PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE AND THEORY OF MEANING IN DEWEY AND WITTGENSTEIN

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ABSTRACT

PEDAGOGICAL EXPERIENCE AND THEORY OF MEANING IN DEWEY AND WITTGENSTEIN

By

Scott R. Vaughn

Philosophy of education is frequently characterized as the application of philosophical methods and doctrines to educational problems. Such a view of the relationship between philosophy and education does not show sufficient appreciation of the role of educational experience in the resolution of philosophical problems. The careers of both John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein provide support for the thesis that experience with and understanding of the practice of education can contribute to the reformulation and solution of difficult and persistent philosophical problems.

Chapter II provides a survey of the main theories which have been developed to account for the philosophical problem of meaning. It includes descriptions of referential ideational, behavioral and use theories of meaning.

The third chapter describes the revolt against formalism in American social thought which characterized

the intellectual climate of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also includes an account of John Dewey's role in the program conducted at the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago and an argument in support of the claim that the Laboratory School was representative of the larger reform movements of the period. Chapter IV describes the post-World War I attempts by the Social Democratic party to reform the elementary school system of Austria and illustrates Ludwig Wittgenstein's active participation in that reform movement.

Chapter V begins with an argument that the program of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago and the Austrian School reform movement shared important characteristics, goals and methods. It also includes arguments in support of the claim that interpretations of Dewey and Wittgenstein's philosophical works should, but generally do not, include serious consideration of the philosophical importance of their educational experience.

The final substantive chapter presents an argument in support of the claims that (1) the concepts of occupations as employed in Dewey's philosophy and the forms of life as employed in Wittgenstein's work are similar notions and (2) both concepts originated in the

educational contexts described in the previous chapters. It concludes with an argument that those concepts are central to the use theories of meaning developed by both philosophers.

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By

Scott R. Vaughn

A DISSERTATION

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To Cara, Lisa and Jennifer

On the giddy swing . . .
Tiny girl-child
Clutching tight
Her spray of blossoms.

- Issa

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It would be impossible for me to acknowledge all of those who provided assistance and encouragement to me in the course of writing this dissertation. I sincerely thank all of the dear friends and fine teachers who labored with me and hope that the product is worthy of their efforts. To George Ferree who has given more than can possibly be acknowledged, I humbly offer my deepest gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> Am I doing child psychology?--I am making a connection between the concept of teaching and the concept of meaning.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*

> I recall one conversation with Dewey during the latter years of his life. . . . We had been talking about the ways in which a concern for the practical problems of education forced the administrator to answer questions which were actually questions in philosophy. . . .
>
> It was a familiar Deweyan view that the reasons students and teachers should be mutually involved in working out their own educational plans was not only for the experience they could gain in the practice of democracy, but for the insight they could reach in the study of human values and social philosophy.
>
> Harold Taylor, "Introduction" to Dykhuizen's *Life and Mind of John Dewey*

Educators and philosophers who attempt to do philosophical analyses of the practical problems of education typically tend, I believe, to view their task as one of identifying and clarifying the ways in which philosophical insights, distinctions and methods can be employed to improve educational practice. The literature of the philosophy of education is replete with examples of this point of view. One well-known author, for example, recommends that we understand philosophy of education to be "those problems of philosophy that are of direct relevance

to educational theory."[1] Another devotes several pages of his introduction to the philosophy of education to a consideration of the "Applications of Philosophy to Education."[2] Even those who see the relationship between philosophy and education as a more complex affair, seldom, if ever, make more than a passing reference to the importance of the contributions made by educational practice to an understanding of philosophical problems. Brauner and Burns, for example, argue that ". . . philosophy and education are mutually reconstructive; they give to and take from one another . . ." but they illustrate this mutually reconstructive relationship with the observation that ". . . education would soon be as lost as a blind man without his seeing-eye dog if it were parted from philosophy."[3] They provide the reader with no clue as to what philosophy might suffer if it were parted from education.

This view of the nature and mission of educational philosophy, common though it may be in current professional circles, contrasts sharply with the view adopted

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[1]D. J. O'Connor, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), pp. 14-15.

[2]George F. Kneller, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 20-31.

[3]Charles J. Brauner and Hobert W. Burns, *Problems in Education and Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 20.

in this paper. I will show that accounts of the philosophy of education, which emphasize the primacy of philosophy over education, do not do justice to the complex interplay and exchange which takes place between educational and philosophical elements when the practical problems encountered in an educational context are approached as philosophical problems. I will show that the views briefly described above are deficient in that they do not show sufficient appreciation of the contributions that experience with and understanding of the practical affairs of education can make in the reconstruction and solution of philosophical problems. In fact, I will show that, in at least some cases, philosophy owes more to education than education owes to philosophy. Specifically, I will illustrate the validity of the claim that there are instances in which the relationship between philosophy and education cannot be seen as one in which the solutions to problems in technical philosophy provide models for the solution of educational ones; but that, quite to the contrary, should be seen as one in which the solutions to problems generated in an educational context provide models for the solution of difficult and persistent problems in technical philosophy.

The problems associated with the question of what it is for a linguistic expression to have meaning, along with a set of related questions, represent, without a

doubt, difficult and persistent problems in technical philosophy. What follows will be an argument to show that the careers of both John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein provide support for the thesis that experience with and understanding of the practice of education can assist a philosopher in reformulating and solving philosophical problems of this sort. I will attempt to show that in both cases the participation of these philosophers in educational reform movements as well as their practical experience as teachers made significant contributions to their work in the philosophy of language, especially in their work on the concept of meaning.

I will not be arguing the thesis that practical experience in educational matters is either a *necessary* or a *sufficient* condition for the successful reconstruction and solution of any philosophical problem. I will be arguing the more limited thesis that there are instances where the perspectives and insights that result from a careful consideration of problems generated in educational practice are crucial in the reconstruction of technical problems in philosophy which have proved resistant to solution when approached from other perspectives.

This thesis *is* ambiguous in one respect. It can be interpreted as the claim that there is some unique perspective which can be identified as educational, and that having this perspective can help one see more clearly

what is involved in certain philosophical issues. Alternatively, it can be interpreted as the claim that if *some specific views*, as opposed to a general educational perspective, of the nature and purpose of the educational enterprise (e.g., views about what constitutes learning) are held by a philosopher, then his educational experience may be instrumental in producing a perspective which leads to some valuable and productive new ways of seeing some philosophical problem. The latter formulation of the thesis is, I believe, the only defensible one, and represents the thesis I hope to defend.

In order to defend this thesis, I will defend the following claims:

1. John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein approached, reconstructed and proposed solutions to the problems associated with the theory of meaning in much the same way.

2. Dewey and Wittgenstein were involved in educational reform movements which endorsed similar goals and dictated similar educational methodologies and curricula on similar grounds.

3. Dewey and Wittgenstein were able to reconstruct and propose the similar solutions to the problems associated with the theory of meaning which they did propose by way of perspectives and insights gained in the context of their similar experience with educational matters.

The argument to establish these points will proceed in the following fashion. In Chapter II I will provide a brief account of the nature of the philosophical problems involved. Chapter III will be a descriptive account of the Progressive reform movements in the United States with special emphasis on the Dewey School. Chapter IV will survey the social democratic reform movements which occurred in Austria following World War I with special emphasis on the educational elements of those reforms. In Chapter V I will demonstrate the extent of involvement by John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein in those movements and attempt to show that in each case those experiences exerted a significant influence on the course of their philosophical development. Chapter VI will illustrate and elaborate this general point by providing an argument that Dewey's use of the concept "occupations" and Wittgenstein's use of the concept "forms of life" may be traced back to and grounded in their educational experiences. I will also present an argument for the view that the two concepts are similar in certain key respects. This chapter will conclude with an argument that Dewey's views on meaning are similar to those of Wittgenstein. Chapter VII will present a summary of the arguments presented in defense of the thesis as well as the conclusions.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM:

THEORIES OF MEANING

> Now answers to this highly abstract question, What are meanings? have, in recent decades, bulked large in philosophical and logical discussions. Preoccupation with the theory of meaning could be described as the occupational disease of twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon and Austrian philosophy.
>
> Gilbert Ryle,
> "Theory of Meaning"

> Only one who has familiarity with the literature of the subject can even begin to be aware of how confusing, obfuscating, and boring in its multiplicity of elaborations the word "meaning" has become.
>
> John Dewey, "Importance,
> Significance and Meaning"

It is a central claim in this dissertation that both Dewey and Wittgenstein were able to reconstruct and find solutions for some difficult and persistent problems in technical philosophy and that their similar experiences with educational matters assisted them in that reconstruction. Little needs to be done to show that the problems associated with the concept of meaning have a long history. As Gilbert Ryle observes, in discussing questions about the concept of meaning,

> . . . many of these issues were explicitly canvassed . . . in certain of Plato's later Dialogues, and in the logical and other works of Aristotle. Some of them, again, were

> dominant issues in the late Middle Ages and with Hobbes; and some of them . . . stirred uneasily inside British epistemology between Locke and John Stuart Mill.[1]

The persistence and difficulty of these philosophical problems is not the primary issue here but a survey of some of the attempts which have been made to solve them is necessary in order to understand the nature of the problems faced by Dewey and Wittgenstein.

Any discussion of the theory of meaning immediately runs up against a confusing array of opinion, not only about the theoretical issues involved, but even in the terminology used to talk about those issues. Ogden and Richards, in their classic work *The Meaning of Meaning*, identify no fewer than sixteen definitions of meaning, all of which, they state, have been held by reputable students of meaning. Other attempts to bring some order to the discussion of meaning categorize competing theories under the rubrics of "denotation theories," "causal theories" and "image theories."[3]

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[1]Gilbert Ryle, "The Theory of Meaning," in *Philosophy and Ordinary Language*, ed. Charles E. Caton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. 128-129.

[2]C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923), pp. 186-187.

[3]G. H. R. Parkinson, ed., *The Theory of Meaning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 3-5.

Still others subsume competing theories under the categories of "'Fido'-Fido theories" and "causal theories."[4]

William P. Alston makes the observation that "the literature of this subject contains a bewildering diversity of approaches, conceptions, and theories . . .," but he also argues that most of these ". . . can be grouped into three types . . . 'referential,' 'ideational,' and 'behavioral.'"[5] Alston's analysis includes an account of the central claims involved in each of these major approaches to the theory of meaning. The account of meaning theories used here to discuss the nature of the problems faced by Dewey and Wittgenstein draws in large part from his analysis of the issues.

The first point which needs to be clarified is that of the way in which the philosophical problem of meaning is to be specified. Alston identifies several senses of 'mean' and its cognates which, he argues, are distinct from the relevant philosophical sense. He offers, for example, the expression "That is no mean accomplishment," as an instance of the use of mean where the sense of the word is that of 'insignificant' and the

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[4]Daniel M. Taylor, *Explanation and Meaning: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), Chapters 10 and 11.

[5]William P. Alston, *Philosophy of Language* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 11.

expression "I mean to help him if I can," as one in which the sense is 'intend.' In all, Alston identifies nine different senses of 'mean' and its cognates which are distinct from the sense relevant to his discussion of the problem of meaning; those senses are 'cruel,' 'results in,' 'significance,' 'explanation,' 'implies,' 'refers to' and 'indicates reliably' in addition to 'insignificant' and 'intend.'[6] Alston illustrates the sense of 'mean' which is involved in the problem with the sentence "'Procrastinate' means *put things off*," and he represents the problem, which he calls the problem of linguistic meaning, with these questions; "What are we saying about a linguistic expression when we specify its meaning?," "What is linguistic meaning?" and "How is the concept of linguistic meaning to be analyzed?"[7] The problem then is that of linguistic meaning and the attempts which have been made to solve it will be discussed under the headings of referential, ideational and behavioral theories.

Referential Theories of Meaning

Referential theories base their answer to the question "What are we saying about a linguistic expression when we specify its meaning?" on a quite common and thoroughly unobjectionable notion; that is, language is

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[6]Ibid., p. 10.

[7]Ibid., pp. 10-11.

regularly used to talk about things. By extending this commonplace observation theorists have built up an entire theory of meaning. Referential theories, in all of their various forms, have at least this much in common; they insist that every meaningful expression is about something and that the expression is related to the thing in much the same way that a name is related to the thing named.

In its most basic form this theory of meaning asserts, without qualification, that the meaning of an expression *is* what it refers to, stands for or names. You have, for example, a dog named 'Fido.' According to this version of the referential theory of meaning, the meaning of 'Fido' (the dog's name) is Fido (the dog); similarly, the meaning of 'water' is water (the stuff you drink and wash with). In the same fashion, the meaning of any and all linguistic expressions is the thing referred to or named. This form of the theory is faced with a number of substantial difficulties in working out a complete and detailed answer to the problem of meaning. There are, for example, instances in which it can be shown that linguistic expressions with different meanings refer to one and the same thing; there are also cases in which the same expression has more than one referent but not more than one meaning.

Bertrand Russell's example, "Scott is the author of *Waverley*," is a classic example of a case where expressions differ in meaning but have the same referent. In this case both of the expressions ('Scott' and 'the author of *Waverley*') refer to Sir Walter Scott. But if we were to substitute one of the expressions for the other, the product would not be an informative statement equivalent in meaning to the original; this would be the result if the expressions were equivalent in meaning. Instead the product would be an uninformative statement of identity--either "Scott is Scott" or "The author of *Waverley* is the author of *Waverley*."

Not only is it the case that linguistic expressions having the same referent sometimes have different meanings; it is also the case that expressions having the same meaning sometimes have different referents. Take, for example, the expressions called "indexical terms" ('I,' 'you,' 'here,' 'this' and others) which depend on certain contextual conditions to determine their referents yet have a single meaning. As Alston observes:

> When Jones utters the word 'I,' it refers to Jones; when Smith utters it, it refers to Smith. But this fact doesn't mean that 'I' has different meanings corresponding to these differences. . . . The word has a single meaning--*the speaker*. And it is because it always has this meaning that its referent systematically varies with variations in the conditions of utterance.[8]

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[8]Ibid., p. 13.

Faced with difficulties of this magnitude the basic version of the referential theory has been modified, by incorporating a sense-reference distinction, in an attempt to preserve the primary claim of the theory; i.e., that every meaningful expression stands for or refers to something else and that to specify the meaning of an expression is to specify the referential relationship between the expression and that for which it stands.

The main modification of the basic theory that the meaning of an expression is the thing referred to is the contention that the meaning of an expression is constituted by the relationship of referring, naming or designating. On this modified account to say that an expression has meaning is to say that the expression is related to something in the world in such a way that it stands for, refers to or names that thing. The meaning of an expression is no longer identified with the referent but the referential relationship is specified as a necessary condition for an expression to be meaningful. The primary unit could be single words, seen as names, or sentences, seen as representations of situations, but the central point of the approach remains the same on either account; to specify the meaning of a linguistic expression is to specify the relationship

that holds between that expression and the thing to which it refers.[9]

Alston argues that, in several respects, referential theories are deficient answers to the question of meaning. He criticizes and argues against their contention that every meaningful expression must have a referent; and describes the difficulties involved in deciding just what the referent of any particular expression might conceivably be. He concludes his critique of referential theories by repeating his endorsement of the basic insight upon which referential theories are built but by arguing that:

> . . . in the referential theory, this insight is ruined through oversimplification. The essential connection of language with "the world," with what is talked about, is represented as a piecemeal correlation of meaningful linguistic units with distinguishable components of the world.[10]

In short, he argues that referential theories are faced with grave deficiencies which cannot be solved within the framework of the theory and that we must look elsewhere for a comprehensible account of meaning.

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[9]See Jerzy Pelc, *Studies in Functional Logical Semiotics of Natural Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), pp. 58-60 for a discussion of what he calls the distinction between ". . . THEORIES OF THE MEANING OF A *de facto* SINGLE WORD and the THEORIES OF THE MEANING OF A *de facto* SENTENCE."

[10]Alston, p. 19.

Ideational Theories of Meaning

Just as referential theories are based on the truism that linguistic expressions are sometimes used to talk about things in the world, ideational theories are an outgrowth of the equally true observation that linguistic expressions are sometimes used to talk about or express thoughts and experiences. The classic statement of the theory was made by John Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. There he argued that "The use . . . of words is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are their proper and immediate signification."[11] The central claim made by those endorsing an ideational theory is that to say of an expression that it has a certain meaning is to say that the expression is associated with or used to indicate a definite idea in the mind of the speaker. In this sense ideational theories are similar to referential ones; they accept the notion that meaningful expressions must stand for something else, but believe that the referents of expressions are properly ideas, not objects.

This seems to mean that ideas and meaningful expressions stand in a one to one correspondence, in the sense that for each meaningful expression there must be some distinct and identifiable idea in the speaker's

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[11]Ibid., p. 22.

mind which corresponds to that particular expression. Alston identifies the following conditions which would have to hold for the ideational theory to work:

> 1. the idea must be present in the mind of the speaker, and 2. the speaker must be producing the expression in order to get his audience to realize that the idea in question is in his mind at that time. Finally, 3. insofar as communication is successful, the expression would have to call up the same idea in the mind of the hearer. . . .[12]

It should be explicitly mentioned here that the point of speaking at all, according to this theory, is to tell others what you are already thinking about. Thought is seen as being prior to and independent of language, and words are seen as getting connected up with thoughts by a process of association.

Jerzy Pelc argues that there are both pyschological and non-psychological versions of ideational theories of meaning. The version described above requires that ideas be psychological states of mind--images, or something of that sort. Since, on that theory, thought precedes language and language functions to communicate thought, ideas must be interpreted as psychological states, images or something closely resembling images. Pelc contends that a number of thinkers who have held ideational theories of meaning have not intended such an interpretation of 'idea.' They have, he argues, identified ideas, not with

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[12]Ibid., pp. 23-24.

psychological states but with something other than the actual mental experiences of the speaker.[13]

Although there is some point in identifying such variations in the basic doctrine, it is not clear that such variations are significant for the purposes of explicating the central notions of ideational meaning theories so long as they retain the central claim of the theory; i.e., that any meaningful expression must be regularly associated with and stand for a definite idea (however interpreted). Just so long as that central claim is endorsed, the ideas involved (which are the meanings of the expressions) must be identifiable apart from any reference to the expressions involved. That is, no appeal can be made to the expression in order to decide which idea is involved. But, as Alston argues, ". . . the more we push 'idea' in the direction of such identifiability, the clearer it becomes that words are not related to ideas in the way required by the theory."[14] Faced with such problems and the requirement that we rely on introspection to discover the meaning of an expression, it is not surprising that many theorists would turn to behavioral techniques to assist them in the remaining task of attacking this problem.

