

GOD IN DEWEY'S THOUGHT

THE CONCEPT OF GOD
IN
JOHN DEWEY'S THOUGHT

By
HAROLD GLEN MOWAT, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Harold Glen Mowat, B.A. (Western Ontario)

SUPERVISOR: Mr. L. I. Greenspan

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis is an exposition and critical evaluation of the naturalistic concept of God developed by John Dewey in his writings. Included in the examination is an analysis devoted to clarifying mistaken opinions regarding Dewey's attitude toward religion, his reason for entering into the subject, the critical problem for him, and his attitude toward traditional conceptions of God. An examination of his arguments rejecting the supernatural status of an antecedent existing reality and a modern theistic concept is undertaken to show that: (1) This leads him to formulate a concept of God free from the deficiencies he ascribes to them. (2) His own criticisms can in turn be levelled against his positive construction. It is maintained, in conclusion, that his concept of God is incompatible with his professed naturalism.

PREFACE

In every age, religious conceptions and values stand subject to interpretation and modification in order that they may become more congenial and appropriate to contemporary needs. Though the majority of this is undertaken by those actively engaged within the religious framework itself, perceptive criticisms and constructions often come from those formally outside this sphere. One secular critic of religious institutions and beliefs is John Dewey, who turns a mature mind to religious problems and issues late in his career.

Apart from several articles, his single significant work devoted to the subject of religion remains the short, penetrating, often obscure, and certainly limited analysis, entitled A Common Faith.¹ It attempts to offer, among other things, a functional concept of God. As could be expected from a contemporary naturalist, this concept represents a radical alternative to traditional accounts. Thus it stands, an object of philosophical and theological curiosity.

Whether or not treatment of Dewey's thought on God is deserving of effort is a matter for conjecture. But it is clear from examination, that it has been, for more than thirty years, a subject of considerable controversy

and commentaries often lacking in careful scrutiny and analysis. Quite possibly this is attributable, on the one hand, to optimistic thinkers whose zeal led them to uphold it as a work of great vision. On the other hand, hostile combatants have been prone to wield the axe of bias to strike it down. In any case, it has been flagrantly misrepresented.

While Dewey's intention, to construct a naturalistic concept of God suitable for contemporary man, may be cited for merit, the outcome is unable to receive as much. The final judgement, based upon this examination, weighs against him. Just as Dewey undertakes to criticize the traditional conception of God and a contemporary theistic view, likewise an equally critical approach is adopted to treat his doctrine. However, in doing so, no particular theological position is employed to "pry him apart." At the same time, effort is devoted to attempting to reconstruct a valid interpretation of his concept of God.

In conducting this study I have been aided by the holdings of two libraries. To the staff of Columbia University Library and the University of Michigan Library must go my sincere appreciation for making resource material available to me. Added to this must be recognized those on the staff of Mills Memorial Library at McMaster who efficiently procured the requested inter-library loans.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| DESCRIPTIVE NOTE..... | iii |
| PREFACE..... | iv |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| CHAPTER ONE | |
| BACKGROUND..... | 8 |
| CHAPTER TWO | |
| THE CASE AGAINST GOD | |
| A. God as Existent..... | 27 |
| B. God as Supernatural..... | 37 |
| C. God of the Liberal Modernists.. | 59 |
| D. Conclusions..... | 65 |
| CHAPTER THREE | |
| GOD IN DEWEY'S THOUGHT | |
| A. Dewey's Interpretation of God.. | 70 |
| B. Critique..... | 84 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 101 |
| NOTES AND REFERENCES..... | 106 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 137 |

INTRODUCTION

The two centuries spanning the birth of Descartes to the death of Kant in 1804 gave rise, according to James Collins, to three definite trends conspiring to make the natural world seem devoid of divine significance. These trends are: (1) The mathematicizing of nature and technical manipulation. (2) The emphasis of God's transcendence at the expense of His immanence. (3) The phenomenizing of sensible things.¹ Given these factors two courses remained for the minds of the nineteenth century, either the divine could be excluded or nature could be divinized. The former represented various atheistic positions while the latter was the refuge of Hegel and the transcendental idealists. However, if one found atheism to be undesirable and the divinization of nature unacceptable, did that then mean the only alternative was a return to the supernatural God of the Christian tradition?

This represents an enticing challenge. One respondent to its summons is John Dewey. He offers, in reply, a scientifically oriented "Naturalism," a doctrine, to quote Sterling Lamprecht, one of its adherents, which:

means a philosophical position, empirical in method, that regards everything that exists or occurs to be conditioned in its existence or occurrence by causal factors within one all-encompassing system of nature, however 'spiritual'

or purposeful or rational some of those things and events may in their functions and values prove to be.²

In one very real sense this doctrine means a radical psychologizing in its approach to God. It considers the idea of God to be a concept which man has concerning God as opposed to earlier, pre-Hegelian, notions of the idea of God as an exemplar in the divine mind.

The purpose of this thesis is to critically examine and evaluate John Dewey's naturalistic concept of God. Dewey emphatically maintains his concept guarantees all of the things traditional religionists prize and connect with their God. It will be shown that he attempts to reconstruct a concept of God freed from the deficiencies he ascribes to the supernatural God of the Christian tradition plus a liberal modern conception. This requires: (1) Examining his arguments against the traditional and liberal modernist conceptions of God. (2) Offering a viable interpretation of his concept of God. Following this, a critique of his naturalistic God will be given. It will be argued that: (1) Three of the four arguments employed by Dewey to criticize the traditionalists and liberal modernists can, in turn, be levelled against his concept of God. (2) His concept of God is not compatible with his professed naturalism. His emphasis on scientific verifiability requires he give up his concept of God.

In developing his polemic against the traditional conception of God and the God of the liberal modernists, it will be demonstrated in relation to the former that his objections rest on disputing the attribution of "existence" to their Deity, and the status of "supernatural" assigned to God. In the first instance he discredits the notion of existence by maintaining a general agreement with three of the Kantian refutations. This is followed by a moral argument and an argument centering on religious experience. However, the major emphasis of his attack focuses on the second course. Examination of his major philosophical works discloses he would reject the supernatural on four counts: (1) The supernatural rests on a fallacy. (2) It relies on a desire for security. (3) It is based on an invalid method of knowing. (4) It acts as a hindrance to science and religion. As for the latter conception, the liberal modernist, he criticizes this doctrine for not breaking completely with the tradition yet attempting to reconstruct a concept of God meeting the demands of a modern world. Secondly, he rejects their method as a valid means for establishing God.

Though one commentator, Corliss Lamont, forcefully argues Dewey did not wish to incorporate a concept of God into his philosophy, it will be shown he feels a professed

need for such a concept and in fact it is intended to serve a specific functional value, the engendering of an emotive effect. Secondly, it is intended to serve as a middle course between having to accept a supernaturalism on the one hand or a materialism on the other.

The problem confronting Dewey is to formulate a concept of God identifying with something within nature but without the attribution of personality or existential identifiability attending it. His stress on situational dependency is cited as the clue to understanding his progeny. This means when he advocates that a concept of God must contain an identification with the ideal and the actual in a union, he is seeking to offer a concept referring to a situation in which ideal and actual become features manifesting themselves in a constant uniting. This, it will be argued, has the value of not forcing him to identify his God with either the ideal (and hence be charged with idealism) or the actual in isolation. He is thereby attempting to overcome a dualism by making his God the product of an imaginary reflex between the ideal and the actual. However, he is faced with the issue of satisfying his demand for the cognitively real in a concept of God. He attempts to ingrain this into his construction by making the existent conditions providing the basic foundation for his imaginary projections (God) cognitively real and open to empirical verification.

