ultimately believed nature "reached its highest development and organization at the level of mind." He remained in the ancient Greek tradition, seeking "the good life" in order to find a "natural" basis of authority. This "rational reform" became his way of addressing "problem situations" in order to promote the "enhancement of life." In conclusion, however, Conkin offers no suggestions as to which class sector this vision applies, and even fewer specifics of what it entails.[15]

Some historians have attempted to improve this analysis by placing greater emphasis on the social aspects of Dewey's thought. In fact, the term "social" has recently enjoyed a renaissance within the Dewey literature, and phrases such as "socially productive endeavor," "biosocial conception of mind," "social renewal," "social situation," "social sensibility," and "socializing function" are now almost inescapable. Rarely, however, are these terms clarified through precise definitions.[16]

Along Conkin's "conservative" line of analysis, some Marxist scholars consider Dewey and other Progressives part of an entrenched status quo. According to this view,

the "captains of industry" were left intact by Dewey's reform measures since nothing was done about the size and extent of industrialization. In addition, he made no challenge to the basic laissez-faire means of acquiring wealth. Instead, his Progressivism turned to governmental regulation as a beneficent way of alleviating the poor and disadvantaged. Somewhat inadvertently, Marxists conclude, these changes took the reins of government out of the hands of the people. By doing so, a political "vacuum" was created that eventually would be filled by business interests later in the twentieth century. In this sense, they argue that Dewey must be considered among a group of "conservative liberals" who "threatened few in power" and were "functionally useful in developing the capitalist system."[17]

Such are the shortcomings of those who examine Dewey's social outlook and policy, per se. Yet there is a second group of historians who also fail to capture the significance of Dewey's class analysis. As historians of philosophy, these scholars tend to concentrate on the particulars of his methodological "instrumentalism," without emphasizing its pertinence to social class. They are equally guilty of placing Dewey in the Progressive Era, since they too often ignore his later works. Their faults, however, are more serious than those of social historians, since readers are often left with the impression that Dewey was only a philosopher.

Foremost among this sort of analysis is Morton White's

study, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (1943). White portrays Dewey as one among several critics who believed that equality, in all of its forms, could not be guaranteed on purely contractual, legal, or ideological grounds. Hence, they challenged syllogistic logic, which was the basis of purely "formal" means of reasoning. In the case of Dewey, "creative intelligence" attacked the traditional notion that all human experience was "primarily a knowledge-affair." Instead, he promoted "experience" as "an affair of the intercourse of a living being with its physical environment." Dewey's conception of knowledge was not something existing in pure thought and applied to the difficulties of a situation, as asserted by the orthodox view. It rather was part of experience, and must be used only to illuminate the actual conditions facing the individual. In essence, Dewey's theory of knowledge was a form of questioning and discovering--what he called "inquiry."[18]

On the basis of this description, White makes some rather tantalizing allusions. "Political action," he asserts of Dewey, "takes place in an economic context" and is part of the broader conception "that thought issues from other types of situations." Though White correctly describes this phenomenon as "organicism," he offers nothing more specific. He writes that Dewey himself "was not committed to anything so specific in his epistemology" since his ideas promoted "extra-intellectual types of behavior."

Ignoring the social significance of this way of acting, White continues by comparing Dewey to economic historian Charles Beard and a wide array of philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, David Hume, and G. W. F. Hegel.[19]

Other explications of instrumentalism have been made in a similar fashion. Historian Henry May, for example, has given special attention to Dewey's attempts at bridging a "gap between theory and practice." The true meaning of democracy depended upon a group of people acting as a whole, which Dewey considered to be natural among human beings. The machine age, however, had accelerated a "radical separation of man and nature" in philosophical terms, leading to serious injustices in the social milieu. Thus, unification of actions, experiences, mind, and thought would lead to democratic "co-operation."[20]

"Harmony" has also been used by intellectual historians to explain instrumentalist methodology. In this context, there are many discussions of ethics, knowledge, and political science. "Social theory" is often confined to a brief closing chapter, as a part of the "applied" use of Dewey's philosophy. Though some of these accounts emphasize Dewey's radicalism to a certain degree, they do not devote sufficient attention to the topic.[21]

Dewey is usually not considered a significant figure after World War One in American history. He had, in his early years, uniformly denounced the aggressive tactics of the elite. The emergence of aggressive, totalitarian

atrocities in Europe, however, led him to make fine distinctions between "force" and "aggression." He supported a war which Woodrow Wilson felt would make the world "safe for democracy." Dewey therefore claimed that the use of force was valid for the sake of ending human suffering. Many intellectual supporters of instrumentalism, however, most notably the prewar literary figure Randolph Bourne, found Dewey's reasoning in direct conflict with his earlier pacifist ideals. Unfortunately, because Dewey lost support among this socially radical avant-garde, historians have lost interest in his later works.[22]

Yet some studies of the inter-war period have remembered Dewey's strong class-based writings. They have placed his essays contained in the New Republic within the context of the American socialist movement of the 1930s. They often, however, portray him as a political "activist," which he often was.[23] But in so doing, treat the full-length books of the '20s as a discrete part of his thinking from the '30s. The illuminating potential of both decades, even when compared to each other, is therefore lost.[24]

So too did the ideological climate among intellectuals in the depression make Dewey appear to be less of a "radical" than he really was. For this reason, historians have considered his later works a "shift" toward a more active liberalism. Many reformers became indignant at the conditions of the depression years, while retaining

their paternalistic baggage. Though making a brief flirtation with communism in the early '30s, these writers propagated "a middle road" ideology. The old middle-class trust in legislative reform continued. In action as well as in theory, this approach timidly recoils from any genuine "challenge to capitalism."[25]

As indicated by the content of all these historical works, Dewey's radicalism deserves much greater emphasis. Therefore, the following chapter will present a synthetic study of his essays of the '30s written for lay readership. It will emerge that when these works are placed in juxtaposition to those of the '20s, Dewey's central emphasis on class emerges. The remained of this paper will demonstrate that there was no "shift" in Dewey's social philosophy. The state, the individual, as well as the instrumentalist components of experience, certainty, and scientific method, are consistent throughout his work. What Dewey clearly intended was the removal of the ideological basis of the existing social hierarchy and a transformation of the menial masses.

Chapter Two

Workers as Workers: From Rugged Individuals to 'Corporate' Humanitarians

In 1934, an article Dewey wrote appearing in the Social Frontier began with the assertion that "upon the whole the schools have been educating for something called the status quo can hardly be doubted by observing persons." The status quo which the educational system fostered could be summarized by the simple phrase "rugged individualism." Within this term was embedded the "assumption" that the individual exists in a free economic society and has the capacity to act independently and attain economic mobility. Economic opportunities supposedly provided advancement, so that equal liberty was the possession of all. The surrounding legal and political order was designed to protect these opportunities and to ensure a degree of fairness.[1]

Dewey, however, was skeptical of this theory, since he felt individualism no longer pertained to the concrete actualities of modern life. At one time a healthy part of small, agrarian societies, individualism was now defunct in a large, industrial complex. To continue to believe in ruggedness proved that "no grosser myth" had ever been received by "large masses of the population." Those who

already possessed capital used money as a means of maintaining their social positions. Meanwhile, workers toiled away with few material rewards, and were trapped in an endless search for employment and wages. As the object of upper-class repression, the rugged individual had in fact become only "ragged."[2]

In these less scholastic, popular writings of the early 1930s, Dewey's critique of the capitalist "regime" is clearly visible. He explored how all aspects of society--politics, government, capital, labor--were manipulated by those who did not actually produce anything. In this sense his work is simply descriptive of the underlying hardships workers felt, but did not entirely understand. Yet these revealing qualities were meant to be more than simply description, since they point to a need for an entire restructuring of the socioeconomic and political order. This new system, he believed, must replace every aspect of the competitive, rugged individual. "Corporate," in its true sense of a unified body, became the adjective Dewey used to describe the cooperative individual who no longer worked for pecuniary gain. In Dewey's corporate world, all social groups would come recognize the needs of each other through scientific method, and consequently separate classes would no longer exist.

A new, cooperative process, therefore, is the key to understanding Dewey's social theory. The interaction between individuals would never stagnate, since they would

be in constant motion. More importantly, this fluidity would not allow for certain individuals to direct the actions of others. Since a one-sided "directing" ultimately led to domination, through either politics or economics, the cooperative process would eliminate the very basis of social hierarchy. It is for this reason that Dewey turned to the empirical nature of science. Trial and error, not rigid capitalist ideas to protect wealth, would allow workers to be in control of their environment.

The institution primarily responsible for initiating cooperation was education. The crises of the depression focused his thinking, forcing him to make explicit associations between a capitalist system and authoritative pedagogy. He believed the schools must promote "intelligence" among children, so that they may effectivly reveal causes of economic hardship and class oppression. The mechanics of Dewey's egalitarian teaching and educating thus become one with his theory of classless social harmony.

These two components of Dewey's writing in the '30s, the results of rugged individualism and new cooperative processes, both share a common element. They are the visible shadows of the light of theory. They suggest many philosophical points for a restructuring of the social order, all of which are contained in the works of the 1920s. To examine, however, Dewey's theory by beginning in an earlier decade fails to reveal his inherent opposition to capitalism and callings for a universal class of workers.

The later, more popular works of the depression are therefore worth a detailed consideration.

Dewey believed that, at base, a de facto absence of freedom was the real detriment of rugged individualism. "It is a significant and sinister fact," he wrote, that "those who cry 'liberty' with the greatest vehemence are representatives of the class that is more responsible than any other for the loss of actual liberty by the mass of our citizens." A steady adherence to the "glory of the Constitution" made liberty "the monopoly of the business man and the employer." The rise of industrial capitalism since the eighteenth century created a legal order which identified "rights, or liberty, with property interests." In so doing, the state repudiated the importance of other rights such as freedom of speech. It was therefore the "financial system . . . now administered" that was the "great foe" of the civil liberties the Constitution intended to protect. In short, the machine age made "the 'golden dream' of our forefathers a hideous nightmare for uncounted millions."[3]

Without property, the masses could not function much above the level of bare existence. They were forced to remain at their wage-earning positions, and were paid very little. "The machine and the control of power make it possible to abolish poverty," while "actually improvements in the machinery of production and distribution are working in the opposite direction." The net wealth of the nation

had improved dramatically, but most had gone toward rewarding a few competitive individuals who governed distribution in the private profit system. Meanwhile, it was in fact technological forces that were responsible for the "ultimate creation" of wealth. Ironically, the workers who harnessed these forces had little purchasing power and remained utterly desolate. Until these conditions were recognized, argued Dewey, "all steps toward economic recovery" in the depression "may be temporarily helpful while in the long run useless."[4]

Due to this web of legal and economic usurpation, workers in the twentieth century remained in a position of servitude. The tendency of the machine was to destroy the ability of the workman to become his own employer, reducing him "to the position of a mere feeder or attendant . . . [and dispensing] with judgment, skill and brains." A banal, dictatorial "regimentation" pervaded all aspects of working life and was often euphemistically called "loyalty." "Those who are engaged in the outward work of production and distribution" of commodities had "no share--imaginative, intellectual, emotional--in directing the activities in which they physically participate." They only executed "plans which they do not form, and of whose meaning and intent they are ignorant." "Profit for others" and "a wage for themselves" were the only principles workers could comprehend.[5]

Faced with this determinism in production, most Ameri-

cans possessed "an immense amount of political immaturity and economic illiteracy." They concentrated on the high-minded "ideals" of fairness and liberty and sought to redefine those ideals in an evolving system of capitalism. They did not, however, recognize that the real difficulty lay in fulfilling basic notions of social justice. It was thus the "method of action," both in politics and economics, that if left unaltered would continue to fuel the hardships of reality. With their laissez-faire tactics, businessmen would continue to use property to maintain their status and use capital to hold workers in the lowest "place" of the socioeconomic regime.[6]