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[13]Pelc, pp. 62-63.

[14]Alston, p. 25.

Behavioral Theories of Meaning

Alston discusses two versions of the attempt to explicate what is involved in specifying the meaning of an expression by focusing attention on the publicly observable aspects of the situations in which communication occurs. The first, which he describes as relatively crude, is an attempt to analyze the concept of meaning in terms of the concepts of stimulus and response as employed in behavioral psychology. The second, which he describes as relatively sophisticated, is an attempt to analyze the concept of meaning in terms of the disposition to respond in certain ways to the utterance of an expression.

The first type of behavioral theory of meaning asserts that meaning *is* the situation in which an expression is uttered and the response elicited from the hearer by the utterance of the expression. Alston identifies the requirements which must be met in order for the theory to hold in the following passage:

> . . . there must be features that are common and peculiar to all the situations in which a given expression is uttered in a given sense and there must be features common and peculiar to all the responses that are made to the utterance of a given expression in a given sense. Furthermore, these common elements must be actually employed as criteria for assigning the sense in question to that expression.[15]

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[15]Ibid., p. 26.

Basically, the stimulus-response theory yields an answer to the question "What are we saying about a linguistic expression when we specify its meaning?" which could be stated: When we specify the meaning of a linguistic expression we are specifying the features of the situation in which that expression is uttered along with the features of the responses by the hearer to its utterance which are characteristic of all and only the utterances of that expression.

Alston criticizes this version of behavioral theories on virtually every count. He argues that those uniformities which characterize all of the situations in which an expression is uttered do not characterize only those situations, but also characterize the situations in which other expressions are uttered. Even if we were to look simply for situational features common to most of the occasions when an expression is uttered, we still would find, he argues, that the ". . . uniformities hold equally well for quite different sentences with quite different meanings."[16]

Uniformities in response that could be construed as an element in the meaning of an expression also prove elusive. Alston illustrates this with a description of the variety of responses which might be elicited by the utterance of the imperative sentence "Come in now" when

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[16]Ibid., p. 27.

uttered by a parent to a child. His examples range from total compliance through no response at all, including nine quite different responses. Since imperatives constitute the most plausible case for these theories and it is difficult to find a uniform response which constitutes the meaning, or part of the meaning, of most imperative expressions, the assertion that the meaning of a linguistic expression is constituted by situational uniformities and uniformities of response is, to say the least, seriously compromised.

The second type of behavioral theory attempts to avoid these problems by construing meaning in terms of behavioral dispositions rather than actual situational uniformities and regularities in actual overt behavior by those who hear the expression uttered. On this account the meaning of a linguistic expression can best be explicated by identifying those actions which a hearer of the expression in question is regularly disposed to do. That is, whatever the child in the example used above might in fact do, if he is disposed to comply with the parent's request "Come in now," then the meaning of that expression is explicated by specifying the relevant actions, i.e., stopping play and coming into the house, which the expression uttered disposes the child to do. There might, of course, be other considerations which result in non-compliance but the disposition

to act elicited by hearing that particular expression constitutes its meaning.

The problem, of course, is to distinguish those considerations which are not relevant to the meaning of the expression from those which are relevant. The attractiveness of the activity the child is engaged in is not relevant even though it might very well be the decisive factor in whether or not the child complies with the parent's request or not. If behavior, either pure and simple or construed dispositionally, is to serve as a criterion of the meaning of an expression, then the distinction between relevant and irrelevant factors in behavior cannot be drawn by any appeal to the meaning of the expression. That is, the behavioral theory, if true, eliminates the possibility of our saying that the attractiveness of the activity is irrelevant because "Come in now" is a request for compliance. As a consequence of these and other problems Alston concludes that both versions of the behavioral theory of meaning are deficient. He observes that:

> . . . we will be unable to find situation and response features that are distributed in the way the theory requires. Meaning simply does not vary directly with the kinds of factors highlighted in these theories.[17]

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[17]Ibid., p. 30.

Meaning and Use

Alston's analysis of the three primary traditions in the philosophical debate about what constitutes an acceptable theoretical solution to the problem of linguistic meaning leaves us with little hope of actually finding such a solution. Nevertheless, he offers us some hope of finding such a solution with his own theory which explores ". . . the possibility of exhibiting the meaning of a linguistic expression as a function of the way in which it is used by speakers of the language."[18] This approach, on his view, has great promise since

> to the extent that this analysis is, or can be made to be, adequate, it has the great merit of showing just *how* the fact that a linguistic expression has the meaning it has is a function of what users of the language *do* with that expression.[19]

I will say no more of Alston's theory of meaning and use at this point; the central focus of a later chapter will be an analysis of various theories of meaning and use along with an attempt to demonstrate that both Dewey and Wittgenstein's views belong in that group of theories.

This chapter has concentrated on philosophical issues but for now I will turn from philosophy to educational reform. In the next two chapters I will be concerned with educational reform movements in both the

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[18]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[19]Ibid., p. 39.

United States and Austria. Then I will return to the philosophical issues and the argument that those educational reform movements exercised a significant influence on the way in which Dewey and Wittgenstein approached those issues.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN PROGRESSIVISM, THE REVOLT AGAINST FORMALISM AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM

> . . . our culture must be consonant with realistic science and with machine industry, instead of a refuge from them. And while there is no guaranty that an education which uses science and employs the controlled processes of industry as a regular part of its equipment will succeed, there is every assurance that an educational practice which sets science and industry in opposition to its ideal of culture will fail. Natural science has in its applications to economic production and exchange brought an industry and a society where quantity alone seems to count. It is for education to bring the light of science and the power of work to the aid of every soul that it may discover its quality. For in a spiritually democratic society every individual would realize distinction. Culture would then be for the first time in human history an individual achievement and not a class possession.
>
> John Dewey, "American Education and Culture"

The Progressive Movement

Several forces were involved in bringing about the fundamental changes which were taking place in American culture between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century. Urbanization and immigration were combining to produce significant changes in both the distribution and composition of the population. At the same time, economic relations were in the process of fundamental redefinition as industrial modes of organization became increasingly dominant in production.

Basic and fundamental changes were being wrought in virtually every element of social and cultural life. The increasing tendency to consolidation on the part of business corporations, the catastrophic fluctuations of the economy as evidenced in a series of panics and depressions, the emergence of fledgling labor organizations, and the growth of urban slums and political machines all attest to the thoroughness of the transformation which took place in American life during this period.

Historians have provided a number of accounts of the ways in which American reformers attempted to adjust their institutions to this shift from a rural-agrarian to an urban-industrial society. Those accounts are too extensive to recount here but it is sufficient for my purposes to point out first, that political, religious, economic and judicial, as well as educational, institutions were faced with a significantly altered set of circumstances; second, that those changed circumstances were seen by many as having an adverse effect on the quality of life lived by the American people; and, finally, that the movement known as "Progressivism" represented a variety of divergent attempts to bring about institutional adjustments to those changes--adjustments which it was believed would improve the quality of life as lived by individual Americans.

Progressive reformers were active in virtually every area of American life. Novelists, intellectuals and journalists authored books, exposes and tracts to assist and encourage reform minded politicians in their attempts to develop reform programs designed to combat the evils of the new urban-industrial society. Theologians such as Walter Rauschenbusch were busily attacking the religious doctrines which had provided support for the old order and justifications for its inequities. The law was coming under the close scrutiny and attack of reform jurists the likes of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Roscoe Pound. Scholars at Columbia University, the new German-style graduate school at Johns Hopkins and the John D. Rockefeller endowed University of Chicago were chipping away at the doctrine Eric F. Goldman has called "Conservative Darwinism" and erecting in its place the "Reform Darwinism" which was to provide the intellectual grounds and justification for progressive reform.[1]

The Revolt Against Formalism in American Thought

Morton White's *Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism* provides us with an account of the intellectual and academic aspects of the broadly based reform movements which were taking place in late

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[1]Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York: Vintage Books Inc., 1956).

nineteenth and early twentieth century America. American intellectuals of this period were to be found, he argues,

> . . . ranging themselves . . . against formalism, since they had become convinced that logic, abstraction, deduction, mathematics, and mechanics were inadequate to social research and incapable of containing the rich, moving, living current of social life.[2]

He argues that the leading intellectual developments of the period--pragmatism, instrumentalism, institutionalism, economic determinism and legal realism--shared a common philosophical ground in their revolt against formalism; that each of the movements was suspicious of excessively formal approaches, each attempted to come to grips with a comprehensive social reality and each was preoccupied with ". . . the moving and vital in social life."[3] The leading figures in this intellectual rebellion--John Dewey, Thorstein Veblen, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and others--were out ". . . to mop up the remnants of formal logic, classical economics and jurisprudence in America, and to emphasize that the life of science, economics, and law was not logic but experience in some streaming social sense."[4]

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[2]Morton White, *Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 11.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., pp. 11-12.

White's study focuses on the intellectual careers of just a few American thinkers of the period; those he believed representative of the most influential intellectual developments related to the reform movements. His argument includes an attempt to establish the claim that Dewey's instrumentalism, Veblen's institutionalism, Holmes' legal realism, Beard's economic determinism and Robinson's historical pragmatism each shared common fundamental suppositions of a philosophical nature.[5] After noting the difficulties involved in defining the formalism against which his subjects were rebelling, White argues that

> this attack on formalism or abstractionism leads to two important positive elements in the thought of these men--"historicism" and what I shall call "cultural organicism." . . . By "historicism" I shall mean the attempt to explain facts by reference to earlier facts; by "cultural organicism" I shall mean the attempt to find explanations and relevant material in social sciences other than the one which is primarily under investigation.[6]

In short, each of these men not only advocated and employed evolutionary and historical methods in his own discipline (presuming that they even held to anything like the current concept of a professional discipline) but drew heavily from other disciplines in attacking

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[5]See White's Introduction and first chapter for a discussion of what, on his view, makes a question or view philosophical. It would not make a substantial contribution to the present discussion to consider his views on the matter.

[6]White, p. 12.

problems in his own. Even in labeling their positions we find it necessary to explain what today would be called interdisciplinary terminology; Holmes was the advocate of *sociological* jurisprudence, Veblen the *sociological* student of economics and so on. So thorough was their commitment to historicism and cultural organicism that it could be said that they were ". . . all under the spell of history and culture."[7]

This intellectual revolution was the culmination of nineteenth century philosophical developments; the typical academic progressive was the product ". . . of the nineteenth century, following, being influenced by, reacting from its great philosophers of change and process."[8] Their attempt to come to grips with the pressing problems of American life and to develop the evolutionary, historical and cultural methods which they believed were necessary to deal effectively with social life and experience led each of them to attack the leading figures in the tradition of the British Empiricists. Jeremy Bentham became the common enemy in their intellectual rebellion, as White observes:

> It is extremely important to take into account this aversion to British Empiricism. . . . Dewey attacked utilitarian ethics, psychology, and logic for failing to study the actual workings of the human mind; Veblen attacked the hedonic calculus as well as the failure to

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 13.

> study economic institutions in their wider cultural setting; Beard opposed the analytical school for treating the Constitution as if it were axiomatized geometry rather than a human, social document; and Holmes regarded Austin's theory as an inaccurate account of law as it was practiced.[9]

American intellectuals had become convinced that the British tradition in philosophical, social, legal, economic and political thought functioned largely in support of the conservative order in American society. They saw their primary task as one of developing academic disciplines capable of dealing with the real stuff of social and economic life and bringing those disciplines to bear on the pressing problems that they saw in American society.

So, the fundamental change during the last half of the century, the intellectual requirements for dealing with that change and the philosophical heritage of the century were all factors which contributed to the intellectual revolution taking place at the turn of the century. American thinkers in virtually every academic discipline were searching for methods and approaches which would enable them to provide a more accurate account of, say, economic arrangements and, in addition, allow them to more effectively use those disciplines in reforming those arrangements.

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[9]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

The years following the Civil War were years of fundamental and disruptive change in virtually every aspect of American life. By the turn of the century, a diverse group of reformers were busily engaged in attempts to remediate the more obnoxious characteristics of their new urban-industrial society. The American academic community was actively involved in those attempts and many intellectuals were vigorously attacking formal procedures and theories in their disciplines on the grounds that any accurate and useful account of human activity must proceed in terms of historical, evolutionary and cultural modes of thought. It is in this broader context of progressive reform movements and the intellectual revolt against formalism that the progressive education movement must be placed.[10]

Progressivism in American Education

At the beginning of the twentieth century America was in the process of completing the above-mentioned transition from a rural, agrarian nation to an urban, industrial one. While social and economic

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[10]For two representative works, from many, which consider the ways in which progressive educators were involved in other progressive reform movements see Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), and Sol Cohen, *Progressives and Urban School Reform: The Public Education Association of New York City, 1895-1914* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964).

conditions had been rapidly transformed during the nineteenth century, the educational institutions of the nation had changed little since the 1860s. The system of free common schools, designed to serve an agrarian society, continued to exist virtually unchanged in curriculum, methods and aims within the context of a radically changed industrial one. In the eyes of many observers of the time the tradition bound schools of the nation ignored the existence of changed conditions and failed to meet the demands imposed by the new social order. In short, the narrow, traditional curriculum of most public schools had little relevance to life in an industrial society of the sort which had developed.

A few scattered observers spoke out against this state of affairs as early as the 1870s, but not until the late 1890s did the scattered criticism begin to take the form of a concerted effort to reform the schools. Critics pointed out the deplorable state of most school facilities and physical plants, the political corruption afflicting many city systems and the multitude of ways in which school practices bore little or no relationship to the lives of their students or the conditions in which they lived.[11] Lawrence Cremin

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[11]Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), pp. 20-22.

makes the following observation in his study of educational reform.

> . . . progressive education began as part of a vast humanitarian effort to apply the promise of American life . . . to the puzzling new urban-industrial civilization that came into being during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The word *progressive* provides the clue to what it really was: the educational phase of American Progressivism writ large.[12]

Since it was an integral part of the larger movement for reform, it comes as no surprise to find that the impulse for progressive reform in matters of education encompassed a diversity of loosely affiliated and often competing elements. The following account will emphasize John Dewey's views about early elementary education, focusing principally on his involvement in the work of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago; some consideration will be given to Dewey's views of and relations with other progressive educators but no special attempt will be made to provide a comprehensive account of the progressive education movement at large.

It is important to identify two characteristic misinterpretations, or at least misleading interpretations, of Dewey's thought before discussing his critique of American education at the turn of the century. The first type of misleading interpretation, as I will show, is rooted in a failure to take the full import of

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[12]Ibid., p. viii.

Dewey's functional analysis into account. The second is rooted in a similar failure to fully comprehend the consequences of what I will call his contextualism.

The first type of misinterpretation is found in Morton White's "The Philosopher and the Metropolis in America." There he argues that American philosophers have been, nearly without exception, anti-urban. In his concluding remarks about the position of Dewey and his followers he writes:

> The new parochialism was their proposal in the first quarter of the twentieth century for the solution of some of the problems created by urbanization. It was an effort to fill the emptiness of the great city in a nostalgic spirit. This was not a call to revive the unestranged spirit of the colonial provinces, but it shared with Royce's viewpoint the idea that the city was lacking something that older preurban American communities possessed, and which had to be *re*-created. As such, the new parochialism was not an effort to provide *new* forms of association for city dwellers, but rather an effort to revivify old ones and to plant them in a new urban context.[13]

Arguments of this sort tend to obscure the full import of Dewey's *functionalism*. Dewey's critique of societal ills is rooted in the contention that some institutional arrangement or set of such arrangements is functionally unsatisfactory at a fundamental level. It was characteristic of Dewey to define an institutional

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[13]Morton White, *Pragmatism and the American Mind: Essays and Reviews in Philosophy and Intellectual History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 27.

function and to illustrate historically the ways in which a diversity of agencies have functioned to meet some basic human need.[14] Hence, a critique of urban life would include an account of the functions which had been performed by various agencies in the context of a predominately rural society which could no longer be performed by those same agencies in the context of a predominately urban one. Reform, for Dewey, would consist in identifying agencies to perform those functions satisfactorily in the current context, not in attempting to revive the specific agencies which had performed them in the past.

In another essay, Oscar Handlin argues that ". . . the realm of the classroom in the 1890s was totally set off from the experience of the child" and that Dewey ". . . whose own education as a boy was free of all such rigidity . . ." believed that ". . . the educator . . . had to narrow the distance between the classroom and the world outside it."[15] This argument seems to me to hinge on the contention that social and economic change had

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[14]See, for example, his argument in *The Public and Its Problems* where he writes ". . . to the patent objection that the state is a very modern institution, it is replied that while modernity is a property of those *structures* which go by the name of states, yet all history, or almost all, records the exercise of analogous *functions*.

[15]Oscar Handlin, "John Dewey's Challenge to Education," in *Dewey on Education*, ed. Reginald D. Archambault (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 29.

produced undesirable changes in the American school; changes which could and should be reversed by reinstating educational practices common to schools before the industrialization and urbanization altered them, i.e., that Dewey believed his own education as a child to be satisfactory but education circa 1890 not to be and advocated educational reform on the basis of that judgment. While not entirely inaccurate, this obscures the full importance of Dewey's *contextual approach*.[16] Dewey's argument for educational reform appears to me to rest not primarily upon claims about what schools did in 1870 or 1890 but upon claims about what schools might do, given a total social context, to perform functions which had, in previous contexts, been performed by other agencies. Reforms in schools, that is, might be made necessary by functional failures in agencies other than the schools and the problems which evidenced the necessity of such reform might not be, in any immediate sense, school problems. Dewey's approach was not characteristically to select, e.g., an educational problem for analysis and argue for an educational solution to that problem. It was, by contrast, to attempt to isolate the functional failures in a troubled context and to identify agencies

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[16]The term "contextual approach" is not entirely satisfactory but, for a variety of reasons, I think that it is better than "organic," "holistic" or "interdisciplinary."

which might adopt new functions thereby alleviating the problem.

In short, Dewey's general approach to questions of reform was to analyze the current context which would yield clues to what functional deficiencies were involved in that context combined with a search for possible agencies in the current context which might be able to remediate those functional deficiencies. His analysis of the need for educational reform proceeds in just that fashion; he first identifies the functional deficiency--what he calls the fundamental problem of education--and then argues for a distinction between education and schooling. This distinction, Dewey feels, expedites the identification of the basic trouble and provides possible sources to remediate the problems.

