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JOHN DEWEY'S AND ÉMILE DURKHEIM'S VIEWS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

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Judith Mae Sikkenga

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By

Judith Mae Sikkenga

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ABSTRACT

JOHN DEWEY'S AND ÉMILE DURKHEIM'S VIEWS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

By

Judith Mae Sikkenga

This dissertation represents an attempt to set forth and to clarify John Dewey's and Émile Durkheim's views regarding the relationship between religion and morality and to determine the implications of each position for education. The position of each concerning the historical relationship which has existed between religion and morality is presented. In addition, their views regarding the question of whether religion and morality should be considered to be congruent, compatible, or mutually exclusive elements within the context of a modern society are explicated. Although the definitional and methodological strategies of each position are considered, this study is primarily an attempt to present a broadly philosophical analysis of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions.

First, Dewey's views regarding religion are considered in depth. A formulation of his moral theory follows, and then his position regarding the relationship between religion and morality is summarized. In the second place, Émile

Durkheim's views concerning religion are presented, and his moral theory is outlined. A summary of his general position regarding the relationship between religion and morality follows. Next, the educational implications of both Dewey's and Durkheim's positions are explored. This part of the study included an attempt to explicate the rationale underlying the faith which both exhibit concerning the efficacy of education to fulfil their expectations. In the fourth place, a comparative analysis of the two positions is presented, and an attempt is made to determine whether the similarities or the dissimilarities in the positions are more crucial for this study. Finally, some tentative evaluations of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions are offered. These include viewing them from the perspective of recent theories concerning schooling and the rationalization of the social order.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

In this dissertation, I shall attempt to present the views of John Dewey and Émile Durkheim concerning the relationship between religion and morality. Central to this discussion will be the issue of whether, according to Dewey and Durkheim, religion and morality should be considered to be congruent, compatible, or mutually exclusive elements. Although their backgrounds are different, both of these figures lived lives which bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and both, to some extent, represent the liberal position. They emphasize the rationality and educability of individuals, and both are concerned with the problem of whether or not a secular morality can be developed upon these grounds.

Both Dewey and Durkheim were aware of the onslaughts which science and secularization had made upon religion. They were cognizant of the fact that moral codes had traditionally been closely bound to religious beliefs and that the latter had served as bases from which the former had derived much of their authority. They recognized that religion had been seriously weakened as a viable source of moral authority and suggested that this posed a crucial

problem: in the absence of the acceptance of Ultimate values, grounded in the belief in antecedently existing, transcendent Beings, can moral rules be formulated in any genuinely authoritative sense?

Each figure's views will be dealt with separately, and the problem will be approached from two aspects of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions: that relationship which has historically existed between religion and morality and that which should, in fact, exist. The elaboration of these positions will serve as the basis for a comparative analysis of them. This analysis will include a comparison of the educational implications of the positions. Both Dewey and Durkheim were keenly interested in - and actively involved in - education, in addition to their other interests. In an autobiographical essay, Dewey made the following remarks concerning his view of the importance of education for philosophy:

> 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

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> education as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical, come to a head.[1]

Education was also a crucial concern of Durkheim's. One of his tasks was that of outlining a program which would provide a moral education for the children of France. In the following statement, he indicates the significance which he attached to this task: "Anything that reduces the effectiveness of moral education, whatever disrupts patterns of relationships, threatens public morality at its very roots."[2]

Dewey and Durkheim were both intensely concerned with the guidance of human conduct, realizing that, given the erosion of the authority of religion, morality had lost one of its primary anchors. Both were prolific writers. Often their general positions regarding specific topics have been obscured, both by the wealth of topics with which they dealt and by the sometimes confusing manner in which they wrote. Frequently, too, their interpreters have become embroiled in debates concerning ethical terms and definitions and in disputes over philosophical labels. They have often either

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[1]John Dewey, "From Absolutism To Experimentalism," in On Experience, Nature, And Freedom, ed. by Richard J. Bernstein (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 14.

[2]Émile Durkheim, Moral Education: A Study In The Theory And Application Of The Sociology Of Education, trans. by Everett K. Wilson and Herman Schnurer, ed. and with an Introd. by Everett K. Wilson (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 3.

overlooked or ignored the general positions of Dewey and Durkheim regarding the authoritative basis for the direction of human conduct and the relationship of this basis to religion.

This study represents an attempt to clarify the overall positions of Dewey and Durkheim in this regard, to outline their educational implications, and to compare these positions. While acknowledging - and, to some extent, dealing with - some of the difficulties with terms and meanings which have plagued the treatment of both Dewey's and Durkheim's works, I shall attempt to present a broad, philosophical analysis of their positions: one that will, it is hoped, outline their similarities and dissimilarities in such a way as to serve as a basis for the evaluation of these positions in the light of contemporary society.

In spite of their dissimilarities, both Dewey and Durkheim expressed interest in the development of rational societies. Both of their positions entail the notion of rational, moral individuals contributing to the overall progress of a society, and both are convinced that a rational morality can be achieved upon secular grounds. Both made predictions regarding the future state of religion, and an inquiry into some trends in religion in contemporary societies affords one perspective from which their views may be evaluated. The emphasis of both upon formal

schooling as a vehicle for the transmission of a secular morality in children provides another avenue whereby a critique may be made of their positions: they may be evaluated within the framework of some of the more radical theories regarding the functions and limits of schooling within given societies. Finally, the ethical positions of both Dewey and Durkheim can be appraised in the light of more recent concepts, including that of the "rationalization" of society and of "legitimation," conceived of as the process of justifying a given dominant order. Some tentative conclusions will be drawn, and some attempts will be made to offer explanations for the discrepancies which exist between Dewey's and Durkheim's predictions and reports of conditions in the contemporary world.

Importance of the Study

Religion and morality are popular topics yet today, and there still exists a great deal of confusion regarding the meanings of these terms, the validity of the concepts themselves, and the proper relationship which should exist between them. On the one extreme, groups like the Moral Majority are exhorting us to re-establish a close-- almost congruent - relationship between religion and morality. At the other extreme are secularists who reject all of the notions traditionally associated with the terms "religion"

and "religious." In so doing, they frequently also reject the possibility of establishing an authoritative code for human conduct and, consequently, slip into a position of moral nihilism. In between these two extremes lie a variety of adherents to other positions. Humanists, both secular and religious, and sociological functionalists, among others, generally take more moderate positions regarding the relationship of religion to morality than do the extremists.

All in all, the picture is a confusing one. Groups like the Moral Majority are urging a return to religion. The nihilists only furnish ammunition for these evangelical groups. Humanists have often been discredited for their failure to solve human problems and to grasp human needs. James Gouinlock charges philosophers with being responsible for adding to the confusion, and he observes:

> Remarkably, philosophical reflection on religion today tends to be very reactionary; and the so-called radical theologians, for all their foolishness, have nevertheless produced far more imaginative and useful ideas about religion than have current philosophers.[3]

In the midst of this confusion, it seems worthwhile to re-examine and to compare the views of John Dewey and Émile Durkheim. Each takes a significant position regarding the proper relationship which should exist between religion and morality, and each relates this position in a significant

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[3]James Gouinlock, John Dewey's Philosophy Of Value (New York: Humanities Press, 1972), p. 274, n. 77.

way to education. Each deals with the definitional and epistemological aspects of the problem, and each operates upon the assumption that individual progress in this area will accumulate and result in the general progress of the society.

Dewey, in particular, has often been ignored and considered to be of little relevance for the present. Richard Bernstein, writing in 1960, noted this fact but claimed that there were signs of a renewed interest in Dewey. He stated: "For philosophers are once again becoming discontent with extreme specialization and a narrow view of philosophical analysis that avoids the more pressing and complex problems of men."[4]

Gouinlock, however, writing in 1972, could discern no such revival of interest in Dewey's ethical position. In his Postscript, he contends that, for the most part, Dewey is ignored by philosophers and that those who do occasionally refer to him treat his views in a superficial fashion. He notes that a recent book by G. J. Warnock, entitled Contemporary Moral Philosophy and published in 1967, makes no mention of Dewey. Regarding this omission, Gouinlock states: "This is like surveying the history of classical ethics without reference to Aristotle."[5]

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[4]Bernstein, ed., Experience, p. xlvii.

[5]Gouinlock, Philosophy, pp. 359, 359, n. 1.

Positions like that taken by Dewey have, in fact, sometimes been portrayed as contributing to moral nihilism. In discussing Paul Tillich's insistence upon the existence of "true" ultimates upon which anything of genuine concern and meaning must be grounded, Gouinlock notes the implications of Tillich's position: "And without this true ultimate, moreover, the merely finite world is a scene of pure despair and unmitigated anxiety; its presumed value withers to nothingness; it is inherently meaningless."[6] The inference for a position like that of Dewey's is that the absence of an ultimate "Ground of Being" leads inevitably to meaninglessness.

Others have disagreed with this assessment and have suggested that Dewey's ethical views contain much that is of positive value for contemporary society. Robert Holmes, for example, contends that Dewey's ethical position deserves to be studied along with the other moral theories which have been advanced. Writing in 1966, Holmes refers to Dewey's moral theory as a "timely, perceptive, and relatively coherent ethics of pragmatism, one which repays careful study by anyone interested in many of the problems in the forefront of contemporary ethical theory."[7]

Gouinlock agrees with Holmes. He describes Dewey's

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[6] Ibid., pp. 271-72.

[7] Robert L. Holmes, "John Dewey's Moral Philosophy In Contemporary Perspective," The Review of Metaphysics, XX (September, 1966), 43.

ethical position as "the most innovative and elaborately developed philosophy of value to appear in modern history." He contends that Dewey's position must be rediscovered and drawn upon if progress in moral philosophy is to be made and submits: "Substantial progress in moral philosophy - as well as in other fields - will find its greatest stimulus and direction by studying the nature and content of this tradition and by drawing upon its abundant resources."[8]

Durkheim has received more attention, in some respects, than has Dewey. In 1974, Robert Nisbet asserted: "To this day, Durkheim remains, along with Max Weber, one of the two preeminent sociological interpreters of religion."[9] Durkheim is regarded by some as a functionalist, and one of his sympathetic biographers, Anthony Giddens, states: "In the English-speaking world, Durkheim has come to be regarded as the principal figure in the origins of 'functionalism.'" Giddens goes on to declare that, due to the work of authors like Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton, "today the immediate influence of Durkheim probably remains stronger in the United States than anywhere else."[10]

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[8]Gouinlock, Philosophy, pp. 359, 361.

[9]Robert Nisbet, The Sociology of Emile Durkheim (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 156.

[10]Anthony Giddens, Emile Durkheim (New York: The Viking Press, 1979), p. 10.

Durkheim has his critics as well as his admirers, and the whole position of functionalism, often portrayed as stressing society as a functioning system, has received a variety of criticisms. Hans H. Penner, for example, makes the following charge regarding functionalist attempts to explain religion: "What we should learn from this is that the problem with functionalism is not that it explains religion away, reduces religion, or translates religion. The fact of the matter is that functionalism does not explain religion at all."[11] Yet, Durkheim claimed to have furnished an authoritative explanation of religion, and he used this explanation, to some extent, to define the proper role of religion in modern societies.

Durkheim's "social realism" has been subjected to a number of interpretations and criticisms, as has his whole sociological and philosophical position. D. A. Nye and C. E. Ashworth, two British sociologists, argue, in fact, that Durkheim was never able to develop a consistent philosophical position. They contend that Durkheim's thought, throughout his entire life, was "trapped within and upon almost all of the conventional dualisms and oppositions of Western philosophy." Durkheim, according to Nye and Ashworth, was never able to formulate a synthesis from

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[11]Hans H. Penner, "The Poverty of Functionalism," History of Religions, XI (August, 1971), 97.

these oppositions and, hence, was left with the "non-synthesis expressed in the magic word 'social.'"[12]

Nye and Ashworth conclude their article with the following remark: "It is clear that even if we do define Durkheim as a failure we ourselves who live in his shadow can take no credit for having 'gone beyond' him."[13] Their implication is that Durkheim's treatment of "social facts," while deficient, may, by its very deficiencies, be illustrating the difficulties inherent in attempting to establish an inclusive philosophical position of any kind. It seems important to clarify Durkheim's position concerning the relationship between religion and morality, since it reveals the complexity of the problem and suggests wherein some of the difficulties lie.

The educational assumptions of both Dewey and Durkheim are crucial to both an understanding - and a critique - of their ethical positions. In one sense, both of these figures can use their educational formulas to answer critics who assert that their positions and predictions do not coincide with reality. Yet, it is possible that neither Dewey nor Durkheim would be able to furnish an adequate answer to a deeper question: if his educational program is not working,

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[12]D. A. Nye and C. E. Ashworth, "Emile Durkheim: Was he a nominalist or a realist?" British Journal of Sociology, XX (1971), 133-34.

[13]Ibid., 146.

why is it not working? Such questions as this may serve to expose the limitations of both their positions and to suggest further areas of inquiry.

In short, the elements for a productive comparison and critique of Dewey's and Durkheim's overall positions regarding the relationship between religion and morality exist. It is hoped that this study will fulfil that task.

Outline of the Study

In Chapter Two, I shall attempt to set forth John Dewey's views concerning the relationship between religion and morality. I shall begin with a biographical sketch, including an account of some of the people and ideas which influenced his thinking. Next, I shall consider his views regarding religion and shall attempt to clarify his meanings of the terms "religion" and "religious." In the third place, I shall attempt to construct a cohesive formulation of his moral theory from a variety of his works. Finally, I shall summarize Dewey's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality as it has historically existed and as he believes it should exist within the context of the twentieth century.

In Chapter Three, I shall attempt to clarify Émile Durkheim's views regarding the relationship between religion and morality. Using a format similar to that used in Chapter

Two, I shall begin with a biographical sketch and then proceed to a formulation of Durkheim's views concerning religion. Next, I shall attempt to explicate his views regarding morality and, finally, summarize his position.

In Chapter Four, I shall attempt to ascertain the educational implications of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions. Both the theoretical and practical aspects of their educational philosophies will be treated, with attention focused upon topics like the following: the essence of the nature of education, its aims, and proper educational methods.

In Chapter Five, I shall present a comparative analysis of Dewey's and Durkheim's overall positions. I shall attempt to outline the basic similarities and dissimilarities in these positions and attempt to determine which of these is more crucial for the central problem of this study.

In Chapter Six, I shall attempt to draw some tentative conclusions regarding the overall positions taken by Dewey and Durkheim. The consistency and validity of their positions will be considered, and these will be evaluated, also, in terms of present trends in religion. Furthermore, they will be considered within the framework of more recent theories concerning schooling and social progress.

CHAPTER II

JOHN DEWEY'S VIEWS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY

A Biographical Sketch

John Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1859. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Vermont in 1879 and his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1884. Dewey then accepted a teaching position in philosophy at the University of Michigan and, with the exception of one year at the University of Minnesota, remained there until he accepted a position at the University of Chicago in 1894. Here, through the graduate courses and seminars which he offered - and through the writings which stemmed from them - he developed what became known as the "Laboratory School." This was an experimental elementary school which Dewey utilized to test theories of educational psychology and to establish the close relationship between education and his newly-developed philosophical position.[1]

In 1904, Dewey resigned his position at the University of Chicago and accepted a position at Columbia University.

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[1]Sidney Hook, John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait (New York: The John Day Company, 1939), pp. 5-13, 15-16. See also Adolphe E. Meyer, An Educational History Of The American People (2nd ed.; New York: McGraw Book Company, 1967), pp. 258-63.

Here, he was a member of the Department of Philosophy and Psychology and also taught at the Teachers College. Dewey remained at Columbia until his retirement in 1930, and, in many respects, this was the most productive period of his life. He published several books, stemming from his teaching and thinking while at Chicago, and encountered some new philosophical views which resulted in the rethinking of some of his positions. While living in New York, Dewey traveled widely and began to become actively involved in public affairs. After retiring from active teaching, Dewey continued to travel, write, and lecture. Although he had spent many years of his life at major universities, Dewey was not content to remain in an "ivory tower," dealing solely with theories and abstractions. Rather, he exemplified the essential ingredients of his philosophical position: activism, practicality, and experimentalism. John Dewey died in 1952, at the age of ninety-two.[2]

Richard Bernstein suggests that Dewey's philosophic development consisted of three continuous - and by no means "sharply divorced" - stages, each of which lasted roughly twenty years. Bernstein refers to the first stage as the "formative years," beginning in 1882 and ending with the publication of Studies in Logical Theory in 1903. The second

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[2]Meyer, Educational History, pp. 263-69. See also Stanley N. Worton, Review Notes and Study Guide to the Major Works of John Dewey (New York: Monarch Press, Inc., 1964), pp. 5-6.

phase, lasting from approximately 1903 until 1925 and roughly coinciding with Dewey's stay at Columbia, included the development of his "instrumentalism" and the formulation of some of his educational theories. Bernstein depicts the third stage as beginning in 1925 with the publication of Experience and Nature and continuing through Dewey's later years. He suggests that, while it is commonly believed that Dewey only elaborated upon his earlier writings during this period, he actually re-examined and critically analyzed the fundamental assumptions of his former position, establishing a more cohesive point of view. During this period, Dewey wrote The Quest for Certainty and other important works, along with numerous articles.[3]

During Dewey's early period, he was greatly influenced by the views of Hegel. Dewey attributes the source of this influence to the teachings of George Sylvester Morris and to the reaction against "atomic individualism and sensationalistic empiricism" which reached its peak in the eighties and nineties. Dewey declares that there were also subjective reasons for the appeal which Hegel's thought had for him. He states:

> It supplied a demand for unification that was doubtless an intense emotional craving, and yet a hunger that only an intellectualized subject matter could satisfy.... My

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[3]Bernstein, ed., Experience, pp. xix-xx.

> earlier philosophic study had been an intellectual gymnastic. Hegel's syntheses of subject and object, matter and spirit, the divine and the human, was, however, no mere intellectual formula; it operated as an immense release, a liberation. Hegel's treatment of human culture, of institutions and the arts, involved the same dissolution of hard-and-fast dividing walls, and had a real attraction for me.[4]

Dewey describes himself as "drifting" away from Hegelianism in the next fifteen years, although he is careful to emphasize that he never entirely shed the influence of Hegel's views. In his autobiographical account, he states:

> Nevertheless I should never think of ignoring, much less denying, what an astute critic occasionally refers to as a novel discovery - that acquaintance with Hegel has left a permanent deposit in my thinking. The form, the schematism, of his system now seems to me artificial to the last degree. But in the content of his ideas there is often an extraordinary depth; in many of his analyses, taken out of their mechanical dialectical setting, an extraordinary acuteness.[5]

Dewey suggests that it is risky to attempt to establish the existence of a clear-cut change of direction in his thinking. He asserts: "The philosopher, if I may apply that word to myself, that I became as I moved away from German idealism, is too much the self that I still am and is still too much in process of change to lend itself to record." For Dewey, the primary influences upon his thinking

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[4]Dewey, "Absolutism," in Experience, ed. by Bernstein, pp. 9-10.

[5]Ibid., p. 12.

stemmed directly from experiences. Summing up the forces which had been influential in his thinking, he states:

> 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.[6]

Although disclaiming any real continuity in his intellectual development, Dewey suggests that four points seem to stand out. He notes, in the first place, the importance which the practice and theory of education had for him. Secondly, he cites the troublesome nature of the dualisms in logic and methodology which had existed between science and morals and contends that his "instrumentalism" was an attempt to close this breach. In the third place, Dewey notes the great exception to his earlier statement regarding the secondary influence of books in his life. He acknowledges a debt to the Principles of Psychology, written by William James, and asserts: "As far as I can discover, one specifiable philosophic factor which entered into my thinking so as to give it a new direction and quality, it is this one." He states: "It was reserved for James to think of life in terms of life in action." According to Dewey, this point "and that about the objective biological factor in

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[6]Ibid., p. 13.

James's conception of thought" were basic to the development of his philosophic thought. He declares: "And in the present state of men's minds the linking of philosophy to the significant issues of actual experience is facilitated by constant interaction with the methods and conclusions of psychology."[7]

In the fourth place - and stemming from his acquaintance with James's Psychology - Dewey reports that he began to perceive the significance of social categories. Included in these categories were communication and participation, and Dewey emphasized the significance of this perception:

> It is my conviction that a great deal of our philosophizing needs to be done over again from this point of view, and that there will ultimately result an integrated synthesis in a philosophy congruous with modern science and related to actual needs in education, morals, and religion.[8]

Dewey was alluding to the possibility of a new task for philosophy: that of subjecting the subject matter of the social sciences and the arts to the same kind of reflective inquiry which had been accorded that of the mathematical and physical sciences.

Horace M. Kallen, in "John Dewey and the Spirit of Pragmatism," emphasizes, more than does Dewey in his autobiographical sketch, the essential differences between the

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[7] Ibid., pp. 14-17.

[8] Ibid., p. 17.

philosophical positions of James and Dewey. Kallen suggests that Dewey tended to over-emphasize his debt to James while minimizing their crucial differences. After James had written a favorable review of Dewey's Studies in Logical Theory, Dewey referred to James's psychology as the "spiritual progenitor" of his own ideas and as furnishing the basis for a reconstructed system of philosophy. Disclaiming originality for himself, Dewey addressed James: "None the less so far as I am concerned I have simply been rendering back in logical vocabulary what was already your own."[9]

Yet, Kallen suggests that perhaps Dewey was being too modest. For the sake of presenting a united front, according to Kallen, Dewey and James emphasized their agreements and minimized their differences. While acknowledging James's influence upon Dewey's thinking, Kallen insists that Dewey developed his own, unique philosophy and points out that there were, indeed, crucial differences between the views of Dewey and James. Dewey, in Kallen's view, was never able to share James's acceptance of the validity of that which could be neither harmonized nor reconciled. He could not appreciate, as did James, the freedom inherent in direct

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[9]Ralph Barton Perry, The Thought and Character of William James, Vol. II (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1935), p. 525, cited in Horace M. Kallen, "Dewey and Pragmatism," in John Dewey: Philosopher Of Science And Freedom, ed. by Sidney Hook (New York: The Dial Press, 1950), p. 34.

experience, unprocessed by intelligence and, perhaps, unconnected to the common good. James could accept the vagaries of human nature and the atomized experiences of individuals, while, for Dewey, these were always subordinate to activities which partook of intelligent deliberation. Kallen notes that, while for both Dewey and James the world was open and brimming with alternative methods for achieving freedom, their primary emphases were different. He states:

> The paramount value in James's philosophic faith was that Freedom for which the word in other contexts is chance, contingency, plurality, novelty, with Reason derivative, operational, a working tool. The paramount value in Dewey's philosophic faith is Reason, whose right name is Intelligence, and whose work is to liberate by unifying, organizing, controlling, the kind of freedom to which James gives primacy.[10]

It may be, as Kallen suggests, that the differences between James and Dewey should be viewed as being symbolic of the very spirit of pragmatism, the label attached to James's position but discarded by Dewey in favor of other terms like "instrumentalism" and "experimentalism." Kallen describes the essential nature of pragmatism in the following statements:

> In the perspectives of this philosophy, there are no last terms, no finalities, no ultimacies. In so far as metaphysics is a reasoned envisagement of finalities and ultimacies, always and everywhere one and the same, Pragmatism is a philosophy without a metaphysic. It

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[10]Kallen, "Dewey and Pragmatism," in Philosopher Of Science, ed. by Hook, pp. 34, 37-38.

> expresses a posture of the spirit uncommitted to any foregone conclusions, unprejudiced in behalf of any ideal securities which are in fact hazardous postulates by hypostasis exalted into infallible principles.[11]

Elements of this spirit are evident in Dewey's instrumentalism. Sidney Hook asserts: "John Dewey has always denied that his philosophy constituted a system." Hook contends that Dewey's philosophy cannot be considered a system if, by this term, is meant the deduction of a set of doctrines from a few axiomatic principles and the imposition of these doctrines upon all fields of experience.[12]

Yet, as Hook points out, a philosophy may have a "systematic quality" without being, in the strict sense, a system. Hook states:

> That is to say, as it explores different fields, the central insights, methods, and conclusions of one field may hang together with those of other fields in such a way that they mutually provide some supporting force and evidence in relation to each other.[13]

Hook, in short, considers Dewey's philosophy to be systematic in the sense of revealing threads which run through - and tie together - all of Dewey's fields of inquiry.

Bernstein goes farther than Hook and contends that, in his final phase of intellectual development, Dewey was

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[11] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[12] Hook, Intellectual Portrait, pp. 26-27.

[13] Ibid., p. 27.

concerned with developing a "naturalistic metaphysics." Bernstein supports this contention by pointing out that Dewey was concerned with ultimacies in the sense of searching for "that which is basic and irreducible in all existence." Bernstein argues that, in Experience And Nature and in other of his later writings, Dewey attempted to clarify this basic metaphysical stance. He contends that this aspect of Dewey's thinking has been largely ignored by those who have studied Dewey.[14]

The purpose of this study is not to determine whether or not Dewey formulated a concrete metaphysical position. Dewey's writings are voluminous - and not always clear. As some writers have suggested, one could wish that Dewey would have written less but with greater clarity. Since the purpose of this study is, first of all, to clarify Dewey's overall position regarding the relationship between religion and morality, the controversies which took place regarding the labels which should be accorded his metaphysical stance will be given only minimal attention.

Dewey, himself, spent a considerable amount of time attempting to explain and clarify his views. He realized that he had not always been consistent and precise in the

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[14]Bernstein, ed., Experience, pp. 211, xix.

presentation of his overall philosophical position and the implications which it had for fields like moral theory. In his autobiographical account, he states:

> I seem to be unstable, chameleon-like, yielding one after another to many diverse and even incompatible influences; struggling to assimilate something from each and yet striving to carry it forward in a way that is logically consistent with what has been learned from its predecessors.[15]

In spite of this acknowledgement, a perusal of Dewey's major writings - and, in many cases, of the articles in which he attempted to explicate the meanings of views presented in them - reveals that he was primarily interested in presenting the essential ingredients of his philosophical position and its ramifications for all areas of human activities. He consistently attempts to draw the attention of his critics back to the kernel of his philosophy and away from their analyses of language and labels.

These comments concerning Dewey's background are suggestive of some of the forces which influenced his thought. As was noted earlier, Dewey, himself, was not entirely certain regarding these influences. Both Hook and Kallen contend that the midwestern environment played a major part in the shaping of Dewey's thought. Although it undoubtedly did, to some extent, Dewey does not mention

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[15]Dewey, "Absolutism," in Experience, ed. by Bernstein, p. 13.

this as a major influence in his autobiographical account. The influence of James, which Dewey rates so highly, is questioned by writers like Kallen.

Still, this brief sketch can serve to acquaint us with the physical and intellectual milieus in which Dewey developed his views. The next part of this chapter will deal with Dewey's views regarding religion. Because, traditionally, religion and morality were closely related, some of Dewey's reflections upon morality are necessarily found in this part of the chapter. A more detailed study of Dewey's views regarding morality, however, will be dealt with in a succeeding part of this chapter. Finally, Dewey's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality will be summarized.

John Dewey's Views Regarding Religion

In his autobiographical account, Dewey notes that he has frequently been criticized for his undue neglect of the problem of religion. Dewey's explanation for this reticence includes a statement of his fundamental belief in the adaptability of a genuine religious experience to whatever beliefs one felt intellectually compelled to hold. Perhaps stemming, to some extent, from the rather liberal home atmosphere in which he was raised, Dewey found it relatively easy to resolve the conflicts between traditional religious

beliefs and the findings of science. He admits that he has not viewed religion as a philosophic problem, explaining that "the effect of that attachment seems to be in the end a subornation of candid philosophic thinking to the alleged but factitious needs of some special set of convictions." Dewey continues with a statement of faith: "I have enough faith in the depth of the religious tendencies of men to believe that they will adapt themselves to any required intellectual change."[16]

In the above statements, Dewey is alluding to views regarding religion which he did not explicate in any depth until the writing of A Common Faith, published in 1934. His lack of interest is evident in the cursory treatment accorded it in his earlier works. In Ethics, a work which he co-authored with James H. Tufts in 1908, Dewey touches upon the subject of religion.[17] In tracing the historical development of moral progress, Dewey finds examples of positive contributions which religions have made to morality. He suggests that ancestor worship may have served as a vehicle by which the imagination could conceive of ideal values and that the religious bond formed by it may have contributed to the formation and enforcement of higher ethical

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[16]Ibid., p. 11.

[17]Although parts of this book were written by each of the authors, the work is a joint effort, and, for the most part, the views expressed in it reflect those of both authors. For the sake of convenience, I shall refer to Dewey as the author of this work throughout this study.

standards for the group. Dewey also finds positive elements in the Hebrew religious traditions. He notes the presence of the concept of social interdependence found in Isaiah and suggests that this conception that the suffering of the good may be due to the sin or suffering of others "marks the higher type of ethical relation." As embodied in the Christian conception of the cross, Dewey contends that this concept has greatly contributed to raising the level of social consciousness.[18]

In Ethics, Dewey concludes that religion, conceived of as a spiritual relation, served essentially as a unifying force rather than a divisive one. He suggests that the religious has often served as an agent for the moral and that ideals of character have seemed to command respect when embodied in divine beings. Lest he appear to embrace religion too heartily, however, he hastens to add: "But in all these illustrations we have, not the religious as distinct from the moral, but the religious as modified by the moral and embodying the moral in concrete examples and imagery." Using the Hebrew religion as an example, he declares: "In Israel religion was able to take up the moral ideals and become itself more completely ethical."[19] In this earlier work,

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[18]John Dewey and James H. Tufts, Ethics, American Science Series (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1908), pp. 32, 102, 109.

[19]Ibid., pp. 184, 196-97.

Dewey concludes that, historically, some religions have exhibited features which were compatible - in some cases, congruent - with morality.

Yet, further remarks which Dewey made in Ethics concerning the state of religion at the time of his writing are indicative of the views which he elaborated upon in A Common Faith. Noting that the religious has always suggested some relationship between man and either unseen powers or the cosmos, Dewey states: "Religion at present is confronting the problem of whether it will be able to take up into itself the newer ethical values - the scientific spirit which seeks truth, the enhanced value of human worth which demands higher types of social justice."[19]

Dewey makes further references to religion in a later work, entitled Human Nature And Conduct and published in 1922. In this work, in which Dewey was primarily concerned with the guidance of human conduct, he states: "The religious experience is a reality in so far as in the midst of effort to foresee and regulate future objects we are sustained and expanded in feebleness and failure by the sense of an enveloping whole." Dewey reverts to the topic of religion later in this work and contends that, from an individualized sense of the whole, religion has been perverted into something

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[19]Ibid., p. 197.

immutable. He charges:

> Instead of marking the freedom and peace of the individual as a member of an infinite whole, it has been petrified into a slavery of thought and sentiment, an intolerant superiority on the part of the few and an intolerable burden on the part of the many.[20]

In Human Nature, Dewey is railing at the perversion of religion, rather than at the phenomenon itself. He makes this clear when he asserts: "There is a conceit fostered by perversion of religion which assimilates the universe to our personal desires; but there is also a conceit of carrying the load of the universe from which religion liberates us."[21] At this point, Dewey still presents religion as being a potentially liberating force. If conceived properly and if not distorted into something which becomes the possession of the few at the expense of the many, it can aid man in his relationship to the universe.

In Experience And Nature, published in 1925, Dewey deals with religion and religious experiences from an epistemological standpoint. He admits the reality of religious experiences, traditionally conceived, but doubts the reality of the objects of these experiences. He makes his position clear in the following statements:

> Now it is one thing to say that the world is such that men approach certain objects with awe, worship, piety, sacrifice and prayer, and that this is a fact which a

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[20]John Dewey, Human Nature And Conduct (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1922), pp. 264, 331.

[21]Ibid., p. 331.

> theory of existence must reckon with as truly as with the facts of science. But it is a different thing to say that religious experience gives evidence of the reality of its own objects....

Dewey is insisting upon extrinsic evidence as the criterion for determining the reality of all objects, whether they be scientific or religious. In the following statements, he makes his epistemological stance clear:

> Injunctions and prohibitions which are empirically unescapable, may be called categorical imperatives, and their existence may be quite as significant for a just theory of nature as is the law of gravitation. But what sort of objects beyond themselves they give evidence of, whether tribal taboos, a Kantian thing-in-itself, God, a political sovereign or a net work of social customs evolved in the effort to satisfy needs, is a question to be settled by the denotative method, by finding and pointing to the things in the concrete contexts in which they present themselves.[22]

In The Quest For Certainty, published in 1929, Dewey makes a number of references to religion and deals, somewhat briefly, with central aspects of the problem. In discussing the expansion of Christianity, he points out that the Church became the "interpreter and guardian" of the knowledge of ultimate Being. Dewey admits that this authoritative position on the part of the Church did provide for the integration of belief and conduct, noting that the foundation for this integration was undermined by the advent of science. Perceiving the effects of this disintegration, he asserts:

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[22]John Dewey, Experience And Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1926), pp. 17-18.

"The problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man's beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about the values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life."[23]

In Quest, Dewey does not propose to deal with this problem by either retaining religion as an integrative force or by discarding entirely everything of a religious nature. Rather, he takes a middle course, a position which he develops more fully in A Common Faith. In essence, Dewey proposes to rid religion of its creeds and other intellectual pretensions while retaining the religious attitude. Dewey views this attitude as a "sense of the possibilities of existence and as devotion to the cause of these possibilities." He contends that the source of the conflicts between religion and science lies in the commitment of the former to the belief that only that which antecedently exists is worthy of the highest devotion. He suggests that a religious attitude would give up all pretensions to beliefs about matters of fact and would substitute, instead, a belief in the value of discovering actual possibilities and of acting upon them. Dewey predicts that, if religion is divested of its "quest for certitude," it will be less defensive and far

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[23]John Dewey, The Quest For Certainty (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1929), pp. 254-56.

more inclined to deal with the possibilities existing in the natural world. Not certainty, but the possibilities inherent in actual living would constitute the heart of the religious attitude. Dewey states:

> But of the religious attitude which is allied to acceptance of the ideally good as the to-be-realized possibilities of existence, one statement may be made with confidence. At the best, all our endeavors look to the future and never attain certainty.

In a statement which presages his position in A Common Faith, Dewey asserts, regarding the substitution of possibilities for certitude: "A sense of common participation in the inevitable uncertainties of existence would be coeval with a sense of common effort and shared destiny."[24]

In A Common Faith, which, in many ways, seems like a footnote to Dewey's major works, he conducts a somewhat more thorough study of the problem of religion. He rejects the objects of religious belief, as was noted before, upon epistemological grounds and rejects the term "religion" upon definitional grounds. In the first place, Dewey reiterates the position he had taken in Experience: the validity of a religious experience and its effects can be accepted, but its objects must be subjected to empirical proof. Dewey is perfectly willing to concede that people undergo experi-

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[24]Ibid., pp. 303-08.

ences which result in their living more positive lives. He takes issue, however, with the interpretations which may be imposed upon these experiences. To attribute the source of such an experience to God or to some other supernatural being and to attempt to prove the existence of such a being by the experience is, for Dewey, untenable. While not denying the validity of the experience and its results, he argues:

> In reality, the only thing that can be said to be 'proved' is the existence of some complex of conditions that have operated to effect an adjustment in life, an orientation, that brings with it a sense of security and peace. The particular interpretation given to this complex of conditions is not inherent in the experience itself. It is derived from the culture with which a particular person has been imbued.