To ignore "the processes of change" was therefore a wishful denial of the "drift into greater chaos." The upper classes exercised monopolistic control through their ownership of the means of production. Powerful bankers and financial houses operated heavy industry, and protected their interests through the use of such legal means as tariffs. Land speculators and investors in the stock market kept capital out of the pockets of workers. What is more, investors selfishly left their assets frozen in the hopes of greater profit, "compelling the closing of thousands of banks." Meanwhile, farmers working the rural landscape suffered from "unpayable mortgages" and wage earners living in urban areas faced "the slums of the cities." The plight of the poor, however, could not easily be rectified, since land and other raw materials could not be freed from private

profit without an entire restructuring of society's economic base. The economic base, in turn, could not be restructured without substantially altering competitive individualism in politics, workers' roles, and the forces of production.[7]

In a "democratic" state such as America, therefore, the "living embodiment of free men" was ironically conceptualized as the "unhampered flourishing of capitalism." The competitive economic habits of the capitalist regime, in denying the inquiring methods of science, subjected the masses to an "open play of class interests." To insure their competitive advantage, the upper classes used "the weight of unquestioned custom and tradition" as well as brute force. Notions of liberty were developed a priori to maintain economic status. Dewey therefore agreed with the eighteenth-century philosopher David Hume that "reason is and always must be the slave of passion." In the case of modern industry, that passion was best defined as self interest. The state, as a rational framework of "law and order," served only as the businessman's protection of pecuniary gain.[8]

Under such conditions, it was almost impossible for a government based on anachronistic, agrarian notions of the state to give any substantive relief to the poor. Controlled in fact by those who maintained industry and private wealth, the government provided only "tragic insecurity and essential anarchy." Federal authorities somehow felt justified in paying farmers to plow under millions

of acres of vital foodstuffs while many among the poor starved in the streets. Certainly the government ruled the people, but it did not actually govern. "For government implies order and security at the very least." There was widespread evidence of "millions living scantily and precariously upon the dole of waning private charity." President Franklin Roosevelt meant well, and had truly made the necessary preparations for "the nationalization, or better the popularization, of power of production, distribution and exchange." Nevertheless, he and his advisors were "blind and half-hearted," with a chief desire "to bolster and repair the present system . . . of complete power and rule to the very elements that have brought the nation to its present pass."[9]

Roosevelt's governmental "reforms" failed, therefore, in more than simply their philanthropic efforts. They lacked any real ability, or even intention, to end class coercion. "Genuine social control of money and credit," which was the "greatest single source of power in the existing system" was left conspicuously intact, while government analysts contemplated the use of deliberate inflation. The aim was clearly to strengthen big business, and surrender "the interests of labor in the matter of genuine collective bargaining as to wages." There was even an "eager willingness of the Administration to use the methods of coercion [and] intimidation . . . to suppress free discussion and to mislead opinion" in order to maintain lais-

sez-faire enterprise.[10]

The ineffectiveness of government was part of a broader collapse in the democratic process in politics. In the days of artisan production and small town life, the ballot and elected officials served as representatives of the people. Cataclysmic depression in the twentieth century, however, illustrated that such was no longer the case. "Why have power and rule passed from the people to a few" Dewey asked rhetorically. It was quite simply due to "an oligarchy of wealth." In theory, politics and economics operated in separate realms. In practice, "money not only talks but acts." The accumulation and concentration of wealth was the "outstanding fact" affecting politics in the machine age. Until people realized the need to remove raw materials, banks, and modes of transportation from entrepreneurial manipulation, politics would continue to neglect the interests of the menial masses.[11]

In failing to recognize that political system was a function of industry and finance, common citizens suffered from "mental confusion" as to the nature of the state. They believed that the concept of "public control" must be instituted only in times of severe economic distress. On other occasions, the state was to uphold the older notion of competitive individualism. With "corporate forces" in industry now a prevalent actuality, this "confused sentiment" of rugged individualism led to political ineffectiveness and ultimately political apathy. Its principal

defect was a "lack of consciousness" of the present political needs, and the inability to create an economy for the future.[12]

A means of empowering the individual was therefore the most urgent need of society. Politics must be guided toward a heightened awareness of actual conditions and formulating new checks upon upper class rule. Since "the economic problem which weighs so heavily upon us" was an illustration of "the new social impact of science" and mechanization, it was scientific methods in which social cures could be found. Technological applications of science had "produced the potentiality of plenty," but lagging legal and political institutions were left paradoxically "unaffected as yet by the advance of science." This phenomenon was due to claims by those in power that science, "writing it with a capital S-," was not a "method of approach but a kind of self-enclosed entity and end in itself, an . . . authoritatively revealed inherent and absolute Truth." This misconception was part of the "older individualism" of self-interest that sought to use applied science purely for monetary gain and political authority, while keeping its motives "below consciousness."[13]

A government using scientific means could best resolve this sort of chaos. Science had the capacity to do more than extend the "quantitative range and penetration" in examining economic problems. It could provide "understanding through bringing relationships and interactions into

view." The government could thus foresee the needs and consequences in production and distribution. "The future seems to hold in store an extension of political control in the social interest." This aim could best be accomplished through such agencies as the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Reserve Board. Outlets for production could be found efficiently, overproduction prevented, and surpluses distributed among those in need. Gone would be the days of risky speculation. What is more, no single individual could profit unfairly by manipulating conditions with capital.[14]

This more integrated form of governmental planning would come to foster a individualism that incorporated personal satisfaction with economic cooperation. In the future, machinery would lead to more than a mere mastering of natural resources and mechanical energy. "We hardly have commenced to dream of managing" physical power "for the sake of projected purposes and prospective goods." A new form of culture would focus on non-pecuniary means of satisfaction that are similar to esthetic pleasure, so that one day the "intellectual and moral hebetude" of factory work might be removed. If "ideals" of society were made along these lines, it would not be long before the machine served as "liberation and enrichment of human life" rather than hopelessly attempting to harness the power to the dollar. "Organized planning to effect these goods" would produce a "new individual" who was not only

considerate of others, but truly in control of the means of production.[15]

The individual would not only become more cooperative, but also escape the complacent and thoughtless qualities of industrial life. "When the patterns that form individuality of thought and desire" correspond to "outwardly corporate" nature of civilization, individuality "will be released for creative effort." Through group activity, individuals would discover a "positive and constructive energy" for "a new culture expressing the possibilities" immanent in a machine world. Workers would never be "molded" into the "fixed and static" habits of competition, but freed as "constant makers of a continuously new society." They would thus no longer be dependent solely upon politics and government to ameliorate their workings conditions.[16]

Government planning based on science could then lead to much more than an equitable economic system. It could foster an environment conducive to intellectual honing, so that wage earners would employ "the use of thought and emotion in their daily occupations." The "fact-finding" methods of governmental technicians would be imitated "in the thoughts of those who tend the machines." Laborers would no longer be "warped, frustrated, and unnourished" in performing activities, since they would come to understand the physical factors involved in their tasks. In the process, a desire for "related knowledge, physical

and social, would be created and rewarded" by an "enormous liberation of mind." Initiative and responsibility "would be demanded and achieved" from what were once the dominating upper classes. In fact, work, as a form of intellectual activity, would form the quintessential unification "of mind and body" expressed by philosophers for centuries.[17]

As intelligent methods provided knowledge that empower the machine operator, so too would the traditional separation of "the intellectual worker from the wage earner" disappear. There would always be a "comparatively small number of selected minds that have both taste and capacity" for certain scientific fields, but science-as-method had the potential to instill "attitudes of open-mindedness, intellectual integrity, observation and interest" in most people. No longer would the retention of "masses of facts and principles" be the essential foundation of knowledge and the possession of an esoteric few. Instead, facts would serve as a foundation to method, or as a "power to think with respect to conduct of social life and the remaking of traditional institutions." As was the case with any scientific inquiry, the results of an intellectual endeavor would not belong to any particular individual, say an inventor, but rather "the community of workers." Thus, "every new idea and theory" would be submitted to the working community for confirmation and test.[18]

Yet even before this new, advanced age in government planning and worker control arose, science could at least

reveal the subterfuge under which the industrial system of the depression operated. Intelligence, observation, and reflection could "discriminatingly" relate the causes of economic hardship to economic competition. By using the powers of method, the common people would not be forced into acceptance of harsh conditions due to any preconceived, capitalist notions. They would realize that America's antiquated legal and political institutions actually inhibited the great industrial strides made by technological advances. They would demand vast institutional restructuring in order to implement a "classless society." Only then would the country be in a position to develop "a genuine culture" relieved of financial considerations, and able to plan industry "in behalf of a significantly human life."[19]

In the more distant future, science used by the government and workers could control the social effects of technology and promote better standards of living. A "genuine socialization" of industry through collective ownership would put an end to the present system of "values in use," in which sale values determined prices. Instead, "consumption-values" would determine prices. Though Dewey was not entirely specific in his details, he clearly believed a "psychological emancipation" would accompany this means toward material security. Once society was freed from the necessity of subsistence, the average person could enjoy the "cultural consequences" of mass-produced goods.

Material items would thus become not an object of acquisition, but more of a means to a "liberating spiritualization." In essence, the particulars of society would be governed by the adage "regiment machines and money and other inanimate things, and give liberty to human beings."[20]

Dewey's industrial culture was also to be the possession of all, not just the upper classes. The work of poets, painters, novelists, dramatists, and philosophers would no longer find an appreciative audience at a level of society "on top of an industrial and political substructure," striving "for a cultivated elite supported on the backs of toiling masses." Instead, culture would become "a new habit of mind and sentiment" among all involved in material civilization. It would be part of the very nature of society. Even work itself would become "an instrument" allowing "the masses [to] share freely in a life enriched in imagination and esthetic enjoyment." Culture would be intrinsically humanitarian, and show that while "mind is connected with matter, humanity and its collective intelligence are the means by which nature is guided to new possibilities."[21]

This humanistic world, however, could not be implemented easily under the socioeconomic conditions of capitalism. An entrenched business class manipulated science for personal wealth. Individualism was stoutly adhered to in its "individualistic" sense of competition and <u>laissez-faire</u>. America's cultural heritage was selfishly cov-

eted by a relatively small class of businessmen. These "monopolists of capital" formulated notions of ultimate good and "beauty" to maintain their status. Even intellectual and literary figures separated the "refined" forms of artistic achievement from the material items and methods pertaining to use. All upper classes combined their efforts to derogate the patterns and habits of utility among laborers. By doing so, the elite kept the working classes ignorant and subservient.[22]

Even though "intelligence" based on scientific methodology could be extremely effective in breaking this capitalist and cultural nexus, Dewey believed there must be an additional institutional means designed to remedy rugged individualism. The government set guidelines and provided economic relief, but it could do little to alter people's worn patterns of individualistic thought. The greatest hope for society lay in future generations. Dewey therefore turned to the schools for methodological aid. Many critical aspects of his social theory are thus ingrained in his prescriptions for less competitive forms of learning, his ideas on student interaction with the curriculum, and his conception of activity among students and teachers.

Within the existing schools themselves, however, there were many elements designed to protect class hierarchy. A capitalist mentality pervaded even the average high school. "The subject-matter of actual economic and social facts" was disguised to prevent the use of critical, in-

quiring methods of thought. The establishment made pupils "ready victims of propaganda and publicity agents" who doubtlessly veiled the shortcomings of capitalism. In this manner schools educated for the present status quo that entailed a "static social order." At the top of the social pyramid "a nationwide conspiracy" of bankers "and other pecuniary groups" presented a "dictation of policies" to teachers and students. The culminating effect was to "build up and strengthen a class division" of those possessing cultural subjects while the masses were left with "a few and simple mechanical skills."[23]

In addition, traditional schools that lacked scientific methods were in "close connection" with the economic catastrophe of the depression. Pedagogy based on rote learning, discipline, drill, and an acquisitive emphasis on knowledge combined to produce a child who was industrious, self-seeking, and manipulative. In an age when an evolving industrial revolution demanded group harmony and interaction, such patterns of learning could only lead to disaster. The laissez-faire social order that pervaded society was tightly bound to school techniques of the old patterns of individualism. Due to this relationship, any successful effort to "remove or mitigate the forces which brought about the collapse of industry" would at once impose a "beneficial effect on education."