To understand the concept of God formulated by Dewey requires more than a familiarity with what is given in A Common Faith. Prior to 1933 his writings contain no serious sustained confrontation with religious issues and the subject of God. This, as commentators recognize, is a result of his marginal interest in such problems.³ But if his interest is only marginal why does he suddenly have a change of heart? There is no unanimity of opinion accounting for this (the views of Nolan Jacobson and Howard Parsons are cited as examples). To settle this controversy it will be argued that Dewey's disinterest is not personal but arises from his inability to attach importance to religious questions as genuine philosophical problems. What leads him to have a change of heart is his recognition of a vital problem, namely, the status of "supernatural" assigned God. He wants to respond to this problem because of the emphasis he places on the need to work on genuine problems confronting men. That he can respond is due to his having a mature philosophy at his disposal, a philosophy whose development is accompanied with a corresponding development in religious views. This leads him to come to grips with critical religious thought and he begins his labours offering an attack on the theistic interpretation of the liberal modernists' concept of God.

Dewey's formal entrance into the arena of religious

questions in 1933 discloses a sympathy for conceiving a God operative within the continuity of natural processes, but in no part transcendent or incapable of empirical verification. This represents a significant developmental stage in the formation of his naturalistic concept of God. It amplifies the firm secular orientation of his religious thought. This orientation, as examination into his religious and social background illustrates, is a characteristic of his thought following his early disavowal of the Congregational Faith. It stresses the empirical basis for the power of cultural environment---a derivative gleaned from the Hegelian system---and an intellectual regard for social interests and problems. This, it will be shown, is predominately attributable to three factors: (1) The scientific perspective and experimental method emerges as a means for reconciling intellectual techniques with the concrete diversity of experienced things. (2) His close adherence to the democratic force in the social realm as an essential ingredient for social unity. (3) He implicitly accepts his wife's belief in the religious attitude as indigenous in natural experience. The importance of the first two of these factors for his religious thought is considerable. They are merged and made the guidelines according to which religious development must adhere and remain consistent.

It will be demonstrated Dewey gives religion and God a social as opposed to individual fix. A clear example of this is in evidence when he infuses morality into his concept of God. He relies on a correspondence between goods derived from human communication and ideal ends which unite to form God. This ultimately means resorting to an ethical atomism. Nevertheless, he recognizes the unity of ideal ends to be a worthwhile projection for men to respond to as worthy of controlling their desires and choices.

Lastly, it has been a lingering belief in some quarters that Dewey has formed a theistic conception of God. This will be refuted. His concept of God, if the interpretation given in this analysis is correct, is neither monotheistic, polytheistic, nor pantheistic. It is meant to be a postulate, a postulate designed to act as a restorative freeing contemporary man from a sense of inhibiting isolation. It is intended to act as an instrument of social adjustment.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Through his efforts, Dewey, during his lifetime gains enormous esteem and prestige, philosophical and otherwise. As one writer puts it:

In many ways Dewey was the American philosopher of the first half of this century; his thought was a moving force in, and reflected image of, much that was at the center of American life up to the end of the Second World War.¹

The range and scope of Dewey's interests compel him to write on many problems including religion. But his thought, from its earliest days, centers on an attraction to social problems. He accounts for this in his autobiographical sketch written in his seventy-first year with the remark:

Social interests and problems from an early period had to me the intellectual appeal and provided the intellectual sustenance that many seem to have found primarily in religious questions.²

In particular, it is the social categories of communication and participation associated with his philosophy that retain a distinct central importance.³ This is emphasized in his conviction that much of our thought passing as philosophy needs to be reconstructed "from this point of view." The result of doing so, will, he maintains, culminate in "an integrated synthesis in a

philosophy congruous with modern science, and related to actual needs in education, morals, and religion."⁴

The religious thought of Dewey's age is dedicated to the secular point of view and rather than flowing against the current he flows with it. The fruit of his labours is a "religious secularism,"⁵ in which the term "God" explicitly appears. This appearance, queried by some, accepted at face value by others, has, nevertheless, provoked a long debate in scholarly publications, a substantial portion of which is inaccurate and misleading. To understand the meaning and significance of his progeny requires some familiarity with his background, both social and religious.

Dewey was born in 1859 and raised in the small rural New England town of Burlington Vermont. The environment was "typical of settled New England character," bonded with firm communal ties, which from a contemporary focus "might well be criticized for intense moralistic emotional pressure, excited," as his daughter relates in her biography of her father, "by the religious atmosphere, evangelical rather than puritan which surrounded them."⁶ The strength of character of his mother and her ardent religious leaning, as opposed to that of his father, gain ascendancy in shaping the character of her son's formative years and account for his Calvinistic background and membership in the Congregational Church. Nominally this

faith gains Dewey's acceptance for he devotes genuine effort toward believing in its teachings. Regularly, he attends the Sunday services in the White Street Church, and later on, as a young college student at the University of Vermont, serves as a Sunday school teacher.⁷ But between the years 1879 and 1882---his graduation from the University of Vermont and first year of graduate work at Johns Hopkins University---Dewey gives up the formal practice of the Congregational faith. What causes this occurrence Dewey attributes to "personal experiences and not from the effects of philosophical teaching."⁸ Precisely what these "personal experiences" are, Dewey does not mention. All that is known is that this period in his life was one of "trying personal crisis,"⁹ brought on largely, so it seems, by:

the sense of divisions and separations that were..
 ..borne in upon me as a consequent of a heritage
 of New England culture, divisions by way of iso-
 lation of self from the world, of soul from body,
 of nature from God....¹⁰

As a result of this Dewey is left with an "inward laceration" and an accompanying "intense emotional craving."¹¹ His daughter attributes this situation to the fact "his belief was never whole-hearted enough to satisfy his emotional need."¹² However, this may be, he at least manages to allay his craving for intellectual subject-matter while at Johns Hopkins. This is a direct result of a course of study pursued under the Hegelian

scholar George Sylvester Morris. The stimulating introduction Dewey receives to Hegel's thought provides the catalyst he requires to satisfy his emotional yearning. Consequently:

From the idealism of Hegel, as interpreted by Morris, he obtained in his late adolescence that fusion of emotion and intellect for which he had sought unsuccessfully in his boyhood religious experience.¹³

This statement, made by his daughter, is put rather trenchantly while Dewey himself is not willing to admit to, or remember, as much. All he gives assent to is that his introduction to Hegel "operated as an immense release, a liberation."¹⁴ But the Hegelian influence is established as a permanent impression on his thought and writing. To be specific, the actual influence, given by Dewey, of the German scholar is:

The metaphysical idea that an absolute mind is manifest in social institutions dropped out; the idea upon an empirical basis of the power exercised by cultural environment in shaping the ideas, beliefs, and intellectual attitudes of individuals remained. It was a factor in producing my belief that the not uncommon assumption in both psychology and philosophy of a ready-made mind over against a physical world as an object has no empirical support. It was a factor in producing my belief that the only possible psychology, as distinct from a biological account of behavior, is a social psychology. With respect to more technical philosophical matters, the Hegelian emphasis upon continuity and the function of conflict persisted on empirical grounds after my earlier confidence in dialectic had given way to scepticism.¹⁵

In 1884 the offer of an instructorship takes Dewey to the University of Michigan. The subsequent years spent at

