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Idealism and Religion in Dewey's Philosophy

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Abstract and Keywords

Dewey's early organicist idealism related individual selves to God as functional parts of the absolute whole. His critiques of idealists T. H. Green and Josiah Royce exemplify his concern that no dualistic gap separates the knower from the object of knowledge. After he replaced the perfect absolute with the dynamic activity of life, two principles became paramount for Dewey's mature philosophy. Metaphysically, all of human experience is within the same reality as everything else that is also real: nothing about experience segregates it apart from the rest of what is real. Epistemologically, an account of experience's continuity with the rest of reality is compatible with understanding that continuity: nothing about experience prevents our knowing how experiences are within reality. Experience is ontologically continuous with nature, and inquiry creates the natural objects of knowledge. A Common Faith exemplifies this metaphysics as it explains the ethical growth of communities through religious experience.

Keywords: idealism, religion, religious experience, organicism, naturalism, metaphysics, Josiah Royce, T. H. Green

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John Dewey's relationship with philosophical idealism, like his philosophy's approach to religion, is a difficult interpretive challenge. Identifying what counted as "idealism" as understood by Dewey, and by his idealist contemporaries, must be sensitive to its many variations and associations. Idealism was changing significantly during the period of 1870 to 1940, no less so than Dewey's philosophy over that time. Dewey's relationships with idealism and naturalism were bound up with his view of experience, including religious experience. Questions of interpretation are inevitable. Is experience ultimately more ideal or more natural for Dewey, or should experience be de-emphasized to avoid metaphysics? Does religious experience have an independent role, or is it just a type of aesthetic experience? Such issues revolve around decisions, faced by Dewey himself, about what metaphysics can and cannot accomplish in a pragmatic, radically empirical philosophy.

The stance taken on Dewey's metaphysics is usually predictive of a scholar's viewpoint on the role of idealistic themes and religious experiences in Dewey's philosophy. Hostility toward all metaphysics including idealism characterizes some commentators, while some others appreciate metaphysics so long as it is not idealistic. There are also scholars wary of metaphysics who only offer epistemological interpretations of Dewey. As for scholars who are not antithetical to idealism, there are those who acknowledge Dewey's association with idealistic views,[1] and there are also those who argue that Dewey is best understood through the lens of idealism.[2] Not surprisingly, commentators taking idealism quite seriously, as we do, are more open to the significant role that religious experience plays throughout Dewey's

thought from his early to late periods. This chapter examines the major encounters between Dewey and idealism and the roles that religion played in those episodes.[3]

Christian Idealism

The Congregationalism that dominated much of New England, including the Vermont of Dewey's birth, proved amenable to a pious theistic idealism for those seeking a philosophical worldview. God, for this idealism, is the supreme personal spirit guiding an ideal world appearing as material. Dewey accepted this God during his college years. His later memories of an "inward laceration" from a strict religious upbringing were not about resentment or hostility toward religion but only a painful recollection of strict moral demands placed on a young cerebral boy. Dewey was well aware how his selection of an idealistic philosophy from alternatives available during the 1870s and 1880s was a thoughtful response on both ethical and intellectual levels.

At Dewey's seventieth birthday party, his Columbia colleagues presented Dewey with a copy of Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*. They recorded him saying that this book "was our spiritual emancipation in Vermont," and "Coleridge's idea of the spirit came to us as a real relief, because we could be both liberal and pious; and this *Aids to Reflection* book, especially Marsh's edition, was my first Bible."[4] Dewey's rare autobiographical reflections must not be treated as gospel, especially his accounts of intellectual debts, but this one was sincere. His Calvinist upbringing was no false memory either, nor was his laborious escape from it, after embracing idealism at the University of Vermont during 1875–79.

During Dewey's teenage years, the liberality and universalism of his church's minister, Lewis O. Brastow, encouraged the welcome view that reason and religion can and must cohere. Dewey studied this standpoint under his philosophy professor at the University of Vermont, H.A.P. Torrey, who taught from James Marsh's edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* and *The Remains of the Rev. James Marsh* (Shook 2004, 304–309; Dykhuizen 1973, 9–18). Coleridge and Marsh happened to be two of the earliest philosophical thinkers in England and America, respectively, to study Kant, Hegel, Schelling, and other idealists in their German editions.

The liberating creed heard from Coleridge declared that neither speculative reason nor scientific theory, with their didactic and static principles, can take precedence over the living processes and practicalities of human life: "[I]t must be the Practical Reason of Man, comprehending the Will, the Conscience, the Moral Being with its inseparable Interests and Affections—that Reason, namely, which is the Organ of Wisdom, and (as far as man is concerned) the Source of living and actual Truths. … Christianity is not a Theory, or a Speculation: but a Life;—not a Philosophy of Life, but a life and a living Process" (Coleridge 1829, 115, 131; see Dalton 2002, 23–40).

As for Marsh, Dewey cites him in one of his earliest articles, "Soul and Body" (1886), while proposing that "soul" and "body" are related as "function and organ, as activity and instrument" (EW 1:112). Marsh had stated: [W]e recognize the body, each as his own body, and the life of the body, as *his own life*. It belongs to him, as a part of his being, as the *outward form* and *condition* of his *existence in space*. … It is not merely an *organ*, or material *mechanism*, to be conceived as distinct from our personal self, but *it is our proper self as existent in space*, in the order and under the laws of *nature*" (Marsh 1843, 256–257, italics in original)

After graduation, Dewey taught at a high school in Oil City, Pennsylvania. An interview with Dewey by Max Eastman for *The Atlantic* in 1941 recounts his "mystic experience" in Oil City while reading Wordsworth. The experience was, in Eastman's summary, "an answer to that question which still worried him: whether he really meant business when he prayed." The feeling of oneness, which Dewey likened to Whitman's "oneness with the universe," assured him he

need not worry about existence or his place in the universe. It “was not a very dramatic mystic experience,” but, as Eastman reported, there was “just a supremely blissful feeling that his worries were over.” In Dewey’s own prosaic words, “What the hell are you worrying about anyway? Everything that’s here is here and you can just lie back on it.” Dewey then told Eastman, “I’ve never had any doubts since then, nor any beliefs. To me faith means not worrying.” He further opined that mystical experiences are “purely emotional and cannot be conveyed in words.” Dewey concluded, “I claim I’ve got religion, and that I got it that night in Oil City” (Eastman 1941, 672–673).