With the school and society so mutually reinforcing, there was a direct correlation between educational tech-

niques and the individual's socioeconomic "mentality." The "executive type" of school manifested itself in methods that "think for the sake of doing." Ideas in the curriculum were presented only for their utilitarian potential, so that one day they might be manipulated in various modes of production. By contrast, schools designed outside the capitalist matrix exhibited dramatically different methods and ideas. In these cases, "inquiring and artistic types" of children incorporated guiding patterns of "directing and enriching emotional and intellectual experience." To cultivate "growth toward harmony" in a capitalist society thus began with an approach to pedagogy as "direction of movement" within the child, rather than presenting ideas of a specific, "definitely formed" nature.[24]

So too would the teacher play an entirely new role in order to promote a more cooperative social order. "Controlling methods of teaching and discipline" that contained "the traditional individualistic aim" would be substituted by methods with "social purpose." These methods would be based on inquiry and "mutual consultation and discussion" in the student-to-teacher relationship. Such a technique would prevent the dominating, capitalist methods of "imposition and inculcation." No longer would the teacher emphasize the "right answer" in the curriculum, thereby avoiding ideas imbued with implications of a "money motif." The teacher would only "guide" the discovery of cooperative tendencies inherent in the child, who would then be free

of any "dictation" by a "boss" in the school. The child would learn better and faster, since "the force of the worker's spontaneous interest and desire to accomplish something" would stimulate intellectual abilities.[25]

According to this futuristic model, the child would become a miniature worker who finds activity pleasurable since it is no longer for pecuniary gain. There would no longer be prescribed "tasks" in learning, but rather actions that foster "the diversity of capacities and needs of different human beings." The child, acting through new materials and methods, would discover "what tendencies are especially seeking expression." Judgment, learning, and ideas would all emanate from a physical, moral, and social "interaction with existing powers and preferences." A form of control would then emerge, since the student ultimately graduates without a slavish desire for "business success" and open to the realities of economic life. Ultimately, the child would reach a mature level of "discriminating criticism" and an ability "to direct economic forces in new channels" as an adult.[26]

All the while, teachers would serve as "fellow-workers" in the activities of the student. The child would be content and self-motivated, making formal disciple unnecessary. Teachers would present material that is not to be "learned," but instead made a part of living. A set of common interests would then generate out of this process, since sharing would be an integral part of the entire educational exper-

ience. No longer would "success" be determined by the fulfillment of "egoistic" desires for material and pecuniary gain. In short, the teacher and the student would discover a "realization that knowledge is a trust for the furthering of the well-being of all." Genuine freedom would prevail as individuals, "in doing each his own work," contribute to "an equal right to share in the cultural and material fruits of collective human invention, industry, skill and knowledge."[27]

This vision of the school complements Dewey's notion of a labor-oriented, classless society. Students would have participatory habits formed at an early age, and discover a life that is truly egalitarian. Cooperation would make the old patterns of capitalist competition impossible. The material culture would be subservient to the needs of the child, who grows to be a discriminating worker in control of the laboring environment. A new sense of awareness of the worker's surrounding conditions would thus begin at a level of interaction of the child with the curriculum. So empowered, and with so many powers at their disposal, students would feel comfortable cooperating with teachers and each other.

It is in the schools, therefore, as well as in all other critical aspects of Dewey's thinking, that one finds the notion of the "rugged individual" eliminated. He undermined the very basis of class domination, and replaced it with a universal type of cooperative individualism.

With the economic system no longer competitive, the laboring masses found enjoyment in work that heightens intellectual achievement.

The schools, however, were not simply the application of some humanitarian effort on the part of Dewey to alleviate the plight of future workers. They did not, for example, seek to "adjust" the student to a labor market or merely to survive under the harsh conditions of a capitalist society. Nor did Dewey's notion of schooling seek to impart traditional knowledge of the upper-classes upon the lower-classes. Instead, his educational theory was part of his much broader conception of scientific method that would heighten the masses' sense of actual hardships and provide a means of attaining economic equality in reality.

More importantly, education reflected Dewey's belief that society was dominated by an oppressive "democratic" theory based on purely rational ideals of liberty. Upper-class businessmen used the schools to indoctrinate the child into a rigid class hierarchy. The elite formulated such "ideals" as minimal government, formal constitutional rights, and laissez-faire competition and presented them "ready-made" to the masses. As we shall see next, Dewey believed in the previous decade of the 1920s that these basic concepts corresponded to an elaborate intellectual framework designed by the upper-classes to maintain their political authority.

It is this continuity between the realities of the

depression and the ideological foundations of authority that make Dewey's 1930s works most valuable. The depression years illustrate the type of society Dewey had in mind all along, when he discussed his interactive forms of learning and his scientific, "instrumentalist" methodology as a substitute for traditional "Reason." By reading backward, his more "philosophical" points of a the pre-depression period acquire a vitality lost when examining his works chronologically. What is more, the intellectual significance of the depression may even extend to the Progressive Era, making Dewey primarily an underclass "revolutionary" all his life.

Chapter Three

Reason as the Rationalization of Authority

The schools played a highly functional role in Dewey's vision of a classless society. He advocated the use of scientific method in determining the subject matter of the curriculum and the active means by which the child learned. In this process, the child prepared for a life of group harmony through cooperation and democratic control of the means of production. As part of Dewey's broader social theory, the schools served to rectify the consequences of a competitive socioeconomic order he saw throughout the country during the depression.

The depression, however, was the result of much more than a capitalist industrial system gone awry. For Dewey, the elaborate existing political structure associated "liberty" with property, and often subjected the former to the rule of the latter. Hence, those already possessing property maintained a high degree of political authority over those who depended solely on their labor for their livelihood. Property owners stressed the importance of laissez-faire, and falsely assured the community that "rugged individualism" was a valid vehicle for menial-class mobility even in the age of industrialization.

By asserting that this manipulation by the state served only those who controlled the means of production, Dewey's writings of the '30s focused on the laboring masses. If one reviews his works of the '20s, as will be done in this chapter, there are few strikingly new ideas. Competitive individualism was consistently his principal target. He saw an existing status quo in society, and believed that all traditional philosophy was based on the goal of maintaining the "place" of individuals in society, especially those involved with menial skills.

Dewey's full scale works of the 1920s, unlike the essays of the '30s, attempt to reveal the philosophical generalities behind the class oppression he later found starkly evident during the depression. As a result, in the '20s he wrote few words pertaining to the injustices of industrial labor, finance, government reform, manipulation of capital, or an "oligarchy of wealth." Nor did he address the crumbling forms of democracy that were the conscious attempts of businessmen to maintain their status. Quite simply, he did not vigorously elaborate upon the hardships resulting from "ruggedness."

The works of the '20s do, however, contain elements of society's class-based, capitalist oppression, though in a somewhat different style than presented during the '30s. Though oppression was not evident to the extent we see during the depression, Dewey made reference to the same theme repeatedly. He made only occasional references

to economics, but still found the entire ideological foundation of the state, western morality, and theory of knowledge to be centered upon class hierarchy. Much of the work during the '20s is thus devoted to tracing the development of modern philosophy, and sketching its intrinsic forms of "order." More importantly, it demonstrates philosophy's exclusion of the menial masses.

This historical trend of Western thought embodied everything that was the antithesis of scientific method. It was, for Dewey, the systematic repudiation of any form of questioning the positions of the elite and the middle-class followers of the elite. The unscientific methods of traditional philosophy included much more than a retention of the independent, self-sufficient, and acquisitive individual. There was a conscious denial of any form of uncertainty, such as individual inquiry, group interaction, or hypothetical knowledge. In this way, certainty, reason, and authority were mutually reinforcing. In short, they were a rationalization of class domination.

Dewey's works of the '20s present a differing, but parallel, form of social realism compared to those of the '30s. In the earlier works, ruggedness is not a condition of suffering the consequences of economic life, but is instead a condition of being enveloped in ideological hierarchy as a static individual. The "place" of the worker, therefore, is still the concern of his social reconstruction, though less explicitly stated. There are many points

of correspondence in these two eras, making the historical roots of reason and philosophy worthy of explication.

Dewey's theory of the state provides the most critical link between his description of the realities of the depression and his already formed hierarchical conception of society. In The Public and Its Problems (1927) he explained how traditional Western politics developed as a means of protecting the economic self-interests of the ruling business classes. These "authorities" formulated a theoretical distinction between the purely individual nature of business transactions and the needs of the a collective "public." On this basis, rulers argued in favor of a limited government in economic matters, and retained high ideals of independent political action and representation. Dewey, however, found a close historical connection between strictly "private" interests and "public" institutions in the rise of Western democracy.[1]

Contrary to many popular understandings of his day, Dewey believed history proved "ideals" had not, in fact, created institutions of "democratic" government. "There is a current legend," he wrote, "that the movement [of democracy] originated in a single clear-cut idea, and was preceded by a single unbroken impetus to . . . a predestined end." The a priori principles of government based on "theories of the nature of the individual and his rights, of freedom and authority, progress and order, liberty and law, of the common good and a general will, of democracy

itself" were only a myth. The rise of representative government was instead the product of "scientific and economic changes which finally took effect in the political field, being themselves primarily non-political and innocent of democratic intent."[2]

The lofty notions of democracy were only the result, or the reflection in thought, of more practical concerns of society. Specifically, there was a revolt against autocratic government and monarchy, giving birth to a deep desire to reduce government itself "to a minimum so as to limit the evil it could do." Many of the surrounding institutions which had traditionally unified society, such as the church, were associated with the oppressive governments, and were categorically rejected in democratic intellectual currents. Consequently, "freedom presented itself as an end in itself" and became exclusive of any other considerations of equality during the great "movements of revolt" throughout Europe. The chief desire was to minimize government. Thus "'individualism' was born, a theory which endowed singular persons in isolation from any associations, except those which they deliberately formed for their own ends, with native or natural rights."[3]

In this context, John Locke's "contract theory" of the state found a welcoming audience during the tumultuous, individualistic reforms of seventeenth-century England. It became the basis of subverting the authority of oppression to the autonomous will of the individual. It was

premised on the notion that the individual existed alone in a pristine state of nature, and only gradually entered a collective agreement with the state. "Though worthless as a record of fact, [the theory was] of great worth as a symptom of the direction of human desire." The state became the medium of satisfying human needs "by human intention and volition," not by the predetermined ideals of an aristocracy.[4]

Dewey fully endorsed these liberating elements of contractual political theory, though rejected the concept of natural rights because of a parallel historical development. The rise of modern science, fostered by the discoveries in physics made by Francis Bacon during the Renaissance, paved the way for an age of mechanical inventions. Rather than providing social benefits, however, Bacon's discoveries fueled individualism. Once machinery was put to use in production and commerce, there followed "the creation of new[,] powerful social conditions, personal opportunities and wants." In essence, the burgeoning productive capacity of the machine gave way to an age of economic acquisition. Monarchical governments, however, continued to restrict the individual's acts by enforcing feudal guild associations and the vestiges of a barter and trade system, while opposing a system of private profit. To reverse this dichotomy, Adam Smith, in the eighteenth century, formulated economic "laws" in which labor "springing from natural wants and leading to the creation of wealth"

demanded "natural" government of individualism that would unleash the potentials of science.[5]

Modern political theory, therefore, may have relieved society of autocracy, but it simultaneously justified excessive material wealth on the basis of "science." "The economic theory of laissez-faire," equating personal profit with social benefits, "readily fused with the doctrine of natural rights." Governmental power came to protect profit, and, in addition, profit came to protect and utilize government. Kings then consolidated and centralized their power to increase their own revenues. Later, in industrial times, the same phenomenon manifested itself "when modes of private business become 'affected with a public interest' because of quantitative expansion" in the form of monopoly. The "democratic" state, therefore, actually acted in an oppressive manner that subordinated the individual while supposedly providing rights. So equipped, "new governmental agencies were grasped and used to suit the desires" of a "new class of business men."[6]

Thus, the early founders of democracy, including those who framed the American Constitution, did not base their ideas on objective, a priori doctrines. The movement toward popular government proceeded from "technological discoveries" that brought "change in the customs by which men had been bound together." For this reason, Dewey declared that "there is no sanctity in universal suffrage, frequent elections, majority rule, congressional and cabinet govern-

ment." Such institutional forms only expedited the useful "departure from antecedent custom and law." The doctrines exuding from natural rights, however, were "political war-cries . . . in justifying some particular practical polity struggling for recognition," namely, acquisitive economic individualism.[7]

In addition to the mere "pragmatic need" of these ideals, they were "asserted to be absolute truths of human nature or of morals." As time progressed, these truths lived to "cumber the political grounds" since they were unable to respond to the collectivism emerging in mechanized, industrial production. They effectively discredited any notion of a government based on the interaction of individuals. This dichotomy resulted in "a stratification of society into immemorial classes within which each person performed his stated duties according to his fixed position." The public became subservient to its officials. Officials ensured that politics were subservient to laissez-faire economics. All involved parties fostered a business-dominated, hierarchical, and competitive class order.[8]

What is more, this framework was designed by its creators, and henceforth endorsed by its participants, to keep the producers on the bottom rails of society. All intellectual aspects of the new democratic theory were based on a philosophy of "reason" and were a conscious scheme to maintain hierarchy. Menial individuals in an industrial age participated in an agrarian political process

based on capital, and was grounded in principles of epistemology, morality, and unscientific methodology that left them powerless. Hence, in Dewey's mind the existing political structure subordinated not only the social status of the lower classes, but their intellectual status as well.