Ann Arbor mark a change in his philosophical development. His formal interest in Hegel and continental Idealisms gradually turns, regardless of the fact German thought and English Hegelianism has reached the zenith of attention it commands in the philosophical world familiar with it. Here in Michigan, almost on the frontier between East and West in America, the temper of life within the confine of the social structure makes European "systems" of thought ill-suited. The exercise of the material and mechanical on life and thought cause Dewey, as Sidney Hook states, "to abandon all the old metaphysical lumber he had carried with him from the East and roughhew the beams of a new philosophy."¹⁶ But explicitly how this new environment encroaches upon Dewey to initiate his slow, fifteen year "drift" from Hegelianism¹⁷ is rather unclear. He leaves no personal account for it. A likely explanation for it is based on his enduring desire to find an intellectual technique that would be consistent and capable of being adopted "to the concrete diversity of experienced things."¹⁸ The credibility of this content-
ion is strengthened when it is considered that he develops a formal interest while at Michigan in the experimental psychological studies of G. Standley Hall and William James.¹⁹ The effect of the thoughts of these two men, in particular that of the latter, on Dewey is that: "It worked its way more and more into all my ideas and acted

as a ferment to transform old beliefs."²⁰ The schematism of Hegel's system becomes too artificial for Dewey. The remoteness of its abstractions lacks "the nearness to what is distinctively human." He feels this is offset by the "objective biological approach of the Jamesian psychology." At this date, the scientific perspective begins to hold his attention and it will continue to do so as a distinct mark of his thought.²¹ It is to experimental psychology that he turns to effect a reconciliation between intellectual technique and "the concrete diversity of experienced things." The result of carrying through this reconciliation reflects in the rise of the concept of "experience" in his philosophy--- experience as a series of interpenetrating organic coordinations, experience as plurality. Experience, radically reinterpreted from classical accounts by Dewey becomes the factor by which and in which the world-context is disclosed. Classical accounts regard experience as the agent for disclosing the world-context but Dewey moves one step beyond this, maintaining experience is a reflector for manifold ways in which reality can be approached.²² Thus in his thought, the scientific, social, ethical, aesthetic, and the religious etc., become parts or factors in human life embraced by experience.

Though the trend of Dewey's thought lies with the

experimental, the scientific, he remains closely allied to the idea of democracy working within the social realm as a vital force. This empathy for democracy is a retention from what is initiated and established during his early years in Vermont. The town life of New England endears him to democracy "in its old-fashioned American sense,"²³ not that which is congruent with later labels such as "Americanism" or the financial-industrial policy signified by the terms laissez-faire liberalism. Democracy as a concept enters into the fabric of his philosophical writing quite early and in a most striking manner.²⁴ Singularly, the most striking feature of the concept he envisages and advocates is a firm secular²⁵ emphasis demanded of it. To this end Dewey remains typical of the strong tradition in American life requiring a clear delineation between church and state²⁶ and freedom from religious interference in so far as education is concerned. Instrumentally,²⁷ democracy for Dewey provides an essential ingredient for social unity. And it is out of such social unity, he believes, that "genuine religious unity must grow."²⁸ It is this idea of democracy with accent placed on the secular aspect that helps him promote a critical appraisal of traditional religious institutions.²⁹

Both the democratic concept and the scientific point of view remain separate during the initial stages of

Dewey's developing philosophy. While he retains a profound respect for both, it is not until 1908 that they are brought together with significant results for his religious thought. So emphatic does he insist on this merger and its importance, that science and democracy are made the guidelines according to which religion must take cognizance and develop its framework congruent with their dictates. Twenty-nine years after graduation from the University of Vermont, and as a professor of philosophy at Columbia, he asserts:

So far as education is concerned, those who believe in religion as a natural expression of human experience must devote themselves to the development of the ideas of life which lie implicit in our still new science and our still newer democracy.³⁰

And again in stronger terms: "religious feeling and thought [must be] consistent with modern democracy and modern science."³¹ This point is again repeated and stressed in several later works.³²

During his years of professional teaching at Michigan, Chicago, and finally at Columbia University,³³ Dewey's religious position is never clarified nor elaborated in textual form. Prior to the decade beginning in 1930, his works, with the notable exception of two early articles³⁴ and various references scattered throughout his texts, give witness to at best a marginal interest in the subject of religion and even less to the topic

of God. Consequently, attempts to attribute a well-defined religious position to him or even the framework indicative of a position must rely on examination of his early writings on the subject. To do so is myopic and bound to render him an injustice.³⁵ Early articles and references to religion are not advocations of his explicit treatment. Dewey, at one point, warns one critic about attempting to regard early statements as "prophetic of my later more explicit treatments of religion."³⁶ This, of course, does not mean things said or claimed about religion in early works have no bearing upon later thoughts. On the contrary, Dewey's intent in the warning is simply to be discriminate.

Without contravening his admonition here, it is clear his general attitude, after he leaves the rural setting of Vermont and formal practice of the Congregational faith, inclines him to regard religion as something that must lend itself to social conditioning. Religion for Dewey has "its source in the social and intellectual life of the community or race."³⁷ Failure to recognize this he regards as a major mistake made by those who sought to institutionalize religion. As a consequent of this conviction he issues the plea that "one cause worth battling for is a fusing of the social and religious motives."³⁸

Some of his earlier beliefs and tenets do bear on

his explicit treatment of religion. But it is incorrect to assume or judiciously select any one or number of them as constituting the major influencing component for his later thought. The major contributing factor is not the result of a rejection of an early creed, system of beliefs, or philosophical doctrine. Quite the contrary, if one gives full recognition to Dewey's statement: "the forces that have influenced me have come from persons and from situations more than from books,"³⁹ then analysis must attempt to uncover if this has any application to his religious thought. If a person(s) is the influencing factor then who is it, and what is the nature of the influence? The answer to the first part of the question is his first wife Alice Chipman Dewey whom he marries in 1886. And the answer to the second part is that she:

was undoubtedly largely responsible for the early widening of Dewey's philosophic interests from the commentative and classical to the field of contemporary life....She had a deeply religious nature but had never accepted any church dogma. Her husband acquired from her the belief that a religious attitude was indigenous in natural experience, and that theology and ecclesiastic institutions had benumbed rather than promoted it.⁴⁰

The failure of religion to appear as a subject in distinct written form, two short articles notwithstanding, is not the result of Dewey's personal disinterest in the subject itself. In a private conversation with Herbert Schneider at Columbia University he confesses he discus-

ses the matter so little because he regards the subject as one in which people currently profess little interest.⁴¹ More substantially, this lack of serious confrontation with religious issues Dewey attributes to his own attitude which has fostered "an inability to attach much importance to religion as a philosophic problem,"⁴² primarily, as he states, because:

the effect of that attachment seems to be in the end a subordination of candid philosophic thinking to the alleged but factitious needs of some special convictions.⁴³

Religious beliefs intruding upon the philosophical sphere he regards as anathama, an overthrow of professional ideas. His inclination and preference remains devoted to efforts to render first things first---particular philosophical problems and their solutions---dealing with human problems as encountered in social and political activities.⁴⁴ A close adherence to this task will result, in his opinion, in the fact religious action and belief will, as a matter of course, fall into order. This conviction he bases on the belief "any genuinely sound religious experience could and should adopt itself to whatever beliefs one found oneself intellectually entitled to hold."⁴⁵ This statement, made in an article published in 1930⁴⁶ illustrates Dewey is placing religious experience on a wide footing, a consistent attitude conceived and adopted in the 1892 article "Christianity and Democracy" along with the idea that there is "not one

isolated sphere called religious."⁴⁷ But it must be recalled at one point he does contravene the scope within which religious experience is actually allowed to develop, namely, his qualifying demand expressed in the 1908 article "Religion and Our Schools" and several other works, that religious thought must remain "consistent with modern democracy and modern science." But he leaves this point without explanation thus providing further evidence that his thoughts on religion have not congealed in a definite systematic form prior to the 1930's.