Dewey was no longer someone at war with his religious well-being, and idealism was already more vexing to him than his own religiosity. He had learned enough about Kant and idealism to pursue some of transcendental idealism’s puzzles. Dewey was willing to identify God with “the Absolute” in the sense of a perfectly personal being that encompasses and guarantees the organic wholeness to this vision of personal selves residing within dynamic nature. Knowledge remained the vital issue for Dewey: how was this vision to be knowable by humanity, so that knowledge stays unified with what is known? Cartesian dualism situated all knowing on one side of an ontological chasm, apart from matters to be known. Materialism leaves other minds unknowable at best and all minds unreal at worst. Classical empiricism kept the factual units of experience unrelated to each other and hence unintelligible for real knowledge. And Kantianism kept Reason’s role for knowledge too dependent on unknowable things-in-themselves. Dewey sought a philosophical system able to explain how selves relate to each other and the whole without rendering essential factors unknowable.

Absolute Idealism

Dewey’s neo-Hegelian tutelage was conducted during the 1880s under Johns Hopkins University professor George S. Morris, and (by eagerly reading) Oxford’s T. H. Green and Glasgow’s Edward Caird. These idealists were formulating critiques of rival philosophies, especially empiricism and materialism, in order to expound the culminating thesis that the perfectly unified mind of the Absolute is both the epistemic ideal and ontological ground for each human intelligence. Dewey also heard Charles S. Peirce’s lectures on logic and scientific methods at Johns Hopkins, but little influence from Peirce is visible during this early period.

Morris was more fitting to Dewey’s temperament and need. Morris’s absolute idealism was tempered by an engagement with the Greeks as taught by his own professors in Germany, F. A. Trendelenburg and Hermann Ulrici. Dewey adopted its organic idealism, regarding every real thing as functionally contributing to the ongoing vitality of the whole of reality, joining a philosophical heritage tracing back to F. W. J. Schelling and Gottfried Herder (Shook 2000, 2017). Morris made a deep personal impression as well. After Morris died in 1889, Dewey’s eulogistic remembrance noted that “Professor Morris never held his philosophy by a merely intellectual grasp, since it was fused with his personal character, and gained its color and tone from his own deeper interests” (EW 3:7). A religious affinity was also shared between them. One of Morris’s lectures, incorporated into his book *British Thought and Thinkers* (Morris 1880), describes his own religious experience. Dewey later recalled that account, explaining why it “is worth quoting, both because of its rarity and because it reveals how early his mind sought the philosophic channel” (EW 3:5; see Wenley 1917, 308–321). Dewey viewed this sort of unusual experience as characteristic of a “philosophic” channel at the core of one’s character, indicating how he respected mystical states for exploring philosophical questions.

Dewey acquired from absolute idealism the imperative that human experience and knowledge cannot be left unaccountable or unconnected to environing reality. The successive editions of his *Psychology* from 1886 to 1891 display a drift away from rationalism as he sought to reasonably fulfill this imperative. He formulated version after

version of his own "experimental idealism," as he labeled it in *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* (1894; EW 4:264). He was distancing himself from neo-Hegelian absolutism because the perfections of divine Mind seemed too aloof from the actionable knowledge achievable by human intelligence. The resolution of Dewey's boyhood doubts was maturing: not only can we lie back on what *is*, but we also do not *know* what we *do not know*. It is more intellectually honest to accept intelligence's limitations than to place trust in abstract reason's perfections. Unbidden experiences about the bare necessity of things may not be capturable by conceptual formulations, but exaggerating our capacity for knowing all of reality is just the adult version of avowing to get right with our savior. Relax—what is here, really is here.

The first (1887) edition of *Psychology* had agreed with T. H. Green that "Psychology is the science of the reproduction of some universal content or existence, whether of knowledge or action, in the form of individual, unsharable consciousness." (EW 2:11) Specifically, "The knowledge of the finite individual is the process by which the individual reproduces the universal mind, and hence makes real for himself the universe, which is eternally real for the complete, absolutely universal intelligence, since involved in its self-objectifying activity of knowledge." (EW 2:lxxix). This second statement was deleted for the 1889 revised edition. Dewey had judged that philosophy cannot justify the assertion of an Absolute Mind, and the term "God" could no longer properly refer to that Absolute. With this move away from Absolute idealism, he was also letting go of the personal God as a spiritual absolute.

By the late 1880s, Dewey was seeking a third alternative between the Absolute as a projector of knowledge to humanity and God as a projection of human knowledge. In an 1889 exposition of Green's philosophy, Dewey offered an interpretation that had more to do with his own evolving view of God:

> The statement that God is the ideal, or even the true self of man, is liable to interpretation from the wrong side, and, indeed, has often been so interpreted. It is taken to mean that God is only a projection of man; that he is an ideal that man forms of what man would be were he perfect, and that, therefore, God has no reality excepting as a conception of man's ideal, and that God becomes real in the degree in which man realizes his ideal. But this is a complete inversion of Green's thought. The reality of God in himself is a condition of our having the notion of Him as our own ideal self, of our attempts, our striving to make this ideal real, and of our measure of success. Human nature is rather the projection of God, that is, the reproduction of Him, through physical conditions, than God the projection of man's ideal.
>
> (EW 3:26)

Dewey never accepted the first interpretation of God as mere projection, in his early or late philosophy, and hence anthropomorphism was never acceptable to him. Nor was Dewey quite comfortable with the "reproduction" of God in us. What is being reproduced, exactly? If God is participating in our material strivings toward our ideals, none of God's eternal perfections would be relevant or helpful, for all we can know is our own ideals and the environing world enabling our progress, and neither of those things can be known by us as perfect. God understood as a *paraclete* or helper, another idea which endowed God with personality, was becoming a problem.

The relationship that Dewey sought between knowing selves and the knowable whole was proving to be too unstable: either absolute reality is a rational Self constituting reality's completed unity while finite selves within that whole create nothing or individual selves must constitute a known world without universal reason (in the Coleridgean or Hegelian sense). The former view forbids people from doing anything morally real, while the latter forbids people from knowing anything objectively real. Dewey well understood the import of both alternatives. His 1888 book on Leibniz had accused monodology of implicating two very different Gods: (1) a supreme monad eliciting the development of all other monads so thoroughly that the whole amounts to spiritual pantheism and (b) a perfected

monad needing so little interaction with lesser monads that the aggregate amounts to subjective idealism. Yet Dewey discerned a third conception of God hinted at in Leibniz's writings that can satisfy Leibnizian principles:

> God is the harmony of the monads,—neither one among them nor one made up of them, but their organic unity … God *is* the pre-established harmony. This conception, like that of harmony, may have either a mechanical interpretation (according to which God is the artificial, external point of contact of intelligence and reality, in themselves opposed) or an organic meaning, according to which God *is* the unity of intelligence and reality. … According to this view, the opposition between ideal inclusion and real exclusion vanishes. God *is* the harmony of the real and ideal, not a mere arrangement for bringing them to an understanding with one another.
>
> (EW 1:421–422)

A similar view was defended by some American personal idealists, such as George Holmes Howison, during the 1890s. William Ernest Hocking later developed this view into his own type of organic idealism. The conception of the Self (whether divine or human) as the dynamic harmonization of the real and ideal became Dewey's overriding concern, and he was among the first philosophers to work out this idea. Could the ultimate reality of individual selves fulfill that conception? Personal idealism also erupted in Britain with Andrew Seth's (1887) *Hegelianism and Personality*.