The specious equality provided by the notion of natural rights was overlooked due to a traditional belief in carefully deduced principles of guiding "truth." As a somewhat arbitrary object of philosophy, truth made itself supreme in "judgment concerning authoritative value." It ignored the "practical character" of philosophy by not considering the bearing of theory upon practice. It became a philosophical means of supporting preexisting "moral habits" of what was good or bad, right or wrong. More importantly, it "acquired a definite social and political value . . . of a higher class directly associated with the ruling elements in the society." Antithetical, "experimental" knowledge, which was most often the possession of "workers and craftsmen," was hastily denied any philosophical importance.[9]

Ultimate values of truth developed not in terms of providing a "good" for all, as many philosophers claimed, but in an acquisitive, self-seeking sense. A preindustrial, medieval conception of a religious individual seeking salvation was transferred to more secular elements of political and intellectual thought during industrialization. With

this "underlying" acquisitiveness of religion already in place, "the power of the established institutions proceeded from the . . . supreme end of the individual," that is, the desire for wealth. Hence, the upper classes added changing views on religion to their "fusion of individual capitalism, of natural rights, and of morals founded in strictly individual traits and values." The philosopher's conception "of all things that make life worth while" corresponded to this amalgamation by generating moral ideals "as a special kind of action chiefly concerned with either the virtues or the enjoyments of individuals in their personal capacities."[10]

As this type of reasoning became a justification for personal wants, and as politics were framed accordingly, the upper class of thinkers fabricated a conception of individualistic psychology as well. "The very structure of the individual," even in a non-political sense, was considered inherently oppositional to any "associations" with other beings. The eighteenth-century defined psychology as "an introspective and introverted account of isolated and ultimate private consciousness." Personal consciousness became identified with mind itself, or the ego, rather than as interaction with the surrounding social environment. It was easy, therefore, for authorities to justify a political theory that made the invidious individual "the court of ultimate resort."[11]

Philosophy even extended the notion of a "closed mind"

into a fixed, rigid view of nature. Philosophers and "intelligent men of olden times" put their trust in "a closed world, a world consisting internally of a limited number of fixed forms and having definite boundaries externally." Contrary to the "open world" of modern scientific method, they thought and imagined "a limited number of classes, kinds, forms, distinct in quality . . . and arranged in a graded order of superiority and inferiority." In this "definitely closed universe," the "self-involved revolution of mind" turned upon "its own ideal axis of reason." With little variation permitted in nature, the social ideal prescribed was that "each individual has a fixed career to pursue." Pre-arranged into distinct classes, the "castes of nature" were constituted on an "aristocratic, one can truly say a feudal, plan."[12]

Thus, the emerging political patterns of "democracy" had a long heritage in the traditions of Western thought. Even as early as ancient Greece, however, Dewey found a pervasive, upper-class repudiation of the empirical knowledge of artisans that did not correspond to truth. The Greeks created an ideological realm of "technical and abstract" philosophy to support distinctions of birth and privilege. Classic thought was embedded in a process of "holding" rules of conduct and service "to an inferior" while granting authority to one of "superior" capacities. Even ancient "science," while apparently empirical, developed "laws" of nature as an explanation of the patterns

that "govern" the relation of the ruler to the ruled. Hence, there was a "reading [of] social relationships into nature" through ideological concepts "impregnated with a sense of guiding . . . influence from above on what is naturally inferior."[13]

In this way, the ancients deceptively made "the reason of things" a veil of autocratic social custom. They claimed, as did Socrates, that all tradition was subject to question, since man was a "questioning being" because he was intrinsically a "rational" being. Dewey, however, argued that rationality was a false precept of investigation because it ignored actual circumstance, and was in fact "a method of thought and knowledge which while purifying tradition . . . preserve[d] its moral and social values." Its work "was critical and in the interests of the only true conservatism," namely, that of preserving the value of hierarchical order. Reason became "the leading theme of the classic philosophy . . . and [was] restated by the Christian philosophy of Medieval Europe.[14]

Even subsequent discoveries in science did not alter this symbiotic relationship of rationality, scientific law, and society. Sir Isaac Newton, for example, despite his great experimental challenges to "natural" science in the seventeenth century, was not fundamentally an empiricist. He employed mathematical calculations to physical objects to reveal that objects were not ultimately "known" in pure thought, as was traditionally held, but were known

from the human senses. Experimentation, dependent upon direct human observation, was therefore a necessity in any endeavor of knowledge. In this manner, he avoided the determinism of scientific "law" by arguing "whatever is not derived from phenomena is to be called a hypothesis," not an element of "truth." Curiously, however, Newton believed "ultimate physical realities," understandable only in the mind, shared common qualities with sensibly perceived things. For this reason he postulated the maxim that matter must contain irreducible, insensible particles in its composition.[15]

Dewey believed this qualification in Newton's empiricism was part of a deep desire to see that "nature may be lasting." In fear of discovering the natural world was in "chaos," Newton imparted a degree of permanence on all "the various separations and new associations and motions" in the universe. Dewey concluded that this artificial "guarantee" was a retention of "the old notion that reality . . . must consist of those fixed immutable things which philosophy calls substances." It was a continuation of the Greek belief that "only the certain and exact is knowledge." Science may therefore have altered many of its rational "principles" through the ages, but "the procedures and conclusions of experimental knowing" were ultimately dictated by the restrictive, deductive patterns of tradition.[16]

Newton's conception of particle matter, defined by

mathematical properties, even made "ultimate principles" of the rational mind the guide to what could possibly be found experimentally. Ideals, not pertaining to observable reality, became the primary source of all knowledge. The test of direct observation was reduced to "identifying objects" within properties "previously employed." The place of all things could be predicted, and two centuries later, despite the success of truly empirical science in overturning the dogmatism of rationality, "this conception of knowledge still dominates thought in social and moral matters." On the political side, it accrued "adherents of order and organization, those who feel that reason alone gives security."[17]

On the philosophical side, reason reflected a motion toward defining the "real" of all existence antecedently. "Philosophy hurries away," wrote Dewey, from what it conceived as "gross experience" so that "it has no surprises in store, . . . [and] that it will stay put." The great sages of the past possessed the "predilection for mathematical objects" and predictable phenomena:

> Spinoza with his assurance that a true idea carries truth intrinsic in its bosom; Locke with his 'simple idea'; Hume with his 'impression'; the English neo-realist with his ultimate atomic data; the American neo-realist with his ready-made essences.

With such epistemological, or knowledge-based, certainty, philosophy became a means of protecting the social order. Hence, all the traits that were desirable, such as nobility and permanence, were made into the notion of "real Being."

The philosopher, "belonging by status to a leisure class relieved from the urgent necessity of dealing with conditions," portrayed life as good, "something which *is*, even if it does not *exist*."[18]

It is precisely this fallacy which political theorists made in their formulation of the "democratic state." They postulated that there were fixed properties, inherent to the individual, which could not be altered through societal interaction or group association. The nature of the state was therefore devised *a priori* upon the "natural" aims, functions, and limits of the individual. The state became an entity existing in and of itself, and derived from antecedently determined "state-forming forces" such as the "general will." The state was theoretically isolated from the vicissitudes of everyday society, and, as Dewey would later argue in the '30s, from the needs of the populace as well. The government, as the manifest form of the state, could be questioned and even overthrown by its constituents, but ultimately the ruling classes retained their philosophical justification of power. In the machine age, the state effectually came "to legalize and idealize the *status quo*" of an extensive "pecuniary culture."[19]

In addition to the *a priori* means of conceiving ideas, the "teleological" nature of traditional metaphysics contributed to philosophical hierarchy. The notion of what the ancients called "the Good" consisted of a set of "first" principles, in keeping with truth, upon which all ideals

rested. These principles corresponded to what existed in "ultimate Being" and allowed for such rational types of mental functions as logic and Euclidian geometry. It is along these lines that Aristotle devised a system that later generations termed his "First Philosophy." A number of "certain and finished" ends supposedly furnished all existence with "a fixation of ranks or grades of necessity and contingency so sorted that necessity measures dignity and equals degree of reality." It was these highest, "natural ends" of teleology that made the universe predictable, or in Dewey's understanding "static," by providing a "final causation" to all occurances.[20]

The graded ranks of teleology provided a consoling ideology "to those who enjoy[ed] a privileged status." In a "systematic way" the classic philosophies of Being were given "with malice prepense." They were responsible, Dewey felt, for an enduring separation of theory and practice, and a division between the "ultimate aims" of philosophy and the actualities of their repeated failure. Among those with "leisure and the aptitude to pursue their preference" that mind is complete and self-sufficient, came a disparaging view of everyday activity. The artisans caught in the affairs of implementing teleological first principles were made to feel personally deficient if there emerged any practical flaws or frustrations. Though these aspects of traditional philosophy were nominally extinct in the twentieth century, they continued "to influence,

unconsciously, the minds of those who no longer give intellectual assent" to their tenets. Dewey did not specify "the minds" to which he alluded, but he pointed to the "familiar grading of activities from the servile . . . to the liberal, the free and socially esteemed."[21]

In this context, the state became an everlasting ideal of what ought to be. The operations of the body politic were attributed to a "direct causative power" dependent upon nature. Should one disagree with the outcome of these forces, especially pertaining to socioeconomic class, there were no grounds for disagreement. Based on individualistic premises "explained in terms of an 'essence' of man realizing itself," traditional philosophy premised a flourishing democracy upon a society unhampered by government interference.[22]

As unjust as teleology may be, it went unnoticed because of its seemingly "nature" foundations. Notions of "the isolated individual possessed of inherent rights" as well as "the idea of economic laws" were therefore "a skew, a defection and distortion, in democratic forms." They did not allow, believed Dewey, for the more associative qualities of human organization. They resulted in an invidious economic system, one which was more properly termed "artificial" than natural. They "supplied the manmade instrumentalities by which the new governmental agencies were grasped and used to suit the desires of the new class of business men [sic]." The a priori state, as "a good

or true state," allowed this class "to form constitutions offhand and impose them ready-made on peoples." The state became monolithic, and prevented "the use of intelligence to judge consequences."[23]