Early in 1933 the pattern changes, Dewey undertakes to examine problems associated with religious thinking in a more formal and systematic manner. What induces him to initiate these inquiries is a point of controversy. He offers no succinct account for the transition from what he regards as an earlier "half-unconscious sense" toward religious experiences to this new formal interest.⁴⁸ Two critics in recent articles examining specific issues contained in Dewey's religious thought offer speculations explaining this metamorphosis.⁴⁹ Noland Jacobson attributes Dewey's interest in questions of religion to "Conditions in America at the time [which] supported a radical rethinking of traditional faiths."⁵⁰ He feels those "conditions impinged upon Dewey and he responded with his usual philosophical vigor."⁵¹ Howard Parsons, on the other hand, prefers to attribute it to Dewey's early religious

training, apart from the formal aspect---that predominant in the 1870's in American universities which stressed theology and intuition⁵²--as having been so ingrained it had "become second nature with him" so that "he could shed the external trappings and intellectual problems of religion."⁵³ Parsons bases this contention on examination of Dewey's definition of "religious faith" as "any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal and against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of convictions of its general and enduring value."⁵⁴ He maintains that it represents in fact, "an American standard version of the Protestant notion of faith in works and of the Pietistic notion of religion as religious experience."⁵⁵

Of the two explanations, the former comes closer to credibility than the latter, but remains too general. However, based on textual evidence the issue can be clarified considerably. On March 22, 1933 (the year before the publication of his major work devoted to religion, A Common Faith) Dewey makes the following statement in an article:

my present attitude toward theology, various creeds and various philosophies of religion developed slowly and pari passu with the general maturing of my philosophical ideas.⁵⁶

This remark, disregarded by critics of Dewey's religious thought, is quite significant. If, as he states,

his views on religion have developed with an equal pace in accord with the maturing of his philosophical ideas, then there is certainly a reason to indicate why he can freely turn to religion at this point while shunning it earlier and make it the subject of a book. There is no doubt, not even by commentators who regard his philosophy as established at different periods during his career,⁵⁷ that by 1934 Dewey's mature philosophy is worked out and published in print.⁵⁸ Given this, it must be reiterated that Dewey's efforts, by his own admission, are constantly and sincerely devoted to alleviating the "problems of men." Now as it happens, immediately before and following the publication of A Common Faith, Dewey considers there to be one very outstanding religious problem requiring urgent attention. In an article "One Current Religious Problem," a reply to a criticism of Dr. Percy Hughes, Dewey states this problem. He writes:

. . . the status of the supernatural, is the current problem for a much larger number. The evidence for this statement is found in what men are saying and writing and even more in what they are doing....The "Idea" or central structure of these organizations [the Roman Catholic and Protestant evangelical churches] is the supernatural, cosmological and historical. On the other hand, there are multitudes who having given up the supernatural, are wondering whether they must in consequence abandon also the religious. This is a genuine and vital current problem for many persons.⁵⁹

The reason why Dewey turns his attention to religious issues is now clear. He recognizes the existence of an

immediate religious problem for many people and his conviction toward working on "the problems of men" warrants his response. That he can respond is due to the fact he feels he has the fruits of a mature philosophy which can be applied to the problem in order to overcome it. This is also significant in that it points to the fact Dewey's initial "concern" for religious problems is now in position to be placed on more than a cursory footing. He publicly exhibits this in his willing entry into a dialogue that arises because of his review of the book Is There A God by Henry Nelson Wieman, Douglas Macintosh and Max Carl Otto in the February 8, 1933 edition of The Christian Century.

Dewey's review represents an attack on what he calls the "liberal modernists" and their attempt to formulate a theistic conception of God consistent with the modern temper, particularly with science and the advance in secular knowledge. A second article, a reply by Dewey, on March 22, considers objections raised by Wieman and Macintosh to Dewey's review. Specifically, Dewey restates and attempts, in this second article, to clarify the points made in the first article. Wieman follows up Dewey's correspondence in a public communication April 5, 1933, citing what he feels is the gulf between his professed theism and that which Dewey ascribes to him. The exchange then breaks off, explanation being provided in

the May 31 editorial of The Christian Century to the point that: "Professor Dewey's other commitments have for the present made it impractical for him to continue the exchange with Professor Wieman...."⁶⁰ When Dewey does reply it is not by way of formal letter continuing the debate with Wieman. It is delivered as the Terry Lectures at Yale University and immediately published under the title A Common Faith.

The importance of the 1933 articles has been highly underrated. Seldom, if ever, have critics taken them as representing a development in Dewey's own religious thought. This oversight is understandable since they do represent, for all practical purposes, a dialogue between Dewey and Wieman (mainly). In the end it is resolved both men are arguing at cross purposes with Dewey denying what Wieman wants to attribute to him. What does need to be stressed is Jacobson's remark that in these articles Dewey is "coming to close grips with critical religious thought for the first time."⁶¹ To this can be added a further qualification. Their importance is magnified when they are viewed, along with Dewey's inclusive philosophical position, as the basis and background for what is developed in part in A Common Faith. Of prime importance as well, is the fact that as a result of the publication of these articles the first misunderstandings of Dewey's religious thought occurs. Had this misunder-

standing not arisen (primarily Wieman's attributing a theistic position to Dewey) much of the problematic character of Dewey's religious thought, as an enduring scholarly passion, would have been substantially diminished.

When A Common Faith is issued following close on these articles, it is met with a mixed reaction mainly by professional theologians,⁶² and again with misunderstandings. Dewey does not attempt in it a staunch defence of the faith in its traditional form, nor is it his purpose to present a critical tract on traditional religion (though admittedly he is highly critical of traditional religion). What he explicitly attempts is:

to show such persons [those who have abandoned supernaturalism] that they still have within their experience all the elements which give the religious attitude its value.⁶³

It is written expressly for "those who have abandoned supernaturalism and who on that account are reproached by traditionalists for having turned their backs on everything religious."⁶⁴ His legacy to this group is a "humanistic Naturalism," a religious secularism,⁶⁵ that attempts to give full consideration and recognition to the contemporary context. But what of God?

As a philosophical doctrine "naturalism" stresses the reality of nature and natural Being. In adhering to this however, it need not necessarily reject a God. But to remain consistent with its presuppositions it is

obliged to reject, among other things, doctrines containing or entailing, in part or whole, dualistic conceptions, e.g., any Being or principle beyond nature, that is, supernatural.

In a seldom noticed passage, Dewey reveals his true attitude toward the traditional concept of God. He then follows it up with a decisive contention. To begin with he asserts:

. . . of the things which traditionalists prize and which they connect exclusively with their own conception of God can be had equally well in the course of human experience in our relations to the natural world and to one another as human beings related in the family, friendship, industry, art, science and citizenship.⁶⁶

Realization of the full magnitude of this leaves one, according to him, with the alternative:

Either then the concept of God can be dropped out as far as genuinely religious experience is concerned, or it must be framed wholly in terms of natural and human relationships involved in our straightaway human experience.⁶⁷

On the basis of this claim God becomes a problem of some importance in Dewey's religious thought and merits attention on at least two definite accounts: (1) His justification of this claim. (2) Should he wish to retain a concept of God in some form then what must its function and characteristics be?

Traditional religionists have long maintained various associations, e.g., value, ideals, morality, faith, etc., with their deity. Given Dewey's above assertion,

such associations would have to be shown to have their referent entirely within "the course of human experience in our relations to the natural world." To carry out this reconstruction does not, as will be shown, easily or automatically free him from possible difficulties.

Not only traditional, but certain modern conceptions of God, conflict with naturalistic interpretations. To understand and illumine Dewey's position requires examining what it is he specifically objects to in these alien prescriptions and his reasons for doing so. It will be demonstrated that Dewey's arguments against these non-naturalistic views have, in turn, a depreciatory result for the concept of God he formulates.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CASE AGAINST GOD

In this Chapter evidence will be introduced to illustrate that Dewey's polemic is directed against: (1) Traditional notions ascribing (a) "existence" to God, and (b) the status of "supernatural" assigned to God. (2) A modern concept of God that fails, in his opinion, to break with the tradition but nevertheless endeavours to construct a viable conception of Deity.

A. God as Existent

"Religions," as Dewey states in A Common Faith, "have traditionally been allied with ideas of the supernatural, and....the necessity for a Supernatural Being.... that is beyond the power of nature."¹ Further, "these derivations are encumbrances and....what is genuinely religious will undergo an emancipation when it is relieved from them."²

Belief in a supernatural Being, Deity, or God, has been an integral part of traditional Christian religion, and conceptions of such a Being have ranged, as Dewey maintains, "from theism to mild deism."³ To support these beliefs various arguments have been advanced to justify that the Deity or God exists. Traditional arguments

attempting to "prove" God's existence are manifold, hence it has become somewhat of a custom to delineate them by employing the use of labels---ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral, and more recently what is described as from "religious experience."