Dewey refused to join these personalists and their paramount mission to uphold individual moral responsibility against absolute idealism.[5] He was already making his own determinations about the nature of the individual self. His 1890 article "On Some Current Conceptions of the Term 'Self,'" while nominally directed at confusions among definitions for the "self" in Seth's book, concludes by stating that the self can neither be the synthetic unity of sense and thought nor a transcendent activity behind all experience. Dewey ends this article by exonerating Green from hypostatizing an abstraction of the Self, without endorsing Green's supreme absolute. (EW 3:74).

Experimental Idealism

Dewey was revealing his new theory of the self to allies, such as William James. In 1891 he wrote to James (1890) about closely reading his *The Principles of Psychology*, urging an even more radical interpretation of consciousness. Its chapter on "The Consciousness of Self" proposes a fundamental field of "sciousness"—the stream of interrelated phenomena prior to the self/not-self distinction. Dewey tells James,

> that is a much better statement of the real core of Hegel than what you criticize later on as Hegelianism. Take out your "postulated" "matter" & "thinker," let "matter" (i.e. the physical world) be the organization of the content of sciousness up to a certain point, & the thinker be a still further unified organization [not a unify-ing organ as per Green] and that is good enough Hegel for me. And if this point of view had been worked out, would you have needed any "special" activity of attention, or any "special" act of will? The fundamental fact would then be the tendency towards a maximum content of sciousness, and within this growing organization of sciousness effort &c could find their place. … the unity of Hegel's self (& what Caird is driving it) is not a unity in the stream as such, but of the function of this stream—the unity of the world (content) which it bears or reports. … But Hegel's agent (or Self) is simply the universe doing business on its own account.
>
> (1891.05.06, 00458: Dewey to James)

The primal field of "sciousness" would be labeled as "experience" by James and Dewey in later writings to formulate the "postulate of immediate empiricism" (Dewey) or "radical empiricism" (James).

Experience is wider than consciousness; consciousness is a broader realm than a self's thinking; and thinking has a wider range than known objects. Experience per se is not known, and experience does not merely exist for this or that conscious self, although everything that a thinking self is and produces occurs within experience and its known products are also within experience. Subjective idealism is too narrow because objective reality is vastly larger than anything happening for self-consciousness, so experience extends beyond any personal self, for Dewey. Although James is agnostic about that final point, they did agree that Absolute idealism is ill-founded. In spite of Royce's (1885) ingenious arguments in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, James eventually judged, along with Dewey, that the vast extent of experience is not already known by any self—not even a divine or transcendent self—so far as we know or *can* know.[6] Royce's "proof" from the reality of error showed at most that a concept of the Absolute is intellectually inevitable, but it failed to establish that such a being *exists* or *must* exist in accord with that concept.

Dewey and James, along with Royce, firmly agreed that materialism is mistaken because anything postulated as material must be conceived only in dynamic relationships with thoughtful knowers. Dualism only multiplies the errors of subjective idealism and materialism. Since personal idealism and absolute idealism also seemed inadequate to Dewey and James, they were driven toward radical empiricism by the first decade of the twentieth century. Metaphysics remained contentious. James chose a synoptic neutral monism, while Dewey formulated a pluralistic and naturalistic version of organicism (on categorizing naturalisms see Shook 2011). James remained more of a personalist. As for Dewey, by 1900 it was becoming difficult to ascertain the degree of affiliation he retained with idealism.

Readers of Dewey's article "Moral Theory and Practice" and his *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics*, composed during 1890 and published in 1891, were the first to encounter his reconstruction of the individual self. First, an individual self is always active and only real in that activity: there is no unmoved spiritual mover behind personal agency. Second, ideals have no reality nor efficacy outside of that ongoing activity of conduct. The only remaining role that moral ideas could play is this: the degree to which an action is thoughtful, heeding conditions and consequences essential to this acting, constitutes its ideal aspect and eligibility for moral evaluation. A moral end, on Dewey's definition, enhances overall coordination, unifies one's character, and permits worthier achievements. Although individuality captures the "personal" side of committed participation in social progress, and the growth of that *individuality* (which includes personality) is a manifestation of that moral priority (e.g., in genuine education), there is no separate ontological status for the individual. The moral individual exemplifies that dynamic harmonization of the real and ideal carried out in social conduct. Dewey elaborated this theory of social ethics in later works such as *Ethics* (1908).

In 1892 Dewey openly rejected Green, declaring that a perfect and static Absolute/God can play no role in human intelligence or morality (EW 3:159–161). If the growth of human mind is not a poor reduplication of God's perfect mind, what happens to our view of intelligence, once that God is abandoned as unreal? Dewey thus eliminated the middle term of God, so that the idealized community (as intelligence unified) is the spiritual ideal for each individual member of that community (as intelligence growing). Furthermore, around 1894 his church attendance ceased, never to be renewed.

With the departure of the Absolute, there was an important adjustment in Dewey's conception of reality: it cannot be an intelligibly unified whole in itself. If nature is not already perfectly ordered, then no perfect God is responsible for that, and the growth of human intelligence is not about representing for ourselves some perfect order that God had laid down. All the same, human ideals remain powerful here and now, even if they are not immanent in the Whole. Human

intelligence is capable of appreciating whatever order happens locally to prevail in nature, because intelligence is participating that order's alteration and development. Dewey no longer needed a metaphysical God to explain human knowledge, but he did need a potentially intelligible world for human knowing. Fortunately, his philosophy did not have to start from an unprovable postulate, since much intelligibility is already evident, and no sensible objection can disprove that. James would continue to struggle with the immediacy of pure experience, but Dewey's worries had faded years before. What is here *exists*, as he said in 1941 of his 1881 experience.