Dewey adds that, only if the particular conditions are labeled "God" or some other supernatural being, can anything be said to be proven.[25]

In the second place, Dewey rejects the term "religion" upon definitional grounds. He postulates that the term has traditionally been associated with ideas and beliefs concerning the supernatural and discusses three historical aspects of religions which, in his view, cast doubt upon the validity of this definition. In the first place, he notes the endless variety of conceptions which adherents of various religions

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[25]John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 11-14.

have held regarding the nature of the supernatural, ranging from the "fetish of the Africans" to the "Providence of Christianity." Next, he draws attention to the multitude of different methods whereby obedience and reverence to higher powers have been expressed, varying in nature from the offering of human sacrifices to more humble offerings of the mind. Finally, he points to the lack of unity regarding the moral motivations appealed to and utilized by the various religions, noting that these have included fear of torture, hope of eternal bliss, and asceticism. Dewey contends that such a wide variety of beliefs concerning the supernatural reduces the terms of the definition to a common denominator which is virtually meaningless. He concludes that religion, as such, does not exist and that one can only talk about particular religions. Their differences and the necessity for choice among them erase any argument based upon universality.[26]

After discarding the term "religion" and casting doubt upon the objects of belief of the various religions, Dewey is left with the religious. He notes that this adjective has also been traditionally associated with beliefs concerning the supernatural. In dealing with this term, he chooses to take a middle course between those who maintain that

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[26]Ibid., pp. 2-7.

anything religious must partake of the supernatural and those who, having discredited the supernatural, are disposed to discredit anything partaking of the religious. In essence, Dewey desires to retain the religious while discarding the term "religion" and disposing of the religions. He proposes the extraction of religious elements from our experiences after they have been shorn of what have historically been regarded as religions. He states his position as follows:

> I am not proposing a religion, but rather the emancipation of elements and outlooks that may be called religious. For the moment we have a religion, whether that of the Sioux Indian or of Judaism or of Christianity, that moment the ideal factors in experience that may be called religious take on a load that is not inherent in them, a load of current beliefs and of institutional practices that are irrelevant to them.[27]

Dewey is careful to clarify his differentiation between what have been considered to be religions and his interpretation of the term "religious." He notes that religions have historically involved certain sets of beliefs and practices, linked together in institutional structures. In contrast, he uses the term "religious" to refer to attitudes, declaring that they do not denote anything specific which can exist in and of itself. While religions have traditionally been associated with particular types of experiences, the religious can pertain to all modes of human experiences.

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[27] Ibid., pp. 2, 7-9.

The problem, for Dewey, becomes that of recognizing and extracting the genuinely religious in human experiences. After noting the commonly-held belief that people who do not accept a religion are thus proven to be non-religious, Dewey suggests that the rejection of religions may be due to the fact that their historical baggage often prevents the genuine religious quality in life from surfacing. He submits: "I believe that many persons are so repelled from what exists as a religion by its intellectual and moral implications, that they are not even aware of attitudes in themselves that if they came to fruition would be genuinely religious."[28]

In attempting to explicate his meaning of the term "religious," Dewey discusses attitudes which, in his estimation, do lend support to the "processes of living" but which fall short of being religious. He describes that attitude which he chooses to label "accommodation": the passive acceptance of particular, unchangeable conditions which affect only some aspects of people's conduct. He identifies another attitude as "adaptation," noting that it refers to modifying conditions so that they will be accommodated to people's needs and desires. These two types of

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[28]Ibid., pp. 9-11.

attitudes, which Dewey labels "adjustment," do not, in his view, represent the deepest changes which people may make in their relationships to their environment. Dewey suggests that adjustments effect merely surface changes and do not "pertain to our being in its entirety."[29]

Dewey's conception of the religious involves a more enduring kind of change in attitude. He describes this more inclusive modification of the self as follows: "There is a composing and harmonizing of the various elements of our being such that, in spite of changes in the special conditions that surround us, these conditions are also arranged, settled, in relation to us." While conceding that an element of submission exists in this attitude, Dewey contends that it is essentially different from the Stoical attitude in that it is "more outgoing, more ready and glad." He explains its voluntary nature as follows: "And in calling it voluntary, it is not meant that it depends upon a particular resolve or volition. It is a change _of_ will conceived as the organic plenitude of our being, rather than any special change _in_ will."[30] This description serves as Dewey's conception of the term "religious." He contends that religions, despite their claims to the contrary, do not bring about this kind of enduring

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[29]_Ibid._, pp. 15-16.

[30]_Ibid._, pp. 16-17.

change in attitude and self. He prefers to posit that, whenever this kind of change occurs, a religious attitude has developed.

In a limited way, Dewey deals with the relationship between religion and morality in A Common Faith. He notes the distinction which has traditionally been made between intellectual beliefs and convictions in the moral sense, pointing out that the former has implied some truth that could justify intellectual assent, while the latter has signified authority over desires and purposes. Dewey contends that, although moral authority is that of an ideal, it has been encumbered with claims of existence in reality; from an ideal, it has evolved into an actuality. He views this evolution of moral ideals into physical entities as evidence of a lack of moral faith. Since, in his view, the conception of the "whole self" is an ideal, the moral faith leading to the conviction that "some end should be supreme over conduct" must remain embedded in the ideal. He declares: "The authority of an ideal over choice and conduct is the authority of an ideal, not of a fact, of a truth guaranteed to intellect, not of the status of the one who propounds the truth."[31]

According to Dewey, this moral faith begins to evolve into the metaphysical or the theological when its ideal

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[31] Ibid., pp. 20-21.

nature is not respected. He asserts: "Moral faith has been bolstered by all sorts of arguments intended to prove that its object is not ideal and that its claim upon us is not primarily moral or practical, since the ideal in question is already embedded in the existent frame of things." When ideals are viewed as "antecedently existing actualities," according to Dewey, faith that something should be evolves into the intellectual belief that it already is. Dewey notes the results of this transformation: "When physical existence does not bear out the assertion, the physical is subtly changed into the metaphysical. In this way, moral faith has been inextricably tied up with intellectual beliefs about the supernatural."[32]

Dewey emphasizes the point that faith, as he conceives it, pertains to the reality of ideals "as ideals." He emphasizes that he is not using the term "faith" in the sense of "the evidence of things not seen" of the Christian religion. Faith, in this latter sense, becomes a "substitute for knowledge," and its objects become intellectual in nature. According to Dewey, the following consequences ensue from such a conception of faith:

> Religious faith is then given to a body of propositions as true on the credit of their supernatural author, reason coming in to demonstrate the reasonableness of giving such credit. Of necessity there results the

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[32]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

> development of theologies, or bodies of systematic propositions, to make explicit in organized form the content of the propositions to which belief is attached and assent given. Given the point of view, those who hold that religion necessarily implies a theology are correct.[33]

Dewey is careful to point out that not all moral faith in ideal ends is, necessarily, religious in quality. He contends that, to partake of the religious, the ends of moral conviction must "arouse emotions that are not only intense but are actuated and supported by ends so inclusive that they unify the self." For Dewey, the religious must involve the unification of the self, as evidenced in the change of will, and the possibilities for effecting this religious attitude must be kept ideal in nature. His position is that the "intrinsic nature of the ideal," rather than intellectual assent, gives the ideal authority over our conduct and attitudes. Dewey submits that the resulting coherent perspective regarding life should be credited to the religious rather than to religions.[34]

Dewey does not attempt to offer a comprehensive explanation for the origin of religions. In Quest, he had suggested that feelings of dependence and impotence regarding the universe had spawned religions as aids in coping with this helplessness.[35] In A Common Faith, he reiterates this position and alleges that traditional doctrines and creeds have

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[33] Ibid., pp. 21, 19-20.

[34] Ibid., pp. 22-24.

[35] Dewey, Quest, p. 292.

perpetuated feelings of dependency and humility on the part of humans. Dewey admits that, while more forces have come under man's control, some will undoubtedly persist in being troublesome to man. He rejects the stance, however, that this situation necessitates an abject dependency on the part of man. Rather, Dewey suggests that dependence can reflect a positive awareness of the supportive aspects of the environment. He states: "The sense of the dignity of human nature is as religious as is the awe and reverence when it rests upon a sense of human nature as a cooperating part of a larger whole."[36] Man, in short, can realize piety without wallowing in a sense of his own impotence; he can display a religious faith by realizing his true place in the world.

Dewey suggests that, if there has been a scarcity of lives motivated by the ideals which he has discussed, it may not be due to the ineffectiveness of these ideals. Rather, he suggests that energy which could have been devoted to these ideals has often been siphoned off into the practicing of religions. Consequently, according to Dewey, religious aspects of experience have frequently been buried underneath the beliefs and rituals associated with religions. He sums up his case against religions as follows:

If I have said anything about religions and religion

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[36]Dewey, A Common Faith, pp. 25-26.

> that seems harsh, I have said those things because of a firm belief that the claim on the part of religions to possess a monopoly of ideals and of the supernatural means by which alone, it is alleged, they can be furthered, stands in the way of the realization of distinctively religious values inherent in natural experience.

Dewey declares unequivocably: "The opposition between religious values as I conceive them and religions is not to be bridged. Just because the release of these values is so important, their identification with the creeds and cults of religions must be dissolved."[37]

In essence, Dewey's rejection of religions arises out of his all-pervasive philosophic position. This position, which will be dealt with at greater length later in this chapter, involves the application of the scientific spirit of inquiry and validation to every sphere of human activity. For Dewey, there could be no acknowledgement of the existence of two realms - that of nature and of grace - within which different methods of inquiry and criteria for validation are applicable. Only the realm of nature exists and, within it, the interpretations given to experiences must stem from the experiences themselves rather than from conceptions lying outside of these experiences. To apologists for religion who point out that scientific ideas and theories are constantly shifting and, therefore, represent an unreliable source of knowledge, Dewey responds by declaring that to be science's

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[37] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

very strength. He states:

> Science is not constituted by any particular body of subject-matter. It is constituted by a method, a method of changing beliefs by means of tested inquiry as well as of arriving at them. It is its glory, not its condemnation, that its subject-matter develops as the method is improved. There is no special subject-matter of belief that is sacrosanct.[38]

In view of his epistemological position, Dewey can not allow even one item of intellectual assent to be tied to religious qualities and values, and he rejects the whole notion of specific truths with special avenues of access open to them. Dewey is convinced that the religious ideals which he has described contain their own authority and do not need that provided by belief in transcendent beings. He inquires: "What would be lost if it were also admitted that they have authoritative claim upon conduct just because they are ideal?" In the following statements, he reveals his faith in ideals as ideals:

> ...what I have tried to show is that the ideal itself has its roots in natural conditions; it emerges when the imagination idealizes existence by laying hold of the possibilities offered to thought and action. There are values, goods, actually realized upon a natural basis - the goods of human association, of art and knowledge. The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in the climacteric moments of experience and projects them. We need no external criterion and guarantee for their goodness. They are had, they exist as good, and out of them we frame our ideal ends.[39]

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[38] Ibid., pp. 37-39.

[39] Ibid., pp. 32-33, 41, 48.

Dewey is not willing to concede that the masses need - and benefit from - a belief in actual, transcendent beings. He postulates:

> The validity of justice, affection, and that intellectual correspondence of our ideas with realities that we call truth, is so assured in its hold upon humanity that it is unnecessary for the religious attitude to encumber itself with the apparatus of dogma and doctrine.

The belief in the existence of an omnipotent Being, with powers to punish and reward, is not necessary for the striving toward ideal ends which is Dewey's goal. He avers: "There is at least enough impulse toward justice, kindliness, and order so that if it were mobilized for action, not expecting abrupt and complete transformation to occur, the disorder, cruelty, and oppression that exist would be reduced." Dewey exhibits faith in man's intelligence as well as in his impulses. As supernaturalism declines, according to Dewey, man will be forced to rely, to a greater extent, upon his own powers. Dewey submits:

> The objection to supernaturalism is that it stands in the way of an effective realization of the sweep and depth of the implications of natural human relations. It stands in the way of using the means that are in our power to make radical changes in these relations.[40]

Dewey argues that, in addition to hampering the development of man's own powers, religions have violated the democratic spirit. He contends that the separation of the

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[40]Ibid., pp. 44, 47, 80.

"religious" from the "secular" has led to the compartmentalization of religious values rather than to their diffusion throughout a community. He notes that natural social relations have often been depreciated and, at times, have been regarded as dangerous rivals of higher, spiritual relationships. In the following remarks, Dewey declares unequivocably that Christianity's separation of mankind into "sheep" and "goats" is incompatible with the democratic ideal:

> I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed. Whether or no we are, save in some metaphorical sense, all brothers, we are at least all in the same boat traversing the same turbulent ocean.[41]

Dewey's position does not necessitate the abandonment of the term "God," if it were used to denote an active relationship between the ideal and the actual. He states: "But the function of such a working union of the ideal and the actual seems to me to be identical with the force that has in fact been attached to the conception of God in all the religions that have a spiritual content." Dewey does not consider himself to be an atheist. He asserts, in fact, that atheism and supernaturalism have something in common: a concern with man in isolation. Both, in Dewey's view, disregard nature or relegate it to a secondary position below man.

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[41] Ibid., pp. 66-67, 71, 84.

Dewey contends, in contrast, that a religious attitude involves a sense of the relationship of man to his environment: a realization, on the part of man, of his state of dependence and of the support for him to be found in his environment. Dewey suggests that the use of the term "God" or "divine" may fulfill a need of man. He states: "Use of the words 'God' or 'divine' to convey the union of actual with ideal may protect man from a sense of isolation and from consequent despair or defiance."[42] Although Dewey's position is fundamentally an optimistic one, involving the conviction that real, positive changes can be effected in this world without the beliefs and rituals associated with religions, he concedes that man may need protection from an overwhelming sense of isolation. To counteract this, he would accept the use of terms like "God" and "divine," provided they were used in the manner which he prescribes.

In A Common Faith, Dewey is calling for just that: a religious faith which is common to all mankind and shorn of creeds, specific beliefs, and rituals. He points out that all men are part of a "continuous human community" and all have the responsibility to pass on and expand upon the common values which have been the products of civilization. Dewey

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[42] Ibid., pp. 52-53.

concludes A Common Faith with this statement, which gives expression to his hopes for mankind: "Here are all the elements for a religious faith that shall not be confined to sect, class, or race. Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant."[43]

John Dewey's Views Regarding Morality

John Dewey's views regarding morality stem directly from his overall philosophical position. Dewey attempts to clarify this position in Reconstruction In Philosophy, an important work which was published in 1920. In Reconstruction, he critically analyzes the major philosophical movements which had existed up to his time and finds them all deficient, in some way, regarding what he conceives to be the proper task for philosophy: the guidance of human conduct. He charges, regarding the major systems of Western philosophy:

> They have seen themselves, and have represented themselves to the public, as dealing with something which has variously been termed Being, Nature or the Universe, the Cosmos at large, Reality, the Truth. Whatever names were used, they had one thing in common: they were used to designate something taken to be fixed, immutable, and therefore out of time; that is eternal.[44]

Dewey contends that philosophy, generally, had been too far removed from the actual affairs of men to affect them, and he is convinced that a reconstructed philosophy could be

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[43] Ibid., p. 87.

[44] John Dewey, Reconstruction In Philosophy (Enlarged ed.; Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), pp. xii-xiii.

effective in a practical sense.

In the Introduction to the enlarged edition of Reconstruction, which appeared in 1948, Dewey stresses even more the urgent need for a reconstruction in philosophy. The Second World War had occurred in the period between the publication of the two editions, and Dewey is adamant regarding the need for a philosophy which could - and would - deal with the urgent issues of the day. In his Introduction, Dewey points out that the assumption of "underlying fixities" had dominated the natural sciences for a long time and that it should not be surprising that it had served, also, as the basis for the formation of philosophical systems. He notes, however, that the natural sciences were eventually forced to abandon the assumption of fixity; their own development had led them to recognize that process, rather than fixity, constituted the heart of their universality.[45]

Dewey contends that philosophy was lagging behind the natural sciences in this respect and that the search for eternal truths was still going on. He argues that philosophy must take its position beside the natural sciences and adopt the scientific method of inquiry as its operational tool. Philosophy, according to Dewey, must adopt process as the

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[45] Ibid., pp. vi-x.

heart of its activity and focus its attention upon human experiences as they occur in nature. He states philosophy's task succinctly:

> Here, then, lies the reconstructive work to be done by philosophy. It must undertake to do for the development of inquiry into human affairs and hence into morals what the philosophers of the last few centuries did for promotion of scientific inquiry in physical and physiological conditions and aspects of human life.[46]

Dewey is advocating that philosophy be modified so as to operate within the natural realm with scientific tools of inquiry. The heart of Dewey's philosophical position lies in the crucial importance of the scientific mode of inquiry, the essence of which, in his view, is experimentation.[47] He submits that, "when experience ceased to be empirical and became experimental, something of radical importance occurred." Dewey comments upon the positive benefits of experimentalism:

> Aforetime man employed the results of his prior experience only to form customs that henceforth had to be blindly followed or blindly broken. Now, old experience is used to suggest aims and methods for developing a new and improved experience. Consequently experience becomes in so far constructively self-regulative.[48]

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[46] Ibid., pp. xi-xiii, xxiii.

[47] Joseph Ratner, in Joseph Ratner, ed., Intelligence In The Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy (New York: Random House, Inc., 1939), presents an excellent analysis of Dewey's philosophical position. In his Introduction(p. 58), he stresses the importance of experimentation to Dewey's position and prefers, therefore, the label "experimentalism" to "instrumentalism" in referring to Dewey's position.

[48] Dewey, Reconstruction, p. 94.

Man's experiences can be dealt with in a manner similar to that of materials in laboratory experiments: they can be observed, controlled, and tested as to their consequences.

Dewey's reconstructed philosophy would have ramifications for all areas of human activities.[49] Morals, too, must be subjected to inquiry and criticism, as must the customs and institutions which had traditionally embodied moral laws. Dewey reveals the import of his position for morality in the following statement:

> The supposed fact that morals demand immutable, extra-temporal principles, standards, norms, ends, as the only assured protection against moral chaos can, however, no longer appeal to natural science for its support, nor expect to justify by science its exemption of morals (in practice and in theory) from considerations of time and place - that is, from processes of change.[50]

It is Dewey's contention that the study of morals must turn its attention to "means and conditions" if it is to advance. Rejecting both "moral materialism," resulting from means being taken as ends, and "sentimentalism," resulting from ends being taken without regard to means, Dewey advocates experimentalism as a method which must be applied to the realm of human affairs. Declaring this to be "the intellectual task of the twentieth century," he declares: "When this step is taken, the circle of scientific development will

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[49]In his Introduction(p. 9), Ratner asserts that "it is essential to keep focused in mind that Dewey conceives philosophy to be one part of culture, interacting with all other parts with varying degrees of sensitivity and effectiveness."

[50]Dewey, Reconstruction, p. xiii.

be rounded out and the reconstruction of philosophy be made an accomplished fact."[51]

Dewey is confronted with the task of developing a moral theory without the aid of transcendent, immutable rules. He attempts to formulate an authoritative moral relativism but a relativism which will not deteriorate into moral nihilism. He summons philosophy to aid in this task and, in Reconstruction, indicates how it can aid man. Dewey declares:

> It can make it easier for mankind to take the right steps in action by making it clear that a sympathetic and integral intelligence brought to bear upon the observation and understanding of concrete social events and forces, can form ideals, that is aims, which shall not be either illusions or mere emotional compensations.[52]

This statement reflects Dewey's faith in man and in his ability, without the aid of dogma and absolutism, to intelligently form aims for the direction of human conduct.

In Ethics, Dewey deals with aspects of morality which he later solidified and clarified in works like Reconstruction. In the Introduction to Ethics, ethics is defined as "the science that deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad." The terms "moral conduct" and "moral life" are applied to conduct thus considered, and Dewey declares that Ethics "aims to give a systematic account of our judgments about conduct, in so far as

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[51] Ibid., pp. 73, 94, 76.

[52] Ibid., pp. 130-31.

these estimate it from the standpoint of right or wrong, good or bad."[53] One of the central problems dealt with in Ethics is that of the formulation of an authoritative basis upon which to form moral judgments.

In Ethics, Dewey identifies conflict as the source from which moral situations arise. He asserts:

> We have alternative ends so heterogeneous that choice has to be made; an end has to be developed out of conflict. The problem now becomes what is really valuable. It is the nature of the valuable, of the desirable, that the individual has to pass upon.

In discussing the choosing of the "valuable," Dewey touches upon the crucial role which consequences must play. He notes that they must be foreseen and desired over other possible consequences, declaring that humans learn to operate effectively in this respect by "taking into account in subsequent acts consequences of prior acts not intended in those prior acts." Dewey submits: "The great need of the moral agent is thus a character which will make him as open, as accessible as possible, to the recognition of the consequences of his behavior."[54] Yet, the present, with its difficulties, was always of primary concern to Dewey. As he reiterated in later writings, a moral situation arises in a particular setting, and its solution is primarily intended for that

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[53]Dewey, Ethics, p. 1.

[54]Ibid., pp. 207, 261-62.

particular situation.

Dewey makes preliminary, and sometimes tentative, attempts to describe the nature of morality and to determine the standard whereby moral judgments are to be made in Ethics. Whioe suggesting that some relationship exists between morality and the "good," Dewey declines to positively equate the two terms. He declines, also, to equate happiness with the good, contending that the former is a condition which accompanies the latter. Suggesting that a relationship exists between the making of moral judgments and the proper end of man, Dewey declares that the latter "lies in the fullest and freest realization of powers in their appropriate objects." These "appropriate objects" appear to include those which Dewey enumerates in the following statement: "The good consists of friendship, family and political resources, science, art, in all their complex and variegated forms and elements."[55]

For Dewey, morality is inherently social, and moral progress is measured by growth. He describes the latter as a process of becoming "more rational, more social, and finally more moral." Dewey contends that moral progress is occurring when this kind of conduct becomes valued and chosen. Historically, according to Dewey, moral standards were group standards and an individual's morality was gauged by the measure of his

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[55]Ibid., pp. 280-81, 300.

conformity to the group. Dewey contends that a higher level of morality is possible and asserts: "Complete morality is reached only when the individual recognizes the right or chooses the good freely, devotes himself heartily to its fulfillment, and seeks a progressive social development in which every member of a society shall share." Dewey is careful to point out that individualism, in and of itself, is no guarantor of moral progress. Rather, he posits the need for a "reconstructed individual" and describes this person as one who is "individual in choice, in responsibility, and at the same time social in what he regards as good, in his sympathies, and in his purposes."[56] The growth, which, for Dewey, is so essential for moral progress, must entail individual choice joined to social concerns if morality is to progress beyond that which has existed in the past.

In Ethics, Dewey attempts to deal with problems concerning the relationship of duty to morality and that of the individual to society. In cases where conflicts occur between the desires of a person and what he perceives to be the "right" action, Dewey argues that the "consciousness of duty grows out of the complex character of the self" and asserts that the "conflict of duty and desire is thus an accompaniment of a 'growing' self." Dewey attempts to establish an authori-

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[56] Ibid., pp. 10, 12, 34, 73, 75-76.

tative moral relationship between the self and society. He talks about finding the self and then losing it in moral endeavors, explaining his position as follows:

> Our final word about the place of the self in the moral life is, then, that the problem of morality is the formation, out of the body of original instinctive impulses which compose the natural self, of a voluntary self, in which socialized desires and affections are dominant, and in which the last and controlling principle of deliberation is the love of the objects which will make this transformation possible.[57]

Dewey never deviated from his position that the self, in a truly moral sense, must be - and, indeed, is - tied to society. He argued that society, in turn, must be so constituted as to nurture the growing, socially-inclined individual. For Dewey, this society was the democratic one. One of Dewey's strongest convictions involved the belief that democracy was absolutely necessary for the realization of moral progress. He avers, regarding democracy: "Morally, it is the effective embodiment of the moral ideal of a good which consists in the development of all the social capacities of every individual member of society."[58]

The problem of the acquisition of skills regarding the making of moral judgments poses some difficulties for Dewey, and he does not entirely resolve them in Ethics. Dewey contends that moral acts must be intelligent ones in that

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[57]Ibid., pp. 362-63, 397.

[58]Ibid., pp. 482-83.

they are "reasonable" and are capable of standing the test of reflection. Rejecting the "a priori" reason of Kant and the "direct perception" of the sense perceptionists, Dewey emphasizes man's intelligence as the primary ingredient in the formulation of moral judgments. Dewey alludes to "general principles" which would "supply standpoints and methods which will enable the individual to make for himself an analysis of the elements of good and evil in the particular situation in which he finds himself." Because Dewey places intelligent choice in such a primary position in the making of moral judgments, he is confronted with the problem of differences in intelligence and in the conditions and opportunities whereby it develops. He attempts to resolve this difficulty by emphasizing conscientiousness, rather than actual moral knowledge, as the crucial virtue. He submits: "When, however, the morally important thing is the desire and effort to discover the good, everyone is on the same plane in spite of differences in intellectual endowment and learning."[59]

Yet, in spite of the above statement, one senses that Dewey was primarily interested in offering a practical method whereby moral judgments could be made. Even though he concedes that differences in intelligence exist, he offers intelligence as the tool whereby man can make moral choices. While

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[59]Ibid., pp. 307, 316-21, 418-22.

acknowledging the importance of intentions, Dewey is mainly concerned with actions: with the choices which must be made when moral situations arise. He is not so much interested in judging the intentions of humans as he is in giving guidance for their moral choices.

This overall emphasis of Dewey can clearly be seen in Human Nature. In this work, Dewey establishes the integral relationship existing between morality and human nature and refutes the notion that a realm of morals exists which is separate from the ordinary actualities of human existence. He argues for a system of moral thought based upon a study of human nature, rather than upon a disregard for it. Instead of viewing morality as serving the negative function of curbing human nature, Dewey sees it as arising out of the interaction between the elements of human nature and the natural and social elements of the environment. This conception of morality would link the study of ethics to all other studies relating to man and nature, and, while not claiming perfection from such a system, Dewey declares: "Until the integrity of morals with human nature and of both with the environment is recognized, we shall be deprived of the aid of past experience to cope with the most acute and deep problems of life."[60]

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[60]Dewey, Human Nature, pp. 8-9, 12-13.

In Human Nature, Dewey identifies the constituent elements of human nature and relates them to moral development. He identifies habit, impulse, and intelligence as the basic components of man's nature. Dewey suggests that habits are directly related to morality, since the former are outcomes of the environment as much as of the organism. Because this is true, according to Dewey, we must accept our virtues and vices as habits stemming from the adaptation of our personal capacities to forces in the environment. In tackling moral problems, Dewey argues that we must modify conditions, which, in turn, will modify people's habits. He maintains: "To change the working character or will of another we have to alter objective conditions which enter into his habits." He states, even more succinctly: "We must work on the environment not merely on the hearts of men."[61]

It is Dewey's contention that habits are means and that means and ends are "two names for the same reality." He refers to means as "intermediates, middle terms," conceiving of them as earlier stages of a series of acts, while ends are considered to be later stages of the same series. Dewey's position is that the means within our power are habits and that character is the working interaction of habits whose strength depends upon reinforcement derived from other habits.

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[61] Ibid., pp. 14-19, 22.

Habits, thus, are acquired human modes of acting which are influenced by prior activities and are, in turn, dynamic. The essence of a habit, according to Dewey, is a predisposition to ways of acting: a sensitivity to certain kinds of stimuli.[62]

Dewey attempts to deal with the question of the relationship between customs and habits. He submits that it is false to view social customs and institutions as the consolidation of individual habits. Rather, he posits: "But to a larger extent customs persist because individuals form their personal habits under conditions set by prior customs." Customs, for Dewey, supply patterns for individual activities, and, when conflicting customs exist, reflection and criticism must be utilized to reorganize and to readjust them.[63]

Dewey argues, in effect, that the institutions which have evolved in society are reconstructive forces. Regarding institutions like language, family life, property, and academies of art and science, he remarks:

> These are not mere embellishments of the forces which produced them, idle decorations of the scene. They are additional forces. They reconstruct. They open new avenues of endeavor and impose new labors. In short they are civilization, culture, morality.

If one questions the authority of these institutions, Dewey admits that, in one sense, the question is unanswerable. He contends, however, that, from an empirical standpoint, the

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[62] Ibid., pp. 34-42, passim.

[63] Ibid., pp. 58, 75.

authority is that of life. If one asks why use language, seek scientific knowledge, engage in industry, and enjoy art, Dewey replies that, if one must live, he must live a life of which these things form the substance. He contends that reason and moral principles have grown into these institutions as well as out of them, and for Dewey there is really no choice. He asserts, emphatically: "In short, the choice is not between a moral authority outside custom and one within it. It is between adopting more or less intelligent and significant customs."[64]

Dewey cites impulse as another component of human nature. He views impulses as turning points upon which activities are reorganized by changing the direction and quality of old habits. For Dewey, impulses act as potential stimuli for the steady reorganization of habits to meet new elements in new situations, and he explains: "Impulse is a source, an indispensable source, of liberation; but only as it is employed in giving habits pertinence and freshness does it liberate power."[65] Dewey sees the role of impulse as being intermediary: it affords imagination its chance to operate and serves to animate and inspire habit.

Dewey identifies the third element of human nature as being intelligence, and he contends that this ingredient goes deeper than either habit or impulse to give fullest expression

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[64] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[65] Ibid., pp. 96-99, 105.

to the moral life. Noting the importance of impulse in stimulating reflective imagination and the dependence of the latter upon established habits, Dewey adds: "But only thought notes obstructions, invents tools, conceives aims, directs technique, and thus converts impulse into an art which lives in objects."[66]

In Human Nature, Dewey discusses the crucial importance of intelligence in the making of moral choices. He comes close to equating the term with "deliberation," defining the latter as a "dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action." Dewey describes deliberation as "an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses, to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered upon." He suggests that deliberation originates when a troublesome situation arises and that it is concluded when a certain course of action resolves the situation. Dewey prefers to view deliberation as a tool for dealing with present, rather than future, situations. He does concede, however, that the observation of tendencies of acts, of disparities between former judgments and actual outcomes, leads to knowledge concerning the meaning of present acts and, as a result, serves to guide conduct. He avers: "Imaginative forethought

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[66]Ibid., pp. 171-72.

of the probable consequences of a proposed act keeps that act from sinking below consciousness into routine habit or whimsical brutality."[67]

Intelligence, for Dewey, is a crucial tool in the forming of moral judgments. It consists of the reflection upon the possible consequences ensuing from alternative modes of action in a given moral situation. Consequences are of primary importance for Dewey, and he asserts that they "fix the moral quality of an act." He emphasizes that they must be viewed from a broad perspective and that all types of effects must be considered. He is not contending that there can ever be an "exact equation of disposition and outcome." Rather, he prefers to talk about tendencies and explains his position as follows:

> The word 'tendency' is an attempt to combine two facts, one that habits have a certain causal efficacy, the other that their outworking in any particular case is subject to contingencies, to circumstances which are unforseeable and which carry an act one side of its usual effect.[68]

For Dewey, then, ends are not immutable, lying beyond activity. Rather, Dewey describes them as the "foreseen consequences which influence present deliberation and which finally bring it to rest by furnishing an adequate stimulus to overt action." He regards them as "ends-in-view" or as aims, arising out of the situation itself and to be regarded

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[67] Ibid., pp. 190, 199, 207-08.

[68] Ibid., pp. 45, 49.

more as stimuli to present choice than as literal ends to action. He views them as means to unify and liberate present, conflicting habits and impulses rather than as objects in themselves.[69]

Dewey is quite aware of the resistance to this view of ends, noting that man has been attached to the ideals of fixed ends and certainty. He raises the question: "Why have men become so attached to fixed, eternal ends? Why is it not universally recognized that an end is a device of intelligence in guiding action, instrumental to freeing and harmonizing troubled and divided tendencies?" Dewey refers to "endless ends" and suggests that there are no "fixed, self-enclosed finalities." Regarding the belief in these fixities, he charges: "Fixed ends upon one side and fixed 'principles' - that is authoritative rules - on the other, are props for a feeling of safety, the refuge of the timid and the means by which the bold prey upon the timid."[70]

Dewey's position is, essentially, that of moral relativism. He submits: "Morals must be a growing science if it is to be a science at all, not merely because all truth has not yet been appropriated by the mind of man, but because life is a moving affair in which old moral truth

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[69] Ibid., pp. 223, 227-29.

[70] Ibid., pp. 231-32, 236-37.

ceases to apply."[71] Dewey is convinced, however, that man's nature is so constituted as to enable him to make moral choices without the aid of fixed ends and dogmas. Habit, impulse, and intelligence can be utilized to attack moral problems, and the validity of the solutions will be determined by the consequences. The material out of which moral judgments are made consists of the empirical facts pertaining to each particular situation. These facts, first discovered by intelligence and then processed by it, serve as the basis of directives for action in particular situations. "Situational ethics," as Dewey's system is sometimes labeled, uses empirical knowledge as the basis for forming normative judgments.

This aspect of Dewey's thinking has been subjected to a variety of criticisms. In an article, entitled "Theory of Valuation," written for the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science and appearing in 1939, Dewey attempted to explicate his position regarding the nature of moral judgments and the validity of their normative status. He defines the problem with which he attempts to deal:

> Since the propositions of the natural sciences concern matters-of-fact and the relations between them, and since such propositions constitute the subject matter acknowledged to possess preeminent scientific standing, the question inevitably arises

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[71] Ibid., p. 239.

> whether scientific propositions about the direction of human conduct, about any situation into which the idea of 'should' enters, are possible; and, if so, of what sort they are and the grounds upon which they rest.[72]

Dewey cites three theories regarding valuation which lend significance to the problem: the view that there are no genuine value-propositions which can be tested experimentally, the theory that value-categories are located solely in the mental sphere, and the view that physical science, lacking value-expressions, requires supplementation by a 'higher' type of knowledge in which are found value-categories. Dewey notes that these various theories help to define the central problem: that of determining the "possibility of genuine propositions about the direction of human affairs."[73]

Dewey is aware that linguistic difficulties are involved in the problem. He notes the different usages and meanings of the expression "value," noting that, as a verb, it has been used to indicate both personal "prizing" and "appraising." In addition, he notes that the term has sometimes been used to signify "to enjoy." Dewey decides to use the term "valuation," both verbally and as a noun, since he views it as being most neutral in its implications. He decides to allow his further discussion of the problem to determine the relationship of "valuation" to "prizing," "appraising," and

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[72]John Dewey, "Theory of Valuation," International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, II, 2.

[73]Ibid., 3-4.