Ascribing "existence" to a supernatural Being, Deity, or God, does not escape Dewey's attention and he somewhat sardonically remarks: "the existence or non-existence of such a God is something to get excited about."⁴ In his case however, the degree of excitement raised by this issue is vitiated by his refusal to be aroused, to the extent of preferring not to involve himself formally with lengthy transcriptions of these arguments and their entailments. Dewey does not deal directly with the traditional "proofs" (except for the moral and religious experience arguments). Yet this deficiency, if it could be called that, is offset by comments contained in his works which indicate he does have an attitude bearing on each of these traditional arguments. Added to this is a suspicion Dewey holds with Immanuel Kant's critique regarding the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments. This follows from his statement:

. . .there are many religionists who are now dissatisfied with the older "proofs" of the existence of God, those that go by the name ontological, cosmological, and teleological. The cause of the dissatisfaction is perhaps not so much the arguments that Kant used to show the insufficiency of these alleged proofs, as it is the growing feeling that

they are too formal to offer any support to religion in action.⁵

The extent to which Dewey holds with the Kantian critique plus his rejection of the moral and "religious experience" arguments can be illustrated in a separate consideration of each of the arguments in turn.

1. The Ontological Argument. This argument, generally associated with its inceptor the Benedictine Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) and formulated in his work The Proslogium, contends that the concept of God implies God's existence.⁶ Immanuel Kant's objection to this reasoning in simplified form is that existence cannot be deduced from a concept.⁷ In one of his minor philosophical works Dewey appears to be in agreement with Kant. The Problems of Men contains the following assertion:

No amount of purely deductive manipulation of abstractions brings a resulting conclusion any nearer a concrete fact than were the original premises. Deduction introduces in regular sequence new ideas, and thus complicates the general content. But to suppose that by complicating the content of a proposition we get nearer the individual of experience is the fallacy at once of mediaeval realism and of the ontological argument for the existence of God.⁸

In other words, Dewey regards the attribution of "existence" to a Deity by deductive argument to be fallacious.

2. The Cosmological Argument. A classical example of this argument finds expression in the Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas.⁹ This argument seeks to prove God's existence follows from the fact things exist. As such, it re-

lies on a regress of causes presupposing causes until finally stopping at a cause which is not dependent upon something else for its existence. Kant agrees everything that happens has a cause.¹⁰ But he objects to this argument in that:

. . .all laws governing the transition from effects to causes, all synthesis and extension of our knowledge, refer to nothing but possible experience, and therefore solely to objects of the sensible world, and apart from them can have no meaning whatsoever.¹¹

For Kant it may be permissible to assume the existence of God as the cause of all effects in order to aid reason seeking the unity of causes, but postulating the necessary existence of a Being, God, is illegitimate. The contingency of the phenomenal world and the absolute necessity of God cannot be established by human reason.

In a similar manner, Dewey's opposition to a cosmological account would follow from his disagreement of causal conceptions in general. He maintains that: "The notion of causal explanation involved in both conceptions [mechanistic metaphysics and spiritual metaphysics] implies a breach in the continuity of historic processes."¹² Both of these views he regards as resting on a fallacy, the break up "of a continuity of historical change into two separate parts...."¹³ Causality, in his opinion, is just:

another name for the sequential order itself; and since this is an order of a history having a begin-

ning and end, there is nothing more absurd than setting causality over against either initiation or finality.¹⁴

Dewey's case against a cosmological argument for the existence of God ensues from the empirical view of causality represented here and subsequently rests on the denial of metaphysical or spiritualistic causality as incapable of empirical verification.

3. The Teleological Argument. Sometimes referred to as the argument from design or with Kant the physico-theological argument, it is formulated by contending events, objects, etc., reveal a type or relationship suggestive of a purpose or end toward which they move. Simply, it is inferring the existence of God from the nature and arrangement of the actual world. Kant objected to it on the basis of apodictic certainty. As an argument by analogy it could not be conclusive and could not establish a world-creator to which everything is subject.¹⁵

Dewey's rejection of teleological interpretations is contained in several comments:

The traditional conception of natural ends was to the effect that nature does nothing in vain; the accepted meaning of the phrase was that every change is for the sake of something which does not change, occurring in its behalf....But in a legitimate account of ends as ending, all directional order resides in the sequential order.¹⁶

He contends here that while certain events may reach an end this does not make them ends of natural processes. To use his example: "a man is not an adult until after he

has been a boy, but childhood does not exist for the sake of maturity."¹⁷

There is however nothing self-evident, or even clear, in the exclusive identification of ends with ends-in-view....Modern science made it clear that nature has no preference for good things over bad things; its mills turn out any kind of grist indifferently.¹⁸

Popular teleology...has accordingly been apologetic, justificatory of the beneficence of nature; it has been optimistic in a complacent way.¹⁹

Consequently, teleology is arbitrary with respect to upholding good "as natural ends," and bad "as mere accidents or incidents."²⁰

Objects are certainly none the worse for having wonder and admiration for their inspiration and art for their medium. But these objects are distorted when....there is claimed for them a rational and cosmic status....Such a realm is intrinsically one of secure and self-possessed meaning. It consists of objects of immediate enjoyment hypostatized into transcendent reality.²¹

On this count, teleology works to hypostasize objects of art, turn aesthetic objects into realities.

. . .as long as objects are viewed telically, as long as the objects of the truest knowledge, the most real forms of being, are thought of as ends, science does not advance.²²

Here the argument against teleology is simply a dismissal based on his regard for science. Teleology for Dewey runs contrary to and hampers science. His argument at one point is hardly different than Kant's. Kant holds that religionists posit a God through inference while Dewey maintains it rests on hypostatization.

The above evidence indicates Dewey would reject the three traditional arguments directed toward attempting to "prove" God's existence. In each instance his comments witness an agreement with the Kantian approach.

4. The Moral Argument. This argument and the argument from "religious experience" receive greater attention by Dewey than do the preceding ones. His objection to moral "proofs" turns directly to mention of God and his argument is more systematic. In his 1933 article "A God Or The God," Dewey, in attempting to point out the position that has come to be defined by the liberal modernists (in particular Wieman), finds a philosophical difficulty for those who would attempt to formulate God based on the imperatives of the moral life. He charges:

If you appeal to the moral life for your basis and direction, you must be content to derive your conception of religion and of God wholly from the implications of the moral life.²³

The weakness of this method reveals itself if one appeals:

. . .to the supremacy of moral ideals as the ground for the content of religious ideas, including that of God, and then to insist upon a God to give moral ideals eternal and independent support involves an inherent contradiction.²⁴

In other words, Dewey is disputing the essential premise of the inference from axiology to a supernatural God. His belief is that it is not necessary to invoke a supernatural God to guarantee the validity of moral ideals (the authority rests with the intrinsic nature of the ideals²⁵).

Attempting to give supernatural support to moral ideals is, for Dewey, the result of "vast intellectual schemes, philosophies, and theologies," that have been devoted to proving that "ideals are real not as ideals but as antecedently existing actualities."²⁶ As a consequent "the physical [has been] subtly changed into the metaphysical."²⁷ Whether or not Dewey is correct in this last point is a possible point of conjecture. However, he is not incorrect in maintaining morality can be founded independent of supernatural support and guarantee (Kant in his Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals and Hegel in his Philosophy of Right, for example, testify to this).

5. The Argument From Religious Experience. As well as his stricture against attempting to formulate the existence of God on moral grounds, Dewey finds among theistic appeals seeking establishment of the divine existence an appeal to "a definitely limited channel and organ of experience, denominated religious."²⁸ He outright rejects this method of approach as viable on several counts: (1) He points out that the Christian has claimed a "right religious adjustment" based on this "religious" way of knowing, but "the right religious adjustment of devout Parsee, Islamite, Buddhist, Vedantist, etc., would yield other 'empirical evidence'."²⁹ (2) He distinguishes between the experience and interpretation of it arguing that: "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."³⁰

(3) Men of different religious faiths and those professing no belief in God have had experiences similar to those claimed to be religious by Christians.³¹ No a priori bond between these experiences and a supernatural God exists.