Christianity, after theism, must be thoroughly reconstructed. Dewey's 1893 essay "Christianity and Democracy," identifies Christianity's prioritization of the full realization of each individual with the devotion to the endless advancement of genuine community. How could a single religion turn out to be the ultimate moral end of all humanity for all time? First, what Christianity stands for must be liberated from historical accident to reveal its universal significance. (Dewey anticipates Royce's *The Problem of Christianity* by twenty years.) Second, what religiosity stands for must be connected to that *same* universal significance. That is why Dewey denies that Christianity is just a religion (EW 4:4). What is a religion? "Every religion is an expression of the social relations of the community; its rites, its cult, are a recognition of the sacred and divine significance of those relationships." (EW 4:3) Going further, if "the community" should consist of all intelligent agents, then a potentially universal religion is no longer a religion but just the ongoing revelation of Truth itself. That revelation is not *from* God—that revelation *is* God. "God is essentially and only the self-revealing, and the revelation is complete only as men come to realize Him. … The revelation is, and can be, only in intelligence. … Beyond all other means of appropriating truth, beyond all other organs of apprehension, is man's own action" (EW 4:6–7). For Dewey, "Christianity, if universal, if revelation, must be the continual unfolding, never ceasing discovery of the meaning of life." (EW 4:4).

What is socially universal, for Dewey, can therefore only be democracy itself:

> It is in democracy, the community of ideas and interest through community of action, that the incarnation of God in man (man, that is to say, as an organ of universal truth) becomes a living present thing, having its ordinary and natural sense. This truth is brought down to life; its segregation removed; it is made a common truth enacted in all departments of action, not in one isolated sphere called religious.
>
> (EW 4:9)

Like nature, God has no meaning or reality outside of an integration with us, through our transformation of the cooperative world.

Dewey had arrived at an empiricist and functionalist version of Leibniz's third conception of God as a growing unity of intelligence and reality, grown through progressive social experience. Other idealists, such as Howison and Seth, were plodding toward the same idea but not boldly enough to situate God firmly within human energy and achievement. Heaven was not a democracy for the personal idealists, not even for Royce. For Dewey, to self-consciously and devoutly participate in the democratic and scientific growth of intelligence (the inclusive moral end urged by Dewey) is not to seek God or to become "like" God—it is to be unified *in* God, wherever social intelligence is growing. To be religious is to be ethical, which is to be devoted to the advancement of intelligent culture, which is nothing less than the democratic pursuit of free intelligence itself (Shook and Good, 2010). Royce could agree up until the last clause; he wanted the authentic *agapic* community now, not democracy's tumultuous hopes for public community. Dewey took up controversies over God with Royce, discussed in the next section, but he published nothing about James's (1902) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, although its influence on Dewey's *A Common Faith* is discussed in the last section.[7]

Democracy would be religious enough for Dewey's philosophy, as he proceeded with confidence to expound his ethical, pedagogical, and social theories from 1896 to 1924, culminating with *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922). Most other idealists during that era defended democracy sincerely enough. However, philosophers offering idealism as a substitute for revelation had less tolerance for social disorder and political deliberation, needing a metaphysically guaranteed order in reality before they can believe that more good than evil is achievable in society.

The Critic of Absolute Idealism

Dewey's sharp criticisms of idealism during the first two decades of the twentieth century allowed many of his readers to think that he had fully abandoned idealism. However, his autobiographical reflection in 1930, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," emphasizes how adopting experimentalism was his decisive transition, which flowed from "experimental idealism," as he called his view after 1891. Dewey was still labelling his philosophy as experimental idealism in 1929 in *The Quest for Certainty* (LW 4:134). His assembly of this philosophy from organicist and idealistic theses without needing an Absolute provided him with argumentative grounds for criticizing metaphysical idealisms.

In 1900 Dewey reviewed Royce's *The World and the Individual, First Series*, examining its conception of the Absolute. Why is an Absolute of infinitely perfect experience implicated by our limited and incomplete experiences? Having denied that reality could be utterly unlike experience, Royce infers that all reality only consists of experience, but that leaves his absolutism exposed to Dewey's dilemma: how can one and the same purposive experience be known as poorly fulfilled and also as completely fulfilled? If a purpose is only partially fulfilled, then it cannot be simultaneously known as completely fulfilled within the Absolute (otherwise, we would rest content with that experience). On the other hand, if we know an experience as perfectly fulfilled (as it really is within the Absolute), then we would not regard it as merely human experience.

Royce cannot dodge this dilemma since flawed human experiences are the only evidence, and he cannot prove the Absolute's reality by logic alone, Dewey argues. An unproven Absolute cannot condemn all human experience as irredeemably unsatisfactory, even if, as Dewey admits, only a greater fund of wider experience can reveal where our purposes can become more successful, or exposed as fruitless. For Dewey's experimental idealism, Royce's "identification" (as Dewey interprets the argument) of Absolute experience with human experience is not philosophically justifiable. A weaker conclusion is proffered by Dewey: our purposes attain or lose their relative validity in the course of further guided experiences intended by those plans. There is no need to presume any perfected achievements but only postulated outcomes attainable through effort in actual human experiences.

Dewey's criticism of Royce echoes his previous repudiation of T. H. Green, and it was at work in Dewey's even earlier critique of Leibniz (EW 1:415–418). Rationalism's preference for complete metaphysical identity (as Dewey takes Royce to be asserting), while leaving empirical difference inexplicable, was too static and formal for Dewey. He preferred a dynamic "organic unity"—a dynamic identity despite differences that attains unity through those differences. For Dewey, only changing and interrelating processes are real, while the real for Royce includes logical relations that compel our thinking and provide norms for our reflective acts. Was Dewey more of a process philosopher than Royce?

No phase of Dewey's career demarcates when "process" philosophizing first infused his thought. Going back to his earliest publications, Dewey used the word "process" in most of his writings with high frequency, describing

practically every significant matter under discussion as a process, and often as an activity as well. Among early process thinkers in America, calling attention to one's philosophy as basically about "process" came much later. However, that delay does not mean that Dewey was unaware or unaffected by his fundamental allegiance to process. In 1903 he wrote revealing letters to William James, explicitly pointing out the importance of process. One letter mentions how George H. Mead (the student of both James and Royce) calls reality a "Life-Process" (1903.03.15?, 00797: Dewey to James), and a follow-up letter to James expressed his own commitment to process.