Dewey claims that his conception of the problem of education is of paramount importance in his theory of education; the problem is, he writes, that of ". . . harmonizing . . . individual traits with social ends and values" or the ". . . effective coordination of the factors which proceed from the make-up, the psychological constitution, of human beings with the demands and opportunities of the social environment."[17] He attempts

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[17]Katherine Camp Mayhew and Anna Camp Edwards, *The Dewey School: The Laboratory School of the University of Chicago, 1896-1903* (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), p. 465.

to distinguish his formulation of the problem from that of the proponents of child-centered education, who, he believed, gave insufficient attention to the social factors involved, as well as from that of the advocates of manual training and social adjustment who were not sufficiently aware of the individual factors. His argument proceeds with the claim that such a harmony is only possible at all in virtue of the fact that ". . . the *process* of mental development is essentially a social process, a process of participation."[18] He elaborates this argument in greater detail in *Democracy in Education* where he argues that both the perpetuation of a society and the continued physical existence of its young depends on the successful conduct of education. He writes there that

> society exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions, from those members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive.[19]

and that

> . . . the human young are so immature that if they were left to themselves without the guidance of others, they

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[18] Ibid., p. 467.

[19] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 3.

> could not acquire the rudimentary abilities necessary for physical existence.[20]

This, then, is the crucial problem for any educational endeavor in any society whatever; the formulation is completely general since it does not take into account any particular social or specific individual factors. It includes no judgments about the legitimacy of any social factor and no position on what is, in fact, the psychological constitution of the human being; it is an argument to the effect that in any society, whatever its character, and whatever the nature of its individual members, the task of carrying out of education remains the same--that of harmonizing individual traits with social ends and values.

Given this account of the fundamental problem of education, it does not necessarily follow that the school is the sole, or even the primary, agency which could or should discharge the function of education. Schools are characterized by planned, intentional, formal instruction ("direct tuition" in Dewey's terms) as opposed to the informal education which takes place without any special devices or instructional materials in all social participation and exchange. Specific institutions for formal, intentional instruction become necessary, on Dewey's view, as a society becomes more complex and the tasks

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[20]Ibid., p. 4.

demanded by adult participation in that society become more technical. Unhappily, Dewey notes

> . . . there are conspicuous dangers attendant upon the transition from indirect to formal education. Sharing in actual pursuit, whether directly or vicariously in play, is at least personal and vital. . . . Formal instruction, on the contrary, easily becomes remote and dead--abstract and bookish, to use the ordinary words of depreciation.[21]

This general account of Dewey's view of the function of education contains two points, then, which deserve special emphasis. First, Dewey's concept of education is much broader than his concept of schooling, i.e., a variety of agencies other than the school perform an educational function. Second, schooling, for Dewey, becomes more necessary as society becomes more complex and other agencies fail to perform adequately the function of inducting the young into full participation in adult life; *nonetheless, schools, to the extent that they employ formal and direct methods of instruction, are ill suited means to this end.*

Faced with this dilemma Dewey recognized that the educational reformer was confronted with two distinct but related tasks: (1) the reformer was required to identify those broader functions which were no longer being adequately performed by other institutions and might be adopted by the school, and (2) he had to develop new methods and means which would make the school an

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[21]Ibid., p. 8.

effective agency in the performance of those new and broader functions. The problem was not simply, I repeat, that the schools were not doing well in 1890 what they had done well in 1860; as Dewey himself notes,

> A great deal of school material is irrelevant to the experience of those taught and also manifests disrespect for trained judgment and accurate and comprehensive knowledge. *In the earlier days of our country these defects of school material were largely made good by the life of the young out of school.* But the increase of urban conditions and mass production has cut many persons off from these supplementary resources. . . .[22]

Since my purpose here is to compare Dewey's educational experience with that of Wittgenstein, I will not attempt to provide a comprehensive explication of the first step in Dewey's analysis--that of identifying the specific characteristics of American society in 1890 which made it necessary for schools to adopt new and broader educational functions. My account will rather focus on Dewey's work at the Laboratory School since that work aptly illustrates the curricular and methodological reforms which Dewey advocated in order to make the school an agency more capable of performing those new tasks.

What then, were the main features of the reform program initiated by Dewey and his associates at the University of Chicago?[23] Some thirty years after the

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[22]Mayhew and Edwards, p. 469, emphasis added.

[23]It is somewhat misleading to describe the Laboratory School as a reform program; Dewey steadfastly

Chicago experiment ended, Dewey wrote that ". . . the first factor in bringing about the desired coordination (between the individual and the social) was the establishment of the school as a form of community life."[24] He identified the factor next in importance as that of ". . . working out a definite body of subject-matter, the material of a 'course of study.'"[25]

The first important characteristic of the experimental school was the attempt to reconstruct the school in the form of an ". . . institution in which the child

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insisted that it was neither a progressive school nor a practice school for training teachers, but a laboratory for testing philosophical and psychological hypotheses about education. He did not, however, deny that the conduct of the school had any bearing on the issue of school reform. For example, he made the following remarks in a speech delivered before the Pedagogical Club in 1896. [John Dewey, *The Early Works, 1882-1898*, vol. 5: *1895-1898, Early Essays* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), p. 436.]

> "As it is not the primary function of a laboratory to devise ways and means that can at once be put to practical use, so it is not the primary purpose of this school to devise methods with reference to their direct application in the graded school system. It is the function of some schools to provide better teachers according to present standards; it is the function of others to create new standards and ideals and thus to lead to a gradual change in conditions. If it is advisable to have smaller classes, more teachers and a different working hypothesis than is presently the case in the public schools, there should be some institution to show this. This the school in question hopes to do, and while it does not aim to be impractical, it does not aim primarily to be of such a character as to be immediately capable of translation into the public school."

[24]Mayhew and Edwards, p. 466.

[25]Ibid., p. 468.

is, for the time, to live--to be a member of a community life in which he feels that he participates, and to which he contributes."[26] The school was no longer to be alien to the life of the child; no longer an institution separate from and apparently unrelated to his activities outside of the classroom. As Dewey observed,

> The idea involved a radical departure from the notion that the school is just a place in which to learn lessons and acquire certain forms of skill. It assimilated study and learning within the school to the education which takes place when out-of-school living goes on in a rich and significant social medium.[27]

By building on the child's everyday experience at home the school was to function in such a way as to bridge the gap between home life and life in larger social organizations.

The second feature of the school--the course of study developed to make it truly intermediary between the home environment and the larger society--represents the most obvious and readily apparent deviation from the currently approved principles of pedagogy. The curriculum of the school was not organized along the lines of the traditional disciplines and skills; in fact, it included nothing which, on the surface, could be described as a course of study at all. The curriculum was built up out of a set of carefully selected *activities*

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[26]Dewey, *Early Works*, vol. 5, p. 224.

[27]Mayhew and Edwards, p. 466.

(or occupations) which were designed to reproduce some form of work actually carried out in social life. The point of these activities--sewing, cooking, and woodworking for the youngest groups--was not to bring about mastery of the particular skills associated with those activities, nor was it to train the child to perform tasks which might be useful or necessary in adult life. The primary reason lay in the fact that the

> . . . occupations . . . were means of securing the transformation of crude and sporadic impulses into activities having a sufficiently long time-span as to demand foresight, planning, retrospective reviews, the need for further information and insight into principles of connection. On the moral side, this same continuity demanded patience, perseverance, and thoroughness--all the elements that make for a genuine as distinct from artificially imposed discipline.[28]

The occupations, in short, provided the key to the solution of the central problem of education as Dewey had formulated that problem. By bridging the gap between the school and society, the occupations were to harmonize individual traits with social ends and values.

In specific programmatic terms Dewey believed that a curriculum built around the occupations enabled the school to solve three fundamental problems.

1. School programs which separated the social studies from the study of nature, as most did, failed, on Dewey's view, to recognize the fact that

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[28]Ibid., p. 474.

> . . . the conscious distinction between man and nature is the result of later reflection and abstraction, and to force it upon the children is not only to fail to engage his whole mental energy, but to confuse and distract him.[29]

Dewey argued that any curriculum which carved the environment up in this way would create a motivational problem by reducing that environment to a mass of meaningless details no longer capable of engaging the child's interest and attention. The Laboratory School was to solve that problem by basing the curriculum on occupations which integrated the study of nature and society and which would preserve the child's investigative and experimental impulses as well as provide for activities which would ". . . direct the child's power of observation, . . . nurture his sympathetic interest in characteristic traits of the world in which he lives . . .," and ". . . afford interpreting material for later more special studies."[30]

2. The typical American elementary school of the 1890s included in the curriculum a variety of academic and skill disciplines including reading, penmanship, arithmetic, geography, nature study, manual training and craft work. One of the major problems

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[29]John Dewey, "General Principles of Work, Educationally Considered," *The Elementary School Record* 1 (February 1900): 13.

[30]Ibid.

faced by teachers was that of providing for continuity in such a diversified curriculum; furthermore, each new subject which was added to the curriculum made the problem of correlation more difficult. Dewey argued that the solution to the problem of correlation lay, not in improved teaching methods, but in a thorough reform of the curriculum. With a curriculum based on occupations rather than disciplines, he said,

> It is the community and continuity of the subject-matter that organizes, that correlates; correlation is not through devices of instruction which the teacher employs in tying together things in themselves disconnected.[31]

3. Many teachers of the period had recognized and attempted to incorporate into their teaching methods two factors which frequently came into conflict in practice. Dewey observed that

> the need of the familiar, the already experienced as a basis for moving upon the unknown and remote, is a commonplace. The claims of the child's imagination as a factor is at least beginning to be recognized. The problem is to work these two forces together, instead of separately. The child is too often given drill upon familiar objects and ideas under the sanction of the first principle, while he is introduced with equal directness to the wierd, strange, and impossible to satisfy the claims of the second. The result, it is hardly too much to say, is a twofold failure.[32]

The occupations provided a solution for this problem as well; the specific activities were selected because they were familiar and immediate to the child, and in virtue

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[31] Ibid., p. 14.

[32] Ibid.

of the fact that they encouraged expression, innovation and further investigation. The activities, Dewey argued, required the child to ". . . educe and exchange with others his store of experiences, his range of information, to make new observations correcting and extending them . . . in definite and vivid realization of what is new and enlarging."[33]

This account of Dewey's work in elementary education is, of course, not a complete one but it does identify several elements of that work which, as I will show later, were influential in Dewey's later work in philosophy. We turn now to the educational program which was instituted by socialist reformers in Austria after the end of World War I.

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[33]Ibid., p. 15.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIALIST REFORM AND THE NEW EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

> The new republic needed citizens trained in a democratic way to exercise their rights in self-government. It needed skilled workmen, independent and self-confident, as far removed from wage slaves as might be. It needed to make the best use of the results of research in the field of education for the common good. These ideas involved the democratization of the schools and their administration in the most complete sense, the delegation of their supervision to trained educators, the improvement of the training of teachers, and the improvement of the methods of instruction.
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> Charles A. Gulick, *Austria*

When Francis Joseph ascended to the Habsburg throne in December of 1848, Vienna, the capital of his empire, was a somewhat remote outpost of Western life for a population of approximately 360,000 people.[1] The whole of the Habsburg Empire had a population of approximately thirty-eight million and embraced a bewildering array of ethnic and linguistic groups with greatly divergent customs and creeds. The multinational

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[1]For brief but more complete accounts of Viennese life during the reign of Francis Joseph, see Arthur J. May, *Vienna in the Age of Franz Josef* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), and Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

character of the empire is so fundamental to an understanding of its politics and social attitudes that it would be difficult to overemphasize its importance; one observer has described it as an "ungovernable mélange of Germans, Ruthenes, Italians, Slovaks, Rumanians, Czechs, Poles, Magyars, Slovenes, Croats, Transylvanian Saxons and Serbs."[2] Vienna, by contrast, was in 1848 a predominantly German city; as late as 1800, for example, 90 percent of the population were Viennese in origin.[3]

By 1916, when Francis Joseph's reign came to an end, not only was the empire on the verge of dissolution, it had been transformed, along with much of the Western world, from a predominantly rural and agrarian society to a predominantly urban and industrial one. In those sixty-eight years, the

> . . . capital city, his beloved Vienna, had experienced a radical reformation. . . . . the transforming might of industrialism, capitalistic finance, a huge growth of population, and experimentation in municipal "socialism" had wrought powerfully upon the texture and quality of the city.[4]

The shift from agriculture to industrial production was neither so swift nor so complete in Austria as in Germany, where by 1895, for example, the proportion of the work force involved in industrial production

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[2]Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 40.

[3]May, *Vienna*, p. 38.

[4]Ibid., p. 4.

exceeded that in agriculture.[5] Industrialization was, nevertheless, an important force in late nineteenth century Austria; industrial consolidation accelerated as cartels were established in the iron, soda, copper, petroleum, textile and other industries.[6] Vienna's population at the turn of the century had shifted in composition to include a significant number of industrial workers, many of them immigrants from non-German portions of the empire.[7]

The social and economic problems and dislocations normally associated with rapid industrial development were exacerbated in the Austrian context by the divisive politics of nationalism in a multinational state and the apparent inability of the government to adapt to changed conditions. In describing the "illusory stability" of

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[5]Hans Rosenberg, "The Cancer of Industrial Depression," in *The Austrian Empire: Abortive Federation?*, eds. Harold J. Gordon, Jr. and Nancy M. Gordon (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1974), p. 97.

[6]Heinrech Benedikt, "The Spread of Industrialism," in *The Austrian Empire: Abortive Federation?*, eds. Harold J. Gordon, Jr. and Nancy M. Gordon (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1974), pp. 92-93.

[7]By 1891 the population of the capital had grown to approximately 1,365,000, of which only 35 percent were of Viennese origin. See May, *Vienna*, and Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, for accounts of the housing shortage in Vienna and other conditions which testify to the fact that Vienna had become a major industrial city with many of the social and economic problems associated with that status.

Francis Joseph's reign, Janik and Toulmin characterize the Monarchy as

> . . . a superpower plagued by problems of rapid economic change and turbulent racial minorities, a power whose established constitutional structure was, at essential points, incapable of adapting itself to the novel demands of its changing historical situation.[8]

Given these conditions, it is not surprising to find a proliferation of divergent political movements in reaction to these new and emerging social and economic problems.

Nineteenth century *laissez faire* liberalism never became the dominant political force in Austria that it was in many other European countries; what promise it had of success there lay, almost by design, in its appeal to the middle class inhabitants of the predominantly German cities of the Empire. Given the circumstances of liberal ascendency to the government and the fact that the major metropolitan areas were being flooded with immigrants from the economically depressed countryside during the last decades of the century, the prospects of a successful liberal government were never very good. These factors in combination with increasing nationalistic fervor made liberal domination virtually impossible. Janik and Toulmin argue that the Austrian middle classes were never ready to assume political power and that with the failure

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[8]Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 30.

of liberals to respond to changed urban conditions the political initiative shifted to working class movements led by political figures who had defected from the ranks of the liberal party. They observe that

> Viktor Adler, the organizing spirit behind Austrian Social Democracy; Karl Lueger, the Christian Social demagogue; Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the fanatical Pan-German; and even Theodor Herzl, the prophet of Zionism--each began his career as a liberal. The defection of these men from liberalism resulted from the traditional liberals' incapacity to come to grips with the problems of urban growth and industrialization. . . .[9]

Each of the three major political parties endorsed, from the mid-1880s onward, significantly different educational programs. From that period on the political struggles between Social Democrats, Christian Socialists and German Nationalists dominated the public life of Austria; including the nature and conduct of the Austrian school system.[10]

Elementary education in late Habsburg Austria presents us with as many anomalies as the Empire's other political and social facts of life. The *Reichvolksschulgesetz* of 1869, for example, established a ". . . universal undenominational *Volksschule* without regard to confession, rank or wealth." Provisions for common

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[9]Ibid., p. 50.

[10]Ernst Papanek, *The Austrian School Reform: Its Bases, Principles and Development--The Twenty Years Between the Two World Wars* (New York: Frederick Fell, Inc., 1962), pp. 30-44, 49-73, and 77-95.

[11]Otto Tumlirz, "Austrian Education in the Past Fifteen Years," *School and Society* 41 (February 1935): 198.

schooling through the first five years were included. This reform was so highly regarded that it served as a model for educational reformers in other European countries but in Austria it was largely ignored; in the words of one Austrian official,

> To be sure, a five year *Volksschule* (elementary school) theoretically constituted a common foundation for both groups. But in practice the children of the higher classes attended private schools for the most part and in general did not come in contact at all with the common people.[12]

The national school law did however provide the legal basis for all elementary education in Austria and it was the *Volksschule* established through this legislation that became the object of vigorous political debate from the late nineteenth century on.

The *Volksschule* was opposed by politically and socially conservative forces on the grounds that a system of common elementary schooling might produce a democratizing force in political and social affairs; it was vigorously opposed by conservative clerical forces since it represented a diminution of the authority of the church. In addition to debates such as these, there was, even among those who agreed that the schools should be both secular and common, little agreement on other

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[12]Paul L. Dengler, "Austria," in *Educational Yearbook of the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University*, ed. I. L. Kandel (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1937), p. 4.

issues of educational purpose or method. Middle class liberal forces, for example, generally opposed attempts to ease the transition from elementary to secondary education and supported programs advocating manual and vocational training in the *Volksschule* years while socialist forces again and again attempted to provide more extensive general education beyond the first five years to make more options in higher education accessible to more people.

During the last decades of the Monarchy, the political parties created associations and agencies to further their educational programs. The German National Party, for example, created the German School Society for Austria in 1880 and the Christian Social Party established the Catholic School Society to combat the secular views embodied in the national school legislation. The Social Democratic Party formed a Central Educational Organization within the party structure, founded the Organization of Children's Friends in 1908 and helped organize the Free School Association in 1905; this last organization established two experimental schools in Vienna, in part to test new teaching methods.[13]

Austrian Social Democrats, allied with an association of progressive school masters known as the

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[13]Papanek, *School Reform*, pp. 31-36.