"enjoying."[74]

In developing his theory of valuation, Dewey contends that "feelings" are meaningless, from an empirical point of view, since they are not open to observation and description. He argues, in addition, that the use of terms like "liking" and "disliking" in isolation from actions is meaningless. Dewey is postulating that only observed behavior verifies the existence of valuations and makes descriptions of them possible. He concedes that valuation involves desiring but insists that the latter must always be dealt with in the "existential context" in which it is operating.[75]

The crux of Dewey's position in "Theory" is the distinction which he makes between the terms "prizing" and "appraising" and the relationship which he suggests exists between them. He views "prizings" as immediate desires, whereas "appraisals" are understood as involving norms. He affirms, regarding the latter: "Wherever there is an appraisal involving a rule as to better or as to needed action, there is an end to be reached: the appraisal is a valuation of things with respect to their serviceability or needfulness." Dewey further observes, regarding appraisals: "There is always some observation of the outcome attained in comparison and contrast with that intended, such that the comparison throws light upon the actual fitness

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[74] Ibid., 4-6.

[75] Ibid., 9-11, 13-16.

of the things employed as means."[76]

Dewey contends that, whenever there is an end-in-view, there is a "union of prizing and appraising." His position is that prizings, in and of themselves, do not constitute valuation. He insists, furthermore, that they do not exist by themselves but are influenced by the appraisal of means. Dewey describes desire and interest as being "ineffectual save as they co-operatively interact with environing conditions." Viewed as means, prizings help to form the basis for the valid appraisal of ends. Dewey moves to a postulation of the empirical nature of ends and argues:

> For it cannot be denied that propositions having evidential warrant and experimental test are possible in the case of evaluation of things as means. Hence it follows that, if these propositions enter into the formation of the interests and desires which are valuations of ends, the latter are thereby constituted the subject matter of authentic empirical affirmations and denials.[77]

In "Theory," Dewey reiterates his basic position regarding the making of moral judgments. Valuation occurs only when a problem arises and action has to be taken. Intelligence is utilized to select an end-in-view to resolve the unsatisfactory situation. The inadequacies of the situation are analyzed and a solution chosen which is grounded in the empirical realities of the given situation. Dewey submits that the

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[76] Ibid., 21-23.

[77] Ibid., 31, 29-30.

simplicity of the case is obvious, but that it has been clouded. He charges:

> The case is empirically and dialectically so simple that it would be extremely difficult to understand why it has become so confused in discussion were it not for the influence of irrelevant theoretical preconceptions drawn in part from introspectionist psychology and in part from metaphysics.

Dewey states uncategorically: "Empirically, there are two alternatives. Action may take place with or without an end-in-view."[78]

Dewey anticipates objections to his position. In the first place, he notes that there are those who question the ideal of rationality, considering it to be arbitrary and dependent upon the needs of human beings. Dewey argues, in rebuttal, that ideals should be considered to be arbitrary if they are <u>not</u> related to actual human conditions. He states:

> One would suppose it to be peculiarly true of the ideal of rationality that it is to be judged as to its reasonableness (versus its arbitrariness) on the ground of its function, of what it does, not on the ground of its origin. If rationality as an ideal or generalized end-in-view serves to direct conduct so that things experienced in consequence of conduct so directed are more reasonable in the concrete, nothing more can be asked of it.[79]

In the second place, Dewey anticipates objections to his rejection of the existence of "ends-in-themselves." He

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[78] <u>Ibid</u>., 34-35.

[79] <u>Ibid</u>., 39.

argues that the distinction between means and ends is "temporal and relational," with means serving as ends-in-view and ends serving as possible means to future ends. He conceives of ends as final only in the sense of representing "the conclusion of a process of analytic appraisals of conditions operating in a concrete case." Dewey realizes that his position in this regard leaves him open to the charge of involving valuations in a "regressus ad infinitum." According to this argument, all ends evolve into means, and there exists no place for foresight to stop. Dewey answers this charge by stressing the point that the formation of an end only arises when a deficiency exists. From this point, he argues:

> The 'value' of different ends that suggest themselves is estimated or measured by the capacity they exhibit to guide action in making good, 'satisfying,' in its literal sense, existing lacks. Here is the factor which cuts short the process of foreseeing and weighing ends-in-view in their function as means.[80]

For Dewey, the end is "final," in a particular situation, as it eradicates the existing evil. Its finality in a particular situation, however, does not preclude its use as a means in a future situation.

Dewey spent much time and effort attempting to clarify his views and to clear up misconceptions regarding them. There was some debate, for example, over the exact nature of Dewey's metaphysical stance and the label which should be

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[80] Ibid., 42-43, 45-46.

given it. George Santayana had labeled Dewey's metaphysical position "half-hearted naturalism," and Dewey attempts to clarify the meaning of the term "empirical naturalism," as he used it. He is critical of Santayana's "naturalism," contending that it keeps mind and matter "worlds apart." Dewey declares: "To me human affairs, associative and personal, are projections, continuations, complications, of the nature which exists in the physical and pre-human world." He sums up his metaphysical position in the following statements:

> The main features of human life (culture, experience, history - or whatever name may be preferred) are indicative of outstanding features of nature itself - of centers and perspectives, contingencies and fulfillments, crises and intervals, histories, uniformities, and particularizations. This is the extent and method of my 'metaphysics.'[81]

In "Valuation Judgments And Immediate Quality," Dewey replies to a critique of his position regarding valuation judgments which had appeared in an earlier article by Philip Blair Rice. Dewey notes that Rice was in agreement with his attempt to seek "objectivity in the evidence for value judgments." He points out, however, that Rice accuses him of ignoring a crucial kind of evidence: "that concerning the immediate quality of the experience of value itself."

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[81]John Dewey, "Half-Hearted Naturalism," The Journal of Philosophy, XXIV (February, 1927), 57, 62, 58-59. Santayana's article is "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics," The Journal of Philosophy, XXII (December, 1925), 673-88.

Dewey observes that Rice advocates adding this "subjective" evidence to the "objective" evidence gathered in a particular situation and, in so doing, strengthening the validity of the value judgment. Dewey explains that, in his view, enjoyment and satisfaction are elements of the material from which valuation judgments are made. He attempts to clarify their function, however, in the following statements:

> But it is an essential part of my view of valuation judgments that the satisfaction, liking, enjoyment, they are about is not itself a value save in a figurative way,...And so an enjoyment is called a value with reference to being potentially the material for an evaluative judgment, or in connection with events still to occur.

Reiterating, to some extent, his position in "Theory," regarding the differences between "prizing" and "appraising," Dewey posits:

> The consistent empirical view is that viewed as events, as occurrences, the subjective and objective are both of the same nature. They differ (and differ basically) with respect to the capacity of their respective causal conditions to serve as valid grounds, - in their ability, that is, to stand up in the exercise of the verifying evidential function.[82]

In a subsequent article, Rice again argues for the use of subjective aspects of events as evidence in the forming of value judgments. After defending his position, he warns:

> But if empiricism continues to be defended in such a way as to exclude the affective evidence that most men

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[82]John Dewey, "Valuation Judgments and Immediate Quality," The Journal of Philosophy, XL (June, 1943), 311-12. Rice's article is "Objectivity in Value Judgments," The Journal of Philosophy, XL (1943), 5-14.

> take into account in making value judgments, then the result will be to aggravate that 'new failure of nerve' of which Mr. Dewey has written elsewhere, and to turn many of those who are especially concerned with values away from the promising but incomplete contemporary versions of empiricism, to find refuge in some form of intuitionism or apriorism or authoritarianism.[83]

Dewey again replies to Rice and uses his reply to clarify his overall philosophical position which, he notes, has been so often misunderstood. Dewey contends that the central issue is "accessibility to observation" and the "evidential status for judgment" of types of material. Again, he attempts to explicate his position in this regard and argues:

> The occurrence of events in the way of prizing, cherishing, admiring, relishing, enjoying, is not in question. Nor is their primary importance for human life in any way depreciated; the events are what make life worth having. Nor is it held that they must be taken out of their qualitative immediacy and be subjected to judgment. On the contrary, my thesis, as respects valuation, is that only when conditions arise that cause doubt to arise as to their value (not their occurrence) are they judged.[84]

Dewey continues to emphasize that the formation of value judgments, if it is to be empirical, must be grounded in evidence which is observable and "public."

In Ethics And Language, Charles L. Stevenson raises further questions concerning Dewey's ethical theory. Stevenson is concerned with the "quasi-imperative" aspect of ethical terms, and charges Dewey with neglecting this aspect

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[83]Philip Blair Rice, "Types of Value Judgments," The Journal of Philosophy, XL (September, 1943), 533-43.

[84]John Dewey, "Further As To Valuation As Judgment," The Journal of Philosophy, XL (September, 1943), 545, 548-49.

of ethical statements. He asserts: "In identifying the whole meaning of the judgment with its supporting reasons, Dewey explains away the characteristically hortatory, quasi-imperative meaning, as distinct from explaining it." He questions, in essence, Dewey's willingness to rely upon strictly external evidence, rationally accepted, arguing that emotional elements often enter into ethical arguments and make agreement regarding them difficult.[85]

Dewey, in his reply to Stevenson, explains that whatever he has said concerning prediction has had to do with giving reasons, of the empirical kind, about some "to-be" in the context of what "should" be done. He attempts to make his position explicit:

> Evaluative statements concern or have reference to what ends are to-be-chosen, what lines of conduct are to-be-followed, what policies are to-be-adopted. But it is morally necessary to state grounds or reasons for the course advised and recommended. These consist of matter-of-fact sentences reporting what has been and now is, as conditions, and of estimates of consequences that will ensue if certain of them are used as means.[86]

In spite of attempts to clarify his position regarding the nature and function of value judgments, criticism of Dewey's ethical views continued. Morton G. White, for example, takes issue with the distinction which Dewey makes between the terms "desirable" and "desired" and with his accordance of "de jure" status to the former and merely

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[85]Charles L. Stevenson, Ethics And Language (Reprint; New York: AMS Press, 1979), pp. 256-60.

[86]John Dewey, "Ethical Subject-Matter and Language," The Journal of Philosophy, XLII (December, 1945), 711.

"de facto" status to the latter.[87] White states Dewey's problem as follows: "The problem, then, is to give an analysis of 'a is desirable' when it is construed as meaning a ought to be desired, which will render it an empirical statement, a statement which conveys empirical knowledge." White contests the normative status accorded to "desirable" and submits:

> And since the fact that a is desirable (as Dewey construes it) is related to the fact that a is desired in precisely the way that the fact that a is objectively red is related to the fact that a appears red, it would follow that 'a is desirable' is no more normative than 'a is desired.'

White concludes, emphatically: "We may safely say, therefore, that pragmatism is still without a solution of the fundamental problem of ethics."[88]

Not everyone has agreed with White's contention. Sidney Hook, for example, finds a serious flaw in White's criticism: the contention that "desirable" and "objectively red" are, for Dewey, designations of the same nature. Hook contends that Dewey never took this stance: that he viewed the former as involving practical choice and the latter as not entailing this element. Hook states Dewey's position as follows: "Dewey's contention is that every true proposition in use in a concrete

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[87]This topic is discussed by Dewey in the tenth chapter of Quest, pp. 254-86, passim.

[88]Morton G. White, "Value and Obligation in Dewey and Lewis," The Philosophical Review, LVIII (July, 1949), 321-22, 326, 329.

situation provoking choice does have a normative status, because wherever relevant it determines in some degree what we should choose."[89]

Hook declares, regarding White's position: "What Professor White has established is that in any theoretical argument we cannot reach a conclusion with an 'ought' term unless one of the premises contains an 'ought' term." Hook contends that this position ignores the fact that, in practical situations, something must be done and that the urgencies of the situation constitute the "ought." Hook finds Dewey's normative element in the practical nature of certain situations and avers: "The underlying premise of the argument is not an explicit statement at all, but the situation itself."[90]

Robert Holmes, also, disagrees with White's statement. While admitting that many of the misunderstandings concerning Dewey's ethical thought stem from Dewey's own lack of precision is many of his works, Holmes contends that Dewey's ethical theory is significant and that his overall meaning can be extracted from his voluminous writings. Regarding the controversy concerning the status which should be accorded moral judgments, for example, he attempts to explicate Dewey's general position in the following statements:

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[89]Sidney Hook, "The Desirable and Emotive in Dewey's Ethics," in Philosopher Of Science, ed. by Hook, pp. 202-03.

[90]Ibid., pp. 204-05.

> Thus to be legitimately supported, moral judgments must be backed by factual reasons, and it is these which constitute their 'subject-matter.' To the extent that subject-matter is viewed as somehow 'part' of the judgment, there is indeed a sense, however attenuated, in which moral judgments in Dewey's view have cognitive status. But this means only that they have their supporting reasons already built-in, as it were.[91]

Holmes also attempts to clarify Dewey's overall position regarding the criteria to be followed in the living of the moral life. He considers Dewey's scheme as one which involves three categories: personal preference, conventional moral rules, and "the greatest happiness standard." Holmes argues that Dewey emphasized deliberate choice, tempered by conventional rules, and ultimately subjected to the test of the promotion of the "general welfare" as being the guide to moral conduct. Regarding the accusation that Dewey's views invite moral laxity, Holmes contends that "far from breeding chaos and laxity, the method he advocates would bring a greater strictness to morality." He suggests that Dewey's - and, by implication, his own - conviction is that, by shouldering the responsibility for their own actions, people will be less apt to fall into moral laxity than if they automatically accept conventional rules of conduct.[92]

Holmes notes another objection to Dewey's position: that

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[91]Holmes, "John Dewey's Moral Philosophy," 42, 53.

[92]Ibid., 57-60.

conflicts which arise over judgments which have been formulated after careful deliberation are irresolvable. Holmes suggests that two answers are found, at least implicitly, in Dewey's position. The first is the need for tolerance, encouraged by the rejection of fixed moral rules. The second is the possibility that, given more attention to the "facts" of particular situations, fewer conflicts in judgment will arise. As Holmes points out, this latter answer involves faith, not only in the efficacy of man's intelligence, but also in the rational character of man.[93]

Holmes makes another point which is particularly relevant to this study. He notes that Dewey has been criticized for concentrating upon method while neglecting content and cites one critic's remark that "'by rendering intelligence in terms of method, questions of content are left pretty much to look out for themselves.'"[94] Holmes attempts to reconstruct Dewey's position regarding the actual content of moral choices and submits that his position is grounded in "considerations of what will promote the greatest general welfare." This standard "provides the very foundation of morality," and Holmes asserts, regarding the justification for this standard:

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[93] Ibid., 60-61.

[94] A. K. Rogers, Ethics and Moral Tolerance (New York, 1934), p. 101, cited in Ibid., 61-62.

> The standard itself is susceptible of no moral justification, since it is presupposed by such justification. But in a broader sense it has all the justification one can ask by providing the conditions under which men can live together and progress constructively as a social unit.[95]

As Holmes points out, the moral end, for Dewey, is growth. He suggests that Dewey's ethical position takes cognizance of the dual concerns which constitute the truly moral: freedom for the individual and the welfare of others. In this way, according to Holmes, Dewey's position "bridges the gap between utilitarianism and self-realization theories." Holmes summarizes Dewey's moral theory as follows:

> To adopt the greatest general happiness as a standard, therefore, is to adopt the point of view which recognizes growth as the end of conduct, realizes that the Right can be justified only in terms of it, and finally, which makes the moral postulate.[96]

Dewey's views regarding morality form a relatively coherent and complete position, if they are not obscured by linguistic and definitional debates. The moral realm is the realm of human activities where, inevitably, conflicts arise and choices must be made. Given man's nature, he can be encouraged to use the methods of experimental science to make rational, moral choices. In lieu of dogmatic moral rules and, at the other extreme, of no guiding principles at all, man ought to form moral judgments on the basis of

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[95]Holmes, "John Dewey's Moral Philosophy," 62-64.

[96]Ibid., 65-67.

the factual evidence gathered in each particular situation, always keeping in mind the possible consequences of the alternatives available. These consequences must be broad enough to encompass the effects upon those for whom the situation is relevant but narrow enough to allow a decision to be made. As situations change, moral ends change, and change itself, in the form of growth, becomes the sign of moral progress. Philosophy must shift its attention from the rather barren task of dealing with ultimate verities to the task of giving man intellectual direction for the guidance of his conduct in everyday, practical affairs.

A Summary of John Dewey's Views Regarding the Relationship Between Religion and Morality

To some extent, religion was, for John Dewey, an afterthought. He concedes that, historically, it has been closely bound to concepts of morality, citing instances of compatibility between the two phenomena and, in the case of the Hebrews, congruence. He suggests that, from a historical standpoint, one can consider religion to have been a unifying force. Yet, he emphasizes the primacy of the moral in its relationship to religion; the latter is significant as it embodied the former and was modified by it. For Dewey, morality is the primary concern. Only if religion can adapt itself to changing ethical values will he accord it much attention or significance.

Because religion, as historically defined and practiced, could not incorporate into itself the scientific method of inquiry and validation, Dewey gave less and less attention to it. He never attempted to deny the reality of "religious" experiences and beliefs. He insisted, however, that the objects of these experiences and beliefs be subjected to the kind of extrinsic evidence which the scientific method demanded in every other area. There was no place, in Dewey's position, for a "realm of grace" where faith, conceived of as a substitute for knowledge, reigns. Although historically useful as props for moral conduct, the objects of religious beliefs are illusions. There is no way to prove that they exist, since they are believed to exist in a realm beyond that of the natural world.

Dewey moves to a position whereby he considers religion and morality to be mutually exclusive elements. He rejects the term "religion" on definitional grounds, contending that its implication of a relationship with a supernatural being renders it devoid of all meaning, given the endless varieties of these relationships. He rejects the various religions upon epistemological grounds, contending that no proof exists for the reality of the objects of their beliefs and practices. Neither is Dewey willing to concede that humans need the certainty which accompanies the beliefs of religions. Rather,

he contends that supernaturalism impedes the development of man's own powers and diverts energy that could be directed to solving the practical problems of this world.

Dewey is left with a "religious" attitude. Bereft of specific doctrinal beliefs and rituals, this term signifies, for Dewey, a change of will such that the self is unified and dedicated to the realization of ideals. These ideals, instead of existing antecedently in some realm, exist as possibilities in the natural world. It is Dewey's position that, only as the religions decline, will the truly "religious" attitude emerge. This attitude can be directed to all spheres of activity, thereby breaking down the dichotomy which has traditionally existed between the religious and the secular.

The question becomes that of Dewey's position regarding the relationship of the religious attitude to morality. Gouinlock suggests that Dewey's position implies at least a relationship of compatibility between the two elements. Regarding the "inclusive ideal ends" which constitute the objects of Dewey's religious attitude, Gouinlock states: "Such ideal ends are like the ends-in-view discriminated in problematic situations. They are based on present needs and aspirations, and they give meaning to present effort." He notes that, in both cases, the achievement of the end is not

regarded as an end in itself but always as a means of enriching human lives. Gouinlock views Dewey's ideals as serving as conditions for the realization of problematic ends. He states, regarding these ideals: "They are not, for Dewey, states of ultimate repose and static perfection, but they are efficacious in promoting the good of activity."[97]

Yet, Gouinlock is careful to point out that differences exist between Dewey's religious ideals and his moral ends-in-view. The former, according to Gouinlock, are always less attainable in any total sense than the latter. He submits:

> In conduct, the end-in-view is always something attainable by action in the situation; while an ideal end indicates the general direction of a great number of individual actions and informs each of them with a wealth of meaning. This meaning provides additional continuity from situation to situation in the lives of individuals.[98]

Gouinlock is suggesting that ideals like freedom, democracy, and justice serve to direct individual efforts and provide continuity in individual lives.

Gouinlock senses that there may exist a degree of incompatibility between Dewey's ideals and his ends-in-view. The former pertain more to direction while the latter pertain to existing possibilities. He tries to reconcile the two types of ends, however, in order to establish a sense of

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[97]Gouinlock, Philosophy, pp. 268-69.

[98]Ibid.

compatibility between them and states:

> As just indicated, the ideal end characterizes the direction in which events are to be transformed by shared effort; but actual human energies are best expended by devotion to the possibilities at hand. It would be misguided to regard individual efforts as specifically directed to the achievement of the ideal, as such. As Dewey said, it is the next step that lies within our power; and each step may have its own distinctive consummation. The ideal end unites and gives added meaning to these efforts.

Using Dewey's ideal of the democratic community as an example, Gouinlock attempts to establish both its inclusive nature and its concrete values. He explains:

> Thus it is that 'democratic community' is a notion possessed of extremely abundant and concrete significance to Dewey himself. It evoked a 'religious' feeling precisely because he was so keenly aware of so much that is entailed by genuine democracy, and because circumstances entailed by democratic life were intrinsically valuable to him.[99]

It is safe to conclude that, while Dewey considered religions and morality to be mutually exclusive elements, he viewed the religious attitude as being compatible with the moral life. Whether or not he would have considered them to be congruent elements is debatable. A perusal of Dewey's works reveals that his primary interest lay in morality rather than in religion. His moral theory, grounded in the resolving of human problems within the context of social concerns, seems capable of existing independently,

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[99] Ibid., pp. 269-70.

without the aid of the "religious" attitude. The "inclusive ideals," in fact, which serve as objects of this attitude, do not appear to differ significantly from the general principles which Dewey discussed within a purely ethical context. In short, Dewey's "religious" attitude appears to be superfluous to his moral theory. The latter can stand alone, and, while the religious ideals may enrich and lend continuity to moral conduct, they do not seem to be essential to it.

One senses that Dewey somewhat reluctantly incorporated the "religious" into his overall philosophical position, realizing that it had been a significant phenomenon in the past and that many people still viewed it as such. Given his epistemological position, however, and his development of an ethical theory grounded in human experiences and devoid of the "certainty" which had characterized religions, his "religious" attitude appears to be little more than an addendum to his views regarding morality. Dewey, after noting that secularization had crowded organized religions into corners, remarks: "This change either marks a terrible decline in everything that can justly be termed religious in value, in traditional religions, or it provides the opportunity for expansion of these qualities on a new basis and with a new outlook."[100] One senses that the qualities to which Dewey refers are those which are so essential to his moral theory,

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[100]Dewey, A Common Faith, p. 83.

and that their embodiment in the "religious" does not significantly alter that theory. Both are grounded in the possibilities inherent in the natural world, and that feature is the heart of Dewey's ethical position. While Dewey would undoubtedly consider the religious attitude and morality, as he conceived it, to be potentially congruent phenomena, it is safe to conclude that he would not consider them to be essentially so. Given a preference, Dewey would choose an emphasis upon ends-in-view over inclusive, ideal ends, since the former entail direct action regarding immediate problems. The ideal ends could contribute to the formation of moral judgments as long as they did not divert energy from the resolving of present moral conflicts.

CHAPTER III

ÉMILE DURKHEIM'S VIEWS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY

A Biographical Sketch

David Émile Durkheim was born in Épinal in eastern France on April 15, 1858. He was of Jewish parentage and was nurtured in the Jewish faith. His father was a Chief Rabbi, and, for a time, Emile attended a rabbinical school, the thought being that he might follow in his father's footsteps.[1] In his discussion of Judaism in Suicide: A Study In Sociology, Durkheim may have been describing his own community when he referred to the typical Jewish community as being "a small, compact and coherent society with a strong feeling of self-consciousness and unity." Again, he may have been reflecting upon his own upbringing when, in the same work, he stated: "Judaism, like all early religions, consists basically of a body of practices minutely governing all the details of life."[2]

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[1]Steven Lukes, Émile Durkheim: His Life and Work (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 39.

[2]Émile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study In Sociology, trans. by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, ed. and with an introd. by George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1951), p. 160.

Although Durkheim eventually broke with the Jewish religion and declared himself an agnostic, there is evidence to suggest that he retained, to some degree, the influence of his early upbringing and disciplined home life. Georges Davy declares, regarding Durkheim:

> The home, marked by austerity rather than opulence, in which observance of the law was both precept and example...produced in the young Lorrainian several ineradicable traits: scorn for the avoidance of effort, disdain for success accomplished without work, horror of everything that is not reliably founded.[3]

In 1879, Durkheim was admitted to the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Giddens remarks: "At the École, he was one of a brilliant group of intellectuals, several of whom were to make a major impact upon cultural life and politics in France."[4] Here, Durkheim's interests became centered in the areas of social and political philosophy. It was at the École, also, that Durkheim made the final break with the Jewish faith. Steven Lukes describes the significance of this break:

> That break was painful but decisive; henceforth he was to regard religious beliefs, not as simply false, but rather as a confused and distorted form of morality, a set of moral beliefs expressed in a theological or mythological rather than in a positive or scientific,idiom.[5]

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[3]Georges Davy, Centenaire de la naissance de Durkheim, Annales de l'Université de Paris, no. I (1960), 15, cited in Giddens, Durkheim, p. 16.

[4]Giddens, Durkheim, p. 16.

[5]Lukes, Durkheim, p. 44.

After his graduation from the École, Durkheim taught philosophy in several provincial lycées from 1882-1887. He spent one year during this period, however, in Germany, becoming acquainted with the latest developments in scholarly and scientific thought there. Although he found much to criticize in the German universities, he was impressed with "the acute sense of collective life" which he encountered and with the attempts to develop a social science of morality.[6]

Before leaving for Germany, Durkheim had already formulated a position which he was to elaborate upon and set forth in The Division Of Labor In Society, one of his two doctoral theses. He had come to believe that the proper method of studying the relationship between the individual personality and what he termed "social solidarity" was the sociological one. He was inspired by the attention given to the fledgling science of sociology in Germany, but he insisted that it must be made truly scientific. He set forth to develop sociological methods radically different from those of Comte which, in Durkheim's view, were deficient.[7]

In 1887, Durkheim obtained a post at the University of Bordeaux as a lecturer in social science and pedagogy, and he remained there for fifteen years. During this period,

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[6]Ibid., pp. 64, 86-92.

[7]Giddens, Durkheim, p. 18; Lukes, Durkheim, p. 92.

he developed his sociological position more fully. Division appeared in 1893. Durkheim had successfully defended it as a doctoral thesis, causing a reporter to comment that "sociology has finally won the right to be mentioned at the Sorbonne." In 1885, The Rules Of Sociological Method was published and created more controversy. Suicide appeared in 1897 and represented Durkheim's attempt to apply his sociological method to a specific, empirical subject.[8]

In 1897, Durkheim also helped to found a review journal, entitled L'Année sociologique. Giddens asserts that this journal "did more than anything to concretize Durkheim's sociology as a recognized 'school' of thought." The Année reviewed sociological literature, as well as works in related fields, and, in time, began to give prominence to works involving the sociology of religion. Durkheim had become increasingly interested in this subject and, during the period from 1894-1895, had studied the works of some leading English and American ethnographers. According to his own testimony, these writings were influential in the revamping of some of his views regarding religion.[9]

Durkheim's new insights were eventually embodied in a major work, The Elementary Forms Of The Religious Life, which

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[8]Giddens, Durkheim, pp. 18-20; Lukes, Durkheim, p. 299.

[9]Giddens, Durkheim, pp. 22-23.

appeared in 1912. In the meantime, in 1902, he had moved to a post in education at the Sorbonne, becoming a full professor in 1906. In 1913, his chair was made that of "Education and Sociology." Many of the lectures from Durkheim's various courses were collected and published posthumously. Moral Education and Professional Ethics and Civic Morals represent two such efforts, while Pragmatism and Sociology represents an effort to reconstruct, from students' notes, Durkheim's analysis of pragmatism.[10]

With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Durkheim became immersed in the war effort, serving on numerous committees concerned with the publication of pamphlets regarding the war. At the same time, he continued his teaching duties. His health, however, was deteriorating, and he died on November 15, 1917, at the age of fifty-nine. Giddens affirms that the death of Durkheim's only son, André, in the war undoubtedly hastened his own death.[11]

Among the primary influences upon Durkheim's thinking were the teachings of Émile Boutroux, a professor at the École. Boutroux influenced Durkheim in the direction of emergentism: the notion that out of a social group there emerges a reality not to be explained only by the interrelatedness of the individuals constituting the group. Boutroux

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[10] Ibid., pp. 23-25.

[11] Ibid., p. 24.

also insisted that each science must have its own methodology and distinct subject matter and submitted that philosophy should have its base in the sciences where it would be in contact with natural realities. Durkheim incorporated some of these ideas into his sociological position, and he wrote, regarding Boutroux:

> I owe the distinction between sociology and psychology in the first place to my teacher M. Boutroux, who, at the École Normale Supérieure, often repeated to us that each science must explain by "its own principles," as Aristotle put it: psychology by psychological principles, biology by biological principles. Very much impressed by this idea, I applied it to sociology.[12]

Through Boutroux, Durkheim began, also, to study the neo-Kantian views of Charles Bernard Renouvier. Giddens contends that Kantian themes can be detected in some of Durkheim's works and that Renouvier's emphasis upon the initiation of a scientific, comparative study of morality deeply influenced Durkheim's thinking.[13] Durkheim, himself, states, regarding Renouvier's influence upon him: "If you wish to mature your thought, devote yourself to the study of a great master; take a system apart, laying bare its innermost secrets. This is what I did, and my educator was Renouvier."[14]

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[12]Lukes, Durkheim, p, 57; Émile Durkheim, "Lettres us Directeur de la Revue Néo-scholastique," Revue Néo-scholastique, XIV, (1907), 613, cited in Lukes, Durkheim, p. 57.

[13]Giddens, Durkheim, p. 17.

[14]C. Bougle, et.al., "L'oeuvre sociologique d'Émile Durkheim," Europe, XXII, 299, cited in Lukes, Durkheim, p. 54.

Fustel de Coulanges, noted historian and professor of history at the École, also influenced Durkheim. Lukes states: "Apart from generally reinforcing his sense of intellectual dedication and his commitment to scientific method, Fustel's influence on Durkheim can be discerned in a number of more specific respects." Among these, according to Lukes, are an aversion to "preconceived ideas," an emphasis upon the reality of social institutions, an aversion towards "unrestrained philosophical speculation," and certain basic conceptions underlying Durkheim's sociology of religion as he developed it in Forms. [15]

There has been some debate regarding the degree to which Durkheim was influenced by the ideas which he encountered in Germany. After noting that the charge has been made that all of Durkheim's basic ideas were borrowed from Germany, Lukes asserts: "It is true that he was influenced by these German writers, but, essentially, they clarified and reinforced existing tendencies in his thought."[16] Talcott Parsons affirms Lukes's assessment. After contending that "the evidence shows that Durkheim's thought was rooted overwhelmingly in French intellectual history," Parsons describes Durkheim's position as follows:

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[15]Lukes, Durkheim, pp. 58-63.

[16]Ibid., p. 92.

> It is no disparagement of the originality of French thought on problems of man and society to say that it filled a mediating position between the two wings of the main European trends of thought, British empiricism and utilitarianism and German idealism. In a crucial sense, modern sociology is a product of the synthesis of elements that have figured most prominently in these two traditions, and it seems to have been the mediating character of his French background that gave Durkheim a distinctive 'place to stand,' from which he contributed so effectively to this synthesis.[17]

Not all of Durkheim's interpreters would agree with this evaluation of his contributions. Nye and Ashworth, for example, in their article referred to in Chapter I, not only contend that Durkheim failed to formulate a synthesis of any kind, but also refute the claim, made by Parsons and others, that Durkheim was one of the "founding fathers" of modern sociology. Indicting Durkheim for his deficient treatment of the distinction between facts and values, they submit: "As Durkheim very obviously rejected the cornerstone of modern sociology he can therefore hardly be considered the founding father of it."[18]

Durkheim's writings lend themselves to misconceptions, and he spent much time attempting to clarify key elements of his overall position. In the first place, he uses key phrases and concepts in a manner which is not always clear and consistent, and this has resulted in confusion regarding his meanings. One such concept, related to his sociological position, is

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[17]Talcott Parsons, "The Life And Work Of Émile Durkheim," in Émile Durkheim, Sociology And Philosophy, trans. by D. F. Pocock, introd. by J. G. Peristiany (New York: The Free Press, 1974), pp. xliii, xlv.

[18]Nye and Ashworth, "Emile Durkheim," 133-34, 138.

the conscience collective, a phrase to which Durkheim gave a variety of labels. In Division, the work in which he made most use of this concept, Durkheim stated: "The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society forms a determinate system which has its own life; one may call it the collective or common conscience."[19]

Lukes notes that, as Durkheim moved away from some aspects of his central thesis in Division, he, too, began to view the notion of the conscience collective as being too restrictive. Hence, according to Lukes, Suicide makes reference to représentations collectives. Lukes states:

> The concept of conscience collective was too all-embracing and too static. It failed to discriminate between cognitive, moral and religious beliefs, between different beliefs and sentiments, and between the beliefs and sentiments associated with different stages of a society's development. To make such discriminations Durkheim used the concept of 'représentations collectives.'[20]

Durkheim uses this concept, with all of its ambiguities, in his later works, and it figures prominently in his sociology of knowledge as well as in his theories of religion and morality.

A third important concept of Durkheim's is that of "social facts," emanating from his conception of the nature of society. Lukes notes three categories of social facts, corresponding to Durkheim's three conceptions of the term

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[19]Émile Durkheim, The Division Of Labor In Society, trans. by George Simpson (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 79.

[20]Lukes, Durkheim, p. 6.

"society." Durkheim used the latter term to refer, at various times, to structural aspects of collective life, such as the distribution of population, to collections of social institutions, and, most importantly, to the existence of a sui generis reality, originating in - but, at the same time, distinct from - the sum of the personalities of the members comprising a group.[21]

Durkheim's "social facts" could be located in each of these levels of society, although, as Lukes points out, those associated with the latter, "superstructural" level of society came more and more to dominate Durkheim's attention. The manner in which Durkheim dealt with these various conceptions of society and with the "social facts" associated with each lends itself to confusion and misinterpretation, and this is compounded by Durkheim's assertion that these facts must be studied as "things." Yet, Durkheim's treatment of the représentations collectives, his term for the "social facts" found in the superstructural level of society, forms an integral part of his overall position regarding religion and morality.[22]

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[21] Ibid., pp. 8-10. For a thorough treatment of Durkheim's conception of the three levels of society, see James Fredrick Lewis, "Emile Durkheim's Social Realism And Its Consequences For His Theory Of Religion" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1976), pp. 105-49.

[22] Lukes, Durkheim, p. 10.

Running like threads throughout the majority of Durkheim's works are a number of dichotomies which are presupposed by the concepts just mentioned. The former include, among others, the "binary oppositions" of sociology-psychology, social-individual, sacred-profane, and normal-pathological. One also encounters characteristic arguments which Durkheim used in conjunction with his concepts and dichotomies. Frequently, he resorts to presupposing what is to be proven, to argument by elimination, and to argument from analogy when formulating his positions. Lukes notes a final characteristic of Durkheim's writings: "And finally, Durkheim's style often tends to caricature his thought: he often expressed his ideas in an extreme or figurative manner, which distorted their meaning and concealed their significance."[23]

There are serious flaws and deficiencies in both Durkheim's thinking and in the manner in which he attempted to present his thoughts. Yet, Durkheim's thinking is significant and has been influential. Giddens, while noting the weaknesses, sums up Durkheim's importance as follows:

> Émile Durkheim was not, as Max Weber, his famous contemporary in Germany, an encyclopedic thinker. What lends Durkheim's writings their intellectual power is rather his persistent attack upon a limited number of problems that occupied him throughout his intellectual career.[24]

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[23]Ibid., pp. 16-33, passim, 4; Lewis, "Durkheim's Social Realism," pp. 13-16.

[24]Giddens, Durkheim, p. 13.