> It may be the continued working of the Hegelian bacillus of reconciliation of contradictories in me that makes me feel as if the conception of process gives a basis for uniting the truths of pluralism and monism, and also of necessity and spontaneity. … I cannot help feeling that an adequate analysis of activity would exhibit the world of fact and the world of ideas as two correspondent objective statements of the active process itself—correspondent because each has a work to do, in the doing of which it needs to be helped out by the other. The active process itself transcends any possible objective statement (whether in terms of facts or of ideas) simply for the reason that these objective statements are ultimately incidental to its own ongoing—are for the sake of it.
>
> (1903.03.27, 00800: Dewey to James)

Although this "active process itself" was metaphysically sufficient for Dewey, functioning as absolute enough for his experimentalism, he refused to credit Royce (and related idealists such as Bowne, Howison, and Hocking) with this process view. Subsequent debates let each of them to talk past each other on crucial topics from truth and reality to experience and the absolute (Oppenheim 2005, 291–300). This argumentative futility widened the growing divide among the next generation of philosophical witnesses. The pragmatists around Dewey and James, along with the new realists, felt justified in dismissing idealism, and that distrust was sustained during the rest of the twentieth century. Ironically, that ill-repute attached to idealism also left Dewey's idealistic debts in obscurity, especially for later pragmatists anxious to stay safely naturalistic.

Dewey did praise Royce's work in logic (MW 2:360–361) while developing his own logical theory. He sent a copy of *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903) to Peirce, who responded with a book review and two stern letters in reply. Peirce accused Dewey of psychologism by reducing logical relations to psychological processes and objected to Dewey's turn away from transcendence and whatever realities it may harbor with a mere logical interdiction. There is no logical or empirical basis to foreclosing an extension of inquiry into what is only possible, for Peirce. Concomitantly, Dewey was too comfortable with metaphysical and religious agnosticism, and Royce agreed with that assessment. These disagreements could not be easily reconciled. Peirce's "idealistic" pragmatism occupied a middle ground between Royce's insistence upon the hypothetico-logical knowability of the Absolute and Dewey's limitation of logic's reach to generalizations from actual experience. For Peirce, one cannot say in advance what inquiry into the structure of possibility in mathematics and abduction in logic might confirm in the future. Post-Kantian problems haunted all three philosophers. Something transcends the ongoing work of intelligence. How should it be treated as a recognizable aspect of experience?

Empirical Naturalism

In 1904 Dewey left the University of Chicago for Columbia University and its unique philosophical atmosphere. Naturalism, as it was developing there, was far from just materialism or monistic realism. Dewey adapted this open and pluralistic naturalism to fit with his experimentalism. He began publishing articles in *The Journal of Philosophy*,

continuing to expound his criteria for philosophical adequacy and his view of dynamic reality, and contrasting his views with both idealisms and realisms. Put concisely, two requirements play a paramount role. First, a metaphysical requirement: all of human experience is within the same reality as everything else that is also real. Nothing about experience segregates it apart from the rest of what is real. Second was an epistemological requirement: an account of experience's continuity with the rest of reality is compatible with understanding that continuity. Nothing about experience prevents our knowing how experiences are within reality.

Dewey asserted the identity of experience and reality in such articles as "The Realism of Pragmatism" (1905b), "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" (1905a), and "Reality as Experience" (1906). The first article seemed to assert materialism, with a decidedly Darwinian flavor: "Psychical things are thus themselves realistically conceived; they can be described and identified in biological and physiological terms, in terms (with adequate science) of chemicophysical correspondents. … Their origin as existences can be stated *and must be stated* in terms of adjustments and maladjustments among habits, biological functions" (MW 3:154–155, our emphasis). The second article sounded like subjective idealism: "things are what they are experienced to be" (MW 3:159). The third article affirmed a tenet associated with absolute idealism: "the assimilation to each other of the ideas of experience and reality" (MW 3:101). Dewey expected such pronouncements to be mutually coherent and supportive; most of his readers were left confused, despite another ten years of clarifications.

These three views can be reconciled, starting with the way that mental events are within experience, but noting how experience is a vastly broader realm for Dewey than whatever reaches self-awareness or thoughtful attention. Dewey agreed with James's empiricist claim that consciousness does not have its own kind of existence, so "experience" is not consciousness and certainly not just the content of mental matters. He also agreed with Frederick Woodbridge's naturalistic statement of this same view, taking the objects of experience to be real entities rather than simulacra of objects composed of some "stuff" called experience (MW 3:156; Woodbridge 1905). Since natural objects around us are in lived experience, mental events in experience are attempted adjustments of biological functions and biological activities are interactions with environing matters. Therefore, experiencing encompasses both the purposeful organism and the environing matters with which that organism is engaged.

Dewey's abiding appeal to experience for adjudicating the real and the unreal is understandably reminiscent of idealism's prioritization of mind over matter. His repudiation of mechanism and materialism as metaphysically inadequate, coupled with his emphasis on the efficacious power of ideas and ideals, also sound like idealistic views. He was not rejecting his experimental idealism that dated back to 1891, but it was undergoing adaptation for the context of evolution, naturalism, and the scientific attitude. Idealism's antipathy toward science's account of nature arouses his complaint that scientific method must not be subordinated to rationalist dialectic. Yet Dewey withholds from science the right to dictate what is more or less real. Reality does not consist *only* of known matters; anything experienced yet not knowable deserves ontological parity with everything confirmed by science. Everything really is what it is experienced to be, by his postulate of immediate empiricism. Identity, then, is not about reducing external things down to experiential status but instead about situating experiences within the natural realm.

> If biological development be accepted, the subject of experience is at least an animal, continuous with other organic forms in a process of more complex organization. … And experience is not identical with brain action; it is the entire organic agent-patient in all its interaction with the environment, natural and social.
>
> (MW 10:26)

Science can determine where and how experienced events actually persist, by ascertaining how much of nature, which includes the organism, is involved with an experiential episode. (If the subject is peremptorily taken out of nature, the

question is begged against Dewey's ontology, and dualisms proliferate.) Visual illusions are engagements with a very local region of nature—what happens to be focally in the line of sight and its perceptual processing in the brain (MW 8:53–54). Colors have vastly greater import, as they are reliably where broad fields of electromagnetic radiation are activating duly sensitive nervous systems, so colors are neither only external or internal (LW 1:25, 254). Meaningful import therefore correlates with natural extent—that is what Dewey means by the capacity of inference to stretch into nature.