(4) The origin of such experiences could have many causes³² other than a supernatural one. (5) Assuming the "religious" to be a special kind of experience relegates it to being "limited and private" while "The method of intelligence [science] is open and public."³³ (6) It is a circular argument:

Moreover, when the experience in question does not yield consciousness of the presence of God, in the sense that is alleged to exist, the resort is always at hand that it is not a genuine religious experience. For by definition, only that experience is religious which arrives at this particular result.³⁴

The claim to establish the existence of God based on a "religious way of knowing" presents several difficulties, among which can be numbered the problem of verification. Dewey, as the above objection indicates, seems well aware of this and his argument has merit. If this "religious way of knowing" is based on some claim that could be described as "psychological," then attempting to demonstrate the existential claim "God exists" could hardly be made by an inductive argument. This would be due primarily to the difficulty of testing a

genuine experience of God from an ungentuine one.³⁵ Again, to establish the existential claim "God exists" upon the "psychological" claim of having religious experience cannot, as C. B. Martin points out, be based on a deductive argument either. The reason for this is that "psychological statements....can make the claim only that I have.. ..complex feelings and sensations. Nothing else follows deductively."³⁶ Even if it were claimed the "religious way of knowing" is unique, this does not support direct experience of God or support the claim "God exists."³⁷ The upshot of this is, to quote Martin:

We have seen that there are no tests or checking procedures open to the believer to support his existential claim about God. Thus he is left with the testimony of his own experience and the experience of others.³⁸

In summary, Dewey's case against God's existence illustrates that he rejects the most frequent formal "proofs" offered supporting the attribution of "existence" to God. His remarks and arguments do not differ essentially from traditional oppositions nor do they add anything new. It was noted at one point Dewey retains a displeasure toward these arguments as being too formal for a religion in action.³⁹ Possibly this accounts for his reluctance to indulge in metaphysical speculation in this direction. His opposition to moral arguments and arguments from "religious experience" receive proportionally greater systematic treatment and retain stronger

philosophical validity. It appears from examination Dewey is willing to admit few concessions to the religious believer. There is however, one exception. He is willing to assent to:

the logical possibility of the existence of a personal will which is causative and directive of the universe and which is devoted to the promotion of moral ends.⁴⁰

But even this receives a dampening qualification, for he quickly adds, without giving any explanation, that: "If the future of religion is bound up with really finding such justificatory evidence, I fear for the future of religion."⁴¹

B. God as Supernatural

Dewey devotes more effort to the idea of the "supernatural" than he does to the traditional "proofs." As he understands and employs the term, "supernatural" designates more than just God.⁴² But God is at least subsummed under this category. This supernatural God is considered to be transcendent---"beyond the power of nature."⁴³

Further, he maintains this is the supernatural God of the Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant belief.⁴⁴ Noticeably, he makes no allowance for, or considers the possibility of, a supernatural God immanent in the natural world as its sustaining ground.

Though his writings contain numerous references to

the supernatural, his disputation consists of four major objections. These are expressed in Experience And Nature (1925), The Quest For Certainty (1929), and finally in A Common Faith (1934).

1. The supernatural rests on a fallacy. Dewey's first objection stipulates the supernatural is a result of hypostatization which in turn rests on a fallacy. He maintains it is as true today as it was in the past that man finds himself in a "precarious and perilous" world.⁴⁵ That is, the empirical world "includes the uncertain, unpredictable, uncontrollable, and hazardous."⁴⁶ The ominous present facing man is attributable to "unknown consequences flowing from the past" and a future "even more unknown and perilous."⁴⁷ But in the midst of this instability resides a desire for stability, a desire to placate the unknown forces deciding our future destiny. However, it is the evils present in the world that furnish more convincing evidence of the uncertain character of nature than do the goods of our existence and lead to our emphasis of the precarious in human existence.⁴⁸ The "uncontrollable distribution of good and evil" the "inextricable mixture of stability and uncertainty" and the problematic character it fosters has, as a result, occasioned the rise of philosophy⁴⁹ and the subsequent development of a host of philosophies which while radically opposed in many instances nevertheless accept a

common premise, namely: "denying to the universe the character of contingency it possesses so integrally...."⁵⁰

Consequently, philosophical efforts have been a constant quest to identify "reality with what is sure, regular and finished...."⁵¹ The product of these efforts has been various techniques of conversion whereby:

the uncertain and unfinished [are relegated] to an invidious state of unreal Being, while they have systematically exalted the assured and complete to the rank of true Being.⁵²

In other words, these techniques of conversion are simply hypostatizations in which:

"reality" becomes what we wish existence to be, after we have analyzed its defects and decided upon what would remove them; "reality" is what existence would be if our reasonably justified preferences were so completely established in nature as to exhaust and define its entire being and thereby render search and struggle unnecessary. What is left over, (and since trouble, struggle, conflict, and error still empirically exist, something is left over) being excluded by definition from full reality is assigned to a grade or order of being which is asserted to be metaphysically inferior; an order variously called appearance, illusion, mortal mind, or merely empirical, against what really and truly is.⁵³

To justify this contention Dewey resorts to an historical appeal to the philosophical tradition. To back up his claim he cites the culpable act of the "erection of objects of selective preference into exclusive realities"⁵⁴ which marks the scholastic equation of the True and Good and Unity with Being as such, the Spinozistic true idea which carries truth intrinsically, the "simple idea" of Locke, the "impression" of Hume, the atomic data of the English

neo-realist, and the ready-made essences of American neo-realists.⁵⁵ Faced with a choice of certainty or uncertainty, philosophers, Dewey maintains, simply preferred the former and then consigned whatever they considered capable of it to "constitute ultimate Being while the remainder is held to be either phenomenal or illusory."⁵⁶ Desire for the simple drove some to a love for "elements" and subsequently to the conferring of primary reality to them.⁵⁷ Favouring the permanent as opposed to the changing has led to the "hypnotic influence exercised by the conception of the eternal."⁵⁸ As far as traditional religion is concerned:

. . .the value prized in those religions that have ideal elements are idealizations of things characteristic of natural associations, which have then been projected into a supernatural realm for safe-keeping and sanction.⁵⁹

Each of these cases affords, for Dewey, striking examples of what he terms the "fallacy of selective emphasis," that is, the "conversion of eventual functions into antecedent existence."⁶⁰ And God, like aesthetic essences, mathematical subsistences, or the purely physical order is a consequent of this conversion,⁶¹ the result of an hypostatization. Those who would hold to the conception of a supernatural God have, according to Dewey, been misled. They make the mistake of failing to do justice to the "inclusive integrity of 'experience'." They:

. . .have gone astray through failure to connect their reflective results with the affairs of everyday primary experience....they have failed to note

the empirical needs that generate their problem, and have failed to return the refined products back to the content of actual experience, there to receive their check, inherit their full content of meaning, and give illumination and guidance in the immediate perplexities which originally occasioned reflection.⁶²

This sort of move, to Dewey's mind, is the result of an inconsistent procedure. It appeals either to experience for its establishment and then proceeds to demean experience or demean empirical modes of knowing only to secure, by some theoretical manner, those ends toward which empirical methods are directed. To back up his argument Dewey cites the case of Absolute Experience. Supposedly it derives its validity from a consideration of "experience." Once established however, it deprecates the very experience upon which it is founded. He writes:

. . .the contents as well as the form of ultimate Absolute Experience are derived from and based upon the feature of actual experience, the very experience which is then relegated to unreality by the supreme reality derived from its unreality. It is "real" just long enough to afford a spring-board into ultimate reality and to afford a hint of the essential contents of the latter and then it obligingly dissolves into mere appearance. If we start from the standpoint of the Absolute Experience thus reached, the contradiction is repeated from its side. Although absolute, eternal, all comprehensive....it proceeds to play a tragic joke upon itself---for there is nothing else to be fooled---by appearing in a queer combination of rags and glittering gew-gaws, in the garb of the temporal, partial and conflicting things, mental as well as physical, of ordinary experience.⁶³