Young Ones (*Die Jungen*) had begun an explicit critique of the Austrian *Volksschule* as early as 1892. By 1898 the Young Ones had drawn up a specific program for school reform, much of which was to be incorporated into the Social Democratic school reform program. A central part of that reform program was a critique of the prevailing educational principles in Austrian pedagogical circles;[14] that is to say, a critique of Herbartian pedagogical principles, for Herbartian views in psychology, philosophy and pedagogy were dominant in nineteenth century Austria.[15] The *Die Jungen* were especially critical of the *associationist psychology* which played a central role in Herbartian pedagogy and of the *formal steps of instruction* prescribed by that approach.[16] By comparison

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[14]Ibid., pp. 38-39. It should be noted that much of the *Die Jungen* reform program was designed to eliminate or minimize class distinctions by improving access to higher education for working class people. Even though this was an important aspect of the reform program, I will not treat it directly as I wish to focus explicitly on the reform of elementary education.

[15]See, for example, William N. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 281-286 and William Warren Bartley III, *Wittgenstein* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1973), p. 91.

[16]Herbart recommended that formal classroom instruction proceed according to a prescribed format designed to promote the effective assimilation of new material. Although Herbart himself identified four steps the Herbartian method was later expanded to include five. The steps were: (1) *Preparation* of the student by bringing old knowledge back into his consciousness; (2) *Presentation* of new material by the

with the elementary schools of many other European countries, the *Volksschule* was neither especially rigid nor overly authoritarian; nevertheless, neither the views of the nature of the child implicit in Herbartian associationist psychology, the central role reserved for drill in the classroom nor the sometimes highly artificial correlation of studies required by the formal steps were compatible with the reform views of the Young Ones.

These reform minded politicians and educators were primarily concerned with five factors which they believed to be characteristic of the old-style *Volksschule*: (1) The emphasis placed on information to be acquired for future use as well as the related view of the child as nothing more than an incipient adult; (2) The emphasis placed on pupil docility and receptivity as opposed to teacher authority and activity along with the attendant importance placed on teacher presentations and pupil drill as teaching methods; (3) The alien nature of much school material; (4) The radical division of school studies into subject matters and the accompanying division of the school day into distinct time periods reserved for the study of each subject; and (5) The

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teacher; (3) *Association* of the new material with the old; (4) *Systematisation* or review of the new material and its associations with the old; and (5) *Application* of the new knowledge in practice and use. See Curtis and Boultwood, *Short History*, pp. 360-362 for a more detailed account of the formal steps.

Herbartian identification of moral education with training the will in the development of acceptable and proper attitudes.[17]

When, in 1918, the Social Democrats found themselves participating in the federal government of the new Republic of Austria--and actually in control of the city administration in Vienna--they turned their attention almost immediately to matters of school reform. From the first day of the Republic's existence, the authority for the supervision and reform of the school system was in the hands of the Social Democrat and *Die Jungen*, Otto Glöckel. Glöckel moved quickly to renovate the staff of the Department of Education and almost immediately issued decrees establishing parent organizations and teachers councils which were to advise the department on questions of school reform.[18] He reported in July of 1919 that he had authorized the District School Inspectors to allow selected teachers to implement elements of the reform program in their classes. Ernst Papanek writes that

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[17]Many of the characteristics of the school attacked as Herbartian might not have been endorsed by Herbart himself; it is true, however, that those who supported the educational status quo did so on what they took to be Herbartian grounds and considered themselves followers of Herbart. For a favorable assessment of Herbart's own views, see S. J. Curtis and M. E. A. Boultwood, *A Short History of Educational Ideas* (London: University Tutorial Press, 1953), pp. 355-368.

[18]Papanek, *School Reform*, p. 50.

> the experimental classes became extensive laboratories for testing procedures devised by the Reform Division of the Ministry of Education. The division collected material drawn from them and from the experience of international educators in many countries and selected the methods it judged had proved most successful.[19]

By August of 1920 Glöckel had mobilized the support of most of the teachers in Austria and, armed with the favorable reports collected in the experimental classes recommended that the school reform program be adopted on a trial basis for the fall of 1920.

The reform program presented by Otto Glöckel through his Reform Division of the Ministry of Education included provisions designed to remedy each of the problems and failures of Austrian elementary education described above. The leading principles of the reform movement were:[20] (1) understanding the nature of the child;

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[19]Ibid., p. 57.

[20]My account of the main elements of the reform program is a composite drawn from several sources. Some commentators list three so-called "leading principles" while others list four; furthermore, not all of the observers are in agreement about what to call some of the principles or what they actually meant. Consequently, if one were to enumerate a list of all reported "leading principles" it would include at least twelve or fifteen. Part of the disagreement is attributable to the fact that the reforms were quite transitory; due to political opposition they were hardly ever fully implemented in the rural districts and where they were started they were so attacked that by 1926 there was no viable reform movement outside Vienna. By 1936, most of the remnants of social democracy had been eradicated in Vienna as well. In retrospect it seems easy to see the vast differences in the reforms of 1920 and those *described as* reforms by, for example, Dengler in 1937. At any rate I think these five slogans capture the original character of the reforms

(2) self-activity; (3) the accustomed environment; (4) concentrated or integrated instruction; and (5) cooperative activity. Each of these slogans stood for an element in the reform program which was aimed at remediating some aspect of pre-revolutionary schooling which had been under socialist attack since the turn of the century or before.

Kindesgemässheit--Schooling and the Nature of the Child

One of the major charges that school reformers brought against the Habsburg *Volksschule* was that of ignoring the nature of the child, that of employing a psychology that consisted in little more than the notion that the child was an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, information and skills through drill and formal instruction. To be sure, Herbartian educators had viewed the child as a *passive* object of instruction; the emphasis placed on the logical structure of developed disciplines and the central importance of the formal steps of instruction illustrate the extent to which

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and furthermore it is with the period from 1920 to 1926 that I am concerned. The sources for my account of the reform are: Bartley, *Wittgenstein*; Dengler, "Austria"; Robert Dottrens, *The New Education in Austria*, ed. Paul L. Dengler (New York: The John Day Co., 1930); Charles A. Gulick, *Austria From Habsburg to Hitler* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948); Papanek, *School Reform*; May Hollis Siegl, *Reform of Elementary Education in Austria* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1932).

Herbartians focused their attention almost exclusively on the psychological study of adult cognition. Precious little attention was given to the study of the psychology of the learner; their psychology was totally devoid of developmental concepts or any study of the language, thought or logic of children. Against this psychology Glöckel and the other reformers advocated

> . . . a theory of the child as an active social being whose mind was far more than an empty bucket to be filled with appropriate information. In their attack on the Drillschule and the Lernschule, the reformers were quite explicitly anti-Herbartian, antiassociationist, and anti-atomist in learning theory and psychology.[21]

One visiting educator described the results of this new approach as

> . . . the fruit of copious collaboration between the experts and the teachers. Wundt, Meumann, Stern, Lay, Gaudig in Germany, Binet in France, Claparède in Switzerland, Decroly in Belgium, Dewey in America, and many others have not worked in vain. Each one, from his own personal viewpoint, has pointed out the faults in the old-fashioned school system. But all have agreed that the purpose of education is not to fill children with ready-made knowledge, and that the primary object of the school is not to cram pupils with facts so that they can recite them. They have ceaselessly insisted that a child is a child, a special sort of being who must have activity, and who only does well what arises out of his own need or interest.[22]

So, the first element in the reform program was to attack the psychology of learning, which was a central doctrine in Herbartian pedagogy, and to replace it with a child

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[21]Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, p. 145.

[22]Dottrens, *New Education*, pp. 43-44.

psychology capable of providing direction in the conduct of schooling appropriate to children.

Selbsttätigkeit--Self-activity

The second step in the socialist critique of the Herbartian school dealt with the respective role of the teacher and the place of activities in instruction. One account, favorable rather than critical, of the teacher's role in a Herbartian system, compares the teacher with a stage manager.

> In the process of instruction and training, *the educator needs not only select what ought to be learnt--in all aspects of learning*--but also to evolve methods of generating the necessary mental processes.[23]

This task was one

> . . . calling for endless effort, ingenuity, and the observation of individual pupils, in order to insure *unbroken, steady, upward progress, with no marking time and the minimum waste of energy on haphazard, unguided activity.*[24]

Herbartian theories included virtually no provisions for the active participation of the child; quite to the contrary, younger children, it was believed, should be restrained from such activity and ". . . external control must be at its strongest because the pupil has not yet

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[23]Curtis and Boultwood, *Short History*, p. 366. Italics mine.

[24]Ibid. Italics mine.

built up the knowledge of responsibilities and values necessary to lead him to control himself."[25]

Eduard Burger, who played an important role in Glöckel's school reform movement, was the foremost exponent and theoretician of activity methods in education. His *Arbeitspadagogik: Geschichte-Kritik-Wegweisung*, published in 1914 and revised in 1923, includes a definitive account of his views on education and served as the "Bible of the activity school."[26] Burger's activity pedagogy did emphasize physical activity on the part of the student but, of even greater significance, it emphasized student activity as the most effective and desirable means of teaching subject matter. One commentary on Burger makes the observation that

> the activity school is not merely characterized by the presence of a few manual training courses, but is a development of the learning school in that it uses instruction in the fields and open spaces; utilizes excursions, opportunistic learnings; welcomes the initiative, the questions, the discussions, the self-government of the pupils. Everything is utilized in an activity school which arises spontaneously out of the nature of the pupil or of the work in hand, for such things make the teacher-pupil relationship a cooperative relationship in communal work.[27]

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[25]Ibid., p. 362.

[26]Gustav G. Schoenchen, *The Activity School: A Basic Philosophy for Teachers* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940), p. 308. Burger's work is not available in English.

[27]Ibid., pp. 110-111.

In short, the new Austrian elementary school was to be one in which students participated actively in their learning and in the conduct of the school, no longer one characterized by rote memorization and drill under the constant supervision of a teacher.

One of the primary reasons for advocating such educative activities in the school was the belief that social and economic conditions had deprived many of the child's out of school activities of their educative value. After arguing for the value of pedagogical activities, for example, one student of Burger's work concludes that

> . . . we should be justified in excluding it from the school only if it could be demonstrated that provision for it has been made elsewhere. . . . the work on a farm is, under certain conditions, pedagogical activity in a true community of work. . . . But in general, because of changed social conditions, it is no longer safe to rely upon the family as the educational institution that it was in the past.[28]

Pedagogic activity, that activity which both engages the interest of the child and has instructional value, must, Glöckel and Burger argued, be adopted as the central feature of the school since social and economic changes had deprived children of the opportunity to actively participate in true communities of work in the process of growing up.

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[28]Ibid., p. 98.

Bodenständigkeit--The Accustomed Environment

The Habsburg *Volksschule* was, the reformers argued, ". . . a strange place where one occupied oneself with abstract things having nothing to do with daily life and experience."[29] The preoccupation of Herbartian educators with the nature of developed academic disciplines and established knowledge combined with their antipathy toward physical activity insured that they would avoid methods such as field trips or constructive activities as means of teaching geography or mathematics. Oscar Jászi provides a description of the way in which they approached civic education which illustrates this tendency. They were inclined, he writes

> . . . to describe Austrian history as the personal work of the Habsburgs; to extol all their military exploits, even the smallest; to eliminate as far as possible the memory of their defeats, errors or faults; to qualify all movements opposed to the Imperial Majesty as pure crimes or rebellions. . . .[30]

This approach, he argues, yielded few results but that

> . . . a new type of civic education could have found a way out: a civic education convincing the various peoples of the monarchy of the necessity and advantages of a mutual, economic and cultural co-operation. . . .[31]

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[29]Dengler, "Austria," p. 9.

[30]Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), p. 435.

[31]Ibid., p. 437.

In order to make the school an integral part of the child's world the reformers insisted that instructional activities in the early grades be conducted in, and with materials from, the immediate and familiar environment of the child. The child's activities were to be closely related to the home environment since only then could the school effectively bridge the gap between the child's everyday life and his school activities and ease the transition from home to school. In this fashion

> The class, the district, the city of the town, the whole country--all become the fertile soil from which the culture of the people springs. *The knowledge of surrounding things and persons forms that science of life and the fatherland* . . . which is at the center of the elementary school teaching.[32]

This demand for a concentrated study of the local environment and local ways of life accounts, in part, for the emphasis placed by the reformers on the excursion, a common activity in the reformed school.

Gesamtunterricht--Integrated Instruction

A central problem in Herbartian pedagogy was that of *correlation*; the formal steps of instruction were made necessary by the demand to correlate apparently unrelated ideas and disciplines to produce in the student an

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[32]Dottrens, *New Education*, pp. 48-49. Italics mine.

apperceptive mass of ideas which would approximate the conceptual structure of some mature, developed discipline. Providing for such correlation was the responsibility of the teacher since

> the curriculum should permit the correlation of the various courses of study; the content of the courses should be so arranged that the topics to be treated in the different lessons given on one day, or in one week, should be related to one another.[33]

The associationist, atomistic psychology of the Herbartians could not accommodate any notion of perception other than that of discrete elements; consequently knowledge was seen as something which had to be built up out of such elements and correlated to produce some cohesive whole. Their insistence on the passive nature of the child combined with this psychology deprived them of any consistent concept of *interest*; they were forced to endorse a twofold interpretation of the role and function of interest,

> It was the force which facilitated the apperception of new presentations, and it was the feeling of pleasure arising from the completion of a successful association of old and new ideas.[34]

Glöckel's reform program attempted to overcome the problems associated with the Herbartian concept of interest and the requirement for teacher planned correlation. The principle of concentrated or integrated

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[33] Curtis and Boultwood, *Short History*, p. 360.

[34] Ibid., p. 361.

instruction prohibited the division of school work into separate studies as well as the division of the school day into separate periods. Language, mathematics and other traditional school studies were to be taught indirectly through activities which would engage the child's interest.

Glöckel invited the developmental psychologist Karl Bühler to the staff of the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna in 1922; that institution had been established in 1920 by the reform division and placed under the leadership of Eduard Burger to provide teacher training seminars in reform pedagogy. Bühler's work provided Glöckel with a psychology ideally suited to the demands of the reform program, since

> like the Gestaltists, Bühler sought to show that theory making--organization--was a basic function of the human mind independent of associations of sense impressions or other "atoms of thought." The organizing and theorizing activity of the mind enjoyed a kind of priority which determined the kind of wholes with which one would deal as "elements" in thinking.[35]

In short, the reformers advocated an activity based instruction which would obviate the necessity to correlate the material of instruction by refusing to divide it in the first place.

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[35]Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, p. 147.

Arbeitsgemeinschaften--Cooperative Activity

The reform of social and civic education was to play a central role in the socialist reforms of elementary education. The reformers associated Herbartian pedagogy with the dynastic politics of Habsburg Austria and considered it wholly inappropriate for a democratic state. The slogan "Through self-activity to independence" summed up their opposition to the older system and their belief that

> in the Lernschule, primary emphasis must be put on knowledge and skills and on blind trust in, and submission to, authority. The Lernschule is a suitable instrument for preparing subjects; the Arbeitschule prepares citizens.[36]

The reformers believed, on instructional grounds as well as political grounds, that school activities must provide an opportunity for children to *participate in communities* working for some common and shared objective. Only through such participation was learning meaningful and only through such participation could the school remedy the educational deficiencies in social life produced by the divisive forces of urbanization and industrialization.

To counteract those forces and remedy those deficiencies the school was to be organized as a community of work:

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[36]Siegl, *Reform*, p. 37.

> First of all, the class itself . . . forms an Arbeitsgemeinschaft for the achievement of its daily tasks and . . . may be subdivided into a number of special Arbeitsgemeinschaft for such special work as the procuring of specimens for nature study, weather observation, etc. . . . Not only individual classes but schools in their entirety are regarded as Arbeitgemeinschaften. A number of schools have students' councils and are experimenting with student government. Here again, the extra curricula activities help to bring the student from different grades together and furnish a common center of interest and activity.[37]

The reorganization of the old school which had emphasized drill, docility and authority, both intellectual and political, into a community of work emphasizing participation and activity was motivated by socio-political considerations as well as educational and psychological ones.

In short, the Social Democrats attempted a thoroughgoing revision of the whole of elementary education in Austria. Virtually every characteristic of the schools was studied and modified to bring it into accordance with the requirements of the activity school model. Charles Gulick has written that

> . . . no brief description of these methods can do them justice. Perhaps it is not out of place to say that my observations of them, particularly in the case of my daughter who attended a Vienna school in which they were applied in somewhat modified form, convinced me of their outstanding excellence. Certainly, earnest efforts were made to avoid compartmentalization of knowledge, to encourage individual work, and to stimulate the instinct of workmanship.[38]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[38] Gulick, *Austria*, p. 563.

For the purposes of this investigation, however, one of the most important facts about the reform program is that Ludwig Wittgenstein was an active participant in it from 1920 through 1926.

Wittgenstein had apparently decided to prepare for a career as an elementary school teacher during his imprisonment in an Italian prisoner of war camp. According to Bartley he had reported that decision to friends just one week after his discharge from the army in late October of 1919 and

> . . . by September 16 he was enrolled in the Lehrerbildungsanstalt in the Kundmanngasse, one of the first Teacher Training Colleges operating under Glöckel's general direction.[39]

Wittgenstein's sister, Margarete, who was personally acquainted with Glöckel, had helped him make the arrangements with the educational authorities and had informed him of the newly organized reform program.

Bartley's work demonstrates that Wittgenstein was, in fact, an active participant in the school reform program. He describes several of the excursions taken by Wittgenstein and his classes, a variety of constructive activities employed in the classroom and the children's dictionary compiled by Wittgenstein and his

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[39]Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, p. 45.

students.[40] All of these were activities and practices strongly recommended in the guidelines of the reform program. Even the problems which Wittgenstein encountered with the local residents, particularly in Trattenbach and Otterthal, provide evidence of his close association with the reform program. It is not surprising to find such resistance in view of the fact that

> . . . there was a political wall around the city, and no Social Democratic teacher would venture into the conservative territory outside, any more than a Christian Socialist teacher would have the temerity to enter the Socialist precincts of the city.[41]

At any rate, Wittgenstein taught elementary school children in the Austrian countryside from 1920 through 1926. His approach to teaching, as innovative and successful as it was, did not differ substantially from that of other reform teachers apart from the fact that he tried to take the reforms to the countryside.[42]

This chapter has given us a picture of the educational context which framed Wittgenstein's teaching

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[40] Ibid., pp. 82-136. See Gulick, *Austria*, pp. 560-561 for information on the use of dialects in teaching language skills in the reform schools.