Dewey always insisted that experiential episodes cannot be entirely reduced to, or completely identified with, brain events. Although what the brain is doing cannot be omitted from a full scientific explanation for how the organism is experiencing, no knowledge of brain activity is possible without wider reference to the behavioral guidance the brain is providing, as well as that behavior's purpose within an environing context. In his essay "How Is Mind to Be Known?" (1942) Dewey again explains that

> *behavior* … even on the biological level (without reference to behavior as it is culturally constituted), includes a great deal more than "brain events." Indeed, I have difficulty in seeing how any one can give an intelligible account of cerebral behavior unless that limited mode of behavior is itself descriptively determined in connection with the whole scheme of what is known about behavior in its widest biological sense—a sense in which interaction with environmental conditions is included.
>
> (LW 15:33)

Even if cortex, conduct, and circumstance are so coordinated, what really is experience, that philosophy must be so mindful of it? If Dewey's mature philosophy truly left idealism behind in order to adequately frame a pragmatic naturalism, why should the term "experience" survive to denote anything ontologically important? Yet Dewey refused to surrender the term, at the high cost of perpetuating metaphysical misunderstandings. His final despair at evading modern philosophy's view of experience as psychological and subjective allowed him to suggest "culture" as a substitute (LW 1:361–362). However, while human experience is thoroughly cultural, "culture" is not a full substitute for the ontological and epistemic roles that Dewey required from "experience." For Dewey, animals such as fish, frogs, and finches are experiencing the world without culture; and new knowledge is learned by specialized inquirers far in advance of their culture. Furthermore, the variety of naturalism advocated by Dewey must challenge subjectivist categorizations for experience with arguments more ontological and metaphysical than anthropological. Such arguments are at the heart of his major books, such as *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929b), and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938).

Experience and Nature announces what and where experience is:

> [E]xperience is of as well as in nature. It is not experience which is experienced, but nature—stones, plants, animals, diseases, health, temperature, electricity, and so on. Things interacting in certain ways are experience; they are what is experienced. Linked in certain other ways with another natural object—the human organism—they are how things are experienced as well. Experience thus reaches down into nature; it has depth. It also has breadth and to an indefinitely elastic extent. It stretches. That stretch constitutes inference.
>
> (LW 1:12–13)

To ensure than inference, as a mental process, is entirely experiential *and* natural (not subjective or transcendental), Dewey denied that mind and body could be ontologically separated, even if they should be functionally and logically distinguished. *Experience and Nature* proposes "body-mind" to characterize complex organisms.

> Unless vital organizations were organizations *of* antecedent natural events, the living creature would have no natural connections; it would not be pertinent to its environment nor its environment relevant to it; the latter would not be usable, material of nutrition and defence. In similar fashion, unless "mind" was, in its existential occurrence, an organization *of* physiological or vital affairs and unless its functions developed out of the patterns of organic behavior, it would have no pertinency to nature, and nature would not be the appropriate scene of its inventions and plans, nor the subject-matter of its knowledge.
>
> (LW 1:217–218)

Dewey's view that experiencing is entirely natural contravenes abiding presumptions in philosophy. Critics either insisted that he must be a materialist willing to discard what is so experiential for what is just physical or that he must be an idealist eager to absorb into the subjective what is truly objective. Yet his philosophy transcends those dichotomies. Scientific materialism mistakenly holds that nature is only what nature may do when human thinking is absent; intellectualist idealism mistakenly holds that nature is only what nature must do when human thinking is present. Dewey's empirical naturalism instead credits nature with an indefinite multiplicity of interacting activities, with organic perceiving and exploring among them. Knowing is a rigorous mode of thoughtful exploratory engagement *with* and *within* nature, and there is nothing about observation or knowledge rendering it unnatural.

In *Experience and Nature* (1925), Dewey refers to his philosophy as "empirical naturalism" (LW 1:4). In response to George Santayana's accusation that Dewey unduly privileges experience's perspective on nature, he replied that nature is nothing but perspectival: everything is both particularly somewhere and inherently related to other matters.

> Since experience is both individualized and associational and since experience is continuous with nature as background, as a naturalist I find nature is also both. In citing Mr. Santayana's denial that nature has here, now, and perspective, I found myself in stating my own view compelled to use the plural form:—heres, nows, perspectives. … It is absurd to confer upon nature a single here, now, and perspective, and if that were the only alternative, I should agree with Mr. Santayana in his denial. But there are an indefinite multitude of heres, nows, and perspectives. As many as there are existences.
>
> (LW 3:80)

That multiplicity to existence/experience allows for a perspectival and pluralistic naturalism.

This admitted multiplicity elicits idealism's offer to explain experience's organization into the meaningful consistencies and necessities for knowledge. Dewey declines that offer without making empiricism's typical retort, that perception undistorted by idealized inference conveys abundant information for knowing. *The Quest for Certainty* (1929b) points out their common premise, which is also shared by self-proclaimed realists, that knowledge's test is some pre-established reality to which human thinking should conform. Irrespective of whether that reality is pre-set by reason, perception, or nature, those philosophies agree that the contribution of thinking must not stray into originality if it aims at knowledge of truth (LW 4:87). Dewey took the contrary view: ideas selectively track the evident associations among things to discover interconnections useful for reliably transforming those things. That intellectual function for ideas is exemplified in science. "It was logically inevitable that as science proceeded on its experimental path it would sooner or later become clear that all conceptions, all intellectual descriptions, must be formulated in terms of operations, actual or imaginatively possible" (LW 4:95). Ideas must make a real difference to the surrounding world, not because thought pre-sets what the world must be but because thinking transforms what the world can be. "A genuine idealism and one compatible with science will emerge as soon as philosophy accepts the teaching of science that ideas are statements not of what is or has been but of acts to be performed … ideas are worthless except as they

pass into actions which rearrange and reconstruct in some way, be it little or large, the world in which we live" (LW 4:111).

For Dewey to encourage an idealism compatible with science, rather than a scientific realism aligned with science, makes one wonder how naturalistic his philosophy could be. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938) emphasizes how logic and philosophy of science must adapt to modern science's interest in relations, not essences or substances. The function of theoretical descriptions of postulated entities is primarily to render natural changes more predictable, not to accurately represent inherent features of those entities. What is most realistic about well-confirmed conceptions of theoretical entities is their detectably dynamic characters—their propensities for altering while affected by other changing entities. Accordingly, experienced qualities of our environs are in no way threatened by science (LW 12:119–120). To worry that objects known by science lack familiar qualities, and then rescue those qualities by situating them in a subjective realm apart from nature, opens up pointless metaphysical puzzles and leaves scientific method mysterious.

At the conclusion of the *Logic*, Dewey sorts out major theories of knowledge by their treatment (well, maltreatment) of reflective inquiry. Subjective empiricisms and idealisms, and every type of positivism, place their confidence in "verifiable" evident matters while distrusting scientific inferences that alter the import of those matters (LW 12:511–512, 518–521). Rationalist idealisms (Kant is the primary target) ignore the experimental inquiries into transformable situations where reasonings acquire their limited power, instead erecting reason into a universally normative power to guarantee uniform necessities (LW 12:521–524). As for absolute idealism, it admits the incompleteness of human judgment but faults judgment for falling so short of knowledge's final unity that such inadequacy is only redeemable by the prior ultimate reality of that unity (LW 12:524–526). The rivals to Dewey's empirical naturalism each exaggerate the importance of one chosen phase of inquiry, and those philosophies only maintain a dialectical advantage by faulting another isolated phase of inquiry for inadequacy.