Among these problems were the identification of the sources and nature of moral authority and the relationship of religion to morality in societies "enlightened" by science. To determine Durkheim's position in this regard will constitute the primary concern of this chapter. The question of whether labels like "functionalist" should be accorded Durkheim will be acknowledged but not dwelt upon.

Durkheim accorded religion much more attention and significance than did Dewey. Forms represents not an afterthought of Durkheim's thinking, as, to some extent, is the case with Dewey's A Common Faith. Rather, it can be viewed as the capstone of Durkheim's views regarding religion. Parsons observes that, in contrast to the utilitarian tradition and the French Enlightenment which had tended to disparage religion, Durkheim focused much attention upon it as an empirical phenomenon. Parsons states: "Durkheim made it clear that even at the later stages of sociocultural development, every society would require the 'functional equivalent' of a religious system."[25]

This brief sketch of Durkheim's life and some of the characteristics of his writings can serve as a context from which to survey his overall position regarding the central problem of this study. The next part of this chapter will

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[25]Parsons, "Émile Durkheim," in Durkheim, Sociology, pp. lx-lxii.

deal with Durkheim's views regarding religion. As in the case of Dewey, some of Durkheim's reflections upon morality are necessarily found in this part of the chapter. However, a more detailed treatment of his views regarding morality will be presented in a succeeding part of this chapter. Finally, Durkheim's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality will be summarized.

Émile Durkheim's Views Regarding Religion

Émile Durkheim, as did John Dewey, dealt with the topic of religion in a preliminary fashion in some of his earlier works before dealing with it in more depth in a later work. In Division, Rules, and Suicide, for example, Durkheim makes some initial observations regarding religion, although this topic does not represent the central concern in any of these works. Durkheim dealt with religion as a primary concern in his last important work, Forms.

Durkheim deals with religion in a somewhat cursory fashion in Division. His main concern in this early work is social solidarity, and he identifies two types of societies, each with its corresponding type of solidarity. Segmental societies are characterized by mechanical solidarity, a phrase which Durkheim uses to refer to a close adherence to the conscience collective. More advanced societies, on the other hand, are held together by functional interdependence;

by what Durkheim terms the "division of labor." Thus, organic solidarity begins to take the place of mechanical solidarity, and the basis of the latter, the conscience collective, declines in authority.[26] Because, in Durkheim's view, religion held such a dominant position in the conscience collective, he felt constrained to make some observations regarding its role in more advanced societies where the specialization of functions replaces conformity to collective beliefs.

In Division, Durkheim identifies definitional problems pertaining to the term "religion." In his preface to the first edition of this work, he announces: "This book is pre-eminently an attempt to treat the facts of the moral life according to the method of the positive sciences." He then declares, regarding religion: "We do not actually possess any scientific notion of what religion is." He rejects, as a definition of religion, that which involves man's relationship with supernatural beings, contending that many religious laws exist which are devoid of this connotation. After describing the variety of activities which religious rules have governed, he submits: "We know for certain, moreover, that a religion without God exists. This alone should be sufficient to show that we no longer have the right to define religion

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[26]Durkheim, Division, pp. 70-132, passim.

in terms of the idea of God."[27]

Durkheim identifies another definitional difficulty: that of accounting for the status accorded religious objects when, in the opinion of many, the divinities regarded as the source of religious authority do not exist. He posits: "Nothing comes from nothing; this force must have come to him from somewhere, and, consequently, this formula does not get to the heart of the matter."[28] This statement of Durkheim's contains implications for his methodology: definitions must refer to "realities" and "forces" must be accounted for somehow. Beliefs regarding the latter may be illusory but they, themselves, are not. Thus, Durkheim confirms the existence of forces acting from without upon the individual and seeks to identify the genuine reality lying behind these forces.

Durkheim, in Division, offers some tentative views regarding the origin of what has traditionally passed for religion. He observes that "the sole characteristic that all ideas such as religious sentiments equally present seems to be that they are common to a certain number of people living together." He states further:

It is, indeed, a constant fact that, when a slightly

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[27]Ibid., pp. 32, 168.

[28]Ibid., p. 168.

> strong conviction is held by the same community of men, it inevitably takes on a religious character. It inspires in consciences the same reverential respect as beliefs properly religious. It is, thus, very probable...that religion corresponds to a region equally very central in the common conscience.[29]

Durkheim is alluding, in these statements, to a position which he establishes more firmly later: the close connection between religious beliefs and the existence of collectivities.

To his somewhat ambiguous statements regarding the origin of religion, Durkheim adds some projections regarding its future development. He asserts: "But if there is one truth that history teaches us beyond doubt, it is that religion tends to embrace a smaller and smaller portion of social life." As a society develops, politically, economically, and scientifically, according to Durkheim, it takes on a more temporal character, and religion loses its pervasive influence. He states: "The individual really feels himself less acted upon; he becomes more a source of spontaneous activity. In short, not only does not the domain of religion grow at the same time and in the same measure as temporal life, but it contracts more and more." Durkheim qualifies his implication that eventually the conscience collective will entirely disappear, however. He contends that it will become more "general" and "indeterminate" and that the regard for the individual will be heightened. He remarks: "As all the other beliefs and all the

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[29] Ibid., p. 169.

practices take on a character less and less religious, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion."[30]

In Rules, Durkheim again deals only briefly with the topic of religion. He does, however, attempt to establish more explicitly a methodology for the study of sociology, and, hence, this work is valuable for the insights which it affords into Durkheim's later, more thorough treatment of religion and for his study of morality. In his preface to the first edition of Rules, Durkheim states his primary objective:

> As a matter of fact, our principle objective is to extend scientific rationalism to human behavior. It can be shown that behavior of the past, when analyzed, can be reduced to relationships of cause and effect. These relationships can then be transformed, by an equally logical operation, into rules of action for the future.

He asserts: "What critics have called our 'positivism' is only one certain aspect of this rationalism." Durkheim expresses the hope that even his critics will share his faith in the "future of reason."[31]

Durkheim professes, in Rules, to be attempting to establish the discipline of sociology upon empirical and

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[30]Ibid., pp. 169-72.

[31]Émile Durkheim, The Rules Of Sociological Method, trans. by Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller, ed. by George E. G. Catlin (8th ed.; New York: The Free Press Of Glencoe, 1962), pp. xxxix-xl.

scientific grounds. In the first place, he accords it a unique field of inquiry: that of social facts. In Rules, he emphasizes the constraint and exteriority which characterize these phenomena and declares:

> Here, then, is a category of facts with very distinctive characteristics: it consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him.

Durkheim emphasizes, too, the "objective reality" and independent existence of a social fact and describes it as follows:

> A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.[32]

In the second place, Durkheim accords the objects of sociological inquiry a specific methodology whereby they may be observed. He asserts, first, that "social phenomena are things and ought to be treated as things," and he states further: "All that is given, all that is subject to observation, has thereby the character of a thing." Further rules for the observation of social facts include the eradication of preconceptions, the definition of social facts in terms of their "inherent properties," and the objectivity of the external characteristics which make up the definitions.[33]

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[32] Ibid., pp. 3, 13.

[33] Ibid., pp. 27, 31-45, passim.

In his preface to the second edition of Rules, Durkheim attempts to clarify certain aspects of his position which, in his opinion, were misconstrued. He attempts, for example, to explain and to justify his position regarding the exteriority of social facts. Appealing to an argument from analogy, he claims that the notion of synthesis should be valid for the study of sociology, and he reasons as follows:

> If, as we may say, this synthesis constituting every society yields new phenomena, differing from those which take place in individual consciousnesses, we must, indeed, admit that these facts reside exclusively in the very society itself which produces them, and not in its parts, i.e., its members. They are, then, in this sense external to individual consciousnesses, considered as such, just as the distinctive characteristics of life are external to the mineral substances composing the living being. These new phenomena cannot be reduced to their elements without contradiction in terms, since, by definition, they presuppose something different from the properties of these elements.

Durkheim declares unequivocally: "The mentality of groups is not the same as that of individuals; it has its own laws."[34]

Durkheim also attempts to clarify his meaning regarding his classification of social facts as "things." He explains: "We assert not that social facts are material things but that they are things by the same right as material things, although they differ from them in type." He posits that things include all the objects of knowledge that cannot be gained exclusively by introspection and defends his position as follows:

> To treat the facts of a certain order as things is not, then, to place them in a certain category of reality but

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[34] Ibid., pp. xlviii-xlix.

> to assume a certain mental attitude toward them on the principle that when approaching their study we are absolutely ignorant of their nature, and that their characteristic properties, like the unknown causes on which they depend, cannot be discovered by even the most careful introspection.

Durkheim's "social facts," according to this interpretation, are "things" in the sense that they require outside data, including observations and experiments, for their identification. He states, regarding a particular social fact: "We must find external objective signs that will make it perceptible."[35]

Durkheim's attempts at clarification include a discussion of his definition of social facts and of the use of definitions in general. In his definition of social facts he had included the existence of a "coercive influence" upon individual consciousnesses. He explains that this was intended to serve merely as an initial definition and attempts to justify his criterion as follows: "Since we are here concerned with an initial definition, it is necessary only that the criteria we use be immediately discernible and relevant to the intended research." Durkheim makes frequent use of "initial definitions," and he reasons as follows:

> But only when the science is already advanced can one determine whether or not society is the cause of a fact, or whether this fact has social effects. Such definitions could not therefore serve to determine the subject matter of the investigation at its beginning.

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[35] Ibid., pp. xliii, xlvii.

> In order that these definitions may be utilized, the study of social facts must already have made considerable progress, and consequently one must have discovered earlier some other means of finding and identifying them.[36]

Durkheim's use of definitions, in conjunction with his assumptions, forms a basic feature of his methodology, and this is evident in Rules. In his preface to the second edition of this work, he emphasizes that the fundamental principle of Rules is "the objective reality of social facts," and he submits: "Ultimately, everything rests on this principle and grows out of it." Relating this principle to the development of sociology, he makes the following assertion: "This science, indeed, could be brought into existence only with the realization that social phenomena, although immaterial, are nevertheless real things, the proper objects of scientific study." Because social facts cannot be observed directly and depend for their verification upon external objects and upon effects, an assumption must be made concerning their existence. Durkheim justifies this assumption in the following statement: "To be convinced that their investigation was legitimate, it was necessary to assume that they had a definite and permanent existence, that they do not depend on individual caprice, and that they give rise to

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[36] Ibid., pp. liii-lv.

uniform and orderly relations."[37]

Durkheim attributes the resistance to his position, to some extent, to man's reluctance to recognize the authority of the social order, seeing in it a threat to his own presumed unlimited power over the environment. Durkheim attempts to liberate sociology from that kind of persistent prejudice, and, in a statement which presages some of his ideas regarding religion in Forms, he charges:

> In vain have repeated experiences taught him that this omnipotence, the illusion of which he complacently entertains, has always been a cause of weakness in him; that his power over things really began when he recognized that they have a nature of their own, and resigned himself to learning this nature from them.[38]

Suicide, like Durkheim's earlier works, contains no thorough treatment of religion. This work represents an attempt, on the part of Durkheim, to apply statistical methods to the study of suicide, and his overall conclusion is that suicide, in its various forms, is a social phenomenon. Arguing from elimination, he arrives at his conclusion:

> We have in fact shown that for each social group there is a specific tendency to suicide explained neither by the organic-psychic constitution of individuals nor the nature of the physical environment. Consequently, by elimination, it must necessarily depend upon social causes and be itself a

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[37] Ibid., p. lvii.

[38] Ibid., p. lviii.

collective phenomenon.[39]

Durkheim categorizes suicides on the basis of the degree of integration of the individual to various societal groups. He argues that religions have served as integrative forces but attributes this to their social character rather than to religious beliefs themselves. He contends:

> If religion protects man against the desire for self-destruction, it is not that it preaches the respect for his own person to him with arguments sui generis; but because it is a society. What constitutes this society is the existence of a certain number of beliefs and practices common to all the faithful, traditional and thus obligatory. The more numerous and strong these collective states of mind are, the stronger the integration of the religious community, and also the greater its preservative value. The details of dogmas and rites are secondary.

In Suicide, Durkheim accords religion a functional role in the maintenance of equilibrium in individual lives. He concludes that, because Protestantism has been less integrative than either Judaism or Catholicism, it has been less influential in preventing suicides.[40]

Durkheim's contention is that, while religions have had a moderating effect upon the number of "egoistic suicides," their viability decreases as free thought increases. He declares: "Religion, therefore, modifies the inclination to suicide only to the extent that it prevents men from thinking freely." Noting the progress in free thought,

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[39]Durkheim, Suicide, p. 145.

[40]Ibid., pp. 169-70.

he predicts that "religions will no longer be able to exert very deep or wide sway on consciences." He reiterates his position regarding the true function of religion in preventing suicides of the non-integrative type and asserts:

> In a word, we are only preserved from egoistic suicide in so far as we are socialized; but religions can socialize us only in so far as they refuse us the right of free examination. They no longer have, and probably will never again have, enough authority to wring such a sacrifice from us.[41]

In Suicide, Durkheim foresees the decline in the power of religions to serve as integrative social forces and argues that alternatives are needed.[42]

Forms represents Durkheim's most thorough treatment of the subject of religion. He describes this work as an attempt to study, analyze, and explain the most primitive and simple religion, defining the latter as that which exists in a society with the simplest organization and whose explanation does not entail elements borrowed from previous religions. Durkheim then announces the purpose of sociology as it pertains to the study of religion:

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[41] Ibid., pp. 374-76.

[42] Lewis, in "Durkheim's Social Realism," pp. 57-58, appears to misconstrue this aspect of Durkheim's position. He attributes to Durkheim a somewhat inconsistent admission of the continuing importance of religion as an integrative force. Durkheim is, in fact, predicting its decline and postulating the need for a viable alternative which he finds in occupational and professional groups or, as he terms them, "corporations."

> The most barbarous and the most fantastic rites and the strangest myths translate some human need, some aspect of life, either individual or social. The reasons with which the faithful justify them may be, and generally are, erroneous; but the true reasons do not cease to exist, and it is the duty of science to discover them.

It is Durkheim's position that there are no religions which can be considered false in the sense that they are conjured up out of nothing and have their source in sheer illusion. He submits: "All are true in their own fashion; all answer, though in different ways, to the given conditions of human existence."[43]

Durkheim's approach to the study of religion involves the belief that external resemblances in religions signify more universal, profound ones. He states this assumption as follows:

> At the foundation of all systems of beliefs and of all cults there ought necessarily to be a certain number of fundamental representations or conceptions and of ritual attitudes which, in spite of the diversity of forms which they have taken, have the same objective significance and fulfil the same functions everywhere.

It is this significance and these functions which Durkheim makes the objects of his study. Maintaining that he is not searching for the actual origin of religion, he explains his purpose thus: "What we want to do is to find a means of discerning the ever-present causes upon which the most essential forms of religious thought and practice depend."[44]

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[43]Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms Of The Religious Life, trans. by Joseph Ward Swain (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1947), pp. 1-3.

[44]Ibid., pp. 5,8.

David E. Greenwald, in "Durkheim On Society, Thought and Ritual," makes some pertinent observations regarding Durkheim's treatment of religion in Forms. In the first place, Greenwald argues that Durkheim's conception of the nature of society changed drastically between 1893, when Division was published, and 1912, when Forms appeared. Greenwald notes that, already in 1897, with the appearance of Suicide, Durkheim was making reference to "représentations" and seemed to be moving away from the strong emphasis upon social solidarity and the conception of society as the joining together of individuals which was so evident in Division. Greenwald uses examples from other, later works of Durkheim to support his contention that, by 1912, Durkheim was primarily interested in society as a means whereby individuals "conceive of themselves as a group." He states, regarding what he perceives to be Durkheim's more fully-developed conception of society: "More broadly, one might say that for Durkheim, society consists of the ideas people form of who they are and how they are (or should be) organized."[45]

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[45]David E. Greenwald, "Durkheim On Society, Thought and Ritual," Sociological Analysis, XXXIV (Fall, 1973), 157-60. George Simpson, in "Émile Durkheim's Social Realism," Sociology And Social Research, XXVIII (September, 1933), 3-11, argues that Durkheim's departure from the concern which was so central to Division is unfortunate. In this article(4), he states: "In that work, he was well on the way to solving in profound fashion the most vexing, and withal, the central problem of all social thought, - the relation of the individual to society." Regarding Durkheim's conception of society as an emergent entity, Simpson(8) concludes: "Hence, Durkheim has reduced himself to the position of making social only that which permits him to found a science of the social in the light of a certain theory of science which he holds."

In the second place, Greenwald attempts to account for Durkheim's change in direction. In so doing, he refers to the following excerpts from a letter which Durkheim wrote in 1907:

> It was only in 1895 that I had a clear understanding of the capital role played by religion in social life. It was in that year that, for the first time, I found the means of approaching the study of religion sociologically. It was a revelation to me. The course of 1895 marks a line of demarcation in the development of my thought; so much so, that all my previous investigations had to be taken up again at new cost in order to be played in harmony with these new views...This change of orientation...was due entirely to the studies of religious history I had just undertaken and notably to the reading of the works of Robertson Smith and his school.[46]

It is Greenwald's contention that Durkheim owed at least three debts to this ethnographer: the model of religion as a social institution rather than as a collection of dogmas, the theory of sacrifice as primarily an affirmation of fellowship rather than an offering to a deity, and the treatment of totemism within an evolutionary framework. Greenwald suggests that Durkheim borrowed these notions from Smith and then reworked them. He explains this reworking as follows:

> In one sense, Durkheim's reworking of Smith was as simple as it was profound. Smith began with society as a given, and <u>then</u> asked how its members were enabled to represent it to themselves. Durkheim merely reversed the procedure. He <u>began</u> by asking how men were enabled to represent their society to themselves. And by that

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[46]Émile Durkheim, "Lettres us Directeur de la <u>Revue Neo-scholastique</u>," <u>Revue Neo-scholastique</u>, XIV, (1907), 612-14, cited in Greenwald, "Durkheim," 161.

> route, he was led to the insight that any society exists only to the extent that its members can represent it to themselves. It follows, then, that any society must consist of the representations its members make of it.[47]

Finally, Greenwald points out that a central problem dealt with in Forms is that of the persistence of collective representations. He argues that, for Durkheim, religious rituals served the function of keeping these representations in the minds of individuals. Again, Greenwald sees this as a reworking of Smith's ideas, and he states: "For, where Smith had seen in sacrifice and the like, rites for cementing the bonds of fellowship among members of a primitive community, Durkheim saw a means for the making and remaking of society." Greenwald suggests that Durkheim explains man's need to practice ritual in terms of his need to organize and to make sense out of his environment. Greenwald explains Durkheim's position as follows: "Ritual is precisely this organization of experience. Thus, the very process of organization works to maintain the representations of social reality which it expresses."[48]

A summary of Forms appears early in the work. It tends to support Greenwald's observations and, in addition, suggests Durkheim's position regarding the origin of the categories of thought. In this summary, Durkheim states:

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[47]Greenwald, "Durkheim," 161-63.

[48]Ibid., 165-66.

> The general conclusion of this book which the reader has before him is that religion is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of the assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental states in these groups. So if the categories are of religious origin, they ought to participate in this nature common to all religious facts; they too should be social affairs and the product of collective thought.[49]

In Forms, Durkheim submits that the principle categories of thought are "born in religion and of religion." Since religion is viewed as being essentially a social phenomenon, the categories of thought, too, are considered to be collective representations, expressing collective beliefs concerning reality. Whether or not Durkheim's position implies the existence of a "group mind," as some of his critics have contended, it does have implications for his theory of knowledge. If society is a reality sui generis and if its representations are richer and more complex than individual ones, human reason can go beyond the limits of empirical knowledge to the extent that individuals partake of the higher reality which is the social. Durkheim's postulation of a social reality enables him to reject the theories of knowledge of both the empiricists and the a priorists. He states, regarding his own position: "It leaves the reason its specific power, but it accounts for it and does so

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[49]Durkheim, Forms, p. 10.

without leaving the world of observable phenomena."[50]

In Forms, Durkheim elaborates upon the problem of the definition of religion which he had tentatively dealt with in Division. He reiterates his rejection of religion as being that which involves beliefs regarding the existence of supernatural beings. He utilizes a tentative definition, expressing the conviction that a more profound definition of religion will evolve from his study. It is the "reality" of religion which he professes to be studying, and he urges:

> Let us set ourselves before this reality. Leaving aside all conceptions of religion in general, let us consider the various religions in their concrete reality, and attempt to disengage that which they have in common; for religion cannot be defined except by the characteristics which are found wherever religion itself is found.[51]

Durkheim's task becomes that of identifying the various elementary phenomena of which all religions are comprised and then of attempting to determine their basic, universal foundation. He distinguishes two basic categories of religious phenomena: beliefs and rites. The first he describes as "states of opinion" while the second are "determined modes of action." Durkheim then identifies the essential character of all religious beliefs: that of the division of all things in the world into the categories of the "sacred"

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[50] Ibid., pp. 9, 13, 16, 19.

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

and the "profane." He submits:

> This division of the world into two domains, the one containing all that is sacred, the other all that is profane, is the distinctive trait of religious thought; the beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are either representations or systems of representations which express the nature of sacred things, the virtues and powers which are attributed to them, or their relations with each other and with profane things.

According to Durkheim, the rites are defined and distinguished by the special nature of their object which, in turn, is expressed in beliefs. The rites can be defined only after the beliefs have been delineated.[52]

Using the process of elimination, Durkheim identifies the essential characteristic of the sacred as being heterogeneity in relation to the profane. Contending that this characterization is sufficient because it is absolute, he postulates: "In all the history of human thought there exists no other example of two categories of things so profoundly differentiated or so radically opposed to one another." In Durkheim's view, religious phenomena always suppose a bipartite division of the whole universe into two distinct classes, and he summarizes his conception of this separation in the following statements:

> Religious beliefs are the representations which express the nature of sacred things and the relations which they sustain, either with each other or with profane things. Finally, rites are rules of conduct which prescribe how a man should comport himself in the presence of these

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[52] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

sacred objects.[53]

With his identification of the essential characteristic of religious beliefs and rites, Durkheim proceeds to describe how particular religions developed:

> When a certain number of sacred things sustain relations of co-ordination or subordination with each other in such a way as to form a system having a certain unity, but which is not comprised within any other system of the same sort, the totality of these beliefs and their corresponding rites constitutes a religion.

In Durkheim's view, a religion presupposes a unique arrangement of sacred things on the part of a particular group, a group whose members form a church which is a "moral community formed by all the believers in a single faith." Thus, Durkheim arrives at a more "profound" definition of religion:

> A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden - beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.[54]

One of Durkheim's central theses regarding religion is that it is a social phenomenon: that it implies collective beliefs and practices and necessitates the communion of believers in a church.

Because, according to Durkheim, sacred things are not imaginary conceptions, religions cannot be considered to be mere illusions. He states: "Today we are beginning to

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[53] Ibid., pp. 37-38, 40-41.

[54] Ibid., pp. 42-45, 47.

realize that law, morals and even scientific thought itself were born of religion, were for a long time confounded with it, and have remained penetrated with its spirit." Religions represent real things, and Durkheim avers:

> All myths, even those which we find the most unreasonable, have been believed. Men have believed in them no less firmly than in their own sensations; they have based their conduct upon them. In spite of appearances, it is therefore impossible that they should be without objective foundation.[55]

In these statements, Durkheim reveals one of his basic assumptions: what has been believed and has served to cause men to act in certain ways must be grounded in objective reality.

Yet, Durkheim appears to disregard this assumption, to some extent, when he rejects both animism and naturism as being the original form of religion. He contends that the former "expresses no physical reality" and that the latter makes of religion "a system of hallucinations." Declaring that both fail to qualify as elementary forms of religion since both attempt to create something out of nothing, Durkheim asserts: "A fact of common experience cannot give us the idea of something whose characteristic is to be outside the world of common experience."[56] Animism and naturism can both be

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[55] Ibid., pp. 69-70, 82-83.

[56] Ibid., pp. 73-74, 87.

dismissed because their systems of belief, emanating from conceptions regarding the sacredness of man and nature, respectively, fail to disclose objective reality.

In Forms, Durkheim identifies totemism as the elementary form of religion, choosing to study it as it existed in certain Australian societies and, in a supplemental way, in American Indian tribes. Emphasizing that sociology involves the recognition of social types, Durkheim justifies his choice of societies on the grounds that they are perfectly homogeneous and completely documented and that they contain the most primitive and simple religions. He attempts to find the elementary forms at the basis of the religions in these societies.[57]

Durkheim concludes that, at the basis of nearly all Australian tribes, the clan exists as the essential core of collective life. He posits that the clan reveals two basic characteristics: a bond of kinship and the existence of a special relationship to a collection of material things. Regarding the latter, Durkheim states: "The species of things which serves to designate the clan collectively is called its totem." He notes that usually objects serving as totems belong to animal or vegetable kingdoms and indicates their function: "The totem is a name first of all, and then, as we shall see,

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[57]Ibid., pp. 94-97.

an emblem." Durkheim likens the totem to a "coat-of-arms" and points out that the images and figures which represent the totems are considered to be more sacred than the totemic beings themselves. He also observes that each member of the clan is invested with the sacred character of the totem and declares that "there is something in man which holds profane things at a distance and which possesses a religious power."[58]

Durkheim proceeds to attempt to explain this belief in a "quasi-divine principle" and defines the problem thus:

> Since totemism is everywhere dominated by the idea of a quasi-divine principle, imminent in certain categories of men and things and thought of under the form of an animal or vegetable, the explanation of this religion is essentially the explanation of this belief; to arrive at this, we must seek to learn how men have been led to construct this idea and out of what materials they have constructed it.

In attacking this problem, Durkheim notes that the totemic emblems and symbols "have the greatest sanctity" and concludes that the source of the religious nature is found in them. He emphasizes, however, that the totem is above all a symbol, a material expression of something else, and he submits that the identification of this underlying reality will explain the very source of the religious elements of totemism.[59]

Durkheim attempts an explanation by first determining the relationship which exists between the totemic principle

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[58]Ibid., pp. 102-03, 110, 113, 133.

[59]Ibid., pp. 205-06.

and the clan. He concludes that they must be identical, asking: "How could the emblem of the group have been able to become the figure of this quasi-divinity, if the group and the divinity were two distinct realities?" Noting that gods have been beings upon which people have depended, he observes that society also gives the feeling of dependence and concludes that it possesses the power to arouse sensations of the divine in the minds of clan members. Given this conclusion, Durkheim can declare, regarding the primary purpose of religion:

> Its primary object is not to give men a representation of the physical world; for if that were its essential task, we could not understand how it has been able to survive, for, on this side, it is scarcely more than a fabric of errors. Before all, it is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members, and the obscure but intimate relations which they have with it. This is its primary function; and though metaphorical and symbolic, this representation is not unfaithful.[60]

The identification of the foundation of totemic religion as being the clan itself and the consequent postulation of the primary function of religion affords Durkheim grounds for making the following assertion regarding the religious rituals of the cult:

> By the mere fact that their apparent function is to strengthen the bonds attaching the believer to his god, they at the same time really strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member, since the god is only a figurative expression of the society.

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[60] Ibid., pp. 206, 225.

Durkheim is not surprised at the propensity of people to cling to religion in spite of its errors. The fundamental truth which is its foundation compensates for the secondary errors which it has spawned, and Durkheim asserts: "The images out of which it is made are not pure illusions like those the naturists and animists put at the basis of religion; they correspond to something in reality."[61]

Durkheim views totemism as consisting of collective representations which are conferred upon individual members by the force of their sanctity. In Forms, he accords these representations a reality which he describes thus: "Yet the powers which are thus conferred, though purely ideal, act as though they were real; they determine the conduct of men with the same degree of necessity as physical forces." Contending that social thought, by the force which it exercises over individual minds, can add or detract from reality, Durkheim avers: "The ideas thus objectified are well-founded, not in the nature of the material things upon which they settle themselves, but in the nature of society."[62]

Durkheim attempts to answer the deeper question concerning the necessity of the clan choosing an emblem. If the emblem is, itself, grounded in the existence of the clan,

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[61] Ibid., pp. 226-27.

[62] Ibid., p. 228.

one could question the necessity for an intermediary. Durkheim explains that the emblem expresses social unity in a material form and that it, in fact, arises spontaneously out of conditions of common life. The emblem is, at the same time, a constituent element of social sentiment and the creator of it. Greenwald states Durkheim's position thus: "Durkheim recognized, then, much more than Smith, the significance of emblems in creating social phenomena whose existence, in turn, depends on their existence."[63] In Durkheim's view, the existence of collective representations presupposes that individual minds act and react upon each other. They are products of these actions and reactions which are, themselves, possible only through material intermediaries. Social life, according to Durkheim, "is made possible only by a vast symbolism."[64]

Durkheim perceives a resemblence between the logic of primitive, religious thought and modern scientific thinking. He observes that the primitive, though confounding things which we distinguish, also distinguishes things which we connect and even conceives these distinctions in the form of "sharp and clear-cut oppositions," like that of sacred and profane. Durkheim postulates: "Thus between the logic of religious thought and that of scientific thought there is no abyss. The two are made up of the same elements, though

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[63]Greenwald, "Durkheim," 164.

[64]Durkheim, Forms, pp. 230-31.

inequally and differently developed." He contends that religion is more than "feasts and rites" and that, as a system of ideas forming categories of thought which explain the world, it must be viewed also as a cosmology. According to Durkheim, religion and science both address the same realities: nature, man, and society. He identifies their similarities as follows:

> Religion sets itself to translate these realities into an intelligible language which does not differ in nature from that employed by science; the attempt is made by both to connect things with each other, to establish internal relations between them, to classify them and to systematize them.

He concedes that science gives these realities "a new elaboration" and brings a spirit of criticism to them which religion does not. However, he declares that "scientific thought is only a more perfect form of religious thought" and observes: "Thus it seems natural that the second should progressively retire before the first, as this becomes better fitted to perform the task."[65]

Yet, Durkheim takes a somewhat ambiguous position regarding the likelihood of religion receding completely before the superior logic of science. He asserts that, undoubtedly, the regression has taken place and remarks: "Having left religion, science tends to substitute itself for this latter in all that which concerns the cognitive and intellectual functions." Noting that resistance has tended to

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[65]Ibid., pp. 238-39, 428-29.

be greater regarding attempts to treat scientifically certain phenomena of religion itself, including the notion of the "world of souls," Durkheim still ventures to predict:

> But in spite of these oppositions, these attempts are constantly repeated and this persistence even allows us to foresee that this final barrier will finally give way and that science will establish herself as mistress even in this reserved region.[66]

Durkheim makes further comments regarding religion which seem to support this prediction. While conceding that religion is a reality that science cannot deny, he contends that it is losing its speculative function, and he elaborates upon this aspect of its decline:

> That which science refuses to grant to religion is not its right to exist, but its right to dogmatize upon the nature of things and the special competence which it claims for itself for knowing man and the world. As a matter of fact, it does not know itself. It does not even know what it is made of, nor to what need it answers. It is itself a subject for science, so far is it from being able to make the law for science!

Durkheim then reasons: "And from another point of view, since there is no proper subject for religious speculation outside that reality to which scientific reflection is applied, it is evident that this former cannot play the same role in the future that it has played in the past."[67]

Then Durkheim appears to hedge, concerning the fate of religion in the future. He comments: "However, it seems destined to transform itself rather than to disappear." He

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[66] Ibid., pp. 429-30.

[67] Ibid., p. 430.

argues that, in addition to its speculative function, religion involves action and is "a means of making men live." He posits:

> We have said that there is something eternal in religion: it is the cult and the faith. Men cannot celebrate ceremonies for which they see no reason, nor can they accept a faith which they in no way understand. To spread itself or merely to maintain itself, it must be justified, that is to say, a theory must be made of it.

After conceding that a theory of this nature must be founded upon the various sciences, Durkheim submits: "But howsoever important these facts taken from the constituted sciences may be, they are not enough; for faith is before all else an impetus to action, while science, no matter how far it may be pushed, always remains at a distance from this." Science, according to Durkheim, is never complete, but the practical necessities of life persist and often demand theories in advance of science. Religions serve this function, and he states:

> Thus religions, even the most rational and laicized, cannot and never will be able to dispense with a particular form of speculation which, though having the same subjects as science itself, cannot be really scientific: the obscure intuitions of sensation and sentiment too often take the place of logical reasons.[68]

Durkheim suggests that, while resembling that of past religions, the speculation that is characteristic of present religions is different in that it must acknowledge the authority of science even while going beyond it. Present religions are limited in a way that past ones were not, and Durkheim avers:

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[68] Ibid., pp. 430-31.

> Ever since the authority of science was established, it must be reckoned with; one can go farther than it under the pressure of necessity, but he must take his direction from it. He can affirm nothing that it denies, deny nothing that it affirms, and establish nothing that is not directly or indirectly founded upon principles taken from it.

Durkheim appears to vacillate in his position regarding the viability of religion in the wake of science. On the one hand, he sees the "impetus to action" of religion as being indispensable for practical living: intuition and sentiment still have a function as long as science is incomplete. On the other hand, he accords to religion no special realm and offers to it no immunity from the advances of science. Religion, in Durkheim's view, must be submissive to science, and he makes the following tentative prediction:

> From now on, the faith no longer exercises the same hegemony as formerly over the system of ideas that we may continue to call religion. A rival power rises up before it which, being born of it, ever after submits it to its criticism and control. And everything makes us foresee that this control will constantly become more extended and efficient, while no limit can be assigned to its future influence.[69]

In spite of certain difficulties with meanings and with ambiguities regarding the relationship of science to religion, it is possible to summarize, somewhat coherently, Durkheim's views regarding religion. He concludes that totemism contains the elements which are essential to religion and can, hence, contribute to an understanding of what religion,in general,is.

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[69]Ibid., p. 431.

He claims to have found within it "all the great ideas and the principal ritual attitudes which are at the basis of even the most advanced religions," contending that, for this reason, "there is no reason for not extending the most general results of our researches to other religions."[70]

For Durkheim, the reality lying behind religion is society: the emergent, supra-individual entity which both creates true humans and is recreated by their ritual assemblies. Religion, far from being a mere illusion, is essentially the veneer of society. It has contained the fundamental categories of thought, since the latter have originated in society.[71] Only with the advent of science, however, has thought become more refined and the beliefs and rituals associated with religions recognized for what they really are: the collective representations of society. As societies progress and science advances, the role of religion becomes increasingly truncated, although it is possible that it will always exist, to some degree. At any rate, its underlying

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[70] Ibid., p. 415.

[71] P. M. Worsley, in "Emile Durkheim's Theory Of Knowledge," Sociological Review, IV (1956), 47-62, contests this aspect of Durkheim's position. He contends that Durkheim's society exists in a "virtual vacuum" and pays little attention to social activities outside of those gatherings associated with rituals. Furthermore, he questions the emergence of the categories of understanding from social groups and also the presence, in totemism, of primarily rational modes of classification. He asserts(61): "We cannot, then, accept the commonly-expressed view of religion as 'primitive science.'"

reality continues to exist, served, in the main, by science.