The logical objection Dewey is raising with the Absolute Experience example is certainly a valid argument

against idealisms that adopt the procedure of deriving their validity from "experience" and then demeaning it. Apparently however, the technique of the idealists' procedure is equivalent to that employed by the religionist since Dewey does consider the postulation of a supernatural God to be an instance of the conversion technique. To adhere to this is forcing the religionist to adopt the same premise as a starting point as would the idealist namely, "experience." The problem that is omitted from the discussion is, is the religionist necessarily committed to the premise Dewey forces upon him? That the religionist might rely on a volitional response or faith (whatever that signifies) is not considered or allowed by Dewey. He neglects to discuss this for a good reason; it opens up the case of subjective experience(s) which he is adverse to and continually discredits in his works.⁶⁴ In addition to this, it is not clear (at least Dewey does not make it so) whether his critique of the idealists' procedure is relevant to all forms of supernaturalism. The only form of supernaturalism in question, it will be recalled (see above, page 27) is a supernatural God "beyond the power of nature."

To hypostatize a God is to make that God a construction of the human mind. Dewey does not deny this but attempts to refute it because the reason for it is attrib-

utable to man's longing for stability in the face of instability, security because of insecurity, etc. But even if it is true that the genesis of this construction resides in desires for security and stability, this does not determine the validity of the existence of a supernatural God.

Dewey might be correct in contending philosophers and theologians have been guilty of hypostatizing certain ideal traits of experience. But these traits, whatever they may be, are described in linguistic terms. The question is, does the religionist who employs these terms, terms derived from our world of "ordinary experience," to use Dewey's phrase, intend them to apply to God in a similar or different manner from their ordinary use? Dewey makes no mention of this or corresponding problems.

His objection to the supernatural as a product of hypostatization which in turn rests on a fallacy is a weak argument. He raises a valid objection to Absolute Experience but he does not demonstrate, beyond verbal linkage, that the Absolute Experience example is synonymous with the supernatural God posited by the religionist. Secondly, he forces the religionist to adopt the same premise as the idealist without considering other possibilities open to the religionist, e.g. faith. These comments taken in conjunction with the above points serve to indicate that it is not made abundantly clear that

the supernatural God of the religionist is an hypostatization which in fact rests on a fallacy.

2. The supernatural as a desire for security. The second objection to positing a supernatural God follows close on anthropological contentions of primitive man's desire for security. Dewey, ever conscious of anthropological studies,⁶⁵ constructs his disputation employing this as a focal point. Oddly enough, for a philosopher with a social psychology (social behaviourism might be a better characterization) definitely apart from anything bearing a Freudian resemblance,⁶⁶ Dewey's objection strikes an attenuating similarity to Freud's conviction expressed in The Future of an Illusion. In this work Freud notes:

. . .religious ideas have sprung from the same need as all the other achievements of culture: from the necessity for defending itself against the crushing supremacy of nature.⁶⁷

These "religious ideas" represent illusions⁶⁸ attributable in part to the need for security. Protection "against unknown and mighty powers" leads the child when he grows up to project the traits of the father-figure and create gods.⁶⁹ This familiar Freudian view is taken up by Dewey (though not directly from Freud).⁷⁰ In a similar manner Dewey recognizes a supernatural God to be the result of a projection or hypostatization of traits from experience (his first objection). Secondly, he maintains that man frames a supernatural God because of his need for secur-

ity. In The Quest for Certainty Dewey writes:

Man who lives in a world of hazards is compelled to search for security. He has sought to attain it in two ways. One of them began with an attempt to propitiate the powers which environ him and determine his destiny. It expressed itself in supplication, sacrifice, ceremonial rite and magical cult. In time these crude methods were largely displaced....If man could not conquer destiny he would willingly ally himself with it; putting his will, even in sore affliction, on the side of the powers which dispense fortune, he could escape defeat and might triumph in the midst of destruction.

The other course is to invent arts and by their means turn the powers of nature to account; man constructs a fortress out of the very conditions and forces which threaten him....This is the method of changing the world through action, as the other is the method of changing the self in emotion and idea.⁷¹

However, primitive man in his desire for security, Dewey maintains, could not avail himself of this choice. He could not adopt the second means since he "had none of the elaborate arts of protection and use which we now enjoy."⁷² Consequently, he turned to the first means---sacrifice, ceremonial rite, and magical cult---as a source of help. And in this "atmosphere primitive religion was born and fostered. Rather this atmosphere was the religious disposition."⁷³ In this setting primitive man unable to trace experiences to their natural causes held them as descriptions of mysterious powers. Clearly, acts of the uncommon appeared extraordinary and set against the ordinary. The net result of this predicament was "two realms [which] were in no

way sharply demarcated from each other"⁷⁴ but ultimately became delineated into the "holy and fortunate" on the one hand and the "profane and the unlucky" on the other.⁷⁵ In time, Dewey relates, this distinction became generalized and received rational formulation and justification at the hands of philosophy.⁷⁶

This development of religion and the supernatural as an outgrowth of man's need for security is not, Dewey contends, attributable to a desire for intellectual certainty but for "the need for security in the results of action."⁷⁷ The world as found by primitive man, just as modern man finds it, was uncertain and "the values men prize are at the mercy of acts the results of which are never sure."⁷⁸ It was quite natural that primitive man faced with uncertainty in his world reached out for security. And in the "absence of actual certainty in the midst of a precarious and hazardous world, men cultivated all sorts of things that would give them the feeling of certainty."⁷⁹ Hence::

Supernaturalism was, therefore, a genuinely social religion as long as men's minds were attuned to the supernatural. It gave an "explanation" of extraordinary occurrences while it provided techniques for utilizing forces to secure advantages and to protect the members of the community against them when they were adverse.⁸⁰

As well as the need for a feeling of certainty, the pressure of necessity impinged upon primitive man and led him "to impute practical efficacy to play and rite" and "mag-

nify the place of magical exercise and superstitious legend." The result was tribal myth.⁸¹

Although many persons still adhere to these convictions of the supernatural and accompanying myths today as a need for security, a "consolation in the face of the unstable....,"⁸² such devices, Dewey believes, are no longer necessary. The reason for this he challenges is attributable to "The growth of natural science [which] brought extraordinary things into line with events for which there is a 'natural' explanation."⁸³ It is modern science through its methods of control (experimentations) that assures practical certainty as compensation for the indulgence in metaphysical speculations. The supernatural God of religion is purely a compensatory device, a primitive quest adopting an essentially pessimistic outlook on things based on a desire for security.

This objection to the supernatural is an attempt by Dewey to cut at the heart of the matter, its origin in the natural world. But it falls short on several counts. (1) Based on a psychological need, security, it is in turn subject to the same objection stated above (pages 42-43) namely, contending the genesis of religious belief resides in the need for security does not determine the validity of the religious belief. Primitive beginnings of religion do not invalidate the tenets it may hold. Primitive man's desire for security may well have

had a part in the origination of religion and the supernatural yet a supernatural God may exist. (2) His argument assumes the primitive level reached by religion remains a constant---a compensatory device developed because of a need for security. He does not recognize or admit the possibility religion might have developed beyond the primitive level. (3) He maintains natural science has or can eradicate the necessity of languishing in primitive religious conceptions like desire for security, yet science in a similar manner may have been a product of desire. Would he then dismiss science?

3. The supernatural rests on an invalid method of knowing.

Religion, Dewey maintains, is at present faced with a crisis over intellectual beliefs surrounding the supernatural because:

the growth of knowledge and of its methods and tests has been such as to make acceptance of these beliefs increasingly onerous and even impossible for large numbers of cultivated men and women.⁸⁴

As a consequent of this Dewey willingly accepts the supposition:

new methods of inquiry and reflection have become for the educated man today the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence, and intellectual assent.⁸⁵

That is, these new methods have achieved a revolution in "the seat of intellectual authority" to the point that there is now "but one sure road of access to truth---the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means

of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection."⁸⁶ In short, the methods employed by science and the "experimental theory of knowing"⁸⁷ it utilizes.