Ideal-Realism

Dewey's mature philosophy of instrumentalism, or experimental idealism, can be equally viewed as a perspectival naturalism that combines idealism with realism. Insights and improvements between 1925 and 1938, influenced by C. S. Peirce and A. N. Whitehead, include his recasting of knowing as an intrinsically temporal process, so that transformation and transaction are the operational basis of inquiry. Inquiry also became, for Dewey, a deeply human form of engagement with nature not only as it can be known but also as it can be appreciated, revered, and valued for our moral and political prospects. The metaphysical chasm between knowing and the known was closed, but the greater project remained: the functional unification of fact and value and the demonstration that ideals are real. In *Individualism, Old and New* (1929a), Dewey described his philosophy: "a naturalism which perceives that man with his habits, institutions, desires, thoughts, aspirations, ideals and struggles, is within nature, an integral part of it, has the philosophical foundation and the practical inspiration for effort to employ nature as an ally of human ideals and goods such as no dualism can possibly provide" (LW 5:114).

Two central works by Dewey offer the philosophical fulfillment of this naturalism: *Art as Experience* (1934) and *A Common Faith* (1934). Dewey's aesthetics falls outside the purview of this chapter; here we examine the organicism inherent to his approach to ethical ideals. The 1932 edition of *Ethics* by Dewey and James Tufts presents a pragmatist moral psychology and moral philosophy, without determining the ontology of values and ideals. *A Common Faith*, Dewey's Gifford Lectures, accounts for the real potency of ideals by invoking religious experience, piety, and God.

Dewey responded to this lectureship's invitation to explore natural theology by addressing "the religious phase of experience" (LW 9:4). He expected that subtracting supernaturalism from religiosity would dismay traditional theists, while situating God within nature would disappoint atheists. Overtly, the three chapters of *A Common Faith* explain what it means to be religious, how religiously-held ideals function, and where ethico-religious communities can flourish. The first chapter effectively supplies Dewey's response to James, the second chapter responds to Santayana, and the third chapter constitutes his response to Royce. These three philosophies surround his own empirical naturalism with partially agreeable yet divergent worldviews. James is the sensitive experimentalist who was held back by underdeveloped categories (unlike Royce); Santayana is the metaphysical materialist who stunted the individual self (unlike James); Royce is the righteous communitarian who forestalled tragedy with unnatural hopes (unlike Santayana). Dewey sought a combination of experimental, natural, and communal perspectives in order to occupy the middle ground, as neither toughminded nor tenderminded, twice-born in James's sense, with assurances that intelligence is our best hope for worthy societies as the common fruit of religious experience.

Dewey begins on common ground with James's second lecture of the *Varieties of Religious Experience* on the course of historical religions and the significance of personal faith for religions. However, he rejects certain categories upon which James relied, especially what James called "religion in general" and its supposed link with "unseen powers" (LW 9:6–8). Dewey focuses only on what James described as "the essence of religious experiences, the thing by which we finally must judge them," which for both pragmatists "must be that element or quality in them which we can meet nowhere else" (James 1929, 45). Dewey goes further than James by clarifying why "the religious" is no separate matter destined only for cultivation within religion. Religious exclusivity is instilled through institutionalized doctrine to perpetuate supernaturalist religions. Regrettably, that insularity distorts the natural function of religiosity and renders mysterious the role played by devout faith within social affairs.

According to Dewey, people do not have religious experiences because there are religions, nor do religions deserve credence because people have religious experiences. James more than flirted with the first view, but he did not sufficiently appreciate the implications of the second view. If "the religious" should only denote "attitudes that may be taken toward every object and every proposed end or ideal" and "lend deep and enduring support to the processes of living" (LW 9:8, 12) then that distinctive quality may be present in anyone's ongoing devotion to worldly affairs. Religiosity enlivens every individual's committed participation in communal improvement. Dewey denies any monopoly claimed by religions over arousing such commitment—religious fidelity is already immanent within the ethical life, or it is nowhere. Religiosity must morally unify the self (as James had claimed), and Dewey adds that a person's ideal ends must unify one with the world where moral action makes its difference (LW 9:16–17). If devotion to a religion instead sets an individual's duties against each other and ensures conflicts among the endeavors that one pursues, this disunity is more unethical and fanatical than religious.

Dewey concludes the first chapter by presaging his dispute with Santayana, who had notably praised the naturality and justness of piety in *Reason in Religion* (1905). In Dewey's own view,

> Natural piety is not of necessity either a fatalistic acquiescence in natural happenings or a romantic idealization of the world. It may rest upon a just sense of nature as the whole of which we are parts, while it also recognizes that we are parts that are marked by intelligence and purpose, having the capacity to strive by their aid to bring conditions into greater consonance with what is humanly desirable. Such piety is an inherent constituent of a just perspective in life.
>
> (LW 9:18)

Dewey agreed that a sense of reverent dependency on the world's ways is essential to mature religiosity. The second chapter develops his alternative to Santayana's materialistic fatalism and purely aesthetic religiosity.

Dewey was hostile toward the supremely unseen and unknowable, in either its spiritualist manifestations (inflating "liberal" religion) or its materialist versions (echoing Herbert Spencer), calling it "a shadow cast by the eclipse of the supernatural" (LW 9:57). Dewey had already complained that Santayana's version of naturalism is inhumanly "inarticulate, a kneeling, before the unknowable" (LW 3:74), in reaction to Santayana's 1923 lecture "The Unknowable" where he allied with the Unknowable of Spencer (Santayana 1936, 162). Santayana judges, as does Dewey (and Royce), that philosophy should not postulate the intrinsically unknowable, although human knowledge is evidently limited and fallible. But Dewey parts ways with Santayana when skepticism, even when grounded on what is known of nature, dictates too much about life. Santayana asserts: "How far knowledge is possible, therefore, can never be determined without first knowing the circumstances; and the very notion of knowledge … is a notion that never could be framed without confident experience of sundry objects known and of persons able to know them" (Santayana 1936, 170–171). The single word "first" in this passage divides Dewey from Santayana. We do not have to know the circumstances (the what and the who) before framing our conception of the object of faith. Does any survey of what is now known, even the knowledge from the physical sciences, really have the right to dictate how intelligence operates and what it may operate upon? For Dewey, Santayana's fatalistic materialism is just as culpable for isolating religious experience from the rest of life as any revelatory religion.