It is beyond the scope of this study to attempt to evaluate the validity of labeling Durkheim a "functionalist." In the first place, there are disagreements regarding the meaning of this term.[72] In the second place, Durkheim was not always consistent in his treatment of causality, and he made somewhat conflicting remarks concerning the relationship of function to cause. Finally, he professes that he is not pretending to have formulated a complete theory of the concept of causality from his observations regarding totemic societies. In Forms, he admits that the question is too complex to be resolved in this manner and remarks: "The views which we have set forth should be regarded as mere indications, which must be controlled and completed."[73]

It is sufficient to point out that Durkheim regarded religion as serving functions: that of representing society to its members and of making experiences intelligible. He did

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[72]Whitney Pope, for example, in "Durkheim as a Functionalist," The Sociological Quarterly, XVI (Summer, 1975), 361-79, gives his definition of functionalism and contends that, indeed, Durkheim must be considered as a functionalist. On the other hand, Albert Pierce, in "Durkheim And Functionalism," in Emile Durkheim, 1858-1917: A Collection of Essays with Translations and a Bibliography, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff (Reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1979), pp. 154-67, discusses the various definitions of functionalism and concludes that "it would be erroneous to regard Durkheim as a functionalist in any of the commonly accepted contemporary meanings of the term." (165).

[73]Durkheim, Forms, p. 369.

not deal, in any comprehensive fashion, with the intentionality or otherwise of these effects, a dimension of causality which some interpreters of functionalism suggest is vital.[74] In short, Durkheim was intent upon establishing the empirical reality of religion and was concerned with dealing with it as a social fact rather than as a mere abstract concept. To some extent, he considered its functions, as he perceived them, to be more valuable as evidence of its existence than as clues regarding its origin.

Émile Durkheim's Views Regarding Morality

Durkheim's views regarding morality, as in the case of religion, are closely bound to his conception of the superior, transcendent entity which is society. Like religion, morality, to a large extent, becomes a reality which we are able to identify with the help of a scientific sociology. In essence, Durkheim takes a position of moral relativism.

In Division, Durkheim takes preliminary steps in this direction. He views the human conscience as "nothing else than the collective conscience of the group of which we are a part" and observes:

> But, really, every people makes for itself some particular conception of this type which pertains to its personal temperament. Each represents it in its own image. Even the moralist who thinks he can, through thought, overcome the influence of transient ideas,

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[74]For example, Penner, in "The Poverty of Functionalism," 94, contends that it is inadmissable to consider the unintended effects of religion, like the maintenance of society, to represent the cause of religion.

> cannot do so, for he is impregnated with them, and no matter what he does, he finds these precepts in the body of his deductions. That is why each nation has its own school of moral philosophy conforming to its character.[75]

Morality, for Durkheim, is not something immutable and static. Neither is it something which exists universally in a particular form. Rather, it changes from society to society and from time to time within a particular society.

For Durkheim, morality is preeminently social. In Division, with its emphasis upon social solidarity, Durkheim posits:

> Everything which is a source of solidarity is moral, everything which forces man to take account of other men is moral, everything which forces him to regulate his conduct through something other than the striving of his ego is moral, and morality is as solid as these ties are numerous and strong.

He asserts that society is the "necessary condition" of morality and declares: "It is not a simple juxtaposition of individuals who bring an intrinsic morality with them, but rather man is a moral being only because he lives in society, since morality consists in being solidary with a group and varying with this solidarity." In Division, Durkheim views the duties of individuals as being identical to those of society and suggests that, as organic solidarity replaces mechanical solidarity, occupational morality will, to some extent, replace that embodied in the collective conscience.[76]

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[75]Durkheim, Division, pp. 396-97.

[76]Ibid., pp. 398-99, 402.

In Division, Durkheim suggests that the morality arising from the division of labor may, in fact, be of a higher order than that found in societies characterized by mechanical solidarity. He remarks, regarding the former:

> It only asks that we be thoughtful of our fellows and that we be just, that we fulfill our duty, that we work at the function we can best execute, and receive the just reward for our services. The rules which constitute it do not have a constraining force which snuffs out free thought; but, because they are rather made for us and, in a certain sense, by us, we are free. We wish to understand them; we do not fear to change them.

Durkheim argues that such ideals are valuable in spite of their "earthly" nature and submits: "An ideal is not more elevated because more transcendent, but because it leads us to vaster perspectives."[77]

Morality, for Durkheim, does not constitute an intellectual problem. Rather, it consists in adjusting the moral code of a particular society to fit the actual conditions and needs of that society. He comments, regarding the transition of societies from the segmental to the more developed type:

> We shall not suffer because we no longer know on what theoretical notion to base the morality we have been practicing, but because, in certain of its parts, this morality is irremediably shattered, and that which is necessary to us is only in process of formation.

Not the theorizing of scholars but the revision of duties

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[77] Ibid., pp. 407-08.

is the imperative. Durkheim avers: "In short, our first duty is to make a moral code for ourselves."[78]

In his introduction to the first edition of Division, which is included as an appendix in later editions, Durkheim was concerned with developing what he referred to as a "science of ethics." He states:

> Ordinarily, to ascertain whether a rule of conduct is moral, it is confronted with a pre-established general formula of morality. To the extent that the rule can be deduced from the formula, or contradicts it, one assigns, or refuses to assign, a moral value to it.

Durkheim professes to reject this method of determining what is and is not moral, and he explains his reasoning as follows:

> We cannot follow this method, for in order to give it any efficacy, it would be necessary for the formula serving as criterion to be an incontestable scientific truth. But each moralist has his own particular doctrine, and the diversity of doctrines proves the flimsiness of the so-called objective value. Furthermore, we shall show that the doctrines which have been successively proposed are faulty, and that, to find one more exact, a whole science that cannot be improvised is necessary.[79]

Among the ethical theories which Durkheim critiques is that which defines morality as a function of social interest. While conceding that this theory is more comprehensive than the utilitarian ones, including that of Spencer, he contends that it is not an adequate definition. He notes, in the first place, that many things are useful or even necessary to society

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[78] Ibid., pp. 408-09.

[79] Ibid., p. 411.

but cannot be considered to be moral. On the other hand, he submits that a number of moral practices which are of an obligatory nature are of no genuine use to a community in the utilitarian sense. Durkheim does, in this instance, deal with the issue of intentionality. He declares: "Even if those rules whose social utility has been best demonstrated are examined, it is seen that the services they render could not be known in advance." The consequences of certain rules may be unforseen and unintended, and Durkheim concludes: "It is, then, quite certain that the rules of ethics, even the simplest, have not originally had, as end, the interest of society."[80] In this particular passage, Durkheim is rejecting the definition of morality as being that which is of service to society.

In all of the moral theories which he rejects, Durkheim finds a common element: subjectivity. Regarding empiricists, rationalists, and utilitarians alike, he charges:

> The procedure of one, as well as the other, is the following: they start from the concept of man, deducing the ideal from what seems to them suitable to a being who is thus defined; and having set up this ideal, they derive from it the supreme rule of conduct, the moral law. The differences distinguishing the doctrines rest uniquely in the fact that man is not everywhere conceived in the same manner.

Durkheim contends that such subjective approaches to the subject of morality can never result in a science of ethics; they will always remain deductive and, hence, conjectural.[81]

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[80] Ibid., pp. 415-18.

[81] Ibid., pp. 418, 421-22.

Durkheim posits, in contrast, that the starting point must be moral "facts" as they already exist. Then he outlines his suggested procedure:

> But since a general law of ethics can only be of scientific value by taking into account the diversity of moral facts, these must first be studied if we wish to arrive at a law. Before discovering a summarizing formula, the facts must be analyzed, their qualities described, their functions determined, their causes sought out; and only by comparing the results of all these special studies shall we be able to extract the common characteristics of all moral rules, the constitutive properties of the law of ethics.

Given the diversity of moral "facts" and their dependence upon particular - and often changing - conditions, Durkheim concludes that the formulation of a science of morality is "very laborious and very complex." Regarding the conjectures of the moral theorists concerning the nature of man, he submits: "Such a question cannot be tackled at the beginning of the scientific investigation; it can be solved only in proportion to the advance of the science."[82]

It is Durkheim's contention that moral facts must be identified by "some external and visible sign" instead of by means of a formula. Declaring that morality consists of rules of conduct, he attempts to distinguish those which are moral from those which are devoid of this characteristic. The distinguishing characteristic, according to Durkheim, is the existence of a sanction in the case of a moral rule. As the

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[82]Ibid., pp. 418-19, 423-24.

existence of the sacred-profane dichotomy was identified as the distinguishing trait of religion, so the existence of public sanctions regarding certain modes of conduct becomes the identifying feature of moral rules. Durkheim contends: "We now have the criterion for which we have been looking: we can say that all moral facts consist in a rule of sanctioned conduct."[83]

For Durkheim, morality is something which is imposed upon individuals from without. They are constrained to act in certain ways, and Durkheim emphasizes: "What is meant, in short, when we speak of what distinguishes moral rules, is that they are obligatory." The presence of this quality is established by the existence of sanctions, but Durkheim is careful to point out that the element of obligatoriness is not to be considered as a "product" of the sanction. He attempts to explicate the relationship between obligation and the sanction in the following passage:

> On the contrary, it is because the latter derives from the former that it can symbolize it; and as this symbol has the great advantage of being objective, accessible to observation and even to measurement, it is a good method to prefer it to the thing it represents.

As in the case of religion, Durkheim is searching for "realities," and this involves eliminating the subjective feelings of observers in order to uncover the facts. He

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[83] Ibid., pp. 424-25.

asserts that the moralist "must proceed to take as obligatory only what is obligatory, and not what appears so to him," and unequivocally declares: "Now, the reality of an obligation is certain only if it is manifested by some sanction."[84]

Among the problems which Durkheim, himself, recognized as accompanying his definition of the moral, is that of the possibility of error on the part of societies. He concedes that they can "attach the external sign of morality to rules of conduct which are not themselves moral" and can "leave without sanctions rules which should be sanctioned." To solve this problem, Durkheim utilizes the notions of "normal" and "pathological" as he conceives them to be used by natural scientists. The latter, according to Durkheim, equate "normal" with "average" and "pathological" with that which is above or below "average." Applying this rule to morality, Durkheim postulates:

> A moral fact is normal for a determined social type when it is observed in the average of that species; it is pathological in antithetical circumstances. That is what makes the moral character of particular types vary; they depend upon the nature of social types.

Emphasizing that the normal type is not some permanently fixed entity but, rather, is something which evolves along with societies, Durkheim concludes: "Consequently, to know if a moral fact is normal for a society, we must take into account the age of the society and determine the normal type

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[84] Ibid., pp. 425-26.

which serves as landmark."[85]

In his introduction to Division, Durkheim stresses the average as representing the standard for perfection rather than an ideal existing in a transcendent realm. He declares that "to perfect it is to make it more like itself" and states further: "The only ideal that the human mind can propose is to improve what is. It is in reality alone that one can learn the improvements it demands."[86] It is evident that, at this point, Durkheim is defining morality by what exists instead of what ought to exist in the light of immutable moral principles. He is primarily concerned with the question of what is deemed to be moral, by whom, and under what conditions.

In Moral Education, Durkheim elaborates upon the nature of morality. In these lectures, in which he attempts to outline his plan for the implementation of a secular, moral education for the children attending public schools in France, he emphasizes his position that moral phenomena must be treated as natural or rational phenomena. Hence, he asks: "Now, if morality is rational, if it sets in motion only ideas and sentiments deriving from reason, why should it be necessary to implant it in minds and characters by recourse to methods beyond the scope of reason?"[87]

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[85] Ibid., pp. 431-33.

[86] Ibid., pp. 434-35.

[87] Durkheim, Moral Education, p. 5.

As in the case of religion, Durkheim posits morality as a reality. He submits: "There is no people without its morality." He notes that primitive people's morality was, to a great extent, bound up with religion and points out that most duties involved relationships with gods. Human morality, then, was reduced to a few principles. Durkheim suggests that Christianity has contributed to the increase in human duties, since it emphasizes loving one's neighbor and, to some extent, reduces the role of God to that of the guardian of morality. He remarks: "Thenceforth, our duties become independent, in large measure, of the religious notions that guarantee them but do not form their foundation."[88]

Durkheim observes that the bonds between morality and religion have become progressively looser, and he is confident that a secular morality can exist, independent of religion and theology. He recognizes, however, that the task of establishing this kind of morality entails more than simply purging it of all religious elements. Because morality and religion were congruent for so long, the removal of religious elements from morality would deprive the latter, also, of purely moral elements. Durkheim recognizes that the task involves a positive action: that of replacing the religious elements with those that are distinctively moral. Durkheim

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[88]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

perceives his task as follows:

> We must seek, in the very heart of religious conceptions, those moral realities that are, as it were, lost and dissimulated in it. We must disengage them, find out what they consist of, determine their proper nature, and express them in rational language. In a word, we must discover the rational substitutes for those religious notions that for a long time have served as the vehicle for the most essential moral ideas.[89]

In the light of the rejection, by rationalists, of religion and of the religious elements which have been wedded to moral rules, Durkheim considers the formulation of a new moral theory to be crucial. He believes that a new inspiration is needed to replace that which religion afforded but warns: "We must take care lest we impoverish morality in the process of rationalizing it; and we must anticipate the complications that it entails and prepare for them." To guard against impoverishment, Durkheim suggests that the essential elements of morality must be identified, and he asserts that the task is to "ferret out basic sentiments that are the foundation of our moral dispositions."[90] We must know, according to Durkheim, what is essentially moral and what is not. In searching for moral facts, one must first observe what is considered to be moral and then proceed to determine its nature.

Using this procedure, Durkheim identifies a primary ingredient of morality. Concerning behavior which is deemed to be

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[89] Ibid., pp. 7-9.

[90] Ibid., pp. 14, 20-21.

moral, he avers:

> All such behavior conforms to pre-established rules. To conduct one's self morally is a matter of abiding by a norm, determining what conduct should obtain in a given instance even before one is required to act. This domain of morality is the domain of duty; duty is prescribed behavior.

Durkheim explains that this does not imply that the moral conscience is free of perplexities, since the moral rules are general and must be applied to particular situations. To the extent that this is true, moral judgments can be made but, in Durkheim's view, no moral evaluations. He reasons as follows:

> Furthermore, to the extent that the rule leaves us free, to the extent that it does not prescribe in detail what we ought to do, the action being left to our own judgment, to that extent there is no moral valuation. We are not accountable precisely because of the freedom left us.[91]

Durkheim views morality as being embodied in the various laws and maxims existing in a particular society, and he describes them as having "their own existence, their own life." Instead of looking to some general principle of morality for guidance in life situations, one must look to the particular rules which are operative in that society. For Durkheim, the function of morality is "to determine conduct, to fix it, to eliminate the element of individual arbitrariness." It is not solely - or, perhaps, even primarily - the

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

content of moral rules that makes them moral. Rather, they take on this quality because of their tendency to produce regularity of actions. Conceding that the content of moral precepts may have moral value, Durkheim adds: "However, since all such precepts promote regularity of conduct among men, there is a moral aspect in that these actions - not only in their specific content, but in a general way - are held to a certain regularity." Durkheim sees a close connection between customs and morality, and he submits: "If all social customs are not moral, all moral behavior is customary behavior. Consequently, whoever resists the customary runs the risk of defying morality."[92]

In addition to the regularity which results from adherence to prescribed behavior, Durkheim identifies authority as an essential element of morality. Morality entails the existence of an influence beyond that of the individual and his habits, and Durkheim explains:

> By authority, we must understand that influence which imposes upon us all the moral power that we acknowledge as superior to us. Because of this influence, we act in prescribed ways, not because the required conduct is attractive to us, not because we are so inclined by some predisposition either innate or acquired, but because there is some compelling influence in the authority dictating it.

Conceding that all rules, to some extent, partake of this element of authority, Durkheim contends that moral rules can

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[92]Ibid., pp. 25-28.

be distinguished because, in them, this element plays an "absolutely preponderent role." He adamantly declares: "One must obey a moral precept out of respect for it and for this reason alone."[93]

Durkheim considers the two aspects of morality which he has identified so far as deriving, in effect, from one central concept: discipline. He realizes, however, that the regularity and authority inherent in this concept imply constraint. This, according to Durkheim, far from being detrimental to man, actually aids him. Durkheim argues that established norms liberate man from "an incessant search for appropriate conduct" and, in addition, provide necessary restrictions, without which man expends useless amounts of energy upon unattainable goals. Durkheim posits that discipline is useful for both the individual and for society and that it is mandatory in a democracy. Regarding the latter, he observes:

> For, since in some measure the conventional restraints are no longer effective - barriers which in societies differently organized rigorously restrict people's desires and ambitions - there remains only moral discipline to provide the necessary regulatory influence. Because, in principle, all vocations are available to everybody, the drive to get ahead is more readily stimulated and inflamed beyond all measure to the point of knowing almost no limits.[94]

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[93] Ibid., pp. 28-30.

[94] Ibid., pp. 31-32, 37, 39, 48-49.

There is an element in morality, according to Durkheim, which pertains to content. Again, he does not begin by asking what this ought to be but submits: "On the contrary, we shall observe what kinds of acts they are to which we affix this label." Durkheim distinguishes two ends toward which human behavior can be directed: personal and impersonal. After demonstrating that behavior directed toward the former can never be considered to be moral, he concludes: "Here then is our first conclusion: behavior, whatever it may be, directed exclusively toward the personal ends of the actor does not have moral value." He then rejects the view that a moral act involves consideration of the interests of another person. He asks: "Why should that which for me has no moral value have it in the case of others?" Finally, he rejects the view that the end of moral conduct is regard for the interests of a plurality of individuals, and he reasons thus: "If each individual taken separately has no moral worth, the sum total of individuals can scarcely have more. The sum of zeros is, and can only be, equal to zero."[95]

By the process of elimination, Durkheim identifies the objective of moral action as being society. After positing that the goals of moral action must be "supra-individual," Durkheim asserts:

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[95]Ibid., pp. 55-59.

> Outside or beyond individuals there is nothing other than groups formed by the union of individuals, that is to say, societies. Moral goals, then, are those the object of which is society. To act morally is to act in terms of the collective interest. This conclusion imposes itself in the wake of the foregoing arguments, which were successively eliminated.

A moral act, according to Durkheim, must serve some "living and sentient being and even more specifically a being endowed with consciousnesses." Durkheim reasons that nothing fits this description except society, and since, in his view, his process of reasoning proves the existence of the latter, he feels justified in postulating what society must be. Durkheim reasons as follows:

> If society is to be considered as the normal goal of moral conduct, then it must be possible to see in it something other than a sum of individuals; it must constitute a being sui generis, which has its own special character distinct from that of its members and its own individuality different from that of its constituent individuals. In a word, there must exist, in the full meaning of the word, a social being. On this condition only is society able to perform the moral function that the individual cannot.[96]

It is Durkheim's position that only two possible objects of moral action exist: society, as he conceives it, and divine beings. He rejects the latter upon epistemological grounds, and he is left with society. He states:

> Unless the system of moral ideas is the product of a general hallucination, that being with which morality links our wills and which is the principle object of our behavior can only be a divine being or a social being. We set aside the first of these hypotheses as

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[96] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

> beyond the province of science. There remains the second, which, as we shall see, is adequate for our needs and aspirations and which, furthermore, embraces all the reality of the first, minus its symbolism.

Durkheim contends that the existence of an emergent society, with its own properties, should not be surprising. He declares it to be "an invariable fact that a whole may be something other than the sum of its parts," and he observes that, in the case of society, this fact is evidenced in the manner in which "the character of the collectivity outlasts the personalities of its members."[97] Thus Durkheim identifies the individual's attachment to a group of which he is a member as the second element of a moral action.

As Durkheim found positive benefits for man in the constraint inherent in discipline, so he finds them in the subordination of individuals to society. He argues that man only realizes his nature fully as he is involved in society and declares: "It is from society that there comes whatever is best in us, all the higher forms of our behavior." Durkheim points out, in addition, that science developed as a result of collective ends and claims: "Society called it into being, while compelling its members to instruct themselves." He concludes, regarding the first two elements of morality: "Thus, just as morality limits and constrains us, in response to the requirements of our nature, so in requiring our commitment and

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[97] Ibid., pp. 60-62.

subordination to the group does it compel us to realize ourselves."[98]

In Moral Education, Durkheim indicates that he views the nation as being the social group which is best adapted to producing - and serving as the end of - moral acts. The goals of the family are not as lofty as those of the nation, and humanity, instead of being a social organism, is a mere abstraction. It is the authority of the nation which Durkheim emphasizes, and he observes the force which this society exerts upon its members. He notes that, traditionally, people had associated this force with a transcendent being, existing outside of the natural realm, and he makes clear his task:

> It is our task to divest this conception of the mythical forms in which it has been shrouded in the course of history, and to grasp the reality beneath the symbolism. This reality is society. In molding us morally, society has inculcated in us those feelings that prescribe our conduct so imperatively; and that kick back with such force when we fail to abide by their injunctions. Our moral conscience is its product and reflects it.[99]

In Durkheim's view, the force which energizes morality is society. This is the reality lying behind moral rules, and he attempts to explicate his conception of the latter in the following passage:

When we spoke of them as forces that contain and restrain

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[98] Ibid., pp. 68-70, 72.

[99] Ibid., pp. 74-76, 89-90.

> us, it may have seemed that we were hypostatizing or reifying abstractions. What, as a matter of fact, is a rule other than a simple combination of abstract ideas? And how can a purely verbal formula exert such influence? But now we see that underneath the formula, which is only the symbolic exterior, there are some genuine forces that are the essence of it.

Durkheim identifies these forces as being collective sentiments and postulates that they are "quite as real and active as the forces that fill the physical world."[100] It is society which is limiting and constraining man by means of moral rules.

Durkheim recognizes that the two elements of morality which he has identified imply some kind of relationship between duty and good. He states: "Morality appears to us under a double aspect: on the one hand, as imperative law, which demands complete obedience of us; on the other hand, as a splendid ideal, to which we spontaneously aspire." Durkheim notes two schools of thought regarding the relationship between duty and the good: one sees good as the basic notion from which duty is derived, while the other deduces the good from duty. While conceding some differences between the two elements, Durkheim takes the position that they are integrally related. He submits:

> However, the problem is readily resolved as soon as we understand that the two elements of morality are only two different aspects of the same reality. Their unity stems not from the fact that one is the corollary of the other or vice versa; it is the unity, expressed in different forms of behavior, of a real entity.

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[100] Ibid., pp. 91-92.

> Because society is beyond us, it commands us; on the other hand, being superior to everything in us, it permeates us. Because it constitutes part of us, it draws us with the special attraction that inspires us toward moral ends.[101]

In Durkheim's view, society is not only beyond the individual and separate from him but also within him. The constraint which he feels stems, at least in part, from the ideal nature of society which becomes part of the individual.

It is Durkheim's contention that morality, as he has rationalized it and purged it of religious symbolism, is not impoverished but, instead, is enriched. Society, conceived of as an emergent, observable being, is substituted for a supernatural being, and the superior nature of the former serves to draw men toward lofty, moral goals. Durkheim notes the consequences of the rationalization of morality:

> Already, then, merely by virtue of the fact that it is rationalized, morality is freed of the paralysis to which it is logically condemned when founded on a religious base. When it is viewed as the law of an eternal and immutable being, evidently it must be conceived as unchangeable, like the image of God. On the contrary, if, as I have tried to show, it constitutes a social function, then it shares both the relative permanence and the relative variability seen in societies.[102]

Durkheim identifies a third and final element of morality in Moral Education: autonomy. In addition to discipline and the attachment to a group, he maintains that morality implies knowledge and understanding of the reasons for conduct. Durkheim

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[101] Ibid., pp. 96-98.

[102] Ibid., pp. 104-06.

posits that blind obedience to a rule, even if that rule embodies an ideal, is not enough to constitute morality. He contends that, in a society enlightened by science, more is needed and explains:

> Morality no longer consists merely in behaving, even intentionally behaving, in certain required ways. Beyond this, the rule prescribing such behavior must be freely desired, that is to say, freely accepted; and this willing acceptance is nothing less than an enlightened assent.

Durkheim sees intelligence as becoming "increasingly an element of morality," and he comments: "Morality, which originally was completely a function of the act, the content of the behavior that constituted the act, now depends more and more upon knowledge."[103]

It is Durkheim's contention that this element of understanding distinguishes a secular morality from that which had been traditionally bound to religion. Autonomy, conceived of as an understanding of the causes and reasons for moral rules, had little place in religious morality, since the authority of the supernatural being was beyond question and understanding. Durkheim suggests that science is eroding the somewhat "magical quality" which has clung to morality as a result of its close ties to religion, and he expresses faith in the possibility of a "human science of morality." This is possible, according to Durkheim, because of the fact that "moral facts are natural phenomena that emerge through reason alone."[104]

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[103] Ibid., p. 120.

[104] Ibid., p. 121.

In reply to objections that his conception of morality is restrictive in that it pertains to what objectively exists, Durkheim argues that it is, in reality, idealistic. He points out that it opens to individuals ideas which they would never be capable of conceiving and submits: "Now, society, which we have made the objective of moral conduct, infinitely surpasses the level of self-centered interests." Durkheim emphasizes, on the other hand, that his conception of morality makes of it a reality: something which is not "extraspatial" or "extratemporal." He makes the following claim: "It clings to reality; it is part of it; it informs society - that concrete, living entity which, so to speak, we see and touch and are involved in." Durkheim concludes that morality, as he conceives it, results in man becoming more unselfish and, hence, more fulfilled. He reasons: "Morality is a pre-eminently human thing, for in prompting man to go beyond himself it only stimulates him to realize his own nature as a man."[105]

In "The Determination Of Moral Facts," a thesis presented by Durkheim at a seminar in 1906, he reiterates and elaborates upon some of the aspects of his moral theory which he had outlined in the lectures comprising Moral Education. In this thesis, Durkheim gives more attention to the desirability of moral actions, and he avers: "No act has ever been performed

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[105]Ibid., pp. 122-24.

as a result of duty alone; it has always been necessary for it to appear in some respect as good." Durkheim, in this instance, seems to be equating the "desirable" with the "good," and it is his contention that moral acts constitute a mixture of obligatoriness and desirability.[106]

Durkheim suggests that a similar duality is found in the concept of the sacred, and he contends that an understanding of the moral life necessitates relating it to religious life. Noting the intimate relationship which has traditionally existed between morality and religion, he declares: "It is apparent that moral life has not been, and never will be, able to shed all the characteristics that it holds in common with religion." While suggesting that elements of morality and religion are still intertwined, Durkheim stresses that these religious sentiments are something quite different from theological tenets. He observes: "These religious elements do not remain unchanged and it is certain that the religious sentiment of morality tends to become quite a different thing from that of theology."[107]

In this thesis, Durkheim reiterates his position that, out of necessity, an emergent society must exist as the object and source of morality. Reasoning that the choice is between

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[106]Durkheim, Sociology, pp. 45, 47. Lukes, in Durkheim, p. 419, views this emphasis upon the desirability of moral acts as signifying a shift in Durkheim's conception of morality from an emphasis upon the rules themselves to the "moral beliefs expressed by the rules."

[107]Durkheim, Sociology, pp. 48-49. Durkheim, in "The Dualism Of Human Nature," in Durkheim, ed. by Wolff, pp. 334-39, posits the existence of a dual nature in man and relates this nature to both religion and morality.

God and his conception of society, he comments: "I can only add that I myself am quite indifferent to this choice, since I see in the Divinity only society transfigured and symbolically expressed." He goes on to describe society: "Society is something more than a material power; it is a moral power. It surpasses us physically, materially and morally." Society, as Durkheim conceives it, consecrates man: its transcendence permeates man and enables him to develop as a human being. Durkheim posits: "The only question that a man can ask is not whether he can live outside society, but in what society he wishes to live."[108]

In this thesis, Durkheim again suggests that moral rules can be changed and that there exist methods of judging them. In his view, the primary agent for this task is a science of morality. He is careful to point out its limitations in this regard, however, and asserts: "But in any case we cannot aspire to a morality other than that which is related to the state of our society." It is a given society which must be studied to determine if changes in moral rules are needed, since "it is from society and not from the individual that morality derives." Although conceding that sometimes action must be taken without waiting for the guidance of science, Durkheim demonstrates a substantial faith in the efficacy of science to determine and to evaluate social reality and, consequently, to arrive

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[108]Ibid., pp. 52, 54-55.

at the proper moral rules for a given society. He considers science to be the embodiment of "impersonal human reason" and states that "the science of moral facts puts us in a position to order and direct the course of moral life." Durkheim sees a close - almost congruent - relationship between reason and science, and he concludes:

> The reason to which I make my appeal is reason applying itself to a given matter in a methodical manner in order to understand the nature of past and present morality, and which draws from this theoretical study its practical consequences. Reason thus understood is simply science, the science of morality.[109]

In reply to an objection regarding a certain aspect of his thesis, Durkheim emphasizes again that his concern is with "discovering in what morality consists or has consisted." In contrast to those moral philosophers who have attempted to construct new moral theories, he professes to be searching for morality "as it has been lived by humanity in the collective." His conception of a morality based upon science is revealed in the following passage:

> If the science of morals and law, as we are trying to make it, were sufficiently advanced, it would be able to play in relation to moral facts the same role that astronomy plays in relation to astronomical facts. One would go to it in order to discover in what moral life consists.

Primarily, for Durkheim, morality is embodied in laws, moral maxims, and other "sources of moral reality."[110] He envisions

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[109] Ibid., pp. 60-62, 65, 67.

[110] Ibid., pp. 75-77.

a science of morality akin to that of astronomy: one with a subject matter consisting of moral facts, as that of the latter consists of astronomical ones, and one to which one could go in order to learn what constitutes the moral life.

In a lecture, entitled "Value Judgments And Judgments Of Reality" and delivered to the International Congress of Philosophy in Bologna in 1911, Durkheim deals with the problem of different types of judgments and attempts to relate the concept of value to morality. In the first place, he identifies judgments of reality, considering them to be reports of what exists or of what is valued. Secondly, he identifies value judgments. These, according to Durkheim, involve objective judgments in the sense that conflicts regarding them can be settled by subjecting them to impersonal arguments. He posits: "Implicitly we recognize that these judgments correspond to some objective reality upon which agreement can and should be reached. These sui generis realities constitute values, and it is to these realities that value judgments refer."[111] It is Durkheim's contention that judgments of reality merely affirm what is, while value judgments involve the estimation of a thing's worth in relation to people.

Durkheim rejects two schools of thought regarding the

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[111] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

nature of value: that which posits it as being inherent in certain objects and that which regards it as stemming from the relation between reality and ideals, the latter being conceived of as existing in an "extra-empirical reality." Durkheim argues that the first theory is deficient in that it does not explain the existence of a system of objective values. The second, according to Durkheim, rests upon the assumption that man possesses the ability to create trans-empirical ideals, and he sums up the deficiencies of this position as follows:

> To sum up; if the value of a thing cannot be, and has never been, estimated except in relation to some conception of the ideal, the latter needs explanation. To understand how value judgments are possible it is not enough to postulate a certain number of ideals. Their origins, the way in which they are related to, yet transcend, experience, and the nature of their objectivity must be accounted for.[112]

Durkheim's explanation for the existence of genuine judgments of value stems from his conception of the nature of society. It is the emergent society, that which embodies a "new kind of psychic life," which enables man to conceive ideals and become attached to them. Durkheim views ideals as being "simply the ideas in terms of which society sees itself" and describes them thus: "They are collective forces - that is, natural but at the same time moral forces, comparable to the other forces of the universe." The ideals, while partaking of reality, also transcend it, and Durkheim postulates his conception of the nature of the ideal: "It is not simply a

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[112] Ibid., pp. 82, 87, 90.

future goal to which man aspires; it has its own reality and nature. It is to be thought of rather as looming impersonally above the individual wills that it moves."[113]

Durkheim's position is that value derives from the relation of things to the ideal but finds the latter in the natural world. He insists that the ideal is subject to investigation "like the rest of the moral or physical universe" and suggests that the intellect "can be applied in the hope of a progressive understanding without assigning in advance a limit to this indefinite progress." Durkheim submits that these collective ideals, in order to become aware of themselves, must be embodied in material objects. These "concrete realizations" represent more than facts, as conceived of by empiricists: they embody a transcendent, social reality which furnishes man with ideals with which he can make value judgments. Durkheim states: "In a word, society substitutes for the world revealed to us by our senses a different world that is the projection of the ideals created by society itself."[114]

Durkheim contends that there are some similarities between judgments of reality and value judgments: they are both products of the same faculty and are both based upon facts. In addition, since he considers concepts to be ideals, both

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[113] Ibid., pp. 91, 93.

[114] Ibid., pp. 94-95.

are idealistic. Yet, he views them as being different in that the function of concepts, involved in judgments of reality, is to express reality, while that of the ideals involved in value judgments is to "transfigure the realities to which they relate." He elaborates upon this distinction as follows:

> In the first instance the ideal is a symbol of a thing and makes it an object of understanding. In the second the thing itself symbolizes the ideal and acts as the medium through which the ideal becomes capable of being understood. Naturally the judgments vary according to the ideals involved. Judgments of the first order are limited to the faithful analysis and representation of reality, while those of the second order express that novel aspect of the object with which it is endowed by the ideal. This aspect is itself real, but not real in the same way that the inherent properties of the object are real.[115]

Durkheim suggests that a value judgment "adds to the given fact in a sense, even though what is added has been borrowed from another fact of a different order." He affirms that this is evident in the realm of morality and declares, regarding the relationship between it and values: "The principal social phenomena, religion, morality, law, economics and aesthetics, are nothing more than systems of values and hence of ideals." Sociology, according to Durkheim, makes these ideals its starting point. Its purpose should be to deal with these ideals scientifically, and the following statement regarding sociology captures the essence of Durkheim's moral theory: "It does not set out to construct ideals, but on the contrary

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[115] Ibid., pp. 95-96.

accepts them as given facts, as objects of study, and it tries to analyse and explain them."[116]

A Summary of Émile Durkheim's Views Regarding the Relationship Between Religion and Morality

Religion was much more than an afterthought for Émile Durkheim. Due, perhaps in part, to his strict religious upbringing, and also, by his admission, to his study of the works of certain ethnographers, Durkheim gave much attention to religion as a social phenomenon. He also accorded the subject of morality a great deal of attention, emphasizing the need for a scientific moral theory to replace the existing ones,which he considered to be too subjective.

Durkheim's conceptions of both religion and morality stem from his general theory of knowledge and from the methodology which he utilized to uncover that knowledge. One aspect of his methodology was to consider as realities all of the beliefs of people and all of the practices which they engage in and to search, then, for the essences of the terms which have been given to these activities. Durkheim deals with both religion and morality in this fashion. He acknowledges them to be terms which have been used to refer to what people have actually believed and practiced, and, in this sense, he considers them to be realities. His procedure involves giving these terms provisional definitions and, from these, proceeding to the formulation of more profound ones: ones

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[116] Ibid., p. 96.

which include an identification of the essential components of the terms and which, in addition, identify the reality underlying these components.