[41] Helen Constance Lahey, "The Development of Teacher Education in Austria" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1949), p. 525.

[42] Bartley's view is that Wittgenstein decided to teach in the provinces for ethical reasons; that he was, in effect, living his life according to Tolstoy. See Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, especially pp. 82-84 and 97-99 for a discussion of this point.

experience. The previous chapter provided a similar account of Dewey's work at the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago. In the chapter which follows I will continue my argument by reviewing the common elements of those educational experiments and illustrating their importance in understanding the technical philosophies of both Dewey and Wittgenstein.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY

> If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined *as the general theory of education.*
>
> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*

> I want to say: an education quite different from ours might also be the foundation for quite different concepts.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*

I stated in an earlier chapter that I intended to show how the educational experiments which we have been investigating worked to frame the later work done by both Dewey and Wittgenstein in technical philosophy. Furthermore, I said that I would argue that those educational experiences were such that their philosophical views would converge in certain respects. We have now discussed the educational programs separately but they should be compared directly in order to underscore their common characteristics.

1. Psychological foundations: The Austrian school reformers rejected Herbart's associationist psychology in favor of a developmental psychology which incorporated a view of the child as an active agent

rather than a passive object of instruction. Dewey's program included an attack on those same psychological views; against Herbart's positions he argued that ". . . our psychology shows us that ideas arise as the definition of activity and serve to direct that activity in new expressions," and he suggested that "we need a pedagogy which shall lay more emphasis upon securing in the school the conditions of direct experience and . . . constructive activities."[1]

2. The nature of the child: The Austrian reformers set out to create a school in which the students could actively participate in their own learning and in the conduct of the school. A school program centered on the child's activities was demanded by their view of the child's nature and the character of the learning experience. Again, Dewey argued in a similar vein for his own program:

> The fundamental principle is that the child is always a being with activities of his own, which are present and urgent and do not require to be "induced," "drawn out," or "developed," etc.; that the work of the educator, whether parent or teacher, consists solely in ascertaining, and in

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[1]John Dewey, "Interest in Relation to Training of the Will," *The Early Works, 1882-1898*, vol. 5, p. 141. For detailed discussions of Dewey's reactions to both the Herbartian Movement and the Child Study Movement in the United States, see Melvin C. Baker, *Foundations of John Dewey's Educational Theory* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1955), pp. 87-100.

> connecting with, these activities, furnishing them appropriate opportunities and conditions.[2]

3. School and community: The Austrian reformers recognized the need to make the school an integral part of the student's life. For them

> . . . the immediate environment of the child was, especially at the beginning, to be taken as the starting point for its education so that the child would hardly notice the transition from its home to school. In both it should find at first only what was known and familiar to it. The school should not be considered a strange place where one occupied oneself with abstract things having nothing to do with daily life and experience.[3]

Here too Dewey's views bear a striking resemblance to those of Glöckel and others. As I argued earlier, one of the primary objectives which Dewey hoped to achieve was that of bridging the gap between the home and school. In Dewey's words the problem was that of finding ways

> . . . to bring the school, now a place where the child comes, learns certain lessons, and then goes home, into closer relation with the home and neighborhood life; how bridge the gap, and break down the traditional barriers, which unfortunately now separate the school from the rest of the child's everyday life?[4]

4. Activity based curriculum: The Austrian reformers did away with the division of the school day into class periods and the division of the curriculum into disciplines in order to find a solution to the

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[2]John Dewey, "Results of Child-Study Applied to Education," *The Early Works*, vol. 5, p. 205.

[3]Dengler, *Austria*, p. 9.

[4]Mayhew and Edwards, *The Dewey School*, p. 24.

problem of correlation. Dewey's experimental curriculum employed the occupations as a device to solve that same problem.

5. Social and civic education: The Austrian reformers advocated an activity curriculum as a means of improving social and civic education. They considered the instructional program of the typical Habsburg elementary school appropriate only for the preparation of subjects, not free citizens. Dewey expressed similar views in his assessment of Herbartian methods when he wrote:

> Herbartianism seems to me essentially a schoolmaster's psychology, not the psychology of a child. It is the natural expression of a nation laying great emphasis upon authority and upon the formation of individual character in distinct and recognized subordination to the ethical demands made in war and in civil administration by that authority. It is not the psychology of a nation which professes to believe that every individual has within him the principle of authority, and that order means co-ordination, not subordination.[5]

In short, both programs attempted to replace a school curriculum based on specific disciplines with one based on activities. Both took this step in order to narrow the gap between the school and the larger society and make the school a more broadly educational institution. And finally, both were grounded in a scientific, developmental approach to child study which viewed the child as an active rather than a passive being.

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[5]Dewey, "Interest in Relation," p. 141.

Education and Philosophy: Dewey

A history of John Dewey's career in philosophy would include chapters describing the major phases in the development of his views; chapters with titles such as "Intuitionalism," "Absolute Idealism" and "Instrumentalism."[6] Dewey himself remarked that the extent to which his views had changed might make him appear ". . . to be unstable, chameleon-like, yielding one after another to many diverse and even incompatible forces."[7] Still, most current accounts of Dewey's intellectual development emphasize the continuities rather than the differences between the various phases of his philosophy and the extent to which many of the major themes of his mature philosophy can be identified in his earlier positions. I will illustrate the ways in which his pioneer work at the Laboratory School influenced his technical work in philosophy, particularly the influence of that experience in his shift from absolute idealism to

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[6]See Lewis E. Hahn, "Introduction: From Intuitionalism to Absolutism," in *The Early Works of John Dewey, 1882-1898*, vol. 1 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), pp. xxiii-xxxvii; and Lewis E. Hahn, "Dewey's Philosophy and Philosophic Method," in *Guide to the Works of John Dewey*, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), pp. 15-60 for an excellent general account of the historical development of Dewey's philosophy.

[7]John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, ed. Richard Bernstein (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 13.

instrumentalism. First I will provide a brief summary of the various stages of his philosophical development in order to clarify the context in which the school experience was influential.

Dewey's first encounter with philosophy came in the senior year curriculum at the University of Vermont. The senior year course was a tradition in American higher education based on the notion ". . . that after three years of somewhat specialized study in languages and sciences, the last year was reserved for an introduction into serious intellectual topcis of wide and deep significance--an introduction into the world of ideas."[8] During that year H. A. P. Torrey stimulated Dewey's interest in philosophy and, after teaching for two years in an Oil City, Pennsylvania high school, he returned to Vermont to teach and study the history of philosophy privately with Torrey. Dewey described Torrey as a ". . . man of genuinely sensitive and cultivated mind . . ." who ". . . was, however, constitutionally timid, and never really let his mind go."[9] Since American academic philosophy during that period was primarily the province of the clergy and Scottish intuitionalism was favored by those of a clerical persuasion, it is not surprising that

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[8]Ibid., p. 4.

[9]Ibid., p. 5.

Torrey espoused and taught a version of that philosophy. It was Dewey's belief that Torrey could have become a leader in American philosophical circles had he been less constrained by religious preoccupations. But whether H. A. P. Torrey was a great philosopher caught up in theological irrelevancies or not, he did have a genuine and enthusiastic interest in philosophy sufficient to inspire Dewey and to convert him to intuitionalism, at least for a time.

Dewey's first two articles, "The Metaphysical Assumptions of Materialism" and "The Pantheism of Spinoza" were written and published during this intuitionalist period. I will not attempt to summarize these articles or even review the specific tenents of Scottish intuitionalism since those details would contribute nothing to the discussion here. As Dewey himself wrote:

> The articles sent were, as I recall them, highly schematic and formal; they were couched in the language of intuitionalism; of Hegel I was then ignorant. My deeper interests had not as yet been met, and in the absence of subject matter that would correspond to them, the only topics at my command were such as were capable of a merely formal treatment.[10]

That phase, Dewey argued, had no lasting influence on his later philosophy; he had, he says, simply ". . . learned the terminology of an intuitional philosophy, but it did

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[10]Ibid., p. 7.

not go deep, and in no way did it satisfy what I was dimly reaching for."[11]

In 1882, following the year of private study with Torrey, Dewey decided to make academic philosophy his career and began graduate studies at the Johns Hopkins University. During the two years that he was in attendance there he was profoundly influenced by the teaching of George Sylvester Morris and G. Stanley Hall. Lewis Hahn writes that

> the alacrity with which Dewey adopted Hegelian idealism after he began his graduate work with George Sylvester Morris at Johns Hopkins suggests that he was ready for it. . . . Hegel's idealism as interpreted by Morris . . . afforded an intellectual means of satisfying the young philosopher's craving for unification and provided an immense sense of release or liberation from the dualisms and sharp divisions set up by intuitionalism and New England culture. . . . With its treatment of human culture, social institutions, and the arts, this was a philosophy which, at least for a time, satisfied both Dewey's head and heart.[12]

Dewey was attracted to Hegelian philosophy for a variety of reasons; it incorporated a world view which emphasized unity and opposed divisions, he saw it as the most constructive and vital movement in philosophy at the time, and he believed that it addressed real and pressing social issues rather than the theological issues which were of such central importance in intuitionalism.

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[11]Ibid., p. 6.

[12]Hahn, "Dewey's Philosophy," pp. 17-18.

This final point deserves special emphasis since it establishes the importance which Dewey attached to social and political issues at an early stage in his philosophical career. He writes that

> social interests and problems from an early period had to me the intellectual appeal and provided the intellectual sustenance that many seem to have found primarily in religious questions. In undergraduate days I had run across . . . Harriet Martineau's exposition of Comte. . . . his idea of the disorganized character of Western modern culture, due to a disintegrative "individualism," and his idea of a synthesis of science that should be a regulative method of an organized social life, impressed me deeply. I found, as I thought, the same criticisms combined with a deeper and more far-reaching integration in Hegel.[13]

So, for a variety of reasons, Dewey adopted the Hegelian idealism expounded by George Sylvester Morris while a graduate student at Johns Hopkins. But he was also engaged in a serious study of experimental psychology with G. Stanley Hall and that experience would profoundly affect the development of his philosophical views.

Dewey's interest in experimental psychology would eventually move him away from Hegelian idealism, but initially scientific psychology seemed to him to support and reinforce Hegel's views. Hall's use of biological explanations employing the concepts of organism and environment reinforced Dewey's Hegelian synthesis of subject and object while "both its view of experience as continuous rather than as an affair of discrete sensations and ideas

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[13]Dewey, "From Absolutism," p. 12.

and its stress on the importance of specific and concrete . . . details fitted in with Dewey's idealism."[14] The interplay between Morris' Hegelian idealism and Hall's experimental psychology was to be a major factor in the development of Dewey's own philosophy of instrumentalism.

Morton White's excellent account of Dewey's shift from Hegelian idealism to instrumentalism[15] stresses the tension between Dewey's idealistic philosophy and his interest in scientific psychology to such an extent that the central thesis of his book seems to be that Dewey's philosophical development should be seen as Darwinian variations on Hegelian themes. He first illustrates Morris' influence on Dewey and then traces the ways in which Hall's influence worked to produce the six major components of Dewey's philosophy of instrumentalism: (1) the opposition to dualisms (e.g. between subject and object, mind and body or means and ends); (2) the naturalism of Dewey's mature views; (3) the concept of the cultural matrix of human behavior; (4) the concept of the biological matrix of human behavior; (5) the view that thought is a process of inquiry which occurs in problematic situations; and (6) the opposition to formalism. In each case he argues that some original Hegelian

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[14]Hahn, "Dewey's Philosophy," p. 20.

[15]Morton G. White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

doctrine was progressively modified by the Darwinian perspective of Hall's experimental psychology to produce some component of the core of instrumentalist philosophy.

An analysis of this sort does, of course, provide valuable insight into some of the factors which played an important role in producing Dewey's instrumentalism, but it cannot tell the most important part of that story. Dewey, for example, tells us that

> upon the whole, the forces that have influenced me have come from persons and from situations more than from books--not that I have not, I hope, learned a great deal from philosophical writings, but that what I have learned from them has been technical in comparison with what I have been forced to think upon and about because of some experience in which I found myself entangled.[16]

White himself, anticipating objections of this sort, concedes that his essay treats only of Dewey's philosophical writings but counters that even though it is not a history which places Dewey's philosophy in its cultural setting ". . . it is a necessary condition for one."[17] My intention is not to criticize Morton White for writing this book rather than another, but I do want to emphasize the *fundamental* importance of those *experiences* in which Dewey found himself entangled to a proper understanding of the *origins* of Dewey's instrumentalism.

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[16]Dewey, "From Absolutism," p. 13.

[17]White, *The Origin*, p. 149.

Dewey identifies and discusses four factors which contributed to his shift from Hegelian idealism to instrumentalism: (1) his experience with the practice and theory of education; (2) a growing concern on his part with certain logical problems concerning the relationship between scientific beliefs and values; (3) certain aspects of William James' *Psychology*, especially the James-Lange theory of emotions and (4) his recognition of the importance of communication and participation as distinctively social categories.[18] Dewey emphasizes the central importance of his interest in education, especially the education of the young by noting that it was not only an interest but one which fused his previously separate interests in psychology and social issues. He then remarks that

> although a book called *Democracy and Education* was for many years that in which my philosophy, such as it is, was most fully expounded, I do not know that philosophic critics, as distinct from teachers, have ever had recourse to it. I have wondered whether such facts signified that philosophers in general, although they are themselves usually teachers, have not taken education with sufficient seriousness for it to occur to them that any rational person could actually think it possible that *philosophizing should focus about education as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical, come to a head.* At all events, this handle is offered to any subsequent critic who may wish to lay hold of it.[19]

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[18]Dewey, "From Absolutism," pp. 14-18.

[19]Ibid., p. 14. Italics mine.

In short, Dewey's experience with the affairs of elementary education exerted a pervasive influence on his philosophical deliberations, both as a subject of philosophical deliberation and in unifying previously disparate interests of philosophical importance.

Irrespective of the fact that in 1934 Dewey identified his educational activities and interests as the key to his philosophical work, relatively few philosophers since then have taken his hint seriously. No one, to my knowledge, has attempted to illustrate carefully and fully the relationship between educational practice and philosophical deliberation which contributed to the development of Dewey's instrumentalism. Many current analyses of his philosophy make passing reference to the importance of his work in education but few attempt to investigate the specific influence that work had on his technical philosophy. H. S. Thayer, for example, illustrates how certain of Dewey's educational theories influenced his thought in logic and epistemology but his observation that ". . . the experience in education effected important modifications of the logical and ethical ideas Dewey had originally brought to pedagogy,"[20] is nearly devoid of specific illustrations.

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[20]H. S. Thayer, *Meaning and Action: A Study of American Pragmatism* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973), p. 110.

In his recent study of American pragmatism Charles Morris makes the observation that *Democracy and Education* represents ". . . better than any other work the unity of Dewey's thought and the motive of his life,"[21] but his commentary on Dewey's educational work is restricted to an appendix on Dewey as *educator*. Likewise, Israel Scheffler's analysis offers separate treatments of Dewey's technical philosophy and his social and educational theory; the reader is left to discover any significant connections between the two realms.[22] There are other examples of this sort, too numerous in fact to discuss; suffice it to say that most analyses of Dewey's work in technical philosophy fail to give sufficient attention to the influence of his educational experience on the formulation of that philosophy.[23] Furthermore, a proper understanding of Dewey's philosophy can be had only by viewing it against the appropriate broader

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[21]Charles Morris, *The Pragmatic Movement in American Philosophy* (New York: George Braziller, 1970), p. 158.

[22]Israel Scheffler, *Four Pragmatists: A Critical Introduction to Peirce, James, Mead, and Dewey* (New York: Humanities Press, 1974).

[23]One interesting exception to this state of affairs can be found in W. T. Feldman, *The Philosophy of John Dewey: A Critical Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934). Feldman criticizes Dewey for being preoccupied with educational issues and argues that this leads Dewey to erroneous logical and metaphysical views.

context--and that context is, above all else, that of the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago.

Dewey tells us that the primary purpose of the Laboratory School was to test psychological and philosophical hypotheses and that

> the feeling that the philosophy of knowledge and conduct which the writer entertained should find a test through practical application in experience was a strong influence in starting the work of the school.[24]

My claim is basically that Dewey's views about educational matters were not altered substantially after say 1897 while his technical philosophy was significantly transformed after that date. Furthermore, there is sufficient reason seriously to entertain the idea that the educational test to which Dewey put his philosophical and psychological doctrines was instrumental in bringing about that transformation. A complete analysis of this question, of the sort required is, of course, beyond the scope of this dissertation. In the following chapter I will show how Dewey's Laboratory School experience influenced his thinking on some aspects of the single issue of linguistic meaning. But for now, we must turn to an investigation of the overall influence which Wittgenstein's experience in the Austrian school reform movement exercised on his philosophical thinking.

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[24]Mayhew and Edwards, *The Dewey School*, p. 464.

Education and Philosophy: Wittgenstein

The previous section of this chapter began with a list of the chapters which would be included in a history of Dewey's philosophical career. It was possible to do so in virtue of the fact that even though interpretations and critical assessments of his philosophy differ, sometimes substantially, the course of his philosophical development has not itself been a matter of philosophical controversy. This, unfortunately, is not so in Wittgenstein's case; not only do the various interpretations of his work differ drastically but the very question of whether his later work is a logical extension or a complete repudiation of his earlier work is itself controversial.

In fact, interpretations of Wittgenstein's philosophy vary, in a word, wildly. He has been classified as, among other categories, a logical positivist, a linguistic analyst and an advocate of something called therapeutic positivism. His philosophical works have been compared with Zen Buddhism, symphonic music and the theatrical productions of Peter Handke. Practically everyone, including Schopenhauer and Kant, Kierkegaard and Tolstoy, Russell, Frege and Moore has been nominated as a primary source of influence on his philosophy. His main interests and primary subject matters have been

described variously as linguistic, psychological, logico-mathematical, mystical, epistemological, metaphysical (or anti-metaphysical) and ethical. In short, various commentaries on Wittgenstein and his philosophy agree on little and disagree on much, including the extent to which his later work repudiates or develops his earlier work.