Dewey warns against "the general tendency to mark off two distinct realms in one of which science has jurisdiction, while in the other, special modes of immediate knowledge of religious objects have authority. This dualism as it operates in contemporary interpretation of mystic experience in order to validate certain beliefs is but a reinstatement of the old dualism between the natural and the supernatural" (LW 9:26–27). This warning is delivered to science just as sternly as religion: scientific experience, even generously construed (as in Spencer and Santayana), has no more privileged access to truth and existence than religious experience has. The way that Santayana denies to the objects of religious contemplation any efficacy in the world does not exempt his synoptic naturalism from Dewey's critique. Imagination is surely essential to our appreciation of ideals, but our anticipation of what could become real through effort is the point of imagining, not a mystical adoration of the impossible. Dewey scolds Santayana in the first chapter for letting imagination play only a ancillary role instead of a harmonizing role in the ongoing life of the self (LW 9:13–14). The second chapter closes the trap on Santayana. Isolating faith's object in its own realm of being, as Santayana does, because our capacities seem so feeble in contrast to nature's powers, corrupts the true nature of ideals:

> It is admitted that the objects of religion are ideal in contrast with our present state. … The assumption that these objects of religion exist already in some realm of Being seems to add nothing to their force, while it weakens their claim over us as ideals, in so far as it bases that claim upon matters that are intellectually dubious. The question narrows itself to this: Are the ideals that move us genuinely ideal or are they ideal only in contrast with our present estate?
>
> (LW 9:29)

In the next paragraph, in defiance of both supernaturalism and materialism, Dewey sketches a realistic conception of a potently ideal God amenable to intelligence and effective action.

Is Dewey's God naturally real or merely ideal as a subjective idea or transcendental postulate? Unless "ideal" is summarily relegated to "fantasy," ideals are naturally real precisely where, like anything real, they make a dynamic difference: "the reality of ideal ends as ideals is vouched for by their undeniable power in action" (LW 9:30). Where is this dynamic activity? God is transactionally real where environing forces work in concert with ethical achievements

(LW 9:34–35; see Shook 2018). But this natural God in itself is not destined to be the object of religious faith. Person and world, in a unified whole, are the objectives of religious faith. They are neither merely felt nor merely known, and they are not felt or known in their fullness. The fullness comes by way of imagination; the proper philosophical response is audacious speculation, albeit with due humility. Yet these are the ideal ends whereby the "self" is unified through religious experience. Our faith is that we can together become what we ardently desire to be as flourishing persons.

In the third chapter, Dewey argues that the natural home of religiosity must be larger than any church, or an entire religion. Dewey adapts from Royce the language of community in a most democratic and pluralistic vein. In its totality, the "community of causes and consequences" in which all persons actual and future are entwined has to exceed intellectual knowing but not imaginative valuation (LW 9:56). Dewey's final task in *A Common Faith* is to adjust Royce's idealistic philosophy of religion to his own imaginative vision. Royce's ideal ends were *not* imagined, although they did call out to the will of whoever served a cause. Here Dewey and Royce agree: the will and human desire is the requisite power of response to religious experience. For Royce (1913), as *The Problem of Christianity* and other writings argue, proper objects of faith can be logically inferred from fragmentary and tragic experience. Dewey did not accept this kind of logical method, yet the ideal of community defended by Royce resonated with Dewey's view of the ideal unification of person and world. Within this encompassing growing whole, Dewey finds reason to seek grace in the doings and sufferings of the human community (LW 9:57).

Dewey's ideal-realism, exemplified in *A Common Faith*, represents the culmination of his reconstruction of absolutism into the experimentalism needed for an empirical naturalism. The fundamental unity of experience and existence in his philosophy is the key to interpreting Dewey's relationship with idealism, religion, and metaphysics.

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Series abbreviations for *The Collected Works*:
EW *The Early Works* (1882–98)
MW *The Middle Works* (1899–1924)
LW *The Later Works* (1925–53)

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Notes:

([1]) They include John J. McDermott, Richard Bernstein, H. S. Thayer, Raymond Boisvert, Douglas Anderson, Richard Hart, Cornel West, and Dwayne Tunstall.

([2]) These names come to our mind: Henry Nelson Wieman, Victor Kestenbaum, Jennifer Welchman, Frank Oppenheim, James A. Good, and Stephen Rockefeller. We wish to particularly draw attention to Oppenheim (2005).

([3]) With regret we cannot do justice to most of the idealist-minded philosophers in dialogue with Dewey. Charles S. Peirce was a keen critic from 1894 until 1904, while Josiah Royce was prominent during 1910 until 1916. Edgar Sheffield Brightman was perhaps the most talented idealistic critic from the late 1920s onward. A.O. Lovejoy, C.I. Lewis, John Elof Boodin, William Ernest Hocking, and Charles Hartshorne were also important voices in the "idealistic" critique of Dewey.

([4]) Quoted by Herbert W. Schneider in Lamont (1959, 15). Dewey was referring to Coleridge (1829).

([5]) Dewey makes one more mention of personalism as a rival to totalitarianism, which he still perceived as an excessive individualism (LW 15:220–221). Dewey is probably referring to Emanuel Mounier's (1938) *A Personalist Manifesto* (chap. 2), but he oversimplifies its view. Dewey also mentioned personalism in a letter to Sidney Hook (1946.03.08, 13145), citing Jacques Maritain by name. What Dewey thought about the label of personalism does not deter our exposition. Personalism is the convenient label for a metaphysical stance held by James, Royce, arguably Peirce, and many more idealists during Dewey's times such as B. P. Bowne, G. H. Howison, and E. S. Brightman. See Bengtsson (2006).

([6]) A close comparison of Royce's *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* with James's *The Principles of Psychology* shows how James preserves the empirical and phenomenological insights of Royce but denudes them of their dialectical and explicitly idealist context, especially with regard to theories of attention, the stream of consciousness, and the role of doubt in relation to postulation (Auxier 2013, chap. 7). Royce and James should be both credited with the primary insights; they were in more or less constant conversation from 1882 onward, but Royce published his book first. As for Dewey, he perceived Royce's position but kept a greater distance. Dewey does cite *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* three times in his *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (1891), which Royce promptly reviewed.

([7]) James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* kept Dewey cognizant of religious experience as a subfield in psychology and social thought. Dewey told a friend that "a chapter in his Varieties of Religious Experience are I think the best statements of 'pragmatism'" (1906.05.26, 02507: Dewey to Frank Manny).

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