Discarding traditional definitions of religion upon both definitional and epistemological grounds, Durkheim postulates the acceptance of the existence of a sacred-profane dichotomy as being the distinguishing trait of religion. As various groups form particular systems of beliefs and rituals concerning this division of things into the sacred and the profane, various religions are born. Durkheim sees only two possibilities regarding the underlying reality of these beliefs and rituals: the existence of supernatural beings and the collectivities themselves. He rejects the first upon epistemological grounds and, by the process of elimination, identifies societies as being the realities which religions symbolize. In "Durkheim: Sociology Of Knowledge And Educational Theory," Brian S. Crittenden submits that, for Durkheim, "the objective truth which religion represents is that man is everywhere an essentially sociable animal."[117]

Durkheim uses similar procedures in his treatment of morality.[118] He studies what has been considered to constitute

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[117]Brian S. Crittenden, "Durkheim: Sociology Of Knowledge And Educational Theory," Studies in Philosophy and Education, IV (Fall, 1965), 235.

[118]Lukes, in Durkheim, p. 420, notes that Durkheim never progressed farther than the introduction in La Morale, a work that was to represent his comprehensive theory of morality. In spite of this fact, it has been possible to construct a fairly coherent formulation of Durkheim's position regarding morality.

moral acts in various societies and extracts, from these, the essential components of morality. After identifying these as being discipline, attachment to a group, and autonomy, he arrives at what he considers to be the true source and object of moral acts by a process of elimination. He reasons that individuals have never been considered as constituting proper ends of moral acts; hence, other individuals or a plurality of individuals cannot serve as the proper end of morality. Durkheim is left with one alternative: society, conceived of as an emergent synthesis which, while depending for its existence upon individuals, forms a sui generis reality which is more than the sum of the personalities of its individual members. The collective forces which constitute society form the true basis for morality.

There is a sense in which Durkheim's moral theory can be considered to contain normative elements. The collective forces which constitute a given society should be, as perfectly as possible, embodied in laws and other forms of moral maxims. These, in turn, which can be identified by the sanctions accompanying them, should be obeyed by the individual members of a particular society. Durkheim's "shoulds" of human conduct begin with social reality, and the emphasis is upon conformity. Durkheim considers morality to be both obligatory and idealistic, however, and he views value judgments as consisting of the

relating of empirical realities to the ideal, which is the reality of the collective representations.

In one sense, Durkheim regards the historical relationship which has existed between religion and morality as being that of two realities, emanating from the same source. This source is society, viewed as a natural, yet transcendent, entity. It is Durkheim's contention that, historically, religion and morality have been congruent phenomena. In societies untouched by science, both have been embodiments of the collective conscience, with religion serving to keep alive and to enforce the moral maxims of society. Religions - from totemism to Christianity - have served to symbolize the authority of the collectivity to its members. In addition, Durkheim considers religions to have been the precursors of scientific thought, since, in his view, they have served to organize and to classify experiences.

It is not an easy task to state, unequivocally, Durkheim's position regarding the role of religion in a society in which the scientific method is accepted as the only legitimate method of validation in all realms of human activities. The clearest aspect of his position in this regard appears to be his contention that science will undoubtedly replace religion as the source of authority in cognitive matters. He is adamant concerning the certain decline in the speculative function of religion,

contending that, in the wake of science, it loses its right to claim competency in matters which concern knowledge of man and the world. Since he accords to religion no special realm of reality outside of the natural world to which a purely religious type of speculation could be legitimately applied, Durkheim seems to be implying that, in time, religion will lose its intellectual function entirely. It becomes, in his view, a subject for science.

Durkheim's treatment of morality seems to support this position. After examining and analyzing "moral facts," he concludes that a rationalized morality does exist, purged of religious symbolism and able to exist independently of religion. The authority of society, rather than that of supernatural beings, serves as the source and object of morality and, in this capacity, draws men toward lofty, transcendent goals. Implicit in Durkheim's conception of a rationalized morality is the suggestion that, as science exerts more and more influence within a society, this influence becomes part of the social reality. As a result, morality, which Durkheim conceives to be the embodiment of this reality, becomes more and more a reflection of science and less and less a reflection of religion.

Since, in Durkheim's view, religion can only exist in a speculative capacity when free thought is obstructed, it is destined to decline as rationality progresses. As morality, too, becomes rationalized, it breaks free from the dogmatism

and immutability which are characteristic of religions and is freed to reflect, more faithfully, the changing social realities. On the whole, Durkheim adheres to a fairly consistent position of moral relativism. The needs of various societies differ, and those of a given society change from time to time. The external embodiments of these social needs must also be open to change, and Durkheim, with few exceptions, does not infer that an eternal law of morality exists. Although he identifies what he considers to be the underlying nature of morality, the implication is that this nature can be found in an endless variety of societal rules. Crittenden remarks: "In summary, it seems that Durkheim makes no significant modification in his theory of ethical relativism."[119]

It seems a short step from Durkheim's epistemological position regarding religion, his view of the superiority of science to religion in cognitive matters, and his formulation of a secular, rationalized morality to a postulation of the outright disappearance of religion in the future. Yet, Durkheim never explicitly predicts that religion and morality will become mutually exclusive elements; indeed, he seems hesitant to declare that they <u>should</u> become mutually exclusive phenomena, no matter how far science has progressed in a given society.

It is possible to find reasons, both expressed and implied,

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[119]Crittenden, "Durkheim: Sociology Of Knowledge," 235.

for this hesitation on Durkheim's part. In the first place, he views science, by its very nature, as being incomplete and inapplicable to certain situations. When practical situations arise for which science has, as yet, afforded no direction, religion may still be useful in symbolizing the moral authority of society. Durkheim considers religion to be an "energizer" in a way that science is not: it can pose as being complete and capable of providing final answers and can utilize non-rational methods of thinking and acting in a manner which is denied to science. Religion, in other words, by its very nature, is equipped to stimulate and to guide human conduct in certain situations: it can fill in the gaps left by science and offer answers which, in a sense, go beyond those of science.

In the second place, Durkheim realizes that, due to the long period of their congruence, the complete separation of religion and morality is a difficult task. Even though he professes to have established a secular morality and to have found "rational substitutes" for the religious notions that had served so long as the vehicles of morality, he seems reluctant to make the break irrevocable. He suggests that an understanding of morality entails an understanding of religion, since, in his view, both stem from the same source and share common characteristics. It is Durkheim's prediction

that morality will never be divorced entirely from the characteristics which it holds in common with religion.

Finally, it is possible that Durkheim's reluctance to discard religion entirely and to predict its eventual disappearance stems from his intense, religious upbringing. Religion was a reality for him, and, even though he became an agnostic, he never dismissed religions as being mere illusions. They were realities which had to be reckoned with, even though the authority which they were reflecting was something other than the adherents of the various religions believed it to be. Implicit in Durkheim's position regarding religion is the suggestion that, in the event that science should falter or lose the respect of the members of a society, religion could gain back some of its strength and serve, again, as the symbol of moral authority for that society.

In summary, it appears that, theoretically, Durkheim comes close to envisioning - and showing sympathy for - a society in which morality and religion are mutually exclusive elements. Practically, however, he has some reservations concerning both the feasibility and the desirability of the complete disappearance of religion. It has served useful functions in the past, and it is possible that it may, out of necessity, continue to fulfil these functions. Religion must, however, always acknowledge the superior status of science and

give ground as science advances. It must know and understand its true place in the world: that of hand-maiden to science rather than equal. To the extent that adherents of the various religions are cognizant of - and accept - this conception of the role of religion, Durkheim's position would seem to be that religion and morality can exist as compatible elements in a given society.

CHAPTER IV

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF JOHN DEWEY'S AND ÉMILE DURKHEIM'S POSITIONS

The Educational Implications of John Dewey's Position

The educational implications of John Dewey's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality are both dealt with by Dewey directly and are implicit in his position. Dewey's definitional and epistemological rejection of religion leads directly to his rejection of the teaching of religious dogmas in public schools. He proposes, instead, that schools prepare to teach and nurture the religious attitude which he has identified and contends that this can be accomplished in a way which is consistent with both modern democracy and modern science.

In an article, entitled "The Schools and Religions" and first published in 1908, Dewey emphasizes the importance of the denial of the supernatural for both education and morality. He indicates the nature of this significance in the following passage:

> Those who approach religion and education from the side of unconstrained reflection, not from the side of tradition, are of necessity aware of the tremendous transformation of intellectual attitude effected by the systematic denial of the supernatural; they are aware of the changes it imports not merely in

> special dogma and rites, but in the interpretation of the world, and in the projection of social, and hence, moral life.

Dewey is convinced that an educational reconstruction must occur in the light of this intellectual revolution. While conceding that a sense of loss accompanies this "intellectual readjustment," he submits that "nothing is gained by deliberate effort to return to ideas which have become incredible, and to symbols which have been emptied of their content of obvious meaning." He outlines the task as follows:

> Bearing the losses and inconveniences of our time as best we may, it is the part of men to labor persistently and patiently for the clarification and development of the positive creed of life implicit in democracy and in science, and to work for the transformation of all practical instrumentalities of education till they are in harmony with these ideas.[1]

Dewey points out that the issue is an epistemological one, and he inquires: "What is to be done about this increasing antinomy between the standard for coming to know in other subjects of the school, and coming to know in religious matters?" After conceding that religion may become "naturalized" and open to the same tests as other professed truths, he notes:

> But it is pertinent to point out that, as long as religion is conceived as it now is conceived by the great majority of professed religionists, there is

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[1]John Dewey, "The Schools and Religions," in Intelligence, ed. by Ratner, pp. 704-06.

> something self-contradictory in speaking of education in religion in the same sense in which we speak of education in topics where the method of free inquiry has made its way.

Since, in Dewey's view, the scientific standpoint is the "embodiment of integrity of mind," he sees little possibility for either the history or the content of religions being taught in any meaningful sense. Concerning the teaching of the history of religions, for example, he charges that "the professional religionist is one of the most serious obstacles to reckon with, since a wider and deeper historic knowledge would overthrow his traditional basis."[2]

In spite of - and, in fact, because of - the lack of outright education in religion, the public schools do, in Dewey's view, perform a religious function. He describes the nature of this function as follows:

> Our schools, in bringing together those of different nationalities, languages, traditions, and creeds, in assimilating them together upon the basis of what is common and public in endeavor and achievement, are performing an infinitely significant religious work. They are promoting the social unity out of which in the end genuine religious unity must grow.

It is Dewey's contention that as schools stress and foster a sense of social unity, they are "religious" institutions. Such institutions, in Dewey's view, "are more religious in substance and in promise without any of the conventional badges and machinery of religious instruction than they could

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[2]Ibid., pp. 711-12.

be in cultivating these forms at the expense of a state-consciousness."[3]

In this early article, Dewey presages some of his more fully-developed views regarding religion and the "religious" which appear later in A Common Faith. Concerning the disintegration of beliefs involving a supernatural being, he suggests: "For all we know, the integrity of mind which is loosening the hold of these things is potentially much more religious than all that it is displacing." Dewey notes the decline in influence of many religious organizations, and he remarks:

> But it may be that their decadence is the fruit of a broader and more catholic principle of human intercourse and association which is too religious to tolerate these pretensions to monopolize truth and to make private possessions of spiritual insight and aspiration.[4]

This outlook, according to Dewey, must carry over into the realm of education, and he emphasizes the necessity of transforming educational institutions so as to make them compatible with the ideals implicit in science and democracy. Dewey perceives these ideals as being inherently spiritual, and he makes the following comment, concerning those who attempt the educational reconstruction:

> In performing this service, it is their business to do what they can to prevent all public educational agencies from being employed in ways which inevitably impede the recognition of the spiritual import of

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[3] Ibid., pp. 713-14.

[4] Ibid., pp. 714-15.

> science and of democracy, and hence of that type of religion which will be the fine flower of the modern spirit's achievement.[5]

Dewey's whole philosophical position, grounded, as it is, in the efficacy of man's intelligence to direct human conduct, is inextricably bound to his educational philosophy. In an article, entitled "Education As Religion" and published in 1922, Dewey attempts to assess the potential power of education to direct human development and to guide the formation of intelligence. Noting the prevalence of both pessimistic and optimistic views regarding attainments which can actually be traced to education, Dewey takes a cautious stance. He points out that the development of science is making accessible more materials and methods with which to guide the development of intelligence and comments: "It may be argued that the failures of the past are necessary consequences of lack of the kind of knowledge that is now coming into our possession." Dewey then divulges his rather optimistic hopes for education in the following remarks: "Only the future can decide whether the school of despair or of hope is in the right. But at least the right to hope remains with us. If we have any ground to be religious about anything, we may take education religiously."[6]

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[5]Ibid., p. 715.

[6]John Dewey, "Education As Religion," in Education Today, ed. by Joseph Ratner (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), pp. 146-47.

Dewey opts for an attitude of cautious optimism regarding education and the schools and justifies his choice as follows: "There have been many worse objects of faith and hope than the ideal possibilities of the development of human nature, and more harmful rites and cults than those which constitute a school system." He admits that this particular faith "testifies to a generous conception of human nature and to a deep belief in the possibilities of human achievement in spite of all its past failures and errors." Yet, Dewey suggests that this element of credulity is not necessarily detrimental; indeed, as long as it is not converted into "dogmatic assertion," it can serve as an inspiration. He submits:

> Worship of education as a symbol of unattained possibilities of realization of humanity is one thing; our obstinate devotion to existing forms - to our existing schools and administration or to suggested specific programs of improvement - as if they embodied the object of worship - is quite another thing.[7]

Dewey contends that a genuine faith in education entails, first of all, a revamping of the methods and institutions which are labeled "educational," and he charges: "For everywhere there is the same absence of insight into the means by which our professed ends are to be realized, in

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[7]Ibid., pp. 148-49.

consequence of which those ends remain nominal and sentimental." Viewing education as a religion, according to Dewey, can afford direction concerning means and ends since, in this instance, religion is compatible with science and does not seek to circumvent it. He summarizes his hopes regarding education as follows:

> However much or little other religions may conflict with science, here we have a religion which can realize itself only through science: only, that is, through ways of understanding human nature in its concrete actuality and of discovering how its various factors are modified by interaction with the variety of conditions under which they operate.[8]

Dewey's view regarding the illegitimacy of considering the teaching of religious dogmas to be education should not be surprising: it follows from his general theory of knowledge and from his rejection of religion in the traditional sense. Neither should it be surprising that the only sense in which Dewey connects education to religion involves a faith in science to more fully realize the potentialities of human nature. Dewey's whole educational philosophy, in fact, is implicit in his inclusive philosphical position and, particularly, in his ethical theory. Hook states: "Of no philosophy of education is it truer than of Dewey's that its relevant import can be grasped only in the light of its ideas of knowledge, mind, human nature, experience, value,

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[8]Ibid., p. 149.

and democracy." In Chapter I, it was noted that Dewey viewed education as being the focal point of philosophy. Likewise, his educational philosophy can be considered to be so comprehensive as to be applicable to humans in general. Hook declares, regarding its significance:

> Although it is the educator who must be most sensitive to its implications for formal education, it is a philosophy for every intelligent member of the community. For it is a philosophy of life - bearing directly on our current moral, social, and political problems.[10]

As was also noted in Chapter I, Dewey pointed out that his general philosophical position was contained in Democracy And Education, a relatively early work which, on the surface, appears to be predominantly educational in nature. He was alluding to the fact that, given the inclusive nature of his philosophical position, a treatise on education would necessarily contain implications for other aspects of philosophy, including theories regarding human nature and the direction of human conduct. Even had Dewey not explicitly spelled out his educational views, however, they could be implied from his views regarding morality. The direction of human conduct is grounded in experience and in the potentialities inherent in human nature, and the growth which this implies can serve

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[10]Hook, Intellectual Portrait, p. 178.

as the only justifiable end of education. Dewey's reliance upon science necessitates an acceptance of change and growth, and his emphasis upon the efficacy of human intelligence to solve problems implies the existence of a democratic environment in which this intelligence can be fostered. In short, Democracy makes explicit what can be inferred from Dewey's general position and demonstrates the extent to which the various aspects of Dewey's philosophical position are bound together.

In Democracy, Dewey stresses the social nature of education and its affiliation with communication. He states: "To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience." According to Dewey, human impulses have to be controlled and directed and a sense of continuity introduced into successions of individual acts. The young must be able to refer their actions to those of others, and this, for Dewey, results in a "common understanding." He views this understanding of the means and ends of action as being essential for social control and submits: "To achieve this internal control through identity of interest and understanding is the business of education."[11]

As growth is considered, by Dewey, to be the end of morality, so is it considered to constitute the end of

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[11]John Dewey, Democracy And Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), pp. 3, 6, 47.

education. He refers to growth as the "cumulative movement of action toward a later result" and emphasizes in Democracy, as he does later in Human Nature And Conduct, the importance of developing certain kinds of dispositions. Habits must be formed, but in such a way as to retain a measure of flexibility and so as to not "possess us instead of our possessing them." As in the case of morality, Dewey puts primary emphasis upon the role of intelligence in this regard, and he posits the need for "persistent care to see to it that the function of intelligence is invoked to its maximum possibility."[12]

The concept of growth follows, logically, from the significance attached to the full development of the powers of intelligence, and, for Dewey, education and growth do not have ends but, instead, are ends. He views education as being important in and of itself, rather than as being primarily a preparation for the future, and he asserts: "Since in reality there is nothing to which growth is relative save more growth, there is nothing to which education is subordinate save more education." Dewey summarizes his position as follows:

> Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself. The criterion of the value of school education is the extent in which it creates a desire for continued growth and supplies means for making the desire effective in fact.[13]

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[12] Ibid., pp. 49, 53, 58.

[13] Ibid., pp. 60, 62.

There is a sense, of course, in which Dewey views education as being of value for the future. To the extent that present experiences are directed and reconstructed, they become valuable as aids in the direction and enjoyment of future experiences. Hook states Dewey's position as follows: "By perception of the meanings of our activities in meeting the problems of present experience, our powers of understanding and control of future experiences are enhanced." Hook notes the significance of this view of education, as of morality, for social philosophy, and he observes:

> If education aims to make the activities and results of present experience instruments of control over future experience, it follows that its relation to social institutions, social conditions, and problems, which obviously affect the occasions of both present and future experience, is as intimate as the relation between morals and society. This relationship is such that every educational philosophy is at the same time a social philosophy, and conversely.[14]

Consequently, as Hook points out, Dewey's educational philosophy can serve as a standard of evaluation for a given social order. Hook notes that, implicit in it, are questions like the following:

> Does a given social order make possible the achievement of growth for all the individuals educated within it? Does it liberate and at the same time integrate the intellectual, aesthetic, imaginative capacities of the young?

Because of the inclusive nature of Dewey's conception of

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[14]Hook, Intellectual Portrait, pp. 179-80.

education, his educational philosophy is of great practical import for the social arena. Hook describes this potential impact in the following passage:

> Coupled with relevant knowledge, it leads to perfectly concrete proposals for social action. For, if it is in earnest about removing the obstructions to the realization of the educational ideals of growth, its attention is necessarily directed to an examination of the social facts which determine whether these ideals are to remain pious resolutions or whether they are to find a grip or leverage in changing situations.[15]

As democracy, for Dewey, is considered to be the embodiment of a truly moral environment, so he regards it as being the context within which genuine education can flourish. The latter, according to Dewey, can occur only in an environment in which there are "many interests consciously communicated and shared" and in which there are "varied and free points of contact with other modes of association." Dewey submits that both of these elements - mutual interests and avenues for social readjustment - are characteristic of a democratic society, and he contends: "Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder."[16] As in the case of morality, education becomes intertwined with democracy: neither can exist without the other and they feed

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[15] Ibid., pp. 180-81.

[16] Dewey, Democracy, pp. 97, 100, 115.

upon and support each other.

In Democracy, Dewey discusses educational aims, and, in many respects, these are similar to the ends-in-view which figure so prominently in his moral theory. Again, the emphasis is upon anticipated consequences, and Dewey views an educational aim as a "foreseen end" which gives direction to activities. Like an end-in-view, this aim functions to uncover available means, to suggest the proper sequence of means, and to make possible the choice of alternatives. In addition, according to Dewey, the educational aim should be the "outgrowth of existing conditions," flexible enough to meet changing circumstances, and neither too general nor too ultimate. As in the case of ends-in-view, Dewey conceives of educational aims as being both ends and means, and he declares: "Every means is a temporary end until we have attained it. Every end becomes a means of carrying activity further as soon as it is achieved."[17]

Dewey submits: "The net conclusion is that acting with an aim is all one with acting intelligently." This conclusion applies, also, to his moral theory, and, in the case of both education and morality, reflection upon experience plays a major role. In both, a situation arises which demands a solution, and reflection upon past experiences and

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[17]Ibid., pp. 119-122, 127, 124.

their consequences affords insight into possible solutions to the present problem. By the process of reasoning, a solution is selected and applied, and its validity is determined by its consequences.[18]

Dewey conceives of this entire procedure as thinking, and, as with morality, this constitutes a central element in his conception of education. He refers to thinking as "the method of intelligent learning, of learning that employs and rewards mind" and regards it as being "the method of an educative experience." He states, concerning educational methods: "The essentials of method are therefore identical with the essentials of reflection." Pupils must be directed to reflect intelligently upon problems arising out of their actual experiences, to propose intelligent solutions to these problems, and to test these solutions in the light of their consequences.[19]

Just as human experience, for Dewey, is the subject matter of morality, so must it constitute the subject matter of education. In Democracy, he states: "The subject matter of education consists primarily of the meanings which supply content to existing social life." Dewey is not contending that personal experiences form the only legitimate subject

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[18]Ibid., pp. 120, 176-77.

[19]Ibid., pp. 180, 192.

matter for education. He views geography and history, for example, as being valuable subjects for the enlargement of the significance of direct personal experience. In addition, Dewey considers science as constituting a crucial part of the school curriculum. He describes his conception of science as a subject as follows:

> By science is meant, as already stated, that knowledge which is the outcome of methods of observation, reflection, and testing which are deliberately adopted to secure a settled, assured subject matter. It involves an intelligent and persistent endeavor to revise current beliefs so as to weed out what is erroneous, to add to their accuracy, and, above all, to give them such shape that the dependencies of the various facts upon one another may be as obvious as possible.[20]

As science, for Dewey, represents the source of morality, in the sense that it affords grounds for making valid moral judgments, so it underlies the educational process. He states:

> Science represents the fruition of the cognitive factors in experience. Instead of contenting itself with a mere statement of what commends itself to personal or customary experience, it aims at a statement which will reveal the sources, grounds, and consequences of a belief.

Dewey's contention is that, while experience is not primarily cognitive, the measure of its value involves cognition to the degree that perceived relationships and continuities lend it meaning. Education, for Dewey, implies meaningful experience, and he emphasizes the role of science as follows:

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[20]Ibid., pp. 226, 255-56.

> The function which science has to perform in the curriculum is that which it has performed for the race: emancipation from local and temporary incidents of experience, and the opening of intellectual vistas unobscured by the accidents of personal habit and predilection.[21]

It is the scientific spirit which Dewey is most concerned to introduce into the school curriculum. It forms the basis for his experimentalism and for the ethical aspects of this position, and it underlies his entire educational philosophy. Education derives from raw experience, but the latter must be reconstructed and reflected upon in order for its meaning to be extracted. Dewey suggests that "doing may be directed so as to take up into its own content all which thought suggests, and so as to result in securely tested knowledge." Like morality, education is essentially practical in nature, but the experience which is its source can be transformed and infused with cognition. Dewey asserts: "Experience then ceases to be empirical and becomes experimental. Reason ceases to be a remote and ideal faculty, and signifies all the resources by which activity is made fruitful in meaning."[22]

Dewey considers philosophy to be significant for education, as for morality, to the extent that it represents "an idea of what is possible, not a record of accomplished fact." He perceives its function as being that of "defining

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[21] Ibid., pp. 269-70.

[22] Ibid., p. 323.

difficulties and suggesting methods for dealing with them" rather than of furnishing solutions to problems. Philosophy must never be divorced from the social arena but must always be closely tied to "life-situations." Given this conception of the function of philosophy, Dewey can suggest: "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." In the following passage, Dewey further explicates this union of philosophy and education:

> 'Philosophy of education' is not an external application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice having a radically different origin and purpose: it is only an explicit formulation of the problems of the formation of right mental and moral habitudes in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life. The most penetrating definition of philosophy which can be given is, then, that it is the theory of education in its most general phases.[23]

In some respects, Dewey views education and morality as being synonomous. They both involve knowledge "connected with the system of impulses and habits" and both entail the same qualities of mind. Regarding those which are intrinsic to education, Dewey posits: "Open-mindedness, singlemindedness, sincerity, breadth of outlook, thoroughness, assumption of responsibility for developing the consequences of ideas which are accepted, are moral traits." Dewey, in addition, views both education and morality as being essentially social

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[23] Ibid., pp. 381, 383, 386.

and, hence, regards their aims and values as being identical. In Democracy, Dewey emphasizes that the qualities necessary for the formation of productive members of society are vital to both education and to morality, and he concludes:

> Discipline, culture, social efficiency, personal refinement, improvement of character are but phases of the growth of capacity nobly to share in such a balanced experience. And education is not a mere means to such a life. Education is such a life. To maintain capacity for such education is the essence of morals.[24]

It is Dewey's contention that there is a sense in which one can live "educationally" and that maintaining the capacity for this kind of living forms the very essence of morality. Education, for Dewey, implies a special kind of relationship between individuals and their societies, and morality involves a commitment to keep this relationship viable. It is intelligence which, for Dewey, is the essential component of both education and morality. Both necessitate the presence of open-mindedness and other characteristics of the genuinely scientific attitude in order to intelligently solve the practical problems which give rise to both.

Dewey elaborates upon the obligations which are inherent in his philosophy of education in an address which he delivered in Boston in 1933. In this address, entitled "The Supreme Intellectual Obligation," he stresses the importance to education of instilling in students the essential characteris-

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[24]Ibid., pp. 413-15, 417.

tics of the scientific attitude. He submits that the field of education must be incorporated into the realm of science in a manner which is more meaningful than the mere incorporation of science courses into school curricula. He defines his position as follows:

> But I do mean that the responsibility of science cannot be fulfilled by educational methods that are chiefly concerned with the self-perpetuation of specialized science to the neglect of influencing the much larger number to adopt into the very make-up of their minds those attitudes of open-mindedness, intellectual integrity, observation and interest in testing their opinions and beliefs that are characteristic of the scientific attitude.[25]

The highest intellectual obligation of both educators and schools, according to Dewey, is that of permeating every learning situation with the scientific spirit. He declares, regarding the characteristics mentioned above: "Every course in every subject should have as its chief end the cultivation of these attitudes of mind." The acquisition of information must be viewed as a means of operating scientifically, rather than as an end in itself. Dewey defines a scientific inquirer as "above all else a continuing and persistent learner" and submits that the whole spectrum of learners - from those in elementary education to adults - must be imbued with the scientific attitude. This represents the "supreme intellectual obligation," according

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[25]John Dewey, "The Supreme Intellectual Obligation," in Education Today, ed. by Ratner, pp. 284-85.

to Dewey, and, as such, is inherently moral. He avers: "But every obligation is moral, and in its ultimate consequences social."[26]

In a small treatise upon education, entitled Experience And Education and published in 1938, Dewey attempts to clarify some aspects of his educational philosophy and, in particular, his conception of the relationship between education and experience. He emphasizes the point that education must be grounded in experience but is careful to point out that the quality of experience determines the extent to which it can be considered to be educational. It is Dewey's contention that many experiences - including much of what has taken place in "traditional" classrooms - have to be regarded as being "mis-educative." A key element in educational experience, according to Dewey, is its promotion of - and influence upon - future desirable experiences, and he observes: "Hence, the central problem of an education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences."[27]

This emphasis upon the continuity of experience in Education leads inevitably to the concept of growth, and Dewey reiterates his position that this characteristic is

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[26]Ibid., pp. 285-87, 284.

[27]John Dewey, Experience And Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), pp. 13-17.

essential to education. He asserts that "when and only when development in a particular line conduces to continuing growth does it answer to the criterion of education as growing." As in the case of morality, Dewey considers this potential for growth to be dependent upon the freeing of human intelligence from dogmatic thinking. He states: "The only freedom that is of enduring importance is freedom of intelligence, that is to say, freedom of observation and of judgment exercised in behalf of purposes that are intrinsically worth while."[28]

Only as "progressive" schools emphasize intelligent activity, rather than activity per se, does Dewey support them as opposed to traditional ones. He contends that the intelligence which constitutes true freedom must be developed and that this development constitutes the major task of educators. Dewey exhibits faith in the capacity of people to lead intelligent lives, and he declares, regarding arguments to the contrary:

> This view would be more credible if any systematic effort, beginning with early education and carried on through the continuous study and learning of the young, had ever been undertaken with a view to making the method of intelligence, exemplified in science, supreme in education. There is nothing in the inherent nature of habit that prevents intelligent method from becoming itself habitual; and there is nothing in the nature of emotion to prevent the development of intense emotional allegiance to the method.[29]

In the above passage, Dewey is advancing a persuasive argument:

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[28] Ibid., pp. 29, 69.

[29] Ibid., pp. 81, 84, 100-01.

if people are prone to acting out of habit, they can be taught to habitually act intelligently, and if they are creatures of emotion, what is to preclude them from emotionally embracing intelligence?

In Education, Dewey emphasizes the importance of the "progressive organization of knowledge." He argues that it is false to conclude that an education based upon experience spurns the notion of organization, and he avers: "No experience is educative that does not tend both to knowledge of more facts and entertaining of more ideas and to a better, a more orderly, arrangement of them." Yet, Dewey inevitably returns to the objective which forms the heart of his philosophical position, and he insists that the intellectual organization which he regards as being so vital to education "is not an end in itself but is the means by which social relations, distinctively human ties and bonds, may be understood and more intelligently ordered."[30] Intelligence remains the primary tool whereby the true objective of education, as of morality, can be realized: the progressive improvement of social relationships.

The selection of proper means to realize specific ends is both an implicit and expressed principle of Dewey's educational philosophy. It follows naturally from his conception of education as intelligent organization of experience for the

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[30]Ibid., pp. 101-03.

purpose of guiding future experience. In addition, he expresses the importance of the correct utilization of activities in the schools and states: "Intelligent activity is distinguished from aimless activity by the fact that it involves selection of means - analysis - out of the variety of conditions that are present, and their arrangement - synthesis - to reach an intended aim or purpose." Dewey puts primary emphasis upon attachment to the scientific method as the educational ideal, and he considers it to be "the only authentic means at our command for getting at the significance of our everyday experiences of the world in which we live." This confidence in the scientific method forms the backbone of Dewey's educational philosophy, and he expresses faith in the "potentialities of education when it is treated as intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience."[31]

Dewey's view regarding the relationship between education and the social order should not be surprising, since it stems from his general emphasis upon the making of intelligent choices. It is Dewey's contention that, regardless of what people think the schools' role ought to be, they will influence the social order in some way. His concern is with the way in which they will do this, and he reasons:

> But they can exercise such influence in different ways and to different ends, and the important thing

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[31] Ibid., pp. 105-06, 108, 111, 114.

> is to become conscious of these different ways and ends, so that an intelligent choice may be made, and so that if opposed choices are made, the further conflict may at least be carried on with understanding of what is at stake, and not in the dark.[32]

Dewey is very willing to concede that, while schools reflect the social order, they also have a significant role to play in the production of social change. He opts for making them the allies of "the newer scientific, technological, and cultural forces that are producing change in the old order." Dewey's perception of the role of the schools is compatible with his all-encompassing emphasis upon growth, and he asserts:

> The problem will be to develop the insight and understanding that will enable the youth who go forth from the schools to take part in the great work of construction and organization that will have to be done, and to equip them with the attitudes and habits of action that will make their understanding and insight practically effective.[33]

Dewey admits that, because he is not advocating that the schools plunge headlong into the political and economic fray, his position is sometimes considered to be passive and timid. He considers this attitude to be representative of a lack of faith in education and declares:

> It assumes that education as education has nothing or next to nothing to contribute; that formation of understanding and disposition counts for nothing; that only immediate overt action counts and that it can count equally whether or not it has been modified by education.[34]

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[32]John Dewey, "Education and Social Change," in Intelligence, ed. by Ratner, p. 694.

[33]Ibid., pp. 694-95.

[34]Ibid., p. 696.

Dewey is arguing that education, as he conceives it, can be a powerful agent in effecting social change; indeed, he infers that social action becomes more meaningful to the extent that it has evolved, through the educational process, into intelligent activity.

Dewey emphasizes that he is not in sympathy with those educators who advocate the adoption of the class concept as the intellectual and practical guide for the schools. In the first place, Dewey contends that the experimental method precludes the acceptance of concepts like class and class war as dogmatic guides to thinking and practice. In the second place, he questions what the educator's role should be in the light of actual class conflict. Again, he reveals his underlying faith in the efficacy of education to effect evolutionary social change as he poses questions like the following:

> Does education have anything to do with development of the attitudes and convictions that influence the manner of the transition? Putting the question in an extreme form, is it the task of educators, because of acceptance of the class concept, to intensify a consciousness of class division and class war, or is it to help determine the kind of social awareness that is to exist so that the transformation may be accomplished, as far as possible, by educational means instead of by conflict?[35]

Dewey's emphasis upon a social - rather than a class - point of view is compatible with his democratic ideal. He considers

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[35]John Dewey, "Educators and the Class Struggle," in Intelligence, ed. by Ratner, pp. 697-700.

the former to be a more inclusive frame of reference than the latter and is convinced that it has the potential to democratically open the door to critical thinking and, very likely, to social change.

The educational implications of Dewey's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality are clear; indeed, they are intrinsically bound up with his inclusive philosophical position. The beliefs and dogmas associated with traditional religions have no place in Dewey's educational philosophy, just as they are incompatible with his ethical theory. For Dewey, both education and morality arise out of human experience, and it serves as the ideal for both. Both are inherently social in nature and imply a constant and steady growth toward the intelligent solving of social problems and the development of social relationships. Religious ideals are compatible with both, serving to give guidance to the everyday task of selecting suitable means for specific ends.

Dewey views the scientific spirit, which plays a major role in both his educational and his moral theories, as being itself inherently moral in that it paves the way for future education. Dewey's faith in human intelligence is evident in both his educational philosophy and in his moral theory: its development will result in a greater degree of agreement concerning conflicts and, hence, will aid in lessening the

need for drastic measures in the reconstruction of society. To a great extent, Dewey's general philosophical position does rest upon his faith in the efficacy of education to develop intelligent habits in man. Given this faith, neither education nor morality requires reliance upon dogma and unquestioned premises for its authority.

The Educational Implications of Émile Durkheim's Position

The educational implications of Émile Durkheim's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality flow naturally from that position. If the religious elements can be extracted from morality and a secular, rationalized morality developed, the teaching of religious dogmas can have no legitimate place in education. Although Durkheim is somewhat hesitant to predict the complete disappearance of religion, the implication is that, even in the event that it survives as a supplement to science, it can not justifiably be retained as a subject in the school curriculum. The implication of Durkheim's position is that, while education and morality are closely related phenomena, religion will continue to constitute a progressively decreasing element of both.