It was therefore the element of control, indirectly relating to government and politics, that became the principal aim of the upper classes. Ideologically, there emerged a striving toward the regulation of all uncertainties, all contingencies natural and social. The empirical activities, and potential factual discoveries, of the common artisan or laborer were systematically prevented from making any intellectual incursions into the first principles of authoritative science. Hence, philosophy, beginning with Aristotle, developed a "bias in favor of the fixed, certain and finished." Any changes that could be readily observed were associated with "degrees of deficiency in Being." It became "the genteel tradition" to identify what was fixed and regular with a superior quality, while "asserting that change is illusory."[24]

Philosophy even sought to constrict the very conduct of individuals through rigid ethical theories based on some "final end or good." The feudal organization of the past that consisted of a "bounded, ordered cosmos" passed on a tradition that "the irregularity of special cases" in the moral decision-making process necessitated "the guidance of conduct by universals." As a result, "the urgency and pressure of 'lower' ends" were "covered up

by polite conventions." The ulterior motive was "that the [elite] few might be free to attend to the goods that are really or intrinsically worth while [sic]." Yet these "so-called intrinsic goods" remained "divorced from those interests of daily life which because of their constancy and urgency form the preoccupation of the great mass" of people.[25]

Thus, the uncertainty of daily "experience" among the common folk was the element most antithetical to the rational, determinative philosophy of the upper classes. Reason became a function of thought "outside experience and above it to supply assured principles to science and conduct." Like Newton's atoms in nature, the particulars of incidents were subordinated to a set of pre-established kinds, or rational categories. The individual's actions remained within "a certain organized ability in action." The idealism of formal philosophy was thus socially invariable.[26]

This fundamental division between the contingent world of reality and the world of the mind was the fountain from which the upper classes drew their "source of oppression." The "refined objects of reflection," supposedly confirmed by natural science, were used "to describe a path by which some goal is designated or denoted." In this process, however, the intricacies of experience itself went unobserved and consequently held no place in the formation of "rational" ideas. New "problems," which Dewey found

within "what men do and suffer, what they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also how men act," may arise, but only to be dealt with through more categorizing and systematization.[27]

The traditional theory of mind, dependent upon its own internal functions in isolation from events, led to the classic separation of a knowing subject and a known object. Positively, this division was a necessary step toward a more dispassionate analysis of nature, leading to the genesis of true science that opposed the human misleading predilection for mores, customs, and rites. Negatively, Dewey found one very detrimental consequence in this development. Pure, reflective discovery was intellectually linked to the notion of a self-sufficient mind capable of operating without considering other thinking beings. The irrational, "subjective" element was taken out of primary experience by empirical science, but further weight was added to the individualism that was rapidly becoming the centerpiece of all social and political thought. As a result, science per se began a course toward objectivity and interaction, while the resulting social institutions as a whole floundered in a dark age of subjective a priority.[28]

Finally, the hierarchical basis of epistemology, experience, conduct, and political theory was supplemented by an acquisitive theory of apprehension. Learning became entirely dependent upon reflective and "grasping" ante-

cedently derived theories. Practice and activity, involving more attention to circumstantial conditions, were disparagingly considered "menial" among philosophers. Hence, the "exaltation of pure intellect . . . [was] fundamentally connected with the quest for a certainty which shall be absolute and unshakable." The "liberal arts," consisting of such studies as grammar and rhetoric, were carefully distinguished from the arts dependent upon the practical master of a craft. The liberal arts took precedence among "those who were to be in some position of authority, occupied with some exercise of social rule." The use of physical materials and tools was completely eliminated from the schools, while the preponderance of intellectual "faculties" ensured the continuation and domination of the "learned professions."[29]

Once again, the schools corresponded closely to Dewey's broader social theory. In his historical analysis, they serve the upper classes as a capstone to a hierarchical social order. They reflect the traditional belief in the supremacy of rationality, used to benefit all classes except those performing productive labor. Reason, with its "first principles" and intricate deductions, invalidated the worthiness of activity by finding a pre-existing "order" to nature. It was on this basis that "natural" rights were founded, leading to the construction of a state of "democracy" that only nominally preserved civil rights. Meanwhile, those who succeeded in an "individualistic" manipu-

lation of property slighted law and authority in favor of preserving their own social status. The menial masses were left epistemologically vacant, politically deceived, and economically poor.

So poor, in fact, that if a complete depression struck a "democracy" such as America, the results could be devastating. If the machine age brought the masses down to a substandard level of income, as it would in the '30s, there were no institutions, either legal or political, that could restore prosperity. The entire socioeconomic structure revolved around preserving the wealth and status of the upper classes. The lower classes were led to believe that there was no alternative to the "rational" doctrines of acquisition and competition. In Dewey's mind, therefore, the hardships of the Great Depression were the cataclysmic extension of Western intellectual history. "Rugged individualism" was nothing more than the a priori reasoning intended to maintain the "fixed position" of the menial masses.

It was impossible, Dewey felt, to break the pattern of history by arguing for another "ideal" of democracy. The very means of formulating any formal conception of equality were themselves hierarchical, since only the upper classes were involved. What was needed, therefore, was a more empirical, truly scientific methodology that was not derived from a "social order" in the natural world. Only then would knowledge become accessible to the masses,

and ideas of economics and government be really democratic.

Chapter Four

Science as Method and the Birth of Associative Living

Dewey's historical analysis illustrated what he perceived to be the repressive nature of all philosophy. Not only was western thought premised on the notion of hierarchy, but it also systematically kept the menial individual at the very base of the hierarchical structure. "Reason" was among the vagaries of a leisure class of philosophers, fabricated to prevent any lower-class realization of upper-class domination and usurpation. It was the reasoning mind that justified the deceptive notion of a "natural" harmony in the universe, and the corresponding "order" in legal rights based on property. So too did reason provide economic "laws," gaving birth to competition. From thie world of "first principles" came a conception of "democracy" founded upon an isolated individual--isolated not only from any governmental institution, but from other individuals as well.

In this class-based ideology, there was no connection with the realities of common experience and the consequences of ideas. Dewey therefore concluded that the philosophy of reason was nothing more than a product of imagination

and fancy. It was part of the mind's primordial, self-preserving capacity to overlook the hardships of existence while dreaming of a better future. Founded in ancient times, it was refined down through the ages and presented ready-made to artisans and common folk. America's Constitution was its modern manifestation. Reason was systematically removed from any questioning, and was more of a mental habit than true thinking. With such a hiatus between theory and practice, it was small wonder the "reason" behind the economic hardships of the Great Depression went unnoticed.[1]

This chapter will present Dewey's reconstruction of social philosophy by examining how he reversed the upper-class pattern of employing "pure thought" in the formulation of ideas. His theory of knowledge stressed the actualities of existence in the creation and implementation of ideas. In this way, he sought to give epistemological validity to the direct analysis of the social consequences of ideas-in-action. No longer would the everyday living of the lower classes be associated with foreordained ideals of what is "right." Consequently, philosophy could bring the center of intellectual authority down to the level of the menial masses. The path toward genuine democracy could then be opened, since the upper classes could no longer justify property manipulation and rugged individualism to maintain their political control.

In order to break the ideological pattern of imposing

teleological "truths" from above, Dewey substituted scientific "method" for rationality. He believed that the history of science illustrated the importance of the empirical, "trial-and-error" approach in understanding natural phenomena. Furthermore, modern scientific discoveries, many of which occurred as recently as the twentieth century, undeniably proved the inherent uncertainty of nature. Now the work of philosophy would be simply to transpose uncertainty and experimentation into the realm of social science. The certainty of hierarchical "order"--in reality only a thin disguise of upper-class rule--would thus become a thing of the past. Physical activity, demanding careful observation and testing, would ensure a constant effort among all to recognize alternatives to the artifical theories of competitiveness.

Once oriented to the masses, the new approach in philosophy would eliminate the "individualistic" basis of politics and economics. Method would entail the recognition of many other objects beyond the realm of first principles. In economics, method would end the slavish adherence to the guiding "laws" of Adam Smith that made personal wants the basis of a rational system. By definition, therefore, method would intrinsically embody the needs of others. The individual who employs empirical thinking, in the form of doing, would necessarily be less competitive and more humanitarian. In politics, activity would ensure that no leaders claimed a right to authority due to their

"natural" superiority.

Dewey knew the workers under the capitalist system already lived a life of activity, and would readily adopt these new patterns of thinking and activity. In so doing, they would see themselves as part of a collective endeavor, more precisely conceived as "conjoint associated living." In Dewey's vision, therefore, the menial masses would not merely be placed on an equal intellectual footing with any other class. They would be raised to a new level of cooperation among themselves. Eventually, the lower classes would expand to include everyone who once used capital, politics, and authoritative ideology to manipulate producers.

At base, this new "conjoint individualism" rests upon an infusion of everyday experience into what was traditionally considered the exclusive realm of thought. In this approach, ideas become directive of action rather than prescriptive. Though this distinction may appear subtle, for Dewey it made a fundamental shift toward what the individual actually does, rather than what ought to be done. The mind no longer automatically responds to predetermined value of each physical phenomenon encountered. Hence, the individual discovers an independent course of action emerging out of the situation itself. The individual appreciates the many aspects of what Dewey termed the "primary," or actual, experience of any circumstance by provoking a continual stream of adjustments in the mind in

order to better guide action. Thought, therefore, is always "organically" connected to the realities of experience itself. In fact, thought becomes only a "secondary" form of experience.[2]

On this basis, "nature" includes the "contingent," less certain aspects of existence rather than only what is immutable and unchanging. Such things as "reverie and desire" are necessary considerations among ideals. Hence, "the phenomena of social life are as relevant to the problem of the relation of the individual and universal as are those of logic." The factors denied philosophical validity by teleology, factors of "ignorance as well as of wisdom, of error and even insanity," gain recognition in the mind instead of pure "truth." No longer are defects of society "explained away" by the philosophical derogation of "mere 'appearance'" by means of what is "known." Reality is instead judged according to its particular context, and the newly perceived "subject-matter" will lead to a more desirable social consequences.[3]

In this manner, reflective thought prepares for the diversity of all occurrence, and becomes adaptative to what is changing, temporal, and partial. This "denotative" or "empirical" method, in recognizing the particulars of existence, assumes the "starting point" of thought to be "the actually problematic, and that the problematic phase resides in some actual and specifiable situation." In no instance is there "any jump outside empirical, natural

objects and their relations." Reason is incorporated into mental analysis, as is pure thought, but neither one is granted any specific or superior powers. In essence, Dewey summarized denotative method as "a continuous process of reorganization" the minds thoughts and "dissolving" past intellectual habits by clearing the "cloud over the things of ordinary experience."[4]

Dewey was careful, however, to include the use of general ideas in his epistemology. But his works maintain that generalities are not definitive, since the source of ideas, namely experience, is not so certain as to become predictable by an idea. Experience is not, however, so contingent that the mind may directly assimilate subject matter. Such an attempt would revive the "determinism" of the same "sense-data" upon which Newton developed his view of nature. Instead, Dewey combined a speculative "plan of action," evaluated against a backdrop of particulars, in his notion of a general idea. Ideas and abstractions serve to reduce the number of variables in a situation, to clarify uncertainties, and to act as guides to revising the mind's initial formulations. In this way, he qualified his empiricism as "experimental" in order to distinguish it from traditional empiricism, which subverts experience to rational principles.[5]

All the while, direct observation of an idea's consequences remains foremost in defining and judging knowledge under the denotative method. The "actual procedure and

the results of knowing" carry greater significance than the old "properties" of mind and knowledge that were determined antecedently. Observation, therefore, is part of the "testing" of an essentially theoretical scheme. This ensures that the conception of an idea returns to the particulars of experience. The data from observation is not absorbed, but processed for the sake of altering old ideas. The observer, therefore, does not "understand" through apprehending, in the sense of a mental grasping, but rather through constructing or developing. Hence, Dewey believed "nature is intelligible and understandable. There are operations by means of which it becomes an object of knowledge, and is turned to human purposes."[6]