Norman Malcolm's essay on Wittgenstein in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* presents what was for many years the most commonly accepted view of the history of Wittgenstein's philosophy. His work, Malcolm argues, falls rather neatly into two distinct periods with the early period represented by the *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* and the later by the *Philosophical Investigations*. Malcolm describes the *Tractatus* as ". . . a comprehensive work of extreme originality,"[25] and a considerable part of the *Investigations* as ". . . an attack, either explicit or implicit, on the earlier work."[26] From this point of view Wittgenstein's career appears to be

> . . . unique in the history of philosophy--a thinker producing, at different periods of his life, two highly original systems of thought, each system the result of many years of intensive labors, each expressed in an

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[25]Norman Malcolm. "Wittgenstein, Ludwig Josef Johann," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. and The Free Press and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1967), vol. 8, p. 329.

[26]Ibid., p. 33.

> elegant and powerful style, each greatly influencing contemporary philosophy, and the second being a criticism and a rejection of the first.[27]

Other accounts of the relationship between Wittgenstein's early and later work take issue with various elements of the one offered by Malcolm.

Anthony Kenny, for example, identifies three positions which he believes were central ones in the *Tractatus*: (1) a metaphysical atomism with absolutely simple objects designated by names; (2) Wittgenstein's belief that formal logic provides a key to the essence of language; and (3) a picture theory of meaning. He claims that critics commonly draw contrasts between Wittgenstein's early and later work on each and every one of the three positions. He argues, however, that "the first of these contrasts seems to me accurate, the second partly accurate and partly misleading, and the third almost wholly misleading."[28]

K. T. Fann also argues for the position that there is greater continuity between Wittgenstein's early and later work than is allowed for in Malcolm's account. He distinguishes between a conception of the tasks of philosophy and the methods employed to perform those tasks and argues that

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[27]Ibid.

[28]Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 220.

> Wittgenstein's later *conception* of the nature and tasks of philosophy can best be seen as a 'development' of his earlier views, while his later *method* should be regarded as the 'negation' of his earlier method.[29]

There is, at any rate, a variety of greatly divergent opinion about the degree of continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy as well as a multitude of disputes over particular interpretations of both the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. Since I do not intend to provide a comprehensive analysis of Wittgenstein's philosophical views, a survey of those opinions and disputes would contribute little or nothing to this discussion. I will, however, base my discussion of the impact of Wittgenstein's educational experience on his technical philosophy in large part on Stephen Toulmin's account of that philosophy.

In an article written for *Encounter* magazine, Toulmin argues that several commonly accepted notions about Wittgenstein are misconceptions. He argues, in effect, that interpretations of Wittgenstein's work (e.g., the one offered by Malcolm) which emphasize the central importance of epistemological questions and see the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* as blueprints for the philosophical movements of logical positivism and linguistic analysis misconstrue the central point and

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[29]K. T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. xiii.

purpose of his work. He offers and defends the following theses against such interpretations:

1. Wittgenstein was never a positivist;
2. He was never deeply concerned about epistemology;
3. He was not a "linguistic philosopher";
4. There were not "two Wittgensteins," having different philosophical questions and concerns--the author of the *Tractatus*, and the author of the *Investigations*;
5. There were not even two distinct Wittgensteins--one the technical philosopher, the other the "thinker."[30]

Toulmin states that misconceptions of Wittgenstein's views in the first four cases can be remedied largely by more careful attention to the textual evidence but the fifth is more deeply rooted and can be remedied only through a careful inquiry into the cultural and intellectual context in which Wittgenstein lived. A brief discussion of the first four points is in order before we turn to a more detailed discussion of the final one.

Toulmin does not deny the obvious historical fact that the *Tractatus* became a central and important document in the logical positivist movement; he simply denies that it was well suited to play that role. The anti-metaphysical strand in Wittgenstein's thought, for example, was much more specific and less indiscriminate than the anti-metaphysical attitudes held by the members of the Vienna Circle. As Toulmin observes:

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[30]Stephen Toulmin, "Ludwig Wittgenstein," *Encounter* 32 (January 1969): 60.

> For him, the word "metaphysics" was no blanket denunciation, to be used cavalierly to sweep aside whatever was not "meaningful," or "factually verifiable," as of no importance. Rather, he used the word in a highly specific sense--to designate the kind of philosophical discussion which "obliterates the distinction between [i.e., confuses] factual and conceptual investigations" (*Zettel*, 458)--and his condemnation of metaphysics extended no further than this.[31]

Furthermore, Toulmin argues, Wittgenstein believed that only the unsayable, including metaphysics, has any real value; this is a far cry from the conclusion drawn by logical positivists.

On the second point Toulmin argues that Wittgenstein's use of the term "atomic facts" in the *Tractatus*, his association with Bertrand Russell and Russell's preface to the *Tractatus* (which was disavowed by Wittgenstein) all contributed to an epistemological interpretation which erroneously associated atomic facts with sense-data. Russell's program was that of ". . . sifting out, and restating in their true 'logical forms,' those beliefs which a rational man could regard as having a sound basis in 'hard data.'"[32] Consequently Russell treated Wittgenstein's unit propositions as units of knowledge as well as units of language, but Wittgenstein himself was interested

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 61.

> . . . less with the foundations of *knowledge* than with the nature and limits of *language*. . . . The arguments of his *Tractatus* acquired significance for epistemology only if viewed through the spectacles of Russell or Mach; for then--and only then--could Wittgenstein's problem about the limits of the "sayable" be seen as dovetailing with Russell's epistemological question, "Seeing how our language relates to the world, what foundation can we then find for our *knowledge* of that external world?"[33]

In asserting that Wittgenstein was not a linguistic philosopher Toulmin is, again, not denying that the *Investigations* contributed to the movement in philosophy known as "linguistic analysis"; nor is he denying that Wittgenstein was centrally concerned with language and the way it operates in our lives. He is denying that Wittgenstein's immediate concern in philosophy was to develop an ideal language, like Carnap, or develop schemes for classifying and giving accounts of speech-acts, like J. L. Austin. Wittgenstein's interest, he argues, was ". . . in language as an element in a larger inquiry" and

> . . . when we recognize the nature of Wittgenstein's deeper philosophical aims--to which his theories of language were subordinate--we shall find that he was no more of a "linguistic philosopher" than (say) Plato, or Kant, or Schopenhauer.[34]

Toulmin stresses the continuity in Wittgenstein's philosophy against those who emphasize the differences between his earlier and later works. He argues that even

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[33]Ibid., p. 62.

[34]Ibid.

though "at first sight, two books could hardly be less alike than the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*" we should take the two books as successive attacks, using different methods, on one and the same group of problems."[35] Those problems were, he argues, transcendental ones taken up by Wittgenstein after Kant and Schopenhauer. The Kantian tasks of exploring the scope and limits of the reason and demonstrating the consequences of attempts to cross those limits were redefined first by Schopenhauer and finally restated by Wittgenstein as: "(i) exploring the scope--and the intrinsic limits--of *language*; and (ii) demonstrating the consequences of our irrepressible tendency to run up against, and attempt to overlap, those unavoidable limits."[36]

Toulmin's final point concerns the view of Wittgenstein held by most of his colleagues and students at Cambridge. In another source he says of Wittgenstein's colleagues:

> It scarcely seems to have occurred to them that there might be more than a chance connection between the man who rejected all his traditional privileges as a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was never seen around the town except wearing an open-necked shirt and one or two zipper-fastened parkas, and who insisted passionately--as a point of ethics rather than aesthetics--that the only kind of movies worth seeing were Westerns, and (on the other hand) the philosopher whose brilliant

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 63.

> variations on the theories of Frege, Russell and G. E. Moore were doing so much to carry forward the English philosophical argument.[37]

The *Encounter* article attempts to remedy this misconception by arguing that a ". . . 'spiritual attitude' . . . informed the whole of Wittgenstein's work,"[38] a pervasive attitude which underlay his technical philosophy, intellectual preoccupations and way of life. This spiritual attitude included the view that the realm of facts and values were completely dissociated. Wittgenstein was preoccupied with ethico-religious matters, lived a life which demonstrated his ethical concerns and developed a philosophy which dismissed as irrelevant whatever could be stated in language. Be that as it may, my specific interest is in Toulmin's *next* step in his essay. He asks ". . . might we perhaps, penetrate behind this absolute dichotomy of facts and values, to some yet deeper layer of thought,"[39] and his response provides us with a clue for our investigation.

Toulmin's initial response to this question concludes that the dichotomy between facts and values appears to be the conclusion to any account of

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[37]Toulmin and Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, pp. 20-21.

[38]Toulmin, "Ludwig Wittgenstein," p. 64.

[39]Ibid.

Wittgenstein's philosophy, but he qualifies that response with the further observation that Wittgenstein's letters to Engelmann contain hints that some further investigation might be warranted. He speculates that

> . . . we could follow up these hints in either of two directions, psychological or sociological--by looking more closely either at Wittgenstein's own personal make-up, or at the historical setting in which his mind was formed.[40]

After further discussion he rejects the psychological hypothesis but concludes that the sociological one might offer real possibilities for furthering our understanding of Wittgenstein. He does not pursue that idea further in the *Encounter* article but returns to it several years later with *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, written in collaboration with Allan Janik.

This book begins with a comprehensive account of the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of Vienna during the period immediately preceding the First World War and the fall of the Monarchy. The authors describe a number of developments in a variety of different areas of intellectual and artistic activity, and conclude that

> . . . by the year 1900, the linked problems of communication, authenticity and symbolic expression had been faced in parallel in all the major fields of thought and art. . . . So the stage was set for a *philosophical* critique of language, given in completely general terms.[41]

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Toulmin and Janik, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 119.

In the next step of their analysis Toulmin and Janik focus more explicitly on philosophical matters. They describe the first attempt to work out such a critique and identify the three major philosophical traditions which were available for such an undertaking as:

> (1) the neoempiricism of Ernst Mach, with its emphasis on "sense impressions" and natural science; (2) the Kantian analysis of "representation" and the "schemata," regarded as determining the forms of experience and judgment, and its continuation by the antiphilosopher Arthur Schopenhauer; and (3) the anti-intellectual approach to moral and aesthetic issues put forward by that other antiphilosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, and echoed in the novels and essays of Leo Tolstoy.[42]

They argue that Fritz Mauthner's attempt to work out such a critique on Machian principles supported Kierkegaard's central ethical claim, ". . . namely, the view that 'the meaning of life' is not a matter for rational debate, cannot be given 'intellectual foundations,' and is in essence a 'mystical'matter."[43] But, they continue, since Mauthner's analysis accomplished this by denying the possibility of all genuine knowledge--not just ethical knowledge--it was less than completely satisfactory. In view of these developments they conclude that the most pressing problem facing Vienna's intellectuals was that of developing a critique of language which would (1) avoid Mauthner's skepticism about logic and science

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[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 165.

by demonstrating how descriptive language is used to represent matters of fact and (2) continue to support Kierkegaard's ethical views.

The third stage of their analysis is an interpretation of the *Tractatus* which emphasizes the necessity of reading it as a representative work of Viennese philosophy produced in the cultural and intellectual context of that society. According to this interpretation the *Tractatus* should be read as an attempt to solve the problem described above by using logical instruments developed by Frege and Russell. Those logical instruments

> . . . permitted Wittgenstein to show how far ordinary factual or descriptive language can legitimately be thought of (even if only metaphorically) as getting its literal, straight forward meaning in the same kind of way as the "mathematical models" around which Hertz had built his account of scientific knowledge. Yet, in the last resort, the fundamental point of this whole critique was to underline the ethical point that all questions about value lie *outside* the scope of such ordinary factual or descriptive language.[44]

Since my primary interest is that of investigating the forces which influenced Wittgenstein's later work I will discuss his early work no further.

Toward the end of his *Encounter* article, Toulmin raises, but does not answer, a historical question about the sources of Wittgenstein's later work. We do not yet have the careful and comprehensive philosophical and

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[44]Ibid., p. 196.

historical study which would illuminate the *Investigations* in the way that Toulmin and Janik's work has illuminated the *Tractatus*. Such a task goes far beyond the scope of this dissertation; I will, however, identify some of the possible sources of Wittgenstein's later work which warrant further inquiry and, in the following chapter, provide one extended example of the way in which his participation in the educational reform movement influenced his later work in philosophy.

Biographical sketches of Wittgenstein and discussions of his later philosophy usually mention Frank Ramsey, Piero Sraffa and William James as having influenced some aspect of his later work. Sraffa's method of "speculative anthropology" is said to have provided a model for Wittgenstein's later use of imaginative examples and hypothetical cultures. The pragmatic tendencies of his later work are attributed in part to his long discussions with Frank Ramsey, a logician who was strongly influenced by C. S. Peirce. Those same pragmatic tendencies were reinforced by his reading of William James, whose work also supplied him with numerous examples of psychological subject matter.[45] Other names are sometimes mentioned; Eduard Spranger, for example, is often cited as the source of the notion of forms of life.

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[45]Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*, pp. 45-50.

But few of those who have written commentaries on Wittgenstein's later work have even attempted to provide any account of: (1) *why* Wittgenstein was influenced by, e.g., the work of William James; (2) the ways in which various sources of influence might be connected; or (3) the possible relevance of what Wittgenstein was attending to and doing between, say, 1920 and 1929.

The Austrian educational reform movement clearly constitutes one context which might shed some light on these matters; nevertheless, the philosophical significance of the six years Wittgenstein spent as an elementary school teacher is generally ignored. Only a few critics have considered those years to be of sufficient importance to warrant any consideration in their accounts of Wittgenstein's philosophical work. Bartley, for example, discusses Wittgenstein's teaching experience in some detail and argues that

> . . . he was, throughout the twenties, developing and revising some of the most technical aspects of his philosophy. Those who suppose that he dropped philosophy during this period only to be suddenly catapulted back into it again . . . are misinformed. Again, Wittgenstein was, in a manner he was not to repeat, a *participant*, acting throughout these six years in the Austrian school reform program. Here too he did not simply follow; he innovated educationally in an individual way that was to influence his technical philosophy.[46]

K. T. Fann also argues that "the effects of his teaching experience on his later philosophy is quite evident

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[46]Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, p. 84.

in both his lectures and writings,"[47] and he illustrates that effect with several examples. In fact, he concludes, "It would not be an exaggeration to say that the early Wittgenstein's ivory tower view of language was brought down to earth by his elementary school pupils."[48]

As we saw earlier, both Karl Bühler's work in developmental psychology and Eduard Burger's work in the theory of activity pedagogy were closely associated with the school reform program. Bartley argues that there are

> . . . striking similarities between some of Buhler's leading ideas and those of the later Wittgenstein. Among these are: (1) their opposition to psychological and logical atomism; (2) in the place of atomism, a contextualism or configurationism; (3) a radical linguistic conventionalism built up in opposition to essentialist doctrines; (4) the idea of "imageless thought."[49]

I suspect that Bartley is in error about some of these claims but, accurate or not, he does not consider other ways in which Bühler might well have influenced Wittgenstein. Bühler's work does, in fact, treat of a number of subjects which are central preoccupations in Wittgenstein's later work. One book, for example, discusses, among other things, the following topics:

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[47]Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*, p. 44.

[48]Ibid., p. 45.

[49]Bartley, *Wittgenstein*, p. 149.

how the speech of children develops into meaningful communication; the various functions of speech; the importance of social factors in the development of language; and, the crucial role of games in the mental development of the child--including the development of language.[50]

No one, on the other hand, has even attempted to investigate Burger's work either for doctrines which might have had some influence on Wittgenstein's later work or for subjects which might have been incorporated by Wittgenstein. Burger's work does contain extended discussions of subjects which at first glance correspond with many of Wittgenstein's later preoccupations, and the correspondence is close enough to warrant further investigation. Burger's system, for example, employs what he calls empirical, logical and technical heuristics and his *Arbeitspadagogik* illustrates each of these in the teaching of geography. His empirical heuristics includes the methods used to promote the formation of concepts such as length and breadth; logical heuristics encompasses the methods used to promote independent judgment; and technical heuristics deals with the methods used to promote expressional activity

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[50]See, for example, Karl Bühler, *The Mental Development of the Child* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1930).

such as drawing, constructing models or using language.[51] At least two aspects of Burger's work appears to warrant further investigation as possible sources of Wittgenstein's later work.

First, the notion of indirect instruction is a central one in Burger's activity pedagogy. Using his heuristics, one does not instruct a child in how to use language, construct models to represent geographical features, make judgments or form concepts in a certain way; rather one employs methods which will lead the child to use language, construct models, make judgments or form concepts in a certain way. This view of indirect instruction might very well have influenced Wittgenstein's thinking on the nature of indirect communication--apart from the rather obvious observation that Wittgenstein employs a heuristic method of instruction in his later work. Second, Burger's account of the technical heuristic treats the use of language as an activity which, like drawing, model construction and map making ". . . is a long series of related acts each of which brings in concepts, judgments and will."[52]

At any rate, the Austrian school reform movement deserves more attention than it characteristically

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[51]See Schoenchen, *The Activity School*, Part II.

[52]Ibid., p. 163.

gets in discussions of Wittgenstein's later views. I suspect that a comprehensive study would yield further information about Bühler and Burger, and also shed some light on the character of the influence of, say, Ramsey and James by specifying more clearly what Wittgenstein was about when he wrote the *Investigations*.

In the last few chapters I have described the Dewey school and the movement to reform education in Austria. I have argued in this chapter that there is good reason to take those educational contexts seriously when discussing the philosophical views of Dewey or Wittgenstein. In the chapter which follows I will illustrate that argument with an account of the origins and functions of Dewey's notion of occupations and Wittgenstein's notion of forms of life.

CHAPTER VI

OCCUPATIONS, FORMS OF LIFE AND MEANING

> I believe that education which does not occur through forms of life, forms that are worth living for their own sake, is always a poor substitute for the genuine reality and tends to cramp and to deaden.
>
> John Dewey,
> "My Pedagogic Creed"

> "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false"?--It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein,
> *Philosophical Investigations*

Occupations

Dewey was working out the main components of his philosophy of language and meaning at the same time that he was involved with the experiment in education at the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago. When the experiment began Dewey had been struggling for several years to find a way to incorporate his interest in modern psychology into the philosophical framework of his absolute idealism. However, when he left Chicago in 1904, it was clear that the major outlines of his

instrumentalism had been worked out.[1] The occupations which played such an important role in Dewey's experimental school doubtless had an impact upon the philosophical ideas which, by 1904, had largely displaced absolute idealism in Dewey's thought. In the section which follows I will show that (1) Dewey originally employed the notion of occupations as an educational device, (2) he later generalized occupations and advocated its use as an explanatory principle in psychology and (3) he further generalized the notion and employed it as a philosophical principle in his instrumentalist conception of logic.