In Moral Education: A Study In The Theory And Application Of The Sociology Of Education, Durkheim discusses the nature of a moral education. In this work, comprised

of lectures which Durkheim used in the teaching of a course on moral education, he attempts to outline methods whereby the elements of morality which he has identified can be developed in children. The relativism which is characteristic of Durkheim's moral theory is evident, also, in his views regarding education. After emphasizing the legitimacy - and the benefits - of regarding a given society as the source and object of morality, he submits:

> From this point of view, the way of developing the child morally is not to repeat to him, with however much emotion and conviction, a certain number of very general maxims valid eternally and everywhere; but to make him understand his country and his times, to make him feel his responsibilities, to initiate him into life and thus to prepare him to take his part in the collective tasks awaiting him.[36]

For Durkheim, education consists in the development of morality, and, while the essential elements of the latter are universal, their application to given societies is not.

In Moral Education, Durkheim is chiefly concerned with education as it takes place in public schools, considering these to be the "flywheel of national education." He views the school, rather than the family, as the chief agent of moral development in children, contending that only the former can properly train them according to societal demands.[37] In short, Durkheim is concerned mainly with proposing methods

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[36]Durkheim, Moral Education, pp. 123-24.

[37]Ibid., pp. 18-19, 79.

for developing a secular morality in children who attend public schools.

Although Durkheim regards education, as he does morality, as a genuine social reality, he stresses, in Moral Education, the necessity of utilizing psychological insights in the formulation of educational theories. He contends that the nature of children must be observed and taken into consideration so as to enable the natural predispositions of the young to energize and to realize more fully-developed moral qualities. Durkheim asserts that "the mental states that education must arouse in the child exist only as very general conditions, quite remote from the specific form that they are required to take."[38]

In the case of discipline, for example, which is the first element of morality identified by Durkheim, he suggests that, although some ingredients of discipline are foreign to children, this element of morality can be developed in them. This is possible, according to Durkheim, because they possess two basic predispositions: a tendency to act out of habit and suggestibility. The first tendency can be directed and developed so as to nurture the element of regularity, which Durkheim considers to be an essential component of discipline. The second predisposition can be utilized to foster a regard

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[38]Ibid., pp. 129-30.

for authority, the other principal ingredient of discipline. For Durkheim, school discipline represents more than a "superficial peace": it is, in fact, the "morality of the classroom."[39]

Education, in Durkheim's view, involves acquainting students with rules. Furthermore, it entails giving them a sense of the moral authority inherent in the rules, and this, according to Durkheim, represents one of the major functions of the teacher. The teacher must radiate authority and present rules as emanating from a moral power superior to himself. In this way, respect for legality is fostered, and it is strengthened by the effective use of punishments and rewards. It is Durkheim's contention that the primary purpose of punishment is to express disapproval of the breaking of a rule and to demonstrate the teacher's faith in the rule. Punishment, in short, acts as a moral agent, since the breaking of a rule is a "moral violation" which, if ignored, will lead to demoralization. Rewards, according to Durkheim, should be used more to stimulate intellectual activity than to express moral merit.[40]

In Moral Education, Durkheim also emphasizes the importance of the school in the inculcation of the second

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[39] Ibid., pp. 131, 134, 143, 148.

[40] Ibid., pp. 154-56, 166-67.

element of morality: the attachment to social groups. Again, Durkheim suggests that children possess a predisposition which makes it possible for this quality to be developed: the capacity for altruistic sentiments. Although he concedes that children have selfish tendencies, his contention is that this propensity for pleasure can be directed to suitable objects and, hence, become altruistic in nature. These "suitable objects," according to Durkheim, consist of social groups and, in particular, the nation. The development of this capacity for feelings of attachment to social groups becomes a primary purpose of education, and, in Moral Education, Durkheim implies that it can be considered to be the final goal of education. Children must be taught to love the collective life. In so doing, their horizons will be broadened, their egotistical tendencies redirected, and their moral natures developed. In short, the children will be becoming educated.[41]

It is Durkheim's contention that, especially in a country like France where many of the intermediate groups have diminished, the school takes on added significance as the inculcator of collective attachments. Since these, in Durkheim's view, serve as the anchor of morality, it is necessary that collective sentiments become habitual. He

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[41] Ibid., pp. 207, 213-14, 217, 228-29.

submits: "To appreciate social life to the point where one cannot do without it, one must have developed the habit of acting and thinking in common." The school must do this effectively and, in so doing, serve as far more than an institution for the training of the intellect. It must instill in children both the taste - and the need - for associative pleasures, and, in Durkheim's view, the classroom must exude a collective life.[42]

Durkheim views the teacher's role in this task as being crucial and declares: "In a word, he must lie in wait for everything that causes the children of a given class to sense their unity in a common enterprise." This includes "a discrete and deliberate use of collective punishments and rewards," since the members of a group must feel responsible for the morality of each other. According to Durkheim, this also entails instilling in the members of a given class the conviction that the value of each is a function of the worth of the collective and that individual actions represent both causes and consequences. In essence, Durkheim views the teacher as being responsible for the moral unity of the classroom.[43]

Finally, in Moral Education, Durkheim stresses the

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[42] Ibid., pp. 232-33, 235, 239-41.

[43] Ibid., pp. 242, 244-45, 248.

importance of developing the element of autonomy in students. This third component of morality, which he conceives of as consisting of knowledge concerning the rationale lying behind societal rules, is of particular significance in a system of secular moral education; indeed, it distinguishes such a system from one which is closely bound to religion and, hence, places little emphasis upon understanding the reasons for rules. Durkheim submits that morality "has its roots in intelligence," and his contention is that students have to be exposed to "social reality" in order to develop this intelligence. This brings Durkheim back to his conception of society as a sui generis reality: as the only object which can possibly constitute the goal of morality and the knowledge of which constitutes true autonomy.[44]

Since, in Durkheim's view, society, although transcendent, still exists in the natural realm, the natural sciences must form an important part of the school curriculum. They can be utilized to convey the complexity of reality, to demonstrate the significance of the experimental method, and to provide a greater understanding of the natural world, of which societies are a part. Durkheim views science, in its broad sense, as being essentially a moral agent and as being potentially valuable in the formation of moral character. Since a secular

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[44] Ibid., pp. 249, 256-57.

morality is oriented toward the temporal world instead of toward a transcendent realm, the physical and biological sciences can aid in understanding the human realm. Durkheim points out that an important aspect of this understanding includes a realization of both the limits and the progress of science. It is his contention that anything which serves to get people outside of themselves is aiding in the development of habits which form the root of morality. He views science as being crucial in this regard: it is concerned with what is and thus can contribute to an understanding of the social reality.[45]

Durkheim considers art and literature to be somewhat dubious contributors in this regard, since they tend to detach man from reality. In contrast, he regards the teaching of history to be extremely useful. Students can benefit from an acquaintance with historical development and its demonstration of the influence which societies have exerted, and Durkheim states his position as follows:

> Society is not the work of the individuals that compose it at a given stage of history, nor is it a given place. It is a complex of ideas and sentiments, of ways of seeing and of feeling, a certain intellectual and moral framework distinctive of the entire group. Society is above all a consciousness of the whole. It is, therefore, this collective consciousness that we must instill in the child.[46]

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[45] Ibid., pp. 261-66, 268, 274.

[46] Ibid., pp. 267, 271, 275-77.

In Moral Education, Durkheim is concerned specifically with outlining a program of moral education which would be suitable for France at that particular time. He observes that French morality has become excessively individualistic and that the spirit of association has become weakened. It is Durkheim's belief that faith in a "common ideal" is needed, and he considers the development of the collective spirit - particularly that associated with attachment to the nation - to represent a worthy goal of the educational program. He sums up his hopes for his program as follows:

> New ideas of justice and solidarity are now developing and, sooner or later, will prompt the establishment of appropriate institutions. Today the most pressing goal of moral education is to work to unravel such notions, still confused and sometimes unconscious; to bring children to cherish them without eliciting a sense of resentment against ideas and practices bequeathed to us by the past, which are the source of our current predicament. Above all, we have to develop a spirit; and this we have to prepare in the child.[47]

Durkheim regards education as being, essentially, a preparation for the duties and responsibilities of collective life. His conception of the development of autonomy in students does not seem to include the notion of the free exercise of their intelligence. Rather, it partakes more of the character of learning explanations for the existence of certain societal rules. Lukes interprets Durkheim's conception of autonomy as amounting to the notion that children

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[47] Ibid., pp. 102-03.

must be "taught about morality."[48]

A. K. C. Ottaway agrees that Durkheim's conception of autonomy does not involve the notion of freedom in any meaningful sense. In an article, entitled "The Educational Sociology of Émile Durkheim," Ottaway inquires: "Is the only possible autonomy of the will that Durkheim allows nothing but a free submission on the part of the individual reason to the laws of society?" After noting Durkheim's assertion that freedom of the will results from consciousness regarding the reasons for rules of conduct, Ottaway charges: "But only to have explained to one the rules which must in any case be followed, is not to allow one any freedom of choice." It is Ottaway's contention that Durkheim did not follow up his allusions to the emergence of individual reason which were evident in The Division Of Labor In Society. Rather, according to Ottaway, Durkheim began to emphasize the moral force inherent in a transcendent, "real" society whose authority could scarcely be questioned. This interpreter of Durkheim's educational position asks: "So again we can ask how far, according to Durkheim, has the individual a power of choice?"[49]

It is evident that Durkheim's sociological position has

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[48]Lukes, Durkheim, p. 117.

[49]A. K. C. Ottaway, "The Educational Sociology of Émile Durkheim," British Journal of Sociology, VI (September, 1955), 220.

a significant bearing upon his educational theory, as it has upon his moral theory. Lukes states: "Both education and morality, Durkheim maintained, are social phenomena: both are relative to the needs and social structures of particular societies and both are open to systematic observation."[50] It is true that Durkheim can justify many aspects of his educational position on the grounds that they are implied in his conception of society as a _sui generis_ reality. For example, to Ottaway's charge that his conception of autonomy involves no genuine personal freedom, Durkheim could counter with his claim that, only to the extent that individuals are permeated with the transcendent values of a given society, are they given the freedom to develop fully as human beings.

In the lectures which comprise _Education and Sociology_, Durkheim elaborates upon - and adds to - some of the aspects of his educational position which are dealt with in _Moral Education_. In one of the lectures in _Education_, for example, he is concerned with formulating a precise definition of the term "education." He contends that this is possible since, as in the case of morality, education is an observable reality. After analyzing various definitions of education, Durkheim finds them all deficient and explains their deficiency as

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[50]Lukes, _Durkheim_, p. 111.

follows: "They assume that there is an ideal, perfect education, which applies to all men indiscriminately; and it is this education, universal and unique, that the theorist tries to define." Durkheim submits that history confirms no such assumption and avers: "Education has varied infinitely in time and place."[51]

After citing numerous examples of these variations, Durkheim reasons:

> If one begins by asking, thus, what an ideal education must be, abstracted from conditions of time and place, it is to admit implicitly that a system of education has no reality in itself. One does not see in education a collection of practices and institutions that have been organized slowly in the course of time, which are comparable with all the other social institutions and which express them, and which, therefore, can no more be changed at will than the structure of the society itself.

It becomes evident that, in attempting to arrive at a formal definition of education, Durkheim is using a procedure similar to that which he used in defining both religion and morality. This procedure involves observing the numerous practices which are associated with a given term and then extracting from them common characteristics. In this way, Durkheim believes that he is defining a reality rather than merely a mental construct. He proposes, regarding the task of defining the term "education": "To define education we must, then, consider educational systems, present and past,

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[51]Émile Durkheim, Education and Sociology, trans. and with an introd. by Sherwood D. Fox, foreword by Talcott Parsons (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), p. 64.

put them together, and abstract the characteristics which are common to them."[52]

Durkheim contends that two primary elements are to be found in all systems of education, and he identifies these as being "a generation of adults and one of youth, in interaction, and an influence exercised by the first on the second." He elaborates upon the nature of this influence and suggests that, up to a certain point, the "ideal of man," which each society formulates, applies to all of its citizens. Beyond this point, however, education becomes differentiated according to the various subgroups contained in the society. Durkheim's educational relativism exists upon two levels: that of various societies at given stages of development and that of a given society consisting of various milieus. Concerning the first aspect of relativism, Durkheim asserts: "In fact, however, each society, considered at a given stage of development, has a system of education which exercises an irresistible influence on individuals." He states, regarding the two-dimensional character of a given societal ideal: "It is this ideal, at the same time one and various, that is the focus of education."[53]

Durkheim views education as the perpetuation of a certain

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[52]Ibid., pp. 64-65, 67.

[53]Ibid., pp. 67, 65, 70.

degree of homogeneity and of heterogeneity among the members of a society. The degree to which each of these is fostered depends upon the needs of a given society, and Durkheim makes clear his view of the function of education in the following statement: "Education is, then, only the means by which society prepares, within the children, the essential conditions of its very existence." Finally, Durkheim is able to offer a precise definition of the reality which is education:

> Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to arouse and to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined.[54]

Durkheim concedes that, in his view, education consists of "a methodical socialization of the young generation." In Education, he again refers to the two beings which exist in man: the individual personality and the collective influence. He suggests that, as the needs of a given society develop or change, its youth must be fashioned according to these needs. Durkheim uses, as an example, the need of a particular society for science and its methods and its right, hence, to imbue its members with the scientific spirit. Durkheim realizes that this position leaves him vulnerable to the charge of submitting individuals to an "insupportable tyranny." Again, he uses the transcendent nature of society to counter this

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[54] Ibid., pp. 70-71.

charge and posits, regarding the individual members of a society:

> But in reality they are themselves interested in this submission; for the new being that collective influence, through education, thus builds up in each of us, represents what is best in us. Man is man, in fact, only because he lives in society.[55]

Durkheim makes no apologies for advocating the submission of individuals to society. It is his contention that the educational needs of a society vary in accordance with its moral needs and that man's compliance with these needs is advantageous both to him and to the society. He points out that society is responsible for man's moral and intellectual progress and for his capacity to conceptualize through the medium of language. Regarding these achievements, Durkheim observes: "One sees, through these few examples, to what man would be reduced if there were withdrawn from him all that he has derived from society: he would fall to the level of an animal." Society is not repressive, in Durkheim's view: it is progressive and broadening. The wisdom of generations can be preserved, and this accumulation only makes men more human. Durkheim submits that, indeed, society and the individual "imply each other," and he reasons:

> The individual, in willing society, wills himself. The influence that it exerts on him, notably through education, does not at all have as its object and its

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[55] Ibid., pp. 71-72, 74-76.

> effect to repress him, to diminish him, to denature him, but, on the contrary, to make him grow and to make of him a truly human being.[56]

Since, in Durkheim's view, education is oriented so heavily toward the fulfillment of social needs, it is not surprising that he considers the role of the state in education to be justifiably significant. He observes: "If, as we have tried to establish, education has a collective function above all, if its object is to adapt the child to the social milieu in which he is destined to live, it is impossible that society should be uninterested in such a procedure." It is the purpose of education to instill certain attitudes and principles in children, and it is the purpose of the state to determine, to a large extent, the nature of these sentiments. While Durkheim concedes that divergences will exist regarding the specific nature of these sentiments, he submits that there will be agreement regarding basic principles. He explicates his position as follows:

> But in spite of all the differences of opinion, there are at present, at the basis of our civilization, a certain number of principles which, implicitly or explicitly, are common to all, that few indeed, in any case, dare to deny overtly and openly: respect for reason, for science, for ideas and sentiments which are at the base of democratic morality.[57]

It is the duty of the state to clarify these principles and to direct the schools in their attempts to inculcate them.

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[56] Ibid., pp. 76-78.

[57] Ibid., pp. 79-81.

Durkheim displays a considerable degree of faith in the efficacy of education to accomplish the goals which he has set for it. Alluding to the existence of predispositions in children, a topic which is dealt with in Moral Education, Durkheim asserts:

> Between the vague potentialities which constitute man at the moment of birth and the well-defined character that he must become in order to play a useful role in society, the distance is, then, considerable. It is this distance that education has to make the child travel.

Given a child's potentialities and a teacher's influence, one has the right to expect much from education, provided that the methodology of the latter is appropriate. Durkheim describes an appropriate methodology as follows:

> But when education is patient and continuous, when it does not look for immediate and obvious successes, but proceeds slowly in a well-defined direction, without letting itself be diverted by external incidents and adventitious circumstances, it has at its disposal all the means necessary to affect minds profoundly.[58]

As with morality, Durkheim views education as being "essentially a matter of authority." He states, in fact, that "moral authority is the dominant quality of the educator" and refers to the teacher as "the interpreter of the great moral ideas of his time and of his country." It is this authority of the teacher which must be utilized to instill into children the moral force of society, but this can only

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[58]Ibid., pp. 82, 84-86.

be accomplished if the teacher, himself, recognizes that he is only an agent of society. Given this recognition, Durkheim makes the following claim:

> Into an authority which flows from such an impersonal source there could enter no pride, no vanity, no pedantry. It is made up entirely of the respect which he has for his functions and, if one may say so, for his office. It is this respect which, through word and gesture, passes from him to the child.[59]

Throughout his educational writings, Durkheim makes it clear that he views education as an empirical reality. Although its purpose is to serve a transcendent society, education, itself, consists of observable systems of practices and activities. In Education, Durkheim makes this position explicit:

> Indeed, education, as practiced in a given society and considered at a given moment of its evolution, is a totality of practices, of ways of doing things, of customs which constitute perfectly defined facts and which have the same reality as other social facts.[60]

Because Durkheim views education in this fashion, he is convinced that a science of education could be developed. He contends that education could serve as the object of a discipline which would rank with other scientific disciplines, since it would exhibit "all the characteristics of a science." Durkheim suggests, for example, that, by means of the comparison

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[59] Ibid., pp. 87-89.

[60] Ibid., p. 94.

of educational systems, similarities and differences could be calculated and "generic types of education" established. This formulation of the types of education would lead to other scientific problems, and Durkheim describes them thus:

> Once the types were established, we would have to explain them, that is to say, to seek out the conditions on which the characteristic traits of each of them depended, and how they have emerged from one another.

In so doing, according to Durkheim, one could "obtain the laws which govern the evolution of systems of education," and he ventures to submit: "One would be able to perceive, then, both how education developed and what the causes are which have determined this development and which account for it."[61]

Durkheim is, in effect, calling for a statistical approach to the problem of the causation of educational systems and argues that this approach could be used, also, to determine how specific institutions and methods function. These kinds of problems, in Durkheim's view, contribute toward the consideration of education as a legitimate object of scientific inquiry, and he posits:

> Here, then, are two groups of problems the purely scientific character of which cannot be disputed. One group relates to the genesis, the other to the functioning, of systems of education. In all these researches it is a matter simply either of describing present or past phenomena, or of inquiring into their causes, or of determining their

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[61] Ibid., pp. 94, 96-98.

> effects. They constitute a science; this is what is, or rather, this is what would be, the science of education.[62]

Durkheim's emphasis upon education as an observable phenomenon and his hopes for a science based upon it do not preclude his concern with the future of educational systems and with what should be: with what Durkheim refers to as pedagogical theories. Regarding these, Durkheim states:

> Their objective is not to describe or to explain what is or what has been, but to determine what should be. They are oriented neither to the present nor to the past, but to the future. They do not propose to express existing reality as given, but to lay down precepts for conduct. They do not tell us this is what exists and what is the reason why, but tell us this is what must be done.

Durkheim regards pedagogy as consisting of reflections upon educational systems with the aim of giving direction to educators. Although he concedes that the science of education has yet to be developed and that both sociology and psychology fall short of being fully developed, he contends that pedagogy must be practiced and reasons as follows:

> No doubt, we do not have at our disposal all the elements that would be desirable for resolving the problem; but that is no reason for not seeking to resolve it - because it must be resolved. We can only do our best, collect as many instructive facts as we can, interpret them as methodically as we can, in order to reduce to a minimum the chances of error.[63]

It is Durkheim's contention that this kind of reflection

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[62] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

[63] Ibid., pp. 99, 102-04.

is necessary in order to keep educational systems flexible and open to change. He asserts: "Now, the only way to prevent education from falling under the yoke of habit and from degenerating into mechanical and immutable automatism is to keep it constantly adaptable by reflection." Durkheim suggests that pedagogues must utilize both the history of education and the history of pedagogical doctrines in the fulfillment of their task, and he states: "The pedagogic culture, then, should have a largely historical basis." To this basis, according to Durkheim, must be added knowledge concerning proper methods for realizing ends, and this is contained in psychology. In the following passage, he discusses the importance of psychology for pedagogy:

> We shall know all the better how to shape the moral sensibility of the pupils in one or the other direction when we shall have more complete and more precise notions about the totality of phenomena that are called tendencies, habits, desires, emotions, etc., of the divers conditions on which they depend, and of the form that they take in the child.[64]

In spite of this concession to psychology, Durkheim does not hesitate to reveal his sociological bias. Social currents, in his view, can also transform educational methods, and he avers: "Whether it is a matter of the ends that it follows or the means that it employs, it is social needs that it answers; it is collective ideas and sentiments that it

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[64] Ibid., pp. 105-09, 111.

expresses." There can be no conflict with the individual, since "the best in us is of social origin." It is Durkheim's contention that, especially in times of societal unrest and change, the sociological perspective must be applied, and he concludes: "It is always to the study of society, then, that we must return; it is only there that the pedagogue can find the principles of his speculation."[65]

It is quite evident that, given Durkheim's views regarding the nature of education and of pedagogy, he cannot justifiably be regarded as an advocate of the reconstructive theory of education. In the article referred to in Chapter III, Brian Crittenden attempts to emphasize this point. After noting that advocates of the view that the schools should serve as active agents of social reconstruction have often appealed to Durkheim for support, Crittenden proceeds to demonstrate the illegitimacy of this position. He contends that Durkheim's pedagogical theory "is in large measure merely an application of his sociology of knowledge" and that one of the implications of the latter is the view of educational institutions as mere reflectors and agents of the social reality. Crittenden states Durkheim's position as follows: "Hence the limits within which deliberate change in the system of education is possible are set ultimately by the impersonal

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[65] Ibid., pp. 132-33.

social forces which shape the actual conditions of society at any given time."[66]

For Durkheim, reflection and reconstruction must take place within educational systems themselves, but the purpose of this revamping must be to bring the systems into a more harmonious relationship with the societies in which they exist. Crittenden, in the following passage, emphasizes this aspect of Durkheim's position:

> The criterion and goal of educational practice is the ideal of man as currently accepted by the society. The customs and ideas which determine this type are products of the common life of the society at its present moment of existence and throughout its history. It is the moral duty of educators to promote social cohesion and consensus by forming individuals according to this type and by communicating the ideas which underlie it.

Crittenden points out that, in Durkheim's view, the pedagogical reconstruction of education is not revolutionary in nature but, instead, contains elements of continuity. He sums up Durkheim's position as follows: "Thus Durkheim's educational theory attempts to be neither revolutionary (or utopian) nor conservative."[67] Crittenden senses - and rightly so - that, for Durkheim, it is of primary importance that education fulfil the function of serving the needs of society and that the task of pedagogues is to determine how best this can be accomplished.

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[66]Crittenden, "Durkheim: Sociology of Knowledge," 207, 209, 241.

[67]Ibid., 242-43.

In summary, the educational implications of Durkheim's position regarding the relationship between religion and morality are obvious. In societies which have embraced science and the scientific method, there can be no place in public schools for the inculcation of religious doctrines. The schools must focus upon inculcating a secular morality, the specific content of which is derived from the needs of a particular society. In societies which have not embraced science and in which religion is still a viable force, Durkheim's position would seem to entail a recognition of the legitimacy of the teaching of religious beliefs in schools, since these would constitute part of the collective conscience.

Durkheim regards education as an observable phenomenon and, hence, as a legitimate object for scientific inquiry. He regards pedagogy as reflection upon education and views its task as being essentially normative in character. It must determine when - and how - an educational system must be reconstructed to harmonize with societal conditions. Given Durkheim's sociology of knowledge, however, the schools cannot be considered as reconstructive agents of society: their values must be as identical as possible with those of society. Crittenden points out that, in one respect, Durkheim's sociology of knowledge constitutes an educational theory. He reasons:

> Since the collective conscience, as Durkheim understands it, determines what shall be accepted as true and good

> for a given society and hence is the ultimate bearer of moral authority, it is the source and goal of all acceptable pedagogy in the society. The school system is simply a specialized instrument of the collective conscience.[68]

Pedagogy, for Durkheim, is normative in the sense of determining what should be done in order to bring educational systems into positions of compatibility with societal needs. It is not, as Crittenden points out, normative in the sense of establishing the validity or otherwise of the needs themselves. Regarding this aspect of Durkheim's pedagogical position, Crittenden observes:

> Thus, in the final stage of his argument he must assume either that the values which are commonly held ought to be accepted in the society, or that the values which express the objective needs of society at a given time are those which ought to determine behavior in that society.[69]

Educators and pedagogues, in Durkheim's view, are not to be regarded as leaders in the determination of societal needs. Rather, their role is that of followers: they must follow the dictates of those whose business it is to determine, with the aid of science and sociology, the conditions and needs of given societies.

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[68] Ibid., 247.

[69] Ibid., 247-48.

CHAPTER V

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JOHN DEWEY'S AND ÉMILE DURKHEIM'S POSITIONS

Similarities

There are similarities in the positions of Dewey and Durkheim concerning the central problem of this study. Both use the term "morality" to refer to certain types of human conduct, and both suggest that the beliefs and rites associated with the various religions have affected human conduct. Both Dewey and Durkheim consider religions to have provided authority for traditional moral codes and, to some extent, to have positively influenced ethical standards.

Dewey and Durkheim both feel constrained to reject the objects of traditional religious beliefs upon epistemological grounds. Although neither accepts the belief in supernatural beings as constituting an adequate definition of religion, both make clear their position regarding the possibility of acquiring knowledge outside of the natural realm: there is no method whereby this may be accomplished. Knowledge, truth, and reality - if they exist in any meaningful sense - must be related to the natural world.

Both Dewey and Durkheim embrace science and the

scientific method, and neither is willing to concede that there is a special realm of reality where the scientific spirit does not apply. Although both acknowledge that certain religious beliefs have been held and that these beliefs, in some cases, have resulted in certain changes, they contend that the objects of these beliefs must be subjected to the same kind of scrutiny as natural objects. It is the contention of both Dewey and Durkheim that the objects of religious beliefs cannot survive this scrutiny. Dewey concludes that they are mere illusions, while Durkheim considers them to be symbols of society.

Both Dewey and Durkheim venture to make predictions regarding the future of religion. Dewey predicts its decline and eventual disappearance and looks forward with anticipation to this occurrence. Durkheim, too, envisions a progressively declining role and realm for religion. He is willing to concede that religion will - and probably should - survive in societies that have not been touched by science and even in scientifically-oriented societies where science cannot afford answers to urgent problems. He makes clear, however, his position regarding the authority of religion in these situations: it must always be willing to give ground to

science and to surrender territory to it, particularly in matters of a cognitive nature.

Both of these figures are concerned with establishing the temporal world as the basis upon which to formulate an authoritative morality. Dewey is concerned with the reconstruction of philosophy itself, insisting that it must direct its attention to the natural world and, without the aid of metaphysical or trans-temporal dogmas, aid man in the direction of his conduct. Durkheim, too, is confident that a secular morality can be established: that, stripped of its religious elements, it can retain full authority without necessitating the degree of blockage of free inquiry which religion demanded.

Dewey and Durkheim both advance positions regarding morality which can be termed "relativistic." Dewey is primarily concerned with the solving of practical, everyday problems in the lives of individuals and with offering guidance in the formulation of moral judgments concerning these problems. Moral judgments can be rational to the extent that they derive from man's intelligence as it has been applied to the particular aspects of a given situation. Durkheim, like Dewey, attempts to offer no set of moral injunctions, applicable to all people at all times. Instead, he posits the existence of systems of social morality, corresponding

to the needs and conditions of specific societies. As Crittenden observes: "Durkheim's relativism is perhaps most clearly seen in the sphere of moral ideals."[1] Morality is socioculturally relative: different societies demand different moralities, and each society sets up its own moral ideals.

Dewey and Durkheim both adhere to the notion that truth is variable. In "Pragmatism And Sociology," a series of lectures which Durkheim delivered during the period from 1913-14, he contends that "speculation and its value are variable" and concludes that "truth, too, is variable." Durkheim does express disagreement with some aspects of the pragmatic position in this regard. He observes, for example, that "the fact that things change does not necessarily mean that truth changes at the same time" and reasons:

> Truth, one could say, is enriched; but it does not actually change. It has certainly been enlarged and increased in the course of the development of history; but it is one thing to say that truth grows, and quite another to say that it varies in its very nature.[2]

In addition, Durkheim prefers a sociological explanation for the variability of truth to the pragmatic one. He contends that pragmatism places reason and truth upon the same plane as sensations and explains his preference for the sociological

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[1]Crittenden, "Durkheim: Sociology of Knowledge," 231.

[2]Émile Durkheim, "Pragmatism And Sociology," in Durkheim, ed. by Wolff, pp. 433, 431.

explanation as follows: "But just as it is better in seeking a notion of ideal morality to begin by studying moral facts, so does the proper method for determining an ideal notion of truth consist in observing the characteristics of recognized truths."[3] For Durkheim, that which is recognized as truth in a given society must be considered to be true.

Still, both Dewey and Durkheim are concerned with truth as it presents itself - and is accepted by - individuals.[4] Even though some aspects of their positions are different in this regard, an essential core of agreement exists: truth and its acquisition are individual concerns, and epistemological standards pertain to the individual. A strand of individual rationality runs through both Dewey's and Durkheim's positions: religions must be rejected and a rational morality accepted by individuals who are aware of the grounds for these decisions.

Similarities also exist in the manner in which Dewey and Durkheim view the relationship between the individual and society. Dewey tends to emphasize the making of individual moral decisions, even though he considers morality to be

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[3] Ibid., pp. 429-30, 435.

[4] Dewey discusses the notion of truth and experimental verification, for example, in Essays in Experimental Logic (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1917), pp. 231-41.

preeminently social. In essence, Dewey's assumption is that a rational, moral society will emerge from a mass of individuals who utilize their intelligence to form moral judgments. For Dewey, the truly moral self emerges only to the extent that individuals become socialized and base their decisions upon the foreseen social consequences of such. He views a democratic society as a moral necessity, since it nurtures socially-oriented, growing individuals.

Likewise, Durkheim emphasizes the social nature of morality. In his Legitimation Crisis, Jürgen Habermas notes that Durkheim "always conceived society as a moral reality." Habermas goes on to remark: "Classical sociology never doubted that subjects capable of speaking and acting could develop the unity of their person only in connection with identity-securing world-views and moral systems."[5]

Indeed, this is precisely Durkheim's position. In his view, man is human only to the extent that he is permeated with the increasingly rational, moral entity which is society. In Professional Ethics And Civic Morals, he stresses this point and states: "And indeed, man is man only because he lives in society." Only by submitting to society and, thereby,

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[5]Jürgen Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 117-18.

accepting the opportunities which it affords individuals for developing and realizing their true capacities, can man become the rational, moral creature envisioned by Durkheim. In Ethics, Durkheim is especially concerned with the State, and he declares that its main function is to "liberate the individual personalities."[6] In essence, Durkheim is contending that a moral existence is possible only to the degree that individuals are members of - and are permeated with - the social reality.

In a sense, however, Durkheim's position partakes of the concern with individual rationality which is so characteristic of Dewey's stance. Man becomes autonomous to the extent that he understands the reasons for specific societal rules, and Durkheim considers this condition to be the distinguishing mark of his secular morality. Society arises out of the personalities of individuals who, in turn, take on the rational, moral nature of this society. There is a sense in which society exists per se as the repository of morality; in another sense, a rational, moral society arises from individuals who, in addition to exhibiting the other distinguishing marks of morality, are aware of the rationale which forms the basis for societal rules. In Ethics, Durkheim

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[6]Emile Durkheim, Professional Ethics And Civic Morals, trans. by Cornelia Brookfield (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 60, 64, 62.

asserts: "To be autonomous means, for the human being, to understand the necessities he has to bow to and accept them with full knowledge of the facts."[7] The implication is that, as the number of autonomous individuals increases, the society as a whole becomes more rational and moral.

Finally, there are similarities in the educational implications of Dewey's and Durkheim's views regarding the relationship between religion and morality. Understandably enough, both agree that the teaching of religion has no legitimate place in a public school curriculum: that, by its very nature, it is incompatible with education. In societies enlightened by science, the objects of religious beliefs must be recognized for what they really are; to teach children otherwise is not to educate but to deceive. Both Dewey and Durkheim are convinced that a moral education is necessary and that it is possible to achieve it upon a purely secular basis.

Dewey and Durkheim both exhibit a considerable amount of faith in the efficacy of education to accomplish the goals which they set for it. Dewey is optimistic that, given the potentialities inherent in human nature, human experience can be utilized to develop certain dispositions and habits in the young. He suggests that, by utilizing proper educational

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[7] Ibid., p. 91.

methods, educators will be able to develop, in children, the intelligence which is needed for the solving of practical problems. Since the solving of these problems in the most intelligent fashion constitutes the heart of Dewey's moral theory, it is not surprising that he considers education and morality to be closely related. Both are grounded in experience, science, and human nature, and, for both, the only legitimate end is growth.

Durkheim, too, expects much of education. Given the predispositions which he believes exist in children, he is confident that they can be developed into the characteristics which he identifies as the essential ingredients of morality. The role of the teacher is crucial, as is the methodology utilized in the classroom; together with the predispositions existing in the young, education can fulfil the function which Durkheim envisions for it. This function is implied in his sociological position, and, in fact, Durkheim's whole educational philosophy arises naturally from this position. Society is a reality, and morality consists, in the main, of compliance with societal needs. The function of education is that of inculcating, in children, feelings of respect and obedience for the moral rules which embody those needs. Like Dewey, Durkheim considers education and morality to be closely intertwined: each implies the other, and, especially in a secular morality, knowledge of the reasons for specific

rules becomes of primary significance.

Another similarity can be detected in the educational positions of Dewey and Durkheim: in both, much emphasis is placed upon the importance of science in the school curriculum. Dewey insists that the scientific spirit must permeate the entire curriculum: that knowledge gained in all areas must result from the use of the methods which he advances. Science forms one of the bases of Dewey's educational philosophy, as it does his moral philosophy, in the sense that it provides the evidence upon which to solve practical problems and to form judgments.

Durkheim, also, insists upon the importance of science in the school curriculum. Although society, as he conceives it, is a transcendent force, it is a part of the temporal realm; consequently, the physical sciences can provide knowledge concerning this realm. In addition, they can aid in getting children to extend beyond themselves, a tendency which Durkheim considers to be crucial to the development of a moral nature. In short, Durkheim considers science to be an ally and agent of morality; as such, it must constitute a primary element of the curriculum.

Finally, both Dewey and Durkheim stress the social nature of education and view it as a process whereby individuals are prepared for life in society. Their common

conception is that individuals can reach their fullest potential only as members of society, and they view education - and, in particular, formal schooling - as the means whereby individuals are prepared for life in society. Education, for both Dewey and Durkheim, consists in developing rational, moral individuals who will then take their places in their respective societies. From the sum of such individuals, a rational, moral society will emerge. Dewey's and Durkheim's positions include several assumptions: that educators and schools, in general, will be amenable to such goals and that most societies will willingly integrate such individuals into the fabric of the societal structure.

In short, both Dewey and Durkheim envision a morality divested of its traditional religious elements. Both conceive of this secular morality as a product of education, and both assume that such educational results will contribute to the formation of a more rational, moral society.