These processes of knowledge and direct observation are clearly reciprocal operations. Knowledge is scrutinized until it may be verified through successful "interaction" with the environment. If knowledge does not correspond with observed phenomena, it is rejected. Meanwhile, new ideas and theories present new predictions about the environment, which in turn promote innovative "inquiries" into verification. In short, the subject-matter of experience "called respectively sensible and conceptual are seen to be complementary in effective direction of inquiry to an intelligible conclusion." Though this process of knowing might be familiar to the scientist in the laboratory, it requires no special skill. The direct social implication is that knowledge becomes the possession of

all. In fact,

> the poet may know stars, rain and clouds as well as the meteorologist; the statesman, educator and dramatist may know human nature as truly as the professional psychologist; the farmer may know soils and plants as truly as the botanist and mintrologist [sic].[7]

Observation and inquiry, as part of the denotative method, both become the basis for Dewey's broader concept of "intelligence." Intelligence signifies, quite simply, "operations actually performed in the modification of conditions, including all the guidance that is given by means of ideas, both direct and symbolic." It is more than, say, the mere quantity of ideas held in the mind or the mental ability to manipulate the outcome of an event. It requires not only physical concepts, but "human values in behalf of a human interest" to regulate the consequences of an act. It does not allow, for example, a blind application of physics in improving factory production without considering the worker, who would otherwise might become "an attachment to a machine for a number of hours a day" with no influence over his circumstances.[8]

The realm of ideas and concepts, traditionally considered pure thought, are now of value only for their "relational" capacity to experience. An idea may even carry the import of an experience that is not actually performed; hence Dewey's definition of a "symbol." Whether gestures, words, or elaborate mathematical constructions, symbols embody experiments which do not "commit us to actual or existential consequences." Representing the result of

an occurrence or interaction, symbols help the mind envision a situation without encumbrances and irrelevancies. They are derived from the comprehensive "local context" of experience. It is therefore a fallacy on the part of "intellectual specialists" to consider symbols as merely arbitrary objects, and relating to each other only as such. A symbol may reveal a relation in thought "independent of the instances in which it is overtly exemplified, although its meaning is found only in the possibility of these actualizations."[9]

Conceptualizations, and their logical extensions, ideals, have a similar function. They serve as models of a desired end, and help prescribe the means to its realization. There are no transcendental or immutable characteristics to an ideal, only indications "that if one is to attain a specified result one must conform to the conditions which are means of securing this result." The ideal is grounded in the concrete of experience and contains relationships that are identifiable in, though not derived from, the mind. These relationships may be analyzed through deduction, but at no point are they held in isolation from their actual implementation. The ideal thus involves discrete processes bearing a "serial relation" to one another. The purpose of deduction and of a rational mind is to identify the possible combinations of relations and the effects of those relations upon outcomes. The aim is not merely internal elaboration and consistency.[10]

These main tenets of Dewey's epistemology of method, later presented in his educational ideas of the 1930s, were directly aimed at liberating the individual from hierarchical intellectual and social control. Since knowledge derives from the mind's reconstructing of experiences, people "do not tend to think when their action, when they are amid difficulties, is dictated to them by authority." This fact, unfortunately, was

> too true of most workingmen under present economic conditions. Difficulties occasion thinking only when thinking is the imperative or urgent way out, only when it is the indicated road to a solution. Wherever external authority reigns, thinking is suspected and obnoxious.[11]

Dewey therefore believed the capitalist system did not allow for intelligent inquiry. The upper classes made thought the "the habit of treating observation as something outside of and prior to thinking,"

> and thinking as something which can go on in the head without <u>including</u> observation of new facts . . . It leads to that type of Idealism which has well been termed intellectual somnambulism. It creates a class of 'thinkers' who are remote from practice and hence from the testing their thought by application--a socially superior and irresponsible class.[12]

The experimental, or denotative, method of knowledge leads to a more democratic theory of political power. It imputes a continual degree of political awareness upon the individual, since "it implies a direct challenge to all authority, due to a dependence on concrete verification." Leadership and governmental forms, if based on method, would not be conceived as implements of a good, or true, state using constitutional axioms. Instead, "di-

versity of political forms rather than uniformity" would be the rule. States would "'grow' or develop instead of being made," and therefore would generate out of the needs of those who were traditionally ignored by rational philosophy. The purpose of law whould not be to restrict the individual, but "to forecast and estimate all consequences, establish certain dikes and channels so that actions are confined within prescribed limits, and insofar have moderately predictable consequences."[13] In this manner, the invalid government of "law and order," so clearly visable in the depression years, would be replaced by the "authority" of method.[14]

Stripped of its legal and institutional dogmatism, the state would be more accessible to critical inquiry. The individual would reveal the relationships between the state and the populace, and thus understand how activity may be directed toward humanitarian ends. The working classes would not only reap the benefits of basic economic security, but would also become integral participants in governmental operations.[15]

More broadly, Dewey suggested that his methodology would heighten the workers' awareness not only of politics, but of economic matters as well. No longer would the upper classes wield an unfair advantage through knowledge of economic laws and capital. In addition, notions of liberty and fairness would not be developed and adhered to for the sake of preserving status. Economic ideals would in-

stead be formulated outside of any support for the system of capitalism, and would thus be attuned to the actual needs of all. There would be more general prosperity, rather than the human "passion for wealth" so evident during the depression. The primary beneficiaries of this alternative to laissez-faire is the worker, who would no longer be subjected to an "open play of class interests" by the covert manipulation of capital. In short, Dewey's "democracy" is oriented toward empowerment and mobility, not toward the socioeconomic "place" of the menial individual.

So, too, is Dewey's epistemology the basis of a society no longer wracked by the upper-class, individualistic desires that accompany laissez-faire capitalism. Those frustrated by economic competition would enjoy a psychological emancipation, or liberation, from the endless quest for material and pecuniary gain. History, after all, demonstrated "that the desires, aims and standards of satisfaction which the dogma of 'natural' economic processes and laws are themselves socially conditioned phenomena." The use of scientific method in philosophy, politics, and economics could simply restructure cultural institutions and customs on the basis of cooperative desires instead of acquisitive ones. Society would thus slough off the outmoded agrarian habits of independence, and adopt the modern, industrial character of interdependence based on wide-scale exchange of materials and labor.[16]

Dewey's method, in eliminating the intellectual foun-

dation of an upper-class, profit economy, would lead to an egalitarian class structure. Yet it also, he believed, would interject a large measure of sharing among all individuals, thereby creating a shared culture. Philosophically, the change in knowledge from "contemplative to operative" signified "that the prime function of philosophy is that of rationalizing the possibilities of experience, especially collective human experience." The old notion of mind as a "passive" receptacle of knowledge limited the individual's conception of experience as something from which to take in, or fulfill personal wants. When the conception of mind involves an inquiring, generative tool, however, the individual actively turns knowing and experiencing into acts of giving out, or fulfilling the needs of others. Since there is nothing inherently acquisitive about the nature of human beings, philosophy could employ method to change the motives of the individual's productive capacities.[17]

Once sharing is the basis of society, the menial masses would not be the sole beneficiaries of empirical methodology. The former manipulators of knowledge would lose their desire for excessive wealth. The upper-classes, like their menial counterparts, become more in control of their own acts as the individualistic character of society declines. Invidious wants would be replaced by a collective want to help society as a whole and diffuse the benefits of scientific knowing. In short, the "new

individualism" of sharing would lead to "a more general equitable distribution of the elements of understanding and knowledge in connection with work done, activities undertaken, and a consequent freer [sic] and more generously shared participation in their results."[18]

Denotative method, once applied to economics and the state, would thus lead to the ability to control wants. Selfish desires, preconceived in the mind, would no longer determine the individual's actions. If a desire led to actions that have readily observable detriments, it would be empirically disregarded. Dewey carried this "plastic" nature of human action even one step further by arguing that the individual seeks to fulfill a desire only if the consequences are socially positive.[19]

The individual would then discover himself as an inseparable member of a group, or as part of "conjoint action." The associations in which one participates would mold ones desires, values, and even emotions. Society, in keeping with the trends of industrialization, would become an infinite overlapping of all human interactions. As the wants and needs of people varied, so too would the very ideals of the state and its corresponding government. The static "abstraction" of the state could never satisfy this condition of constant flux. Society must be in a constant socialization process, encompassing "the reflex modification of wants, beliefs and work because of share in a united action." In fact, such a state would be as

natural as "the baby seeks the breast and the breast is there to supply its need."[20]

Clearly, Dewey believed that as the old forms of individualism dissolved, so too would the distinctions among groups within society. His reconstruction of traditional epistemology therefore carried implications far beyond the subject of knowledge per se. It extended into the realm of political theory and economics. It began as an alternative to a priori reasoning, and continued as a humanitarian concern for others. It was thus a way of ensuring that the needs of the menial classes, who experienced the consequences of ideas first hand, were recognized in the very formulation of ideas. Yet he also provided an outlet for the upper classes who, as a result, sought more selfless ends. In short, methodology not only empowered the lower classes, but it raised and expanded them to include the former upper classes.

It is precisely this concern for altering the basis of individualism that unifies Dewey's social theory of the 1920s with his works in the 1930s. Society did not take his prescriptions of the '20s seriously, or at least not seriously enough. It is for this reason he responded so vehemently to the Great Depression. He realized in the '30s that, had his methodology been employed, class manipulation would have been non-existent and the hardships of the poor avoided. Individualism, manifested in the "individualistic" forms of pure thought in the '20s, became

the individualistic manipulation of capital in the '30s. It is, therefore, no surprise he proclaimed "rugged" individualism to be "ragged" during the depression.

Even in the '20s, however, Dewey was confident that his epistemology, based on "denotative" empiricism, would end class injustice by revealing the negative social consequences of acquisitive individualism. Once the masses were in interaction with their environment, he implied that they would discover the hierarchical nature of authority. The overall result would be a popular desire for change, since workers would not be tied to any weight of authority and would owe nothing to preconceived "ideals." The conditions of the competitive economy and the lack of government responsibility would be recognized for what they really were--the product of upper-class usurpation.

So too did Dewey's method of the '20s seek to reverse the oppressive pattern of intellectual history. Knowledge conceived as a process of learning would prevent the upper classes from presenting the competitive social order as "truth." His learning process was to be a tentative guide of action, without any knowledge adhered to for the purpose of fulfilling some historic, a priori ideals of democracy, scientific "laws," or ultimate "teleological ends." With method, therefore, the lower classes could realize that the traditional knowledge they were taught was part of a scheme fabricated to preserve the sanctity of "rights," especially pertaining to property. By scientific means,

the lower classes could ensure that the government provided actual liberty from oppression, thereby ending the ineffective doctrine of "equality" based on "natural" rights.

When placed in juxtaposition to his critique of "rugged individualism" and the history of "reason," Dewey's method of the 1920s takes on a radically new class element. His theory of knowledge during the non-depression years cannot, therefore, be understood in isolation from his vision of a radically restructured society. The details of his work, regarding such aspects as the "interaction" of the knowing subject to the environment, the importance of "experience," and the "contingent" basis of knowledge, are elucidated by understanding Dewey's concern for laboring individuals. There is more, for example, to Dewey's instrumentalism than simply a desire to "bridge the gap between theory and practice," as some historians have suggested.

Though as revealing as the class element may seem to scholars, there was nothing "new" about Dewey's social orientation in the later decades of his life. He was remarkably consistent in all aspects of his thought in relation to individualism. In fact, it is probable that the chief intention of his epistemology was always to undermine class hierarchy. The Great Depression is therefore most representative of his life's work, since hard times most likely strengthened his beliefs in the inequalities of a capitalist regime. Devastating conditions and a less academic audience allowed him to present his class analysis

more cogently and concisely in the '30s than at any other time. Such being the case, there was evidently no significant "shift" in his thinking in later life nor any marked increase in his "radicalism."

Chapter Five

Conclusion. Dewey and Class Reconsidered

In examining the later works of John Dewey during the 1920s and early 1930s, it is clear that he was primarily a social theorist. Whether Dewey was discussing the nature of western philosophy, epistemology, the theory of the state, or even public education, he always had in the mind the relationship of the upper classes to lower classes. Specifically, he believed upper classes systematically sought to maintain their status position in a hierarchical social structure. They did so through the possession and manipulation of capital, the government, as well as the sheer labor of the menial masses.