The occupations, it will be remembered, performed several functions in the laboratory school curriculum. They insured continuity of development by providing the child with appropriate and engaging activities which directed the child's impulses into intellectually and socially desirable ways of thinking and doing. They also insured greater continuity of experience by relating the learning activities of the school more closely to those the child encountered in

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[1]See, for example, John Dewey et al., *Studies in Logical Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903).

everyday life.[2] Dewey summed up the main features of the program and the occupations when he wrote:

> Attention may again be called to that of having the school represent a genuine community life; and to that of a study of the individual child, with a view of having his activities properly express his capacities, tastes and needs. Attention may again be called to the principle of *indirect* training, and the consequent necessary emphasis upon initiating the proper *process* rather than securing any immediate outward *product*. . . .[3]

The occupations, in short, were the means by which the school was to provide the broadly educational experiences which were no longer provided through full participation in community activities. Our question is whether or not Dewey employed the notion of occupations--or some functionally equivalent notion--in his later philosophical works. The answer, in a word, is: yes.

In 1902 Dewey wrote an article in which he criticized the psychology of the day and advocated a new method for psychological studies. He argued that psychological investigations had produced a great deal of unconnected information about a variety of unrelated human traits but no coherent account of mind. He contrasted this situation with that in the biological sciences where concepts were employed which represented

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[2]Arthur G. Wirth, *John Dewey as Educator: His Design for Work in Education (1894-1904)* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), pp. 131-133.

[3]John Dewey, "Plan of Organization of the University Primary School," *The Early Works*, vol. 5, p. 232.

the various elements of an organism in a related pattern. Psychologists would make comparable progress, he argued, only when they came to ". . . recognize that mind has a pattern, a scheme of arrangement in its constituent elements."[4] He recommended that psychologists undertake an evolutionary study of various social groups and cultures. He then states that this

> . . . point of view commits us to the conviction that mind, whatever else it may be, is at least an organ of service for the control of environment in relation to the ends of the life process.
>
> *If we search in any social group for the special functions to which mind is thus relative, occupations at once suggest themselves.* Occupations determine the fundamental modes of activity, and hence control the formation and use of habits. These habits, in turn, are something more than practical and overt. "Apperceptive masses" and associated tracts of necessity conform to the dominant activities. The occupations determine the chief modes of satisfaction, the standards of success and failure. Hence they furnish the working classifications and definitions of value; they control the desire processes. Moreover, they decide the sets of objects and relations that are important, and thereby provide the content or material of attention, and the qualities that are interestingly significant. The directions given to mental life thereby extend to emotional and intellectual characteristics. So fundamental and pervasive is the group of occupational activities that it affords the scheme or pattern of the structural organization of mental traits. *Occupations integrate special elements into a functioning whole.*[5]

This call for a new approach to psychological investigation is based on a generalized application of the

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[4]John Dewey, "Interpretation of the Savage Mind," in *Philosophy, Psychology and Social Practice*, ed. Joseph Ratner (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 283.

[5]Ibid., pp. 283-284. Italics mine.

notion of occupations. Dewey now advocates its use as an explanatory principle which will allow the psychologist to give a coherent theory of mind.

For the purposes of this account, two features of Dewey's essay deserve further comment:

1. He was generalizing the notion of occupations in order to provide a different account of mind from the one he had previously endorsed rather than explicating the theory behind the laboratory school experiment. There is no evidence that the notion of occupations had *any* prior theoretical importance for Dewey apart from its role in the educational program.

2. The essay anticipates many of the themes which became central in Dewey's later philosophy. In the closing paragraph of the essay he writes:

> In conclusion, let me point out that the adjustment of habits to ends, through the medium of a problematic, doubtful, precarious situation, is the structural form upon which present intelligence and emotion are built. It remains the ground pattern.[6]

This claim was to be the central thesis of later works such as *How We Think*, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, *Human Nature and Conduct*, *Experience and Nature* and others.

Dewey argued in the 1902 essay that the central task of psychology should be seen as that of describing

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[6]Ibid., p. 294.

". . . the formation of mental patterns appropriate to agricultural, military, professional and technological and trade pursuits, and the reconstruction and overlaying of the original hunting schema."[7] Just one year later he and several of his colleagues published the first comprehensive statement of instrumentalist philosophy, *Studies in Logical Theory*. In the introductory essay of that volume[8] Dewey discussed the instrumentalist conception of the methods, problems and subject matter of logic. Logic, he argued,

> . . . deals with this question: How does one type of functional situation and attitude in experience pass out of and into another; for example, the technological or utilitarian into the aesthetic, the aesthetic into the religious, the religious into the scientific, and this into the socio-ethical and so on?[9]

This claim was part of an attack on those formulations of the central problem of logic which Dewey believed were grounded on metaphysical or epistemological requirements. He argued that logic seen as a general account of the relation of thought to reality represented

> . . . an attempt to discuss the antecedents, data, forms, and objectives of thought, apart from reference to

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[7]Ibid.

[8]John Dewey, "Thought and Its Subject-Matter: The General Problem of Logical Theory," *Studies*, pp. 1-22, reprinted in John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1916).

[9]Dewey, *Experimental Logic*, pp. 97-98.

> particular position occupied and particular part played in the growth of experience. . . .[10]

Attempts to do this, he argued, produced ". . . results . . . not so much either true or false as they are radically meaningless--because they are considered apart from limits."[11]

Against such views Dewey advocated an instrumentalist account of logic; one which would

> . . . (1) . . . strive to hit upon the common denominator in the various situations which are antecedent . . . to thought . . .; (2) . . . attempt to show how typical features in the specific antecedents of thought call out typical modes of thought-reaction; (3) . . . attempt to state the nature of the specific consequences in which thought fulfils its career.[12]

This view, that logic is the natural history of thought, is a further extension and more generalized application of the notion of occupations. Dewey argued, for example, that the instrumentalist approach made it possible to bring logical theory to terms with psychology conceived of as ". . . the natural history of the various attitudes and structures through which experiencing passes. . . ."[13] In fact he closed the essay with the following remark:

> . . . if it [philosophy] can define its work more clearly, it can concentrate its energy upon its own characteristic problem: *the genesis and functioning*

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[10]Ibid., p. 85.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., pp. 83-84.

[13]Ibid., p. 94.

in experience of various typical interests and occupations with reference to one another.[14]

In summary, the 1902 and 1903 essays provided Dewey with a plan of attack as well as a conceptual framework for much of his later work. Taken together they propose (1) that mind (i.e., the way in which the emotional and intellectual elements of the psyche are related) is a function of the fundamental interests and occupations which characterize a society, and (2) that the singular task of philosophy is that of providing a general account of the genesis of various interests and occupations, their function in experience and their relationships with one another. If this conclusion is correct, then Dewey's later philosophical works should be taken as steps in carrying out this program, i.e., as providing a genetic account of how we think, how we inquire, how we experience art, how we value and so on as well as how our inquiring is related to our valuing, our experience of art to our reflection, and so on.

The philosophical importance of the notion of occupations lies in its contribution to the method of analysis that Dewey employs in each of these subsequent works but he does not restate and defend it in each and

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[14]Ibid., p. 102. Italics mine.

every case.[15] That, however, is no mean contribution. As Dewey himself observed:

> Philosophy, defined as such a logic, makes no pretense to be an account of a closed and finished universe. Its business is not to secure or guarantee any particular reality or value. *Per Contra*, it gets the significance of a method.[16]

In this final stage then, Dewey applied the notion of occupations as a methodological principle for philosophical deliberation. In that capacity it functioned to define and delimit the subject matter and problems of philosophy.

Forms of Life

The expression "forms of life" has been the source of a great deal of debate and disagreement among critics of Wittgenstein's later philosophy. The extent of that disagreement can be seen, for example, in J. F. M. Hunter's account, "'Forms of Life' in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*."[17] Hunter

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[15]The term does not disappear from use altogether. Dewey continued to make use of it in all of his subsequent educational works and in others as well. See, for example, John Dewey, *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1933), pp. 5, 216-219; *The Public and Its Problems* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1927), pp. 151-164, esp. 160; and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1938), pp. 42-43.

[16]Dewey, *Experimental Logic*, p. 98.

[17]J. F. M. Hunter, "'Forms of Life' in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*," in *Essays on Wittgenstein*, ed. E. D. Klemke (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).

describes three interpretations which he believes are in error but have been held and a fourth which he attempts to defend. My argument up to this point has been that Wittgenstein's teaching experience provides a context which can illuminate his philosophical work. If that view is accurate, then the educational program discussed earlier should provide us with some means of clarifying the meaning of the term 'forms of life' and a clearer picture of the role it played in Wittgenstein's philosophical deliberations. I will summarize and utilize Hunter's views and then argue for an account of the expression based on one of the major themes of the Austrian educational reform program.

Hunter describes the following three interpretations which he believes to be in error:

1. The view that a language game is a prime example of a form of life. A form of life, then, is ". . . something formalized or standardized in our life; . . . it is one of life's forms."[18] According to this interpretation Wittgenstein used the term to emphasize the social nature of language games.

2. The view that a form of life is a collection, or package, of related behavioral dispositions, e.g., ". . . to have certain facial expressions and make certain gestures, to do certain things like count apples

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[18]Ibid., p. 275.

or help people, and to say certain things."[19] On this interpretation Wittgenstein used the term to emphasize the fact that linguistic behavior is related to non-linguistic behaviors.

3. The view that a form of life ". . . has something important to do with the class structure, the values, the religion, the types of industry and commerce and recreation that characterize a group of people."[20] Hunter argues that this account is not worthy of serious consideration. He writes,

> . . . I leave it to the reader to figure out whether there is any sense in which only those can hope who have mastered a complicated way of life, or in which a way of life can be used to settle doubts as to the reliability of paper and ink or memory.[21]

Curiously enough, he adds a footnote to this statement which reads: "See . . . *Lectures on Religious Belief* . . . p. 58, where a *way* of life account is perhaps the only plausible one."[22]

Hunter also offers a fourth interpretation, an "organic account" which, he believes, is defensible. On that account forms of life are those things which are typical of a living being, i.e., something very broadly

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[19]Ibid., pp. 275-276.

[20]Ibid., p. 277.

[21]Ibid., p. 278.

[22]Ibid.

". . . in the same class as the growth or nutrition of living organisms, or as the organic complexity which enables them to propel themselves about, or to react in complicated ways in their environment."[23] If the educational matters discussed in Chapter IV did influence Wittgenstein's later work, we might be able to identify some educational doctrine which would help us to better understand his concept of forms of life.

The Austrian school reform movement was based in large part on Eduard Burger's activity pedagogy. The concept of pedagogical activity, i.e., activity which both engages the child's interest and has instructional value, was a central one in Burger's theory. That concept incorporated a distinction similar to Dewey's distinction between education and schooling. For example, Burger argued that pedagogical activities characterize much of the child's everyday experience outside of the school. And, like Dewey, he illustrated that claim by pointing to the learning which can take place as a child participates in the shared work which characterizes life on a farm.[24] The crucial point for the purpose of this discussion is that both approaches treat the school as

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[23]Ibid.

[24]See Schoenchen, *Activity School*, p. 98; and Dewey, *Early Works*, vol. 5, pp. 258-259.

an agency to perform the function of mediating the biological and the social; or, in Dewey's words, of harmonizing individual traits with social ends and values.

Dewey generalized this idea to the point that the occupations became *the* subject matter of philosophical investigation, i.e., *the* task of philosophy became that of giving a general account of, say, how we think, how that is related to the way we value and so on. It is my conviction that Wittgenstein did something similar with Burger's conception of activity pedagogy. If he did, then his analysis should include some account of the ways in which human activities are organized into broader, more comprehensive patterns. Furthermore, pedagogical activity encompassed both biological and social factors in that it was designed to bridge the gap between the nature of the child and the goals and values of society. That is, pedagogical activity had both biological and social aspects and if Wittgenstein employed a generalized version of that notion it too should have both biological and social aspects. The concept of forms of life is a likely prospect for such a generalized application and, if it is, the concept should be interpreted as a way of life account,[25] but

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[25]Hunter, "'Forms of Life,'" p. 277.

one which treats all human activities as natural phenomena. Such an interpretation combines the way of life account criticized by Hunter with his own biological account.

There is some textual evidence that 'forms of life' does refer to comprehensive patterns of this sort, patterns relating constituent elements of human activity. Wittgenstein argues that concepts, or ways of looking at things, are the result of education and training even though they ". . . have their roots in instinct."[26] The pattern, organization or structure of those concepts constitutes what might be called a way of being in the world or a form of life. In a discussion of the language game of writing a series of signs according to a formation rule, he ways of the person learning the game

> . . . I wanted to put that picture before him and his *acceptance* of the picture consists in his now being inclined to regard a given case differently: that is, to compare it with *this* rather than that set of pictures. I have changed his *way of looking* at things.[27]

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[26]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), § 391. Compare this with Dewey's claim on p. 56 of *Logic*:

> "Language did not originate association, but when it supervened, as a natural emergence from previous forms of animal activity, it reacted to transform prior forms and modes of associated behavior in such a way as to give experience a new dimension."

[27]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I, § 144.

And, in a discussion of what is involved in following a rule, he argues that concepts are the result of teaching.

> I shall explain these words to someone who, say, only speaks French by means of the corresponding French words. But if a person has not yet got the *concepts*, I shall teach him to use the words by means of *example* and *practice*.[28]

While discussing the concept of pain Wittgenstein makes the following remarks on the origins of concepts and the connection between concepts and education.

> I want to say: an education quite different from ours might also be the foundation for quite different concepts.[29]

> I really want to say that scruples in thinking begin with (have their roots in) instinct. Or again: a language-game does not have its origins in *consideration*. Consideration is part of a language game.
> And that is why a concept is in its element within the language-game.[30]

Finally Wittgenstein makes the following remarks while discussing the grounds for our certainty that the earth is round.

> 'We are quite sure of it' does not mean that every single person is certain of it, but that we belong to a community which is bound together by science and education.[31]

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[28]Ibid., Part I, § 208.

[29]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, § 387.

[30]Ibid., § 391.

[31]Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (New York and Evanston: J & J Harper Editions, 1969), § 298.

> Now I would like to regard this certainty, not as something akin to hastiness or superficiality, but as a form of life. (That is very badly expressed and probably badly thought as well.)[32]

These citations are at best suggestive but I believe them to be compatible with my contention that 'forms of life' is a generalized application of Burger's notion of pedagogical activity. In short there is reason to believe that 'forms of life' should be interpreted according to my account from both textual and contextual sources. A more complete account would explicate Wittgenstein's distinction between training and teaching as well as his concept of instinct but those questions lie beyond the scope of this dissertation. The final step of my proposed argument was that of looking into the theory of meaning associated with these views. We are now in a position to turn to that question.

Meaning

In Chapter II we discussed Alston's account of various answers to the question: "What are we saying about a linguistic expression when we specify its meaning"? We will now look briefly at Alston's account of meaning and the use of language and ask what characteristics, if any, his account shares with those which

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[32]Ibid., § 358.

are found in Dewey and Wittgenstein's works. Alston argues that

> . . . many behavioral theories try to construe meaning solely in terms of the hearer's response. Even when something on the speaker's side is brought in . . . it is something about the situation . . . rather than anything about what the speaker is doing in that situation.[33]

He suggests that we should characterize

> . . . the meaning of a linguistic expression as a function of the way in which it is used by speakers of the language.[34]

I will argue that Dewey and Wittgenstein held views on this issue similar to the use theory of meaning advocated by Alston.

The first problem one is likely to encounter when looking for a consistent account of meaning in Dewey's works is that he employs the term 'meaning' in a bewildering array of different sense--one is tempted to say indiscriminately. Late in his life Dewey wrote that 'meaning' is

> a word so confused that it is better never used at all. More direct expressions can always be found. (Try for example, speaking in terms of "is," or "involves.")[35]

Dewey's own use of the word in his previous philosophical works no doubt contributed to the confusion surrounding its use. In *Experience and Nature*, for

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[33]Alston, *Philosophy of Language*, p. 32.

[34]Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[35]John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley, *Knowing and the Known* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1949), p. 247.

example, he argued for each of the following claims: "Essence . . . is but a pronounced instance of meaning . . .";[36] ". . . every meaning is generic or universal . . .";[37] "Meanings are rules for using and interpreting things . . .";[38] "Meaning is objective as well as universal";[39] and "Meanings are . . . modes of natural interaction. . . ."[40]

In light of this it is not surprising to find that there are several interpretations of Dewey's views on meaning. One account claims that Dewey's position is a composite one which endorses the claims made in all three of the positions described by Alston. That critic also argues that

> . . . Dewey's use of "meaning" suggests that he was aware of at least two types of meaning: Common meaning which is related to ordinary language and which like the latter is highly connotative. . . . The other type of meaning, scientific, is denotative, sharp and well defined, and the linguistic forms are concrete.[41]

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[36]John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1929), p. 182.

[37]Ibid., p. 187.

[38]Ibid., p. 188.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 190.

[41]Charles Tesconi, "John Dewey's Theory of Meaning," *Educational Theory* 19 (Spring 1969): 166.

Another critic asserts what appears to be the claim that Dewey endorsed an ideational theory but turns out to be the claim that he held a behavioral one. He writes,

> We come now to the central explication of "meaning" in Dewey's theory: *meaning as idea.* Meaning in this sense is the non-overt or implicit response an organism makes to any other response, overt or implicit, which acts as stimulus. For example, when we say, "What does this mean for this organism?" we might as well say, "What implicit responses it the organism making as a result of this stimulus?"[42]

It is possible though to identify a theory of meaning in Dewey's work which avoids these rather crude characterizations.

Such an interpretation would have to take several general characteristics of Dewey's approach to philosophical deliberation into account as well as the claims made in some little known publications. Fortunately, Dewey has provided us with a synoptic account of his philosophy in a response to his critics in 1939. Two of the general characteristics of his philosophy described there are of particular importance in reconstructing his theory of meaning--(1) his defense of the concept of *situations* and (3) his distinction between primary experience and discourse. With respect to (1) Dewey argued that the subject matter of philosophy requires some concept which is capable of providing

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[42]Paul Wienpaul, "Dewey's Theory of Language and Meaning," in *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom*, ed. Sidney Hook (New York: Dial Press, 1950), p. 277.