Dissimilarities

Some dissimilarities do exist in the positions of Dewey and Durkheim. Among these is the difference in definitional strategy utilized by each. Dewey views as meaningless the traditional definition of religion and posits, instead, the existence of a religious attitude. He

uses the term "moral" to denote ideal human behavior and does the same with the term "educational": the former is used to refer to behavior which is based upon the intelligent foresight of consequences, and the latter is used to connote growth and the continuing capacity for the formation of intelligent decisions. In essence, Dewey's definitions arise from the ideal theories which he formulates.

In contrast, Durkheim's definitions take account of what has actually gone on under the terms themselves. He attempts to extricate from the terms "religion," "morality," and "education" those elements which are essential to each and utilizes these as definitions.[8] Durkheim claims to be dealing not with theories but with realities and, in his view, his definitions are scientific and empirical to a degree that "subjective" ones like Dewey's can never be. One cannot, for example, dismiss the term "religion" as an illusion; instead, one must look for the underlying realities of the activities associated with the term.

Durkheim takes religion more seriously than does Dewey and is more hesitant to predict its eventual disappearance. The former stresses the crucial role which religions have played in the history of mankind and tends to judge a particular religion according to the conditions of the society in which the religion exists. For Durkheim, religions

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[8]For a detailed discussion of Durkheim's method of definition, see Lewis, "Durkheim's Social Realism," pp. 151-65.

are social realities which embody the collective conscience and, from this perspective, must be regarded as bearers of truth. Only when the collective representations of a given society are themselves transformed by science, does the role of religion diminish and its function of representing society to its members lose its viability. Even though Durkheim rejects the objects of religion upon epistemological grounds, he does not lightly dismiss religion. He takes its functions seriously and carefully considers the consequences of its dissolution. He reserves a small sphere for it, even in advanced societies: it can afford a kind of certainty which science is not always able to provide.

In contrast, Dewey does not consider religion to be true in any sense. He treats it as an afterthought and views, with anticipation, its eventual disappearance. He is convinced that the human condition will be improved as a result of the relinquishing of beliefs concerning a supernatural realm and that man can live with the uncertainties which this entails. It is the possibilities existing in the empirical realm which are of interest to Dewey, and it is man's intelligence, tempered by a genuinely religious attitude and imbued with the scientific spirit, which must be relied upon to turn these ideals into actualities.

Although both Dewey and Durkheim embrace science and

the scientific method, it becomes clear that they are viewing them somewhat differently and that their anticipated results are different. Dewey reveals his perception of the nature of the scientific method in the following passage from Freedom and Culture:

> Some of its obvious elements are willingness to hold belief in suspense, ability to doubt until evidence is obtained; willingness to go where evidence points instead of putting first a personally preferred conclusion; ability to hold ideas in solution and use them as hypotheses to be tested instead of as dogmas to be asserted; and (possibly the most distinctive of all) enjoyment of new fields for inquiry and of new problems.[9]

Applying this conception of science to the whole realm of morals, Dewey is suggesting that tentativeness, rather than certainty, is the trademark of a moral theory that is divorced from religious dogmas. Humans, according to Dewey, should be content to live within the boundaries set by human intelligence as it is applied to empirical conditions, and they should not desire certainty where none exists. Certainty is not Dewey's primary concern, and Lewis E. Hahn describes Dewey's position as follows:

> Certainty concerning matters of fact is impossible, and the quest for it is illusory. What we actually find is a mixture of the precarious and the stable, and through intelligent use of the method of

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[9]John Dewey, Freedom and Culture (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963), p. 145, cited in Gouinlock, Philosophy, p. 341.

> critical inquiry, with a bit of luck, we can stabilize patterns of change and thus achieve a measure of security. Accordingly, it is far better to seek security than to pursue a will-o'-the-wisp certainty;

Hahn points out that Dewey's position suggests the use of adjectives like "better" rather than "good." It is improvement, rather than certainty, which Dewey emphasizes, and Hahn summarizes Dewey's message as follows: "His message is that through critical inquiry, making use of modern science and technology, we can improve ourselves and our world."[10]

Durkheim seems less eager to accept this element of uncertainty. Science and the scientific method, for him, signify accuracy and a greater degree of certainty. It is these elements which Durkheim hopes to infuse into morality by means of the development of a science of morality. The experimental aspects of the scientific method, which are so important to Dewey, do not seem to be of primary significance for Durkheim. Given societies have particular needs, and a science of morality will aid in determining, with a greater degree of accuracy, the moral rules which will correspond to these needs. This, for Durkheim, appears to constitute the greatest boost which science can offer morality.

Dewey's primary concern, in other words, appears to be with the method of the determination of moral conduct,

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[10]Lewis E. Hahn, "John Dewey's World View," Religious Humanism, XIV (1980), 36-37.

and the certainty, which may or may not accrue from this method, is of secondary importance to him. The only concession which Dewey makes to religion is his postulation of a religious attitude. He does not even seem to indicate that this attitude and morality are necessarily congruent phenomena; merely that they constitute compatible and potentially congruent ones. Whereas Dewey is willing to wait for the consequences of a given solution to determine its validity, Durkheim appears to demand more assurance that, in given situations, certain moral rules will be appropriate. This difference undoubtedly accounts for Durkheim's emphasis upon the greater degree of certainty afforded by science and for his tolerance of religion as a practical ally of science.

The educational implications of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions also exhibit some dissimilarities. In addition to the difference in definitional strategy, Dewey and Durkheim view some other aspects of education differently. Dewey, to a greater extent than Durkheim, perceives education as being more than merely a preparation for the future: it is of equal importance for the present. Also, in spite of the fact that both view education as a socializing process, the methods which they advocate are different. Dewey views education as consisting of activities where the free play of

intelligence is encouraged and where creativity is stressed. He views the only legitimate end of education as growth: the capacity to continually search for more intelligent solutions to specific problems. As these growing individuals take their places in society, it, too, will reflect the progressive, expansive outlook of its individual inhabitants.

Durkheim, in contrast, views education as the socializing of the young in the sense of inculcating them with the moral rules of a given society. Education partakes of conformity, rather than of creativity. The teacher is the moral agent of society, and his task is to acquaint the young with the rules which are applicable to a given society and to acquaint them with the reasons for the existence of these rules.

Dewey and Durkheim take differing views regarding the role which education should play in the reconstruction of society. Although he rejects the class concept as it pertains to education, Dewey views education as a potentially reconstructive tool. He suggests that it may shape attitudes and habits which may lead, eventually, to evolutionary changes in society. Dewey's faith in education is revealed when he suggests that the social change generated by the educational process is often more meaningful and lasting than that resulting from immediate, drastic action. Implicit in Dewey's

position is the assumption that there is no irreconcilable incompatibility between the kinds of individuals which he envisions the educational process will develop and the society into which they will be integrated. A democratic society, for Dewey, is a necessity; given this prerequisite, however, he is confident that the schools can serve as vehicles of social progress.

Durkheim envisions no reconstructive role for education. Education is to mirror particular societal facts, rather than to create them, and the only reconstruction which applies to education is that which takes place within educational systems themselves. The role of pedagogy, as Durkheim conceives it, is to reflect upon educational systems in order to determine how they can be changed to better reflect the societies in which they exist. Durkheim's scheme does not leave as much room as does Dewey's for the possibility that schools will turn out individuals who will be at odds with society; indeed, given Durkheim's plan for a moral education, the chances are better that individuals will be well-prepared to conform to society. Durkheim is, in effect, advocating a subservient role for schools: they should serve society rather than participate in its reconstruction.

A final dissimilarity between Dewey's and Durkheim's

positions can be noted: that pertaining to the view of education as essentially a social process. Dewey, while emphasizing the social nature of education, accords much value to the individual and to his personality. For him, education involves the formation of social relationships, but this does not in any way detract from the worth of the individual. In short, Dewey is not willing to subordinate the intelligence of individuals to the kind of social reality posited by Durkheim. In Dewey's view, human intelligence and education should be directed toward social ends; they should not, however, be considered to be the servants of a society whose authority is inherently superior to theirs.

Durkheim considers education to be social in nature in a much more literal sense. In his view, children are being educated only to the extent that they are being permeated with the social reality. Humans possess two natures, and it is the social nature which is superior and which must be developed by means of an educational system. Durkheim is not hesitant or apologetic concerning the emphasis which he places upon preparing children for membership in a given society. He considers the individual intelligence to be far inferior to that possessed by a given society; hence,

education can occur only when individuals are transformed by society and are enabled to get beyond themselves.

Summary

In spite of the sociological framework within which Durkheim operates, the similarities between his position and that of Dewey's seem to be more crucial for the central problem of this study than do the dissimilarities. In essence, both are convinced that a secular morality can be developed by means of the educational process, and both, to some extent, conceive of a moral, rational society in terms of the sum of moral, rational individuals. Because both express a considerable degree of confidence regarding the efficacy of education to produce the kinds of individuals which they envision, neither gives sufficient attention to the possibility that schools may be neither inclined nor equipped to fulfil this task. There may, in other words, be other roles which schools perform, and the essentially liberal, optimistic position taken by both Dewey and Durkheim may be deficient in that it does not take these other roles into account.

Also, because both conceive of rationality in primarily individualistic terms, neither considers, in any depth, the possibility of a social rationality which is dependent upon the irrationality of individuals. Dewey and

Durkheim both envision an increasingly rational society composed of rational individuals, and neither seems aware of the purposes which individual irrationality might serve.

Dewey and Durkheim operate upon a similar epistemological basis, and, consequently, it is not surprising that both predict the decline of religion and posit the existence of a purely secular morality. Yet, as shall be discussed in the following chapter, religion - even in some of its traditional forms - has not died out and, in some cases, is flourishing. One senses that both Dewey and Durkheim are neglecting certain aspects of the overall picture and that these aspects may, to some degree, account for the discrepancies between their predictions and the conditions existing in contemporary societies.

Certainly, the dissimilarities in Dewey's and Durkheim's positions are interesting, especially if considered from the perspective of an individual morality and within an epistemological framework which focuses upon individual beliefs. The question becomes to what extent these kinds of concerns are still appropriate, given some of the other frameworks which are being utilized today.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This study represents an attempt to determine the positions of John Dewey and Émile Durkheim regarding the relationship between religion and morality, to point out the educational implications of these positions, and to present a comparative analysis of these two positions. In this final chapter, some tentative conclusions will be drawn.

In the first place, some observations can be made regarding the definitional and epistemological frameworks within which Dewey and Durkheim formulate their positions. Dewey takes a looser, more flexible approach to definitions than does Durkheim. In the hope of avoiding becoming mired in definitional difficulties, Dewey tends to construct ideal methods of utilizing human experience as it occurs in the natural world and to formulate definitions for this ideal behavior later. In this way, he develops his definition of the "religious" attitude and operates in a similar fashion with morality and education. Holmes describes Dewey's definitional method as follows:

> Hence the meanings of the terms of everyday discourse (the medium of moral discourse) are tied to the ways in which these words are used in judging, making

> statements, exhorting, advising, commanding, and so forth. To understand them requires examining the sorts of jobs they are used to perform, and it is in this sense that Dewey feels that understanding the nature of judgments and propositions and the way they function takes priority over questions of definition.[1]

Dewey treats education in the same manner, and it is evident that he both begins and ends with human experience. As Robert J. Roth declares: "John Dewey more than any other American elaborated a philosophy of experience." Dewey puts a great deal of emphasis upon individual experiences and is concerned that such experiences will become more meaningful. Roth notes that a primary tenet of Dewey's creed was his belief that "a genuine philosophy of experience will help us to make the things of ordinary life more significant, more luminous and more fruitful."[2] Individual growth represents Dewey's ideal, and he is confident that individuals can live with the uncertainty which the epistemological rejection of the objects of traditional religions entails.

Morality, for Dewey, is conceived of in individualistic terms: he assumes that individuals will be in a position to confront the empirical realities of given situations and to make rational decisions based upon those realities. There

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[1]Holmes, "John Dewey's Moral Philosophy," 48.

[2]Robert J. Roth, "Religion and American Experience," America, CXXIV (January, 1971), 43.

are, according to Dewey, "better" and "worse" choices to be made in given problematic situations, and his assumption is that individuals are free to choose the "better" of these. The sum of these choices of "better" alternatives will be a society characterized by a progressively higher degree of rationality in the sense that the conduct of more individuals will be guided by intelligence. The ability to choose alternatives based on foreseen consequences can be taught, according to Dewey, and one of his critics charges: "His only alternative is simplistically to focus on education as the process of developing greater social harmony by stemming the selfishness of communities."[3]

In contrast to Dewey, Durkheim treats terms like "religion," "morality," and "education" as observable phenomena and accords them precise definitions. In the case of religion, he considers the beliefs and practices associated with the term to be legitimate to a degree which Dewey never does. Durkheim's methodology involves the practice of searching for the underlying realities of given terms, and he considers this method to be objective and empirical, in contrast to the "subjectivity" of theories like Dewey's. Religion must be dealt with, even though Durkheim rejects the objects of religious beliefs upon the same epistemological grounds as does Dewey. "Morality" and "education" are

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[3]Bruce A. Kimball, "Reinhold Niebuhr and John Dewey," Religious Humanism, XI (1977), 130.

developed in the same manner: actual systems of morality and education are studied, analyzed, and compared, and the basis for the formulation of these terms is human behavior as it has already occurred.

For Durkheim, societies are real entities: they are distinct from the sums of individual personalities, and their needs become the ideals with which to measure the validity of systems of morality and education. As, with the advances of science, this reality becomes more rational, individuals become more rational to the extent that this reality becomes internalized. In short, individuals become moral beings. In one sense, Durkheim's position can be summarized as follows: society, in the transcendent sense, is the source of individual morality, while the sum of these moral individuals constitutes a moral society in the non-transcendent sense.

Durkheim does not give primary attention to personal decisions as they are made by individuals. Rather, he focuses upon individuals as they are taught to conform to the rules of a given society and views them as being essentially social beings. In his review of Nisbet's The Sociology of Emile Durkheim, Abram N. Shulsky states: "It focuses attention on the social structures which are the basis of the social being

of man."[4]

In spite of the sociological framework within which Durkheim develops his position, there is a sense in which his perception of rationality is similar to that of Dewey's. For both, rationality implies compliance with science and connotes a legitimacy which stems from adherence to the rules of the scientific method. In Dewey's case, this rationality accumulates as personal decisions are intelligently made; in Durkheim's case, the implication is that science is infused into society through individual efforts and that the resulting rationality is then infused into the individual members of the society. In any case, rationality is conceived of in similar terms, and both Dewey and Durkheim take the position that a secular morality can be developed upon this basis.

If one wants to assume that individuals in a democratic society are as free, as Dewey considers them to be, to make choices in a virtual vacuum, it is difficult to dispute his position. Since the religions must be rejected upon epistemological grounds, the intelligent choice of alternatives appears to represent a rational method for the determination of human conduct. In addition, given the milieu in which

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[4]Abram N. Shulsky, "Social Theorist," review of The Sociology of Emile Durkheim, by Robert A. Nisbet, in Commentary, January, 1975, p. 98.

Dewey was operating and his conception of schools as places where the free play of intelligence would be encouraged, it seems plausible that rational, moral individuals could be developed and that a democratic society could become progressively more secular and more moral.

Within the framework of his own position, Dewey does not find it difficult to answer his critics. To those who charge, for example, that Dewey places too much faith in the capacity which people have for living with uncertainty and with growth as the final goal, he would reply that the temporal world is all that we have and that man should be able to live without the aid of beliefs which are based upon illusions. Although he would admit that the belief in a supernatural Being may be comforting and may produce actual beneficial changes in a given situation, he would deny that the positive results of such beliefs prove the existence of the objects of the beliefs. In the case of religion, at least, one cannot say that, for Dewey, "the useful is the true." Furthermore, Dewey is convinced that it is the temporal world which needs attention and that its improvement will only be hindered by attention given to a supernatural realm.

To the charge that Dewey's postulation of uncertainty is absolutist in the same sense in which a relativist who

posits the existence of relativism is assuming an absolutist stance, Dewey would undoubtedly reply that such an issue represents a distraction from the central concern with the solving of practical problems. In addition, implicit in Dewey's position is the fact that he is not so much postulating the existence of uncertainty as a reality as he is emphasizing the point that dogmas may not legitimately be introduced into the temporal world in order to create an illusion of certainty. For Dewey, the reality of man's situation is to be found within the confines of the natural world, and he concedes neither the need - nor the legitimacy - of conjuring up beliefs which add further dimensions to this reality.

There is a sense in which Durkheim, too, has an answer for all of his critics: he can always rely upon the social reality for the defense of his moral and educational stances, and this gives his overall position a much greater degree of certainty than that presented by someone like Dewey. Morality and education become observable phenomena, rather than mere mental constructs, and they become more scientific as the society takes on a progressively scientific character. Much more so than does Dewey, Durkheim emphasizes the influence of society upon individuals. Because of his particular conception of society, his insistence upon

individual compliance to societal rules can always be justified on the grounds that it is beneficial for the individuals.

Durkheim's position may be more productive for an understanding of contemporary societies than is Dewey's, given the former's recognition of the extent to which individuals are products of society.[5] Certain aspects of Durkheim's position are open to serious question, however. His social realism, for example, can be questioned upon epistemological grounds: upon the same grounds as those used by Durkheim to discard the possibility of the existence of supernatural beings. It is not that the existence of society as a sui generis reality can necessarily be disproved. Rather, it is a matter of lacking the kind of proof which Durkheim demands in the case of supernatural beliefs. His argument from elimination could serve, perhaps, as the supporting grounds for the formulation of a mental construct; it hardly suffices as proof for the existence of an empirical reality. The certainty which Durkheim posits as a result of

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[5]A strong case for the existence of "societal facts," for example, is made by Maurice Mandelbaum in "Societal Facts," British Journal of Sociology, VI (1955), 305-17. Mandelbaum contends that an understanding of the actions of humans as members of societies entails such an assumption. He argues that these "facts" are as ultimate as are those of a psychological character and that the former cannot be reduced to the latter. Mandelbaum does not insist, as Durkheim seems sometimes to do, that only these facts exist. Rather, he claims that they exist alongside of psychological ones.

the infusion of science into the social reality can also be questioned. Method, rather than content, can be considered to be its primary concern, and the tentativeness of much of the latter deprives Durkheim's position of much of its certainty.

Some tentative conclusions can be drawn regarding the predictions which Dewey and Durkheim make concerning the future of religion. Religion is still being defined in a variety of ways.[6] The definitions which Dewey and Durkheim accept, however, can be utilized to evaluate the extent to which their predictions coincide with reports concerning religious behavior in contemporary societies. Both Dewey and Durkheim are confident that a secular morality can be developed and that religion will necessarily decline. Recent reports do not seem to bear out this prediction. Martin E. Marty, for example, observes that traditional religions are very much alive in America. Noting that, while in many respects secular, America "houses an impressive number of religious institutions that attract the loyalties of three out of five citizens," Marty submits:

> At the very least, informed Americans are learning that their university, communication, literary, governmental, and intellectual elites overlook the dynamism of religion at their peril.

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[6]For a discussion of various contemporary definitions of religion, see Mary Douglas, "The Effects of Modernization on Religious Change," Daedalus, III (Winter, 1982), 6-8.

> In the emerging generation, during what appears to be a major cultural restructuring that goes from the nation's capital to its most remote precincts, to misperceive the role of religion, in what Ortega called the effort 'to meet the problems and necessities of life, as well as those which belong to the material order as the so-called spiritual ones,' will be more foolish than ever before.[7]

In a recent article, David Martin makes similar observations. He notes a resurgence of strong religious affiliations, especially evident in evangelical groups. Observing that evangelicalism often operates in an "ecumenical, nondenominational way," Martin adds: "However, it now seems that the conservative recovery in religion begins to include some recovery of denominational distinctiveness."[8]

Louis Dupré, in "Spiritual Life in a Secular Age," makes some observations which are pertinent to this study. In the first place, after noting the development in the nineteenth century of the "virulent antitheisms of scientific positivism, of sociological structuralism, and of axiological humanism," Dupré makes the following observations regarding contemporary atheism:

> It certainly has abandoned the nineteenth century dream of a purely scientific humanism. As a rule, it

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[7]Martin E. Marty, "Religion in America since Mid-century," Daedalus, III (Winter, 1982), 149, 158, 161-62.

[8]David Martin, "Revived Dogma and New Cult," Daedalus, III (Winter, 1982), 52, 64.

> no longer expects an integral world view from science, and it is even beginning to abandon the previous identification of science with human progress.[9]

Dupré also notes a second trend: the resurgence of fundamentalist movements and their attempts to turn back the tide of secularization. In attempting to explain this phenomenon, he observes that religion is becoming "desacralized" and declares: "The 'experience of the sacred,' with which phenomenologists since Rudolph Otto have readily identified religion, can no longer be considered normative of the religion of our time." Conceding that religious adherents will very likely continue to view the objects of their religions as sacred, Dupré states: "But they will do so because they hold them sacred, not because they perceive them as sacred."[10]

In the third place, Dupré observes that, contrary to past practices, the external and institutional aspects of religion have taken on the instrumental task of fulfilling personal needs. He suggests that religions are exercising their integrating function by means of personal decisions to "adopt a traditional doctrine and to use it for guidance and integration of the various aspects of social and private conduct." Dupré then submits:

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[9]Louis Dupré, "Spiritual Life in a Secular Age," Daedalus, III (Winter, 1982), 21.

[10]Ibid., 23-24.

> Genuine religion in the present (and, presumably, in the future) differs from the past in that it integrates from within rather than from without, but it continues to uphold the commitment to a particular doctrine and cult. Their authority, however, becomes operative only after and to the extent that they have been previously accepted and interiorized.[11]

Although these reports are not intended to serve as a comprehensive account of the state of religion today, they do indicate trends and suggest that traditional religions are not disappearing and losing out entirely to secularization. Religions seem to be surviving and, in some cases, thriving, and a number of variations are in evidence. Among the latter, according to Dupré, is the practice of reversing the epistemological process accepted by both Dewey and Durkheim. Contrary to their standards, personal decisions to accept beliefs are often made before the beliefs have been examined and their validity judged. At any rate, the prophecies of Dewey and Durkheim do not appear to have been fulfilled. In fact, an assertion made by a church pastor in 1969 appears to be a more accurate prediction than that made by either Dewey or Durkheim. Roy R. Winkelmann asserted: "The institutional church will always exist in some form; those who talk of its elimination are reading neither history nor human nature realistically."[12]

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[11] Ibid., 24-25.

[12] Roy R. Winkelmann, "Revolution Within an Evolution," Christian Century, LXXXVI (December, 1969), 1579.

To some extent, both Dewey and Durkheim could offer a similar explanation for the inaccuracy of their predictions: educational systems are failing to develop a secular morality, and, consequently, religions still persist. Dewey could always maintain that educational systems are failing to develop human intelligence and, hence, that individuals are falling back upon religions and dogmas as a result of mis-education. Durkheim could always point the finger at pedagogy: it is failing to fulfil the task of bringing educational systems into harmony with the societies in which they exist.

Yet, neither, perhaps, could offer a convincing reason why, if educational systems are failing, they are failing. It is at this point that Dewey's and Durkheim's positions can be evaluated from another perspective: from within the framework of the radical critique of the liberal view of education and schooling. Representative of this radical critique, for example, is Schooling in Capitalist America, written by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. Bowles and Gintis argue, in effect, that a position like Dewey's flounders because it is based upon wrong assumptions. Dewey, according to these authors, assumes that schools can and will perform the following three functions simultaneously: that of integrating youth into society, of equalizing economic

and social opportunities, and of promoting the fullest degree of individual development. Dewey makes this assumption, according to Bowles and Gintis, because he operates upon the following premises: occupational roles in a capitalist society are best filled by individuals who have reached a high degree of personal development, and a universal, public school system can serve this developmental function independently of variables like race and class. Thus, according to these authors, Dewey can view the three functions of schooling as being compatible and supportive. Given the democratic nature of U.S. institutions, integration into adult life and personal development can occur within the context of a society characterized by equality of opportunity.[13]

Bowles and Gintis argue that Dewey's view of schooling is faulty. In capitalist America, according to these authors, schools have served to reproduce the social and economic order. Because this order has been characterized by numerous inequalities, schooling, in serving it, has not been the equalizer envisioned by Dewey. Rather, according to these authors, education has served to "perpetuate the social, political, and economic conditions through which a portion

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[13]Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, Schooling In Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976), pp. 20-22.

of the product of labor is expropriated in the form of profits." They contend that education can best be viewed "as an institution which serves to perpetuate the social relationships of economic life." In fulfilling their integrative role, then, schools "foster legitimate inequality through the ostensibly meritocratic manner by which they reward and promote students, and allocate them to distinct positions in the occupational hierarchy." Regarding the developmental function which Dewey envisions for schools, Bowles and Gintis declare:

> Schools foster types of personal development compatible with the relationships of dominance and subordinacy in the economic sphere, and finally, schools create surpluses of skilled labor sufficiently extensive to render effective the prime weapon of the employer in disciplining labor - the power to hire and fire.[14]

In essence, Bowles and Gintis are contending that Dewey's faith in the efficacy of education to foster the development of a rational, moral society cannot be realized as long as that society harbors economic inequalities and as long as the schools serve to reproduce those inequalities. Utilizing the terms "legitimation" and "correspondence," they argue:

> On the one hand, employers and other social elites have sought to use the schools for the legitimation

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[14] Ibid., p. 11.

> of inequality through an ostensibly meritocratic and rational mechanism for allocating individuals to economic positions; they have sought to use the schools for the reproduction of profitable types of worker consciousness and behavior through a correspondence between the social relationships of education and those of economic life.[15]

The heart of the thesis of Bowles and Gintis is that schools in capitalistic America have not served to nurture the kind of individual rationality which, for Dewey, involved affording legitimate grounds for the choice of solutions to problems. Rather, they suggest that schools have served another function: that of legitimating inequality in the sense that individual irrationality is encouraged and utilized to serve the "rationality" of the capitalistic order. These authors submit:

> Throughout history, patterns of privilege have been justified by elaborate facades. Dominant classes seeking a stable order have consistently nurtured and underwritten these ideological facades and, insofar as their power permitted, blocked the emergence of alternatives. This is what we mean by 'legitimation': the fostering of a generalized consciousness among individuals which prevents the formation of the social bonds and critical understanding whereby existing social conditions might be transformed.[16]

Using numerous examples and a wealth of statistical data, Bowles and Gintis assert that this picture represents a

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[15] Ibid., p. 101.

[16] Ibid., p. 104.

more accurate account of the manner in which schools have functioned in America than that anticipated by Dewey. They suggest that the correspondence between conditions in the work world and those in the schools has precluded the kind of personal development which forms such a vital part of Dewey's ethical position.

Dewey's confidence concerning the development of a secular morality and his prediction regarding the disappearance of traditional religions can be evaluated in terms of this kind of interpretation of schooling. If one wants to go all the way with historians like Bowles and Gintis, one could suggest, for example, that the schools' lack of concern with the development of the kind of rationality envisioned by Dewey has contributed to the persistence of religions and to the adherence to the "irrational" beliefs which accompany them. One could suppose that the work attitudes which are nurtured in the schools are, in turn, reflected in the intellectual climate of a society.

Although Bowles and Gintis do not deal directly with a position like Durkheim's, it is possible to also evaluate his postulation of a secular morality from the perspective of their framework. At first glance it might appear that Durkheim is approximating their position: he views the schools and education as servants of society and envisions

no reconstructive roles for them. Durkheim does, however, anticipate the development of a morality which partakes of the rationality of science, and Bowles and Gintis contend that this kind of rationality has not been fostered in schools. The inaccuracy of Durkheim's predictions concerning the future of religion could be accounted for upon these grounds.

There is another perspective from which both Dewey's and Durkheim's positions may be evaluated: that of the different meanings given to the term "rationality" and the different ways in which a "rational society" is conceived. Both Dewey and Durkheim conceive of rationality in terms of affording legitimate grounds for actions and beliefs and relate it to knowledge. Both, in addition, conceive of a rational society as one which is composed of rational individuals. To some extent, both would go along with the position of Stephenie G. Edgerton who, in "The Sociology Of Knowledge Revisited," addresses the problem of the rational pursuit of knowledge. Edgerton states:

> In order to avoid the charge of irrationality what is needed is a nonjustificational rationality. Such a rationality may be found in criticism. Criticism need not be fused with justification. So long as we hold all of our beliefs, our standards, open to criticism, including the notion of a nonjustificational rationality, and we protect nothing by justifying it irrationally, we can say

in a significant sense that we are being rational.[17] There is a sense in which the rationality which both Dewey and Durkheim posit as the basis for a secular morality partakes of this kind of critical attitude: Dewey's, to the extent that intelligence must consistently be applied to problematic situations where there is no one "right" solution, and Durkheim's, to the extent that societal needs must be subjected to continual re-evaluation.

The terms "rationality" and "rational society" can be conceived of in another sense, however, and Jürgen Habermas is representative of a group of theorists who have attempted to deal with these concepts within the context of complex, advanced societies. In these societies, the operative systems appear to have their own "rationality": one which does not partake, necessarily, of the kind of critical reflection referred to by Edgerton. Habermas discusses this conception of rationality in terms of the positions taken by Max Weber and Herbert Marcuse in this regard, and he states:

> Marcuse is convinced that what Weber called 'rationalization' realizes not rationality as such but rather, in the name of rationality, a specific form of unacknowledged political domination. Because this sort of rationality extends to the correct choice among strategies, the appropriate application of technologies, and the efficient establishment of systems (with

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[17]Stephenie G. Edgerton, "The Sociology Of Knowledge Revisited," Studies in Philosophy and Education, IV (Spring, 1966), 338.

> presupposed aims in given situations), it removes the total social framework of interests in which strategies are chosen, technologies applied, and systems established, from the scope of reflection and rational reconstruction.[18]

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss Habermas's views in depth, some of his observations and reflections are pertinent to an evaluation of Dewey's and Durkheim's positions. In Legitimation Crisis, he is concerned with "rationality," in the sense of legitimating an existing social order. He refers to "legitimating world-views or ideologies" and suggests that they "remove the counterfactual validity claims of normative structures from the sphere of public thematization and testing." Habermas declares: "The order of authority is justified by falling back on traditional world-views and a conventional civic ethic."[19]

Habermas is acknowledging the possibility that the legitimation which is supporting a particular societal order may not be "rational," in the sense in which both Dewey and Durkheim are using the term. An adherence to the legitimating supports may, in fact, depend upon the irrationality of individuals: upon their willingness to disengage them-

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[18]Jürgen Habermas, Toward A Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics, trans. by Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 82.

[19]Habermas, Legitimation Crisis, p. 19.

selves from a concern with truth. Habermas remarks: "It is an open question whether in complex societies motive formation is actually still tied to norms that require justification, or whether norm systems have lost their relation to truth." Although he hesitates to give a dogmatic answer to this question, Habermas does concede that "the steering imperatives of highly complex societies could necessitate disconnecting the formation of motives from norms capable of justification."[20]

In Legitimation Crisis, Habermas is concerned with the possibility that the end of the "bourgeois individual" may be in sight, and he elaborates upon this notion as follows:

> With the historical form of the bourgeois individual, there appeared those (still unfulfilled) claims to autonomous ego-organization within the framework of an independent - that is, rationally founded - practice. In these claims was laid out the logic of a general (if undeveloped, nevertheless continuously effective) socialization [Vergesellschaftung] through individuation. If this form of reproduction were to be surrendered, together with the imperatives logically embedded in it, the social system could no longer establish its unity through formation of the identities of socially related individuals.

Again, while abstaining from making a concrete prediction in this regard, Habermas does hazard this observation: "The

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[20] Ibid., pp. 117, 122.

identity of the ego is a symbolic structure which, with the growing complexity of society, must remove itself centrifugally further and further from its middle point in order to stabilize itself."[21] The implication is that, as societies become more complex and the web of legitimizing structures more intricate, the realm of the individual becomes increasingly infringed upon and the whole concept of individuality becomes more suspect.

In short, the position taken by Bowles and Gintis concerning the nature of schooling and the reflections of someone like Habermas regarding the nature of "rationality" in an advanced capitalist society make it possible to offer some tentative observations in respect to Dewey's and Durkheim's positions. In the first case, one could suggest that neither Dewey nor Durkheim seriously entertained the possibility that schools would be servants of a rationality that, by their standards, would amount to irrationality. The conditions implied in the concepts of legitimation and correspondence, as utilized by Bowles and Gintis, do not seem to have been seriously considered by Dewey. Durkheim, while accepting the reflective role for schools, does not appear to be concerned with the possibility that this might result in the development of irrational people and that this development might be intentional.

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[21] Ibid., pp. 125, 129.

In the second case, neither Dewey nor Durkheim seems to have considered the extent to which individuals might become subordinate and subservient to the rationale of a society. Although Durkheim was operating within a sociological framework and put great stress upon the social nature of individuals, he, no more than Dewey, seems to entertain the possibility that the legitimating supports of a given social system could cloud the whole concept of reality and, perhaps, cast doubt upon the notion of meaningful criticism.

Both Dewey and Durkheim envision science and rationality marching hand in hand, and both are convinced that the irrationality of religion will be the cause of its decline. Neither appears to entertain the possibility that religion might persist as a legitimizing support for a dominant order. In addition, neither appears to consider the possibility that "reality" may consist of such a maze of legitimating institutions that the determination of justifiable norms becomes less and less possible. In short, Dewey and Durkheim do not seem to anticipate the possibility that the concept of individual rationality may become an anachronism: that, as societies become more complex, it may become almost impossible for individuals to free themselves from the web of

"reality" which surrounds them.

It would appear that the secular morality posited by both Dewey and Durkheim has not entirely taken hold and that religion and morality have not become the mutually exclusive elements which they envisioned. Various religions appear to be flourishing, and a common explanation for the persistence of religion and dogmas is that humans need this kind of certainty. Another explanation entails the notion that it is the social aspects of religions, rather than the beliefs and rites, which attract many of the adherents.

Perhaps a more fruitful search for explanations should include consideration of the theoretical frameworks discussed earlier. The extent to which Dewey's and Durkheim's ethical theories may be relevant for contemporary societies would seem to depend upon the actual function of schools in those societies and upon the extent to which individuals may be capable of interpreting a reality which resembles that implied by the positions of both. It is possible that a genuinely individual rationality may be operative only within the context of a "reality" which includes much that is both irrational and closed to criticism.

Such conclusions must remain tentative. As Habermas observes: "The fundamental question of the continued existence of a truth-dependent mode of socialization

constitutive of society is, as one can see, not easy to answer." He continues:

> This could lead one to think that it is not at all a theoretically resoluble question, but a practical question: should we rationally desire that social identity be formed through the minds of socially related individuals or should it be sacrificed to the problem - real or imagined - of complexity?[22]

Habermas realizes that his question presupposes the existence of rationality, in the individual sense, and that herein lies the nub of the issue. Whether or not we should desire the retention of individual rationality - and whether this can be retained if it is so desired - become crucial questions. The answers to them have a distinct bearing upon the degree to which positions like Dewey's and Durkheim's are relevant for modern, complex societies.

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[22] Ibid., p. 142.

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