Dewey's entire social theory aimed at terminating this class domination and restoring all forms of political, economic, and intellectual authority to the laboring classes. He called for an end to purely formal, constitutional means of ensuring democracy. He therefore advocated a theory of the state consisting of legal and governmental institutions based on de facto equality in the new age of industrialization. This shift toward recognizing the actualities of democracy would, he argued, prevent upper-class businessmen from denying liberty for the sake

of preserving their property interests. In addition, it would end the very means of attaining property and wealth under the laissez-faire economic system of competition. The menial masses would no longer be rendered subservient simply because they lacked capital and lived upon subsistence wages.

Dewey traced the inception of America's class-based social hierarchy directly to a theory of knowledge founded in antiquity and formulated solely by the upper classes. Philosophers traditionally considered ideas relating to the structure of the government, democracy, or even mind, as part of the "first principles" within an everlasting, ultimate truth. These principles manifested themselves under various names, such as the universal "laws" of physics, the "ideals" of society, and the "good" life of the Greeks. What is more, the metaphysical concept of "teleology" made these ultimate principles into a graded order. These principles could be comprehended solely by the mind, obviating the need for common experience through deduction and a priori reasoning.

Classical philosophy, adopted by all upper-classes seeking to maintain their authority, presented hierarchical forms of mental choices to the lower classes as part of the "right" social order. Foremost among these was the notion that the individual operated independently of all other human beings. In the historical development of democracy, this individualism translated into a minimalist ap-

proach to government. In terms of economics, Adam Smith's "laws" based on an "individualistic," competitive, and acquisitive desire for wealth became the normative value. Philosophers, who were always of a leisure class, worked unceasingly to support this individualistic nexus of the state and economics by denying any validity to the more empirical, everyday experiences of artisans and workers. Rationality became philosophy's primary intellectual tool as a result. The lower classes were left with no alternative to complacently obeying this intricate system of power.

In order to establish the rightful social status of the lower classes, Dewey's social theory began with a reconstruction in philosophy. His epistemology was derived from, and dependent upon, the uncertain, empirical qualities of everyday experience. All ideas were premised on contingency, not first principles. Thinking was fundamentally related to the physical realities of existence, and therefore included an empirical realm beyond the mind. In addition, Dewey equated ideas as well as class "ideals" with "plans of action" in a perpetual state of tentative formulation. They must be, he argued, tested according to what the individual directly observes. Should a course of action prove an idea detrimental to the well-being of the individual, it was simply disregarded in favor of some alternative. No longer would a priori principles be blindly adhered to for the sake of upholding some antecedently

determined, teleological order.

Dewey's new philosophy, variously termed "denotative methodology," "naturalism," or "instrumentalism," was thus primarily, though not exclusively, beneficial to the menial masses. It was a means of empirically challenging the upper-class principle that individuals naturally think and act independently and competitively. It incorporated the experiences of everyday living in the modern state, and thereby stressed the harsh consequences of the acquisitive individualism. Both laissez-faire capitalism and the political theory of natural rights did not meet the "test" of ideas in experience, and they were thus denounced by Dewey as part of individualistic tradition and habit. His methodology is one inherently containing a cooperative, interactive foundation that he felt would return power in economics and politics to the lower-classes.

Since all forms of competitiveness were to be eliminated by Dewey's social theory, the capitalist basis of hierarchical class delineations would become non-existent. Not only were the highest of the "elite" stripped of their means of oppression, but so too were the means of all classes who manipulated ideas, reason, capital, and law for personal aggrandizement. It is therefore impossible, either through Dewey's specific wording or the spirit of his thought, to construct any type of "middle" class reformism. He moved beyond the sociological concept of "mobility" in terms of wealth and status, since all individuals

worked cooperatively in their ideas and actual practices toward producing consequences beneficial to all. Everyone, without regard to any profession, ability, or skill profited equally from the outcome of an idea.

Dewey's mind always stretched into a wide-ranging set of intellectual fields. In this respect there is nothing unusual about his later decades. But without the insight gleaned from the depression, one may easily miss sight of his class perspective when examining the works of the 1920s and perhaps even the earlier, Progressive Era. His social theory may be, and often is, characterized as some vague attempt at restoring an industrial-age "community." He has been generally considered a "middle-class reformer," implying he sought merely to ameliorate working conditions while ideologically leaving laissez-faire capitalism intact. Some historians, such as the Marxists, portray Dewey as consciously seeking to maintain upper-class authority by making "intelligent," and therefore economically efficient, workers. Other scholars elaborate various elements of his thought, most often pertaining to the schools, while completely neglecting the class relationship of "individualism," scientific method, empirical activity and a host of other Deweyian concepts.

Dewey's less philosophically technical writings of the '20s clarify many of these interpretive misunderstandings. These first examples of his later works sketch a broad social theory aimed at replacing the a priori doc-

trines of tradition. They develop the importance of experience in epistemology, and promote a complete implementation of a classless society. They call for a democracy consisting of a universal class that is not dependent upon (or rather subjected to) purely constitutional rights. Above all, Dewey's books written in the '20s provide a theoretical framework of cooperation that replaces the invidious, individualistic habits of society grounded in "reason."

Dewey's historical analysis of rationality, interspersed throughout the writings of the '20s, are particularly illuminating. He demonstrated that the development of reason, beginning with the ancient Greeks, was covertly designed to maintain authority, both politically and economically. Here philosophy was entirely the product of men of leisure seeking to deny workers and artisans any position of status. Philosophers constructed specious notions of individualism to justify the subordination of the masses to authority. Dewey's social theory, when placed beside this perspective of history, becomes a detailed intellectual map for restoring the menial individual. Every aspect of Dewey's theory, in fact, is not only a challenge to authority, but a prescription for a single, transformed class based on activity and collective interaction.

It is therefore not surprising to read Dewey's perspicacious and lucid, though radical, charges against

"rugged" individualism during the 1930s. The hardships of the depression confirmed his long-standing conviction that society was essentially hierarchical. Catastrophic economic conditions proved that laissez-faire capitalism and "natural" rights were manipulated by the upper classes. It showed that America's high ideals of democracy were in fact a disguised form of authority. Small wonder Dewey was incensed to find the federal government paying farmers to use grain as fuel and plow under crops while casually observing the plight of starving millions.

In addition, Dewey's discussion of the schools in the '30s demonstrate the traditional philosopher's manipulative abilities by presenting knowledge as indisputable "truth" to the masses. Based on idealistic forms of reason, capitalist schools systematically prevented the infiltration of everyday experience through the use of rote learning methods. They established hierarchical student-teacher relationships in order to prepare the child for an adult life of political complacency and subordination. Moreover, the schools conceived the nature of knowledge along the lines of traditional empiricism; that is, as sensory data to be categorized among ultimate "first principles." Employing unscientific methodology, the schools were simply part of the rationalization of authority Dewey traced during the '20s.

The tenets of Dewey's social philosophy are in fact so clearly embodied in his essays of the '30s that he may

be most effectively understood by "reading backward." The student of intellectual history may thus circumvent his occasionally rhetorical arguments of the '20s and avoid getting lost in details. The depression years in fact contain associations between the government, epistemology, and capitalism not distinctly evident in either his Progressive phase or the '20s. There are, however, many parallels that warrant Dewey's later years a careful historical reconsideration.

NOTES

NOTES, Chapter One. John Dewey and the Historical Problem of Class

1. John P. Diggins, Up from Communism (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 7.

2. The standard texts containing this general information are: John M. Blum, et al., The National Experience (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), 519, 799; Oscar Handlin, America: A History (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 211, 836-837, 1020; Samuel E. Morison, et al., The Growth of the American Republic, Volume Two (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), 198-199, 223; Carl N. Degler, et al., The Democratic Experience (Dallas: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1981), 345-346, 518-519; Douglas Tallack, Twentieth-Century America (New York: Longman Singapore Publishers, 1991), 147, 159-160, 178-180. For a representative example in educational history, see Robert L. Church and Michael W. Sedlak, Education in the United States (New York: The Free Press, 1976), 251-287.

3. American Council of Learned Societies, Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Eight (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1964), 169-172. See also John P. Diggins, "John Dewey: Philosopher of the Schoolroom," The Wilson Quarterly 13 (Autumn 1989) 4: 76-83.

4. John Dewey, "Steps to Economic Recovery," in John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981-1991), 9:64.

5. John Dewey, "The House Divided against Itself," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:45.

6. Dewey was opposed to violence, and the absolutist notion among many Marxists that class conflict was inevitable. For further discussion on this point, see Alfonso J. Damico, "Dewey and Marx: On Partisanship and Reconstruction of Society," The American Political Science Review 75 (September 1981) 3: 654-666; Jonathan D. Moreno and R. Scott Frey, "Dewey's Critique of Marxism," The Sociological Quarterly 26 (1985) 1: 21-34.

7. The subject of Dewey's audience, and hence the perceptions of him by the public, is perhaps worthy of

an entirely separate study. He was carefully followed by left-wing academic readers in the 1930s, such as James Farrell, Jim Cork, and Sidney Hook. His addresses and speeches, however, were often given to labor unions and other workers' organizations. For the purposes of this paper, a survey of 828 subscribers to the New Republic, conducted in 1931, is most pertinent. It reveals the major categories and percentages of readers as follows:

Educators, professors, teachers	34.5
Lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, clergymen	18.5
Businessmen and executives	17.0
Housewives, social workers, students, clerks, secretaries	13.5
Artists, journalists, editors, librarians, writers	7.5
Public officials	1.0
Farmers and ranchers	1.5
Miscellaneous	4.5

Taken from C. Wright Mills, Sociology and Pragmatism (New York: Paine-Whitman Publishers, 1964), 326.

8. For a useful overview of the historiographic literature, see David A. Hollinger, "The Problem of Pragmatism in American History," The Journal of American History 67 (June 1980) 1: 88-107.

9. Some of the more popular among these works are discussed below, though a somewhat representative example is Morton White, Origins of Dewey's Instrumentalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

10. Included among the full-length biographies of Dewey are Richard J. Bernstein, John Dewey (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967); George Dykhuisen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973); J. E. Tiles, Dewey (London: Routledge, 1988). These works generally lack a lucid synthesis, as is the case in a more recent work by Robert B. Westbrook, John Dewey and American Democracy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). The most noteworthy exception, however, is still Sydney Hook, John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait (New York: John Day, 1939), though James T. Kloppenberg's Uncertain Victory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Neil Coughlan's Young John Dewey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975) offer penetrating interpretations of Dewey's early years.

11. Among the more blatant examples are David Fott, "John Dewey and the Philosophical Foundations of Democracy," The Social Science Journal 23 (1991) 1: 29-44; Jesse

NOTES, Chapter One (continued)

Goodman, "Education for Critical Democracy," Journal of Education 171 (1989) 2: 88-116; William Shea, "John Dewey and the Crisis of the Canon," American Journal of Education 97 (May 1989) 3: 289-311.

12. William L. O'Neill, The Progressive Years (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1975), 92-97; Mills, Sociology, 279-306; Christopher Lasch, The New Radicalism in America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 157-158; Lewis S. Feuer, "John Dewey and the Back to the People Movement in American Thought," Journal of the History of Ideas 20 (1959): 545-576.

13. Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 154, 199; Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1967), 152.

14. Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 155-160. See also Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of The School (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 115-126; Rush Welter, Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 277-281; Marvin Lazerson, "If All the World Were Chicago: American Education in the Twentieth Century," History of Education Quarterly 24 (Summer 1984) 2: 165-179.

15. Paul K. Conkin, Puritans and Pragmatists (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1968), 345-402.

16. Steven Biel, Independent Intellectuals in the United States, 1910-1945 (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 126-130. Within this brief passage, Biel has created over twenty-five different varieties of these "social" terms.