> . . . a viable alternative to an atomism which logically involves a denial of connections and to an absolutistic block monism which, in behalf of the reality of relations, leaves no place for the discrete, for plurality, and for individuals.[43]

He then repeats his well known argument that every experience is an interaction which involves both the environment and the organism and concludes,

> In other words, the theory of experiential situations which follows directly from the biological-anthropological approach is by its very nature a *via media* between extreme atomistic pluralism and block universe monisms.[44]

The second point of interest is the distinction which Dewey makes between primary experience and discursive experience. He writes that

> . . . one person cannot communicate an experience as immediate to another person. He can only invite that other person to institute the conditions by which the person himself will *have* that kind of situation the conditions for which are stated in discourse.[45]

And relative to this distinction, he argues that

> . . . *telling* is (i) a matter of discourse, and . . . (ii) all discourse is derived from and inherently referable to experiences of things in non-discursive experiential having. . . .[46]

Together these two claims emphasize Dewey's belief in the *continuity* of experience. Discourse grows out of

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[43] John Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1939), p. 544.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 546.

[46] Ibid., pp. 546-547.

and refers back to primary experience and all experience, primary or derived, is an interaction of environing conditions (which include culture) and the organism.

These two points are directly related to Dewey's analysis of language. The fundamental importance of language

> . . . lies in the fact that, on one side, it is a strictly biological mode of behavior, emerging in natural continuity from earlier organic activities, while, on the other hand, it compels one individual to take the standpoint of other individuals and to see and inquire from a standpoint that . . . is common to them as participants . . . in a conjoint undertaking.[47]

After arguing forcefully for the social importance of this biological mode of behavior, Dewey argues for two theses about meaning: (1) the meaning of linguistic symbols is not conventional but is established in associated behavior and (2) a word has meaning only within a system of related symbols. These claims require careful consideration since they are not, in many respects, what they seem to be.

Dewey argues that ". . . the meaning which a conventional symbol has is not itself conventional."[48] He is making a distinction between a symbol (e.g., a word) and a sign (e.g., in the sense that smoke is a

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[47] Dewey, *Logic*, p. 46.

[48] Ibid., p. 47.

sign of fire) and is asserting that the symbol is conventional but that the meaning is not. The immediate question one wants to raise about this claim is "What sort of a convention could determine the symbol without determining its meaning?" The distinction between symbol and sign follows Peirce after all and Alston for one claims that "it is commonly said that symbols (in Peirce's sense) are distinguished from other 'signs' by the fact that their significance is *conventional*."[49] Yet we find Dewey claiming that the symbol itself is conventional but its meaning is not.

What Dewey is actually arguing for is not this claim but the claim that the particular linguistic symbols used in a given language are *arbitrary* while the meaning of those symbols is established in conjoint use and action and hence is *not arbitrary*. He says, for example, "The particular existential sound or mark that stands for *dog* or *justice* in different cultures is arbitrary or conventional in the sense that although it has *causes* there are no *reasons* for it.[50] But "the physical sound or mark gets its meaning in and by a conjoint community of functional use, not by any explicit convening in a 'convention.'"[51] In short what appeared

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[49]Alston, *Language*, p. 56.

[50]Dewey, *Logic*, p. 47.

[51]Ibid., pp. 46-47.

to be an argument against linguistic conventionalism turns out to be an argument for a version of such a view.

Dewey also claims that "any word or phrase has the meaning which it has only as a member of a constellation of related meanings."[52] This statement might lead one to conclude that Dewey is advocating the view that the meaning of a word or phrase is somehow determined by its formal relations with other symbols in the system. But this is not the case, for in explaining this claim, Dewey points out that

> the system may be simply the language in common use. Its meanings hang together not in virtue of their examined relationship to one another, but because they are current in the same set of group habits and expectations. They hang together because of group activities, group interests, customs and institutions.[53]

The point of this claim is simply that they *do* hang together not that their doing so can provide an account of the meaning of some element in the system.

One further source of possible misinterpretation of Dewey's views on meaning remains to be discussed. It is located in the distinction which he makes between symbols and signs and the relations which he attributes to them. Signs are things which have *representative capacity*, i.e., things which can signify, indicate, or

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[52] Ibid., p. 49.

[53] Ibid., p. 50.

point to something else in the sense, say, that smoke is a sign of fire. Signs are of two kinds according to Dewey: (1) natural signs are those in which ". . . the representative capacity in question is attributed to *things in their connection with one another* . . .,"[54] e.g., smoke is a sign of fire because fires usually smoke; and (2) artificial signs (or symbols) are those which ". . . are given representative function by social agreement,"[55] e.g., a flag is the symbol of a country because it is treated as such. Furthermore, the sounds and marks which constitute language are symbols, and their ". . . meaning depends upon agreement in social use."[56]

Following this distinction Dewey offers a terminology which he intends to employ in his theory of inquiry:

1. 'Sign-significance' designates the kind of representative capacity which signs have;
2. 'Symbol-meaning' should be used to talk about the kind of representative capacity which symbols have;
3. 'Relation' designates ". . . the kind of 'relation' which symbol-meanings bear to one another *as* symbol-meanings";

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[54] Ibid., p. 51.

[55] Ibid., p. 52.

[56] Ibid., p. 51.

4. 'Reference' designates ". . . the kind of relation [symbol-meanings] sustain to existence";
5. 'Connection' designates the ". . . kind of relation sustained by *things* to one another in virtue of which *inference* is possible."[57]

Now the danger of misinterpretation here lies in the tendency to conclude that since Dewey argues that symbols (symbol-meanings) refer "to existence" he is advocating a referential theory of meaning. He is not. For Dewey the meaning and the word are one (hence, symbol-meaning) and that unit, which may be used to refer to the facts of primary experience, is determined by agreement in action.

There remains one final point which should be discussed and which will give us a clearer picture of Dewey's positive views on the question of meaning. He illustrates his distinction between 'relation,' 'reference,' and 'connection' with reference to the propositions of mathematical physics. He writes,

> The differences, when once pointed out, should be so obvious as hardly to require illustration. Consider, however, propositions of mathematical physics. (1) As propositions they form a system of *related* symbol-meanings that may be considered and developed as such. (2) But as propositions of *physics*, not of mere mathematics, they have *reference* to existence; a reference

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[57] All quotes Ibid., p. 55.

> which is realized in operations of *application*. (3) The final test of *valid* reference or applicability resides in the *connections* that exist among things.[58]

In short, even in mathematical physics the "referential capacity" of propositions is "realized" only through the operations by which they are applied to the physical world, i.e., they acquire a meaning only when used.

Dewey argues for a number of particular theses about language and meaning but this point represents the central core of his thought on the matter. He claims, for example, that "the heart of language is not 'expression' of something antecedent, much less expression of antecedent thought,"[59] "language is always a form of action . . .,"[60] "meanings are rules for using and interpreting things . . .,"[61] and "as to be a tool . . . is to have and endow with meaning, language, being the tool of tools, is the cherishing mother of all significance."[62] Each of these claims could be explicated and related to the central claim of Dewey's views on meaning but I will leave that task for another time. That central claim was best expressed in one of Dewey's last articles when he wrote

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[58]Ibid.

[59]Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 179.

[60]Ibid., p. 184.

[61]Ibid., p. 188.

[62]Ibid.

> . . . *meaning* has in philosophical usage become neither fowl, flesh, nor good red herring. Only one who has familiarity with the literature of the subject can even begin to be aware of how confusing, obfuscating, and boring in its multiplicity of elaborations the word "meaning" has become. But when one has recourse to the idiomatic usage of meaning: *to mean* is to intend, the suitability of *meaning* to name . . . artfully skilled ways of organized action is . . . evident.[63]

This interpretation of Dewey's theory of meaning has clear affinities with some interpretations of Wittgenstein's theory. K. T. Fann, for example, argues that Wittgenstein's later work showed a decidedly pragmatic temper, and he attributes that development to Wittgenstein's teaching experience and the influence of William James and Frank Ramsey. In fact he argues that the theory of meaning in the *Philosophical Investigations* was a

> . . . warning . . . against oversimplifying our concept of language. It is not one practice or one instrument, having one essential function and serving one essential purpose. Language is not one tool serving one purpose but a collection of tools serving a variety of purposes.
>
> What emerges from all these considerations is an instrumentalist (or pragmatic) conception of language. . . . It is like a working machine which get the job done--namely everyday activities of life.[64]

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[63] John Dewey, "Importance, Significance and Meaning," in *John Dewey and Arthur F. Bentley: A Philosophical Correspondence, 1932-1951*, eds. Sidney Ratner, Jules Altman, and James E. Wheeler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1964), p. 668.

[64] Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy*, pp. 70-71. There are, of course, various interpretations of Wittgenstein's views on language and meaning. See for example Klemke, *Essays on Wittgenstein*; K. T. Fann, ed., *Wittgenstein, The Man and His Philosophy*

He also argues that ". . . Wittgenstein was interested in reminding us of another important feature of language--i.e. its *social* nature."[65]

In one sense Fann's second point, i.e., that Wittgenstein wanted to remind us of the social nature of language, is redundant. An instrumentalist view of language *is* a view which emphasizes the social nature of language. One of its central doctrines is that it is through *social use* in the context of *associated* behavior undertaken to achieve *commonly held* ends that language acquires meaning. It is interesting to note that Fann attributes the pragmatic tendencies of Wittgenstein's later work largely to his teaching experience. My analysis has helped us to understand more clearly how that could have happened; instrumentalism, after all, is not the philosophical position of the day for all elementary school teachers.

Stephen Toulmin's account of Wittgenstein's work also lends support to my contention that there are significant similarities between Wittgenstein's later

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(New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1967); and George Pitcher, ed., *Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), for collections which include representative samples of a range of interpretations. I will not survey the range of interpretive studies since (1) I feel the view I am employing is the most defensible and (2) my objective was to show that Dewey's views are similar to one major defensible interpretation of Wittgenstein's.

[65] Ibid., p. 72.

views and those of Dewey. I have described Dewey's view that the referential capacity of propositions--he used the example of mathematical physics--is realized only in operations of application. I argued that this meant that symbols acquire meaning by being put to use. Toulmin writes of Wittgenstein,

> Having taken it for granted, in the *Tractatus*, that the relationship between "simple signs" and that to which they corresponded could be immediately seen (even if it could not be *stated*) he had been too readily satisfied with a formal analysis of language as representation; and he had, as a result, paid too little attention to the steps by which formalized representations are *put to use* in real life linguistic behavior. Even in physics--as Hertz had taught him--a mathematical system can be applied to scientific problems in the real world, only if we also have well-defined procedures for relating mathematical symbols with empirical magnitudes or measurements.[66]

Having recognized the importance of the way in which representational systems are applied,

> . . . the crucial question now became, "By what procedures do men *establish* the rule-governed links they do between language, on the one hand, and the real world, on the other?"
>
> To arrive at a language suitable for the expression of "propositions," accordingly, it is not enough for us to "make for ourselves pictures of facts." The expressions in our language acquire their specific *meanings* from the procedures by which we give them definite *uses* in our practical dealings with one another and with the world. . . .[67]

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[66] Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 222.

[67] Ibid., p. 223.

I have also argued that for Dewey meaning is determined by its use in social action and ultimately resides in artfully skilled *ways* of organized action. Similarly, as Toulmin argues,

> For the later Wittgenstein . . . the "meaning" of any utterance is determined by the rule-conforming, symbol-using activities ("language-games") within which the expressions in question are conventionally put to use; and these symbol-using activities in turn draw their significance from the broader patterns of activities (or "forms of life") in which they are embedded and of which they are a constituent element.[68]

Summary

Both Dewey and Wittgenstein employed generalized versions of concepts which were originally educational principles in their later philosophical work. Dewey generalized the notion of occupations and used it to define the characteristic problem of philosophy, namely, that of providing an account of ". . . the genesis and functioning in experience of various typical interests and occupations with reference to one another."[69] Likewise, Wittgenstein generalized the notion of pedagogical activity to that of forms of life, a concept which he then employed in a similar fashion to define the central problem of his philosophical investigations, namely, that of ". . . coming to recognize all the multifarious

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[68] Ibid., p. 225.

[69] Dewey, *Experimental Logic*, p. 102.

ways in which 'forms of life' create legitimate contexts for 'language games,' and how these in turn delimit the scope and boundaries of the sayable."[70] Furthermore these generalized educational concepts were important elements in their theories of meaning as use.

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[70] Janik and Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, p. 225.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

> An analogous interpretation applies to the generality and ultimateness of philosophy. Taken literally, they are absurd pretensions; they indicate insanity.
>
> John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*

> I am sitting with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again "I know that that's a tree," pointing to a tree that is near us. Someone else arrives and hears this, and I tell him: "This fellow isn't insane. We are only doing philosophy."
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*

I argued in Chapter I that many accounts of the relationship between philosophy and education fail to recognize the full importance of the contributions made by educational practice to an understanding of philosophical problems. I proposed to illustrate the importance of educational practice with the philosophical careers of John Dewey and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Specifically I proposed to show that their participation in educational reform programs made significant contributions to their work in the philosophy of language, especially in the theory of meaning. Furthermore, I pointed out that it would be necessary to defend the

following claims in order to establish this objective: (1) Dewey and Wittgenstein held similar theories of meaning; (2) they participated in similar educational programs; and (3) their experience in those similar educational programs influenced their work in technical philosophy, especially their views on meaning.

In Chapters III and IV I argued that the Dewey School program and the Austrian school reform program shared common objectives and employed similar methodological and curricular principles. Specifically I showed that the two programs (1) were grounded in similar views of psychology, (2) shared a common conception of the nature of the child, (3) shared similar views on the ways in which the school should be integrated with the larger social order, (4) were both based on an activity curriculum, and (5) both endorsed similar views on the nature of social and civic education.

In Chapter V I argued in defense of the general claim that their educational experience should be carefully considered when interpreting the philosophical positions endorsed by both Dewey and Wittgenstein. And I illustrated in Chapter VI this general claim by showing how they had generalized educational notions--occupations and pedagogical activity--and employed them in their analysis of language and meaning. Furthermore, I argued for an interpretation of Dewey's views on

meaning which is similar to one of the standard interpretations of Wittgenstein's views.

In short I have shown that (1) Dewey held a theory of meaning similar to one attributed to Wittgenstein, (2) they participated in similar educational programs, and (3) since Dewey's concept of occupations and Wittgenstein's concept of forms of life were originally educational principles, their experience with educational matters contributed to their views on meaning. Their work in philosophy then provides instances which demonstrate the contribution of pedagogical experience to the formulation and solution of philosophical problems.

A number of questions remain which were barely touched upon here and which are deserving of further study. For example, I suggested in Chapter V that few of the commentaries on Wittgenstein's later philosophy attempt to provide any account of (1) *why* Wittgenstein was particularly influenced by, e.g., James' work, (2) the ways in which various sources of influence on his later work might be connected, and (3) the relevance of his teaching activities to his work in philosophy. I have said little about the first two points but I suspect that further and wider-ranging investigations of the Austrian reform movement, especially of Eduard Burger's work, would yield some answers to those

questions. It is interesting to note in this regard that Eduard Spranger, the author of *Lebensformen* and the most often cited source of the term 'forms of life,' was one of the most noted educational leaders in the German-speaking world for a full half century.[1] Spranger was involved ". . . in the discussions of the 1920's on elementary school, teaching training, university organization, voluntary adult education work and much else besides."[2]

Further comparative study of Wittgenstein and Dewey might identify and clarify other similarities in their views both in general approach and particular doctrines. A number of writers have pointed out the pragmatic tendencies of Wittgenstein's later work and others have argued for a general reassessment of American pragmatism in light of its continental origins.[3] The following possible similarities seem worthy of further investigation.

Wittgenstein's argument that the aim of philosophical activity is that of dissolving philosophical

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[1]Elof Åkesson, "Eduard Spranger, 1882-1963," *Paedagogica Historica* 4 (1964): 279-288.

[2]Ibid., p. 284.

[3]See, for example, Sandra B. Rosenthal, "Recent Perspectives on American Pagmatism (Part One)," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 10 (Spring 1974): 76-93 and "Recent Perspectives on American Pragmatism (Part Two), *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 10 (Summer 1974): 166-184.

problems rather than advancing philosophical theses is a familiar one. He writes for example:

> When philosophers use a word--"knowledge," "being," "object," "I," "proposition," "name"--and try to grasp the *essence* of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language game which is its original home?--
> What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.[4]

> We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order with a particular end in view; one out of many possible others; not *the* order.[5]

> . . . the clarity we are aiming at is indeed *complete* clarity. But that simply means that the philosophical problems should completely disappear.[6]

Dewey makes the following remarks in a similar vein while discussing his view of the autonomy of inquiry:

> What happens when distinctions which are indispensable to form and use in an efficient conduct of inquiry . . . are converted into something ontological . . . is exhibited . . . in the epistemological phase of modern philosophy.[7]

He points out that an instrumentalist logic refuses to convert functional distinctions between, e.g., subject and object, into ontological distinctions and concludes that

> upon the basis of this view the metaphysical problem which so divided Berkeley from Sir Isaac Newton, and

---

[4]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I, § 116.

[5]Ibid., Part I, § 132.

[6]Ibid., Part I, § 133.

[7]Dewey and Bentley, *Knowing and The Known*, p. 324.

> which has occupied such a prominent place in philosophy ever since . . . is *not so much resolved as dissolved.*[8]

David Pears has written of Wittgenstein that

> all his philosophy expresses his strong feeling that the great danger to which modern thought is exposed is domination by science, and the consequent distortion of the mind's view of itself. . . . the most interesting and fully developed result that the feeling produced was his later view of philosophy.[9]

Dewey expressed views similar to these in 1944 when he wrote:

> What influences me is, I suppose, a strong prejudice against every theory of science that holds, explicitly or by implication, that science is *the* superior mode of knowledge, save for a specifiable class of problems and uses. . . .[10]

Not only are these views similar (at least on initial inspection) but I suspect that they come as a surprise to many students of both of these philosophers.

At any rate I have shown that there are some similarities between Dewey and Wittgenstein and I suspect that further comparative study of their philosophies would enhance our understanding of both. Furthermore I have shown that their educational experiences influenced their technical work in philosophy and I suspect that further study of the educational contexts would also enhance our understanding of their philosophical views.

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[8]Ibid., p. 327. Italics mine.

[9]David Pears, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p. 197.

[10]Ratner, Altman, and Wheeler, *Dewey and Bentley: Correspondence*, p. 222.

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