17. R. Jeffrey Lustig, Corporate Liberalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), IX-XIII, 1-36; Clarence J. Karier, Paul C. Violas, and Joel Spring, Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1973), 88-107; George Novack, Pragmatism versus Marxism (New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1975), 237. This analysis has been the basis of many attacks on modern "progressive education." These scholars argue that the "learn by doing" methods devised by Dewey were used to make efficient, complacent children who were well-versed in vocational occupations. Manipulated by capitalist endeavors, instrumentalism translated into "mental engineering" that would ensure that workers remained in their "place." As

a result, capitalists fostered a working class "harmony" the protected the interests of the middle classes. For an example of this argument, see Gilbert G. Gonzalez, Progressive Education: A Marxist Interpretation (Minneapolis: Marxist Educational Press, 1982), 36, 86-104. Gonzalez illustrates his points in a case study of a Los Angeles school district, 151-171.

For comparisons of Dewey's ideology with Marxism, written by a contemporary, see Jim Cork, "John Dewey, Karl Marx, and Democratic Socialism," The Antioch Review 9 (December 1949) 4: 435-452; Idem, "John Dewey and Karl Marx" in John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: The Dial Press, 1950), 331-350.

18. Morton White, Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1947), 128-130.

19. Ibid., 131, 132-146. White later mentions Dewey's Reconstruction in Philosophy in a chapter pertaining to the 1920s (pps. 180-202). In this latter discussion, he introduces instrumentalism with the bold statement "Marx couldn't have been more forthright in his attempts at 'exposing' the ideological commitments of bourgeois thought." Unfortunately, White provides no elaboration on this comparison of Dewey with Marx.

20. Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), 147-153.

21. See, for example, Elizabeth Flower and Murray G. Murphey, A History of Philosophy in America (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 811-882. This account's closing section on "social theory," though brief, is nevertheless adaquate in portraying Dewey's arguments against the bourgeois. It does not, however, integrate Dewey's class element into other aspects of instrumentalism. See also Arthur E. Murphy, ed., Reason and The Common Good (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 49-66; Paul A. Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of John Dewey (New York: Tudor Publishing, 1951), 335-268; Richard J. Bernstein, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward," Political Theory 15 (November 1987) 4: 538-563; Richard Rorty, "Thugs and Theorists," Political Theory 15 (November 1987) 4: 564-580.

Examples of a weak social analysis are pervasive. Timothy Kaufman-Osborn has argued that Dewey sought to place "common sense" back into political science, so that such ethical notions as "do unto others" would become a normative value once again in American society. The implication is that Dewey believed the middle classes must treat the underprivileged with paternalism. See also

Kaufman-Osborn's "John Dewey and the Liberal Science of Community," The Journal of Politics 46 (1984) 4: 1142-1165; and for even further elaboration see Idem, Politics/Sense/Experience (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 113-157. For a sampling of how class becomes masked behind an interpretation of cultural "symbols" in education, see Forrest H. Peterson, John Dewey's Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1987).

Works clearly honoring Dewey are notoriously deficient, such as Sidney Ratner, et al., The Philosopher of The Common Man (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940). In certain instances it is even argued that Dewey did not seek any social change at all. See J. O. C. Phillips, "John Dewey and Social Control Reconsidered," History of Education 12 (March 1983) 1: 25-37.

22. A clear example of this account appears in Roderick Nash, The Nervous Generation (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co, 1970), 35-40. See also John P. Diggins, "John Dewey in Peace and War," The American Scholar 50 (1981): 213-230.

23. James Weinstein, The Decline of Socialism in America, 1912-1925 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 80. See also Edward J. Bordeau, "John Dewey's Ideas About The Great Depression," Journal of the History of Ideas 32 (January-March 1971) 1: 67-84. For an examination by a contemporary, see Mark Starr, "Organized Labor and the Dewey Philosophy," in Hook, ed., John Dewey: Philosopher of Science, 184-193.

24. Gary Bullert, The Politics of John Dewey (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1983), 21-34; Wayne A. R. Leys, "Dewey's Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy," in Guide to the Works of John Dewey, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970); R. Alan Lawson, The Failure of Independent Liberalism (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1971), 99-130. For an examination of the later works in relation to Dewey's confrontation with Walter Lippman's political theory in the 1920s, see John P. Diggins, "From Pragmatism to Natural Law," Political Theory 19 (November 1991) 4: 519-538.

25. Richard H. Pells, Radical Visions and American Dreams (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 52-53; Frank A. Warren, Liberals and Communism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), 6-33. In neither of these instances is Dewey's radicalism explored within the principal works of the 1920s.

NOTES, Chapter Two. Workers as Workers: From Rugged Individuals to 'Corporate' Humanitarians

1. John Dewey, "Can Education Share in Social Reconstruction," in John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981-1991), 9:205.

2. Dewey, "The House Divided against Itself," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:45.

3. Dewey, "American Ideals (I): The Theory of Liberty vs. the Fact of Regimentation," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:87, 89.

4. Dewey, "Steps to Economic Recovery," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:62, 63; Idem, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:85; Idem, "What Keeps Funds Away from Purchasers," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:81.

5. Dewey, "Steps to Economic Recovery," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:63; Idem, "American Ideals," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:87; Idem, "Capitalistic or Public Socialism?," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:104.

6. Dewey, "Unity and Progress," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:73-74.

7. Dewey, "Steps to Economic Recovery," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:63-65; Idem, "What Keeps Funds," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:83.

8. Dewey, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:84; Idem, "American Ideals," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:88-89; Idem, "Intelligence and Power," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:108-109.

9. Dewey, "Imperial Need: A New Radical Party," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:77-78.

10. Ibid., 78-80.

11. Ibid., 76-77.

12. Ibid., 77; Dewey, "Capitalistic or Public Socialism?," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:95-97.

13. Dewey, "The Supreme Intellectual Obligation," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:98; Idem, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:88-89.

NOTES, Chapter Two (continued)

14. Dewey, "Capitalistic or Public Socialism?," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:94-95.

15. Dewey, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:86-87.

16. Dewey, "The Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:108-109.

17. Dewey, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:104-105; Idem, "Intelligence and Power," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:110.

18. Dewey, "Supreme Intellectual Obligation," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:98-100.

19. Dewey, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:109-110; Idem, "A Great American Prophet," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:104-106.

20. Dewey, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:105, 107. Idem, "American Ideals," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:90.

21. Dewey, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:101, 105, 107.

22. Dewey, "Individuality in Our Day," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:117.

23. Dewey, "Education and the Social Order," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:181; Idem, "The Crisis in Education," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:115; Idem, "Education and Our Present Social Problems," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:134; Idem, "Shall We Abolish School 'Frills'? No," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:145.

24. Dewey, "Education and Our Present Social Problems," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:130; Idem, "The Activity Movement," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:170, 172.

25. Dewey, "Education and the Social Order," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:180. Idem, "Why Have Progressive Schools?," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:155; Idem, "Activity Movement," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:173; Idem, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:102.

26. Dewey, "Crisis in Culture," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:102-103; Idem, "The Need for a Philosophy

of Education," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:196, 199.

27. Dewey, "Can Education Share in Social Reconstruction," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:207; Idem, "Why Have Progressive Schools," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:157; Idem, "A Need for a Philosophy," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 9:202-203.

NOTES, Chapter 3. Reason as the Rationalization of Authority

1. John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), 17-18.

2. Ibid., 81-85.

3. Ibid., 85-88.

4. Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920), 44-45.

5. Dewey, Public, 88-91.

6. Ibid., 48, 95-96. For an affirmation of this concept in Dewey's post-Stock Market Crash analysis of political theory in 1930, see Dewey, "The United States, Incorporated," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:61.

7. Dewey, Public, 144-145, 86-87.

8. Ibid., 114-117.

9. Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929), 32-33, 68; Idem, Reconstruction, 12-13; Idem, Quest, 14, 32-33.

10. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:324-325; Idem, Quest, 31-32. See also Idem, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:77-78, for affirmation in Dewey's post-1929 analysis.

11. Dewey, Reconstruction, 42; Idem, Public, 22, 50, 88; Idem, Quest, 45, 85.

12. Dewey, Reconstruction, 54-60; Idem, Quest, 5.

13. Dewey, Reconstruction, 60-64, 67; Idem, Quest, 17-18, 27-28, 50.

14. Dewey, Reconstruction, 16-23; Idem, Quest, 114-118.

15. Dewey, Quest, 114-118.

16. Ibid., 118-120, 150, 180, 209.

17. Ibid., 21, 170, 186.

NOTES, Chapter Three (continued)

18. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:32-34; Idem, Quest, 17, 19, 209.

19. Dewey, Public, 21, 64-69; Idem, Quest, 194; Idem, "The House Divided against Itself," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:48-49.

20. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:47-48, 78-79, 83-85; Idem, Quest, 254-287.

21. Dewey, Reconstruction, 23-25, 171; Idem, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:88-89; Idem, Quest, 7-9, 34, 75-77.

22. Dewey, Public, 8-12, 19-22, 65.

23. Ibid., 44-45, 94-96.

24. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:46-48, 51, 54, 65; Ibid., 67-68, for Dewey's presentation of the U. S. Constitution as an intellectual ploy for certainty.

25. Dewey, Reconstruction, 161-171. For related aspects of authority in contingency, see Dewey, Public, 31-34; Idem, Quest, 7-8, 39-40, 51, 208.

26. Dewey, Reconstruction, 77-81, 83. Dewey did note, however, that Hume used his empiricism as a temporary means of challenging the social balance of power (as did Locke a century earlier), but was forgotten when, in the nineteenth century, Kant and his followers denied the "totally destructive results of the new empirical philosophy."

27. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:16-21.

28. Ibid., 23-24, 98. See also Dewey, Reconstruction, 94-95; Idem, Quest, 13, 219, 230, 232, 236.

29. Dewey, Quest, 3-5, 74-76.

NOTES, Chapter Four. Science as Method and the Birth of Associative Living

1. Dewey considered "habit" in philosophy to be the principal reinforcing agent of "shrewd businessmen" in their machinations with economics and politics. For examples of this recurrent theme from the 1920s, see Dewey, Reconstruction, 1-10, 25-26, 103-109; Idem, Experience in Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:42; Idem, Public and Its Problems, 3-6, 158, 160-161, 169-170; Idem, Quest, 9-10, 40, 127, 185, 223-227. For a 1930s confirmation of this concept, see Dewey, "The Lost Individual," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:74; Idem, "Toward a New Individualism," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:81.

2. For one the most lucid accounts of this concept, see Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:26-28.

3. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:28-32; Idem, Quest, 181, 216.

4. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:42, 61-68; Idem, Quest, 71-73.

5. Dewey, Quest, 112-113, 123, 124, 178, 217-218.

6. Ibid., 72, 82-83, 209-210.

7. Ibid., 180-181, 204-205, 221.

8. Dewey, Experience and Nature, in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 1:325-326; Idem, Public, 45; Idem, Quest, 186, 199-200.

9. Idem, Quest, 151-153, 154-155, 158-159, 160.

10. Ibid., 163-165.

11. Dewey, Reconstruction, 139.

12. Ibid., 140.

13. Ibid., 47-49, 51-52, 159-160; Idem, Public, 44-47, 52-53. Idem, Quest, 70-71, 205-206, 212-213.

14. Dewey, ""America'--By Formula," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:56; Idem, Public, 37, Idem, Quest, 171.

15. Dewey, Quest, 37, 83-84, 107, 125, 129, 131, 133.

16. Dewey, "'America'--By Formula," in Later Works,

NOTES, Chapter Four (continued)

ed. Boydston, 5:55; Idem, Public, 89, 103-109, 111; Idem, Quest, 211-212.

17. Dewey, Reconstruction, 120-123, 156-157; Idem, "'America'--By Formula," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:56-57; Idem, Quest, 196.

18. Dewey, "'America'--By Formula," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:56-57; Idem, Public, 100-101; Idem, Quest, 81.

19. Dewey, Reconstruction, 68-70.

20. Dewey, "The United States, Incorporated," in Later Works, ed. Boydston, 5:58; Idem, Public, 150-154.

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