Over against this method of knowledge is set the inconsistent procedure of the religionist who claims knowledge of an "antecedent Being," a Being "prior to and independent of the operation of knowing."⁸⁸ Such a claim, Dewey argues, is based on the assumption that "knowledge is concerned with disclosure of the characteristics of antecedent existences and essences...."⁸⁹ It is a mistake he maintains to set up a supernatural antecedent reality as something 'given' "prior to the acts of experimental variation and redisposition...."⁹⁰ The mistake lies in contesting a supernatural antecedent reality "in sufficient existence before the act of knowing" as opposed to being "the outcome of directed experimental operations."⁹¹

Dewey's objection, an epistemological objection, is founded on his conviction that "the object of knowledge is eventual....an outcome of directed experimental operations...."⁹² and "the criterion of knowledge lies in the method used to secure consequences and not in metaphysical conceptions of the nature of the real."⁹³ For Dewey it is only the method of science that allows man to secure consequences. The consequence of experimental verification is knowledge.⁹⁴ This method inval-

idates supernatural methodology as a process of knowing and attaining truth since such a method is incapable of attaining truth. Truth does not reside in an antecedent existent reality. Nor can the methodology of the supernaturalists be considered a valid method of knowing, only experimental verification can lead to knowledge.

Scientific knowing, Dewey believes, compensates for the deficiencies found in traditional processes of knowing and is clearly delineated from supernatural conceptions as a result of three of its inherent characteristics:

The first is the obvious one that all experimentation involves overt doing, the making of definite changes in the environment or in our relation to it. The second is that experiment is not a random activity but directed by ideas which have to meet the conditions set by the need of the problem inducing the active inquiry. The third and concluding feature, in which the other two receive their full measure of meaning, is that the outcome of the directed activity is the construction of a new empirical situation in which objects are differently related to one another, and such that the consequences of directed operations form the objects that have the property of being known.⁹⁵

An interesting point in Dewey's objection lies with the supposition he accepts, namely, that the methods of inquiry employed by science have become the "final arbiter" for "the educated man" and thus supernatural beliefs are rendered "increasingly onerous." If this is in fact true then Dewey's case is made. But it is questionable whether this claim can be extended, as Dewey would have it, to "all questions of fact, existence, and

intellectual assent." A short example may suffice to illustrate the doubt which can be cast upon this contention.

The Christian religion has shown a traditional interest in several questions concerning man: (1) Does he possess a soul or self? (2) Is this soul or self related to his body? (3) Is the individual of supreme worth? The first question is answered in the affirmative, the second question bears upon the problem of immortality, and the third question is affirmed by Christianity. Now according to Dewey's claim, scientific method would have to be able to arbitrate in matters of this nature. Perhaps it may be possible for it to do so but Dewey certainly has not demonstrated that it has or can.⁹⁶

Dewey's discrediting of the religionist's process of "knowing" the supernatural says nothing about what the religionist means by "knowing," and if this "knowing" is similar or different from what scientific "knowing" means. Associations of "faith" have attended the former in traditional claims but Dewey is conspicuously silent about such notions.

By contending the scientific methodology is the only valid method of operation and access to truth, Dewey has automatically, and without sufficient reason, ruled out all other possibilities. In addition, it is important

to note here that as a proposition---scientific methodology is the only valid method of operation and access to truth--it is not itself a scientific proposition and therefore to that extent appears self-contradictory.

4. The supernatural is a hindrance to science and religion.

As themes in human life and culture, religion and science perennially emerge in written tracts given to discussions concerning the scope and function of religion and religious knowledge in an age categorized as "scientific." Interest in science and the expansion of scientific knowledge has exercised a profound influence on religious belief in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and has, since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, witnessed periods of conflict and controversy. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries controversy arose over claims that the findings of science conflicted with specific religious postulates and doctrines of belief. On the one side stood the proponents of Darwinian evolution and on the other the advocates of a literal view of the Genesis creation stories.⁹⁷ In the philosophical sphere, those philosophies that can be generally described as "empirical" have, on the whole, tended to be more sympathetic toward science and hence embraced and advanced scientific claims while remaining highly critical of traditional religious beliefs and thought. Dewey is no exception to this case. He contends the supernatural is not only a religious be-

lief that hinders science but it acts also as a hindrance to religion itself.

"There was a time," Dewey writes, when it was argued there was:

. . .no way to judge the truth of any particular statement about a particular planet, heavenly body, or case of combustion unless there was a general truth already in hand with which to compare a particular empirical occurrence. But...the actual advance of science did not begin till men broke away from this method.⁹⁸

Allowing knowing to be dependent upon a "transcendental factor" makes "confirmation and refutation, correction, criticism, of the pretensions of meanings of things impossible."⁹⁹ Scientific method before Darwin was arrested and retained the mediaeval conception of interpreting nature in terms of essences and attempted to find the objects of knowledge "in some transcendent and supernal region."¹⁰⁰ Invoking supernatural agencies retards social relations¹⁰¹ and resists "the growth and application of the method of natural intelligence."¹⁰² It promotes a laissez-faire attitude standing in the way of our making changes in our social relations.¹⁰³ To overcome this requires interests and activities emancipated from the authority and vested concerns of organized religion.¹⁰⁴ Thus it is of utmost necessity "to fight for recognition of the method of intelligence in action" (i.e., scientific method).¹⁰⁵ It becomes impossible to estimate, Dewey speculates:

the amelioration that would result if the stimulus and support given to practical action by science were no longer limited to industry and commerce and merely "secular" affairs. As long as the practical import of the advance of science is confined to these activities, the dualism between the values which religion professes and the urgent concerns of daily livelihood will persist.¹⁰⁶

Not only does concentration and reliance on the supernatural exert a subversive influence on science, Dewey argues, but it acts to retard religion. He maintains that the positive lessons following from a consideration of the methods of justifying intellectual beliefs is: "that religious qualities and values if they are real are not bound up with any single item of intellectual assent, not even that of the existence of the God of theism."¹⁰⁷ Co-operative human endeavour discloses a more religious faith than does faith arising from revelation,¹⁰⁸ and requires no reference to the supernatural, since such faith places reliance in "intelligence becoming religious in quality."¹⁰⁹ Historical concepts and associations developed and extolled by traditional religion actually impede religion through irrelevant practices inappropriate to the contemporary era.¹¹⁰ They foster a depression in religion. Emancipating individuals from supernatural beliefs inherent in traditional religion would lead to a "deeper and enduring adjustment in life...."¹¹¹ However, "as long as social values are related to a supernatural for which the churches stand in some peculiar

way, there is an inherent inconsistency between the demand and efforts to execute it."¹¹² This state of affairs Dewey attributes to supernatural Christianity's commitment to a basic division between those embracing its dogmas and those rejecting belief in the supernatural. The latter are regarded by the Christian religionists only as "potential brothers." Significantly, this criticism is a result of Dewey's regard for democracy; and at this point the concept of democracy enters once again into his religious thought, for the state of this matter---a division among men---presents, to his mind; a failure in the "realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs...."¹¹³

Dewey's claim that the supernatural hinders science is not unfounded nor without support. In his monumental work A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom, A. D. White has shown that religionists have resisted scientific evidence which conflicted with their beliefs and that religious beliefs have been attacked on the basis of scientific evidence.¹¹⁴ To this extent, Dewey is correct in his objection. But Dewey omits to recognize the positive relationship between the two. A. N. Whitehead in his discussion "The Origins of Modern Science," records that "the medieval insistence on the rationality of God" impressed on the European mind "the inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated

with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles. Without this belief the incredible labours of scientists would be without hope."¹¹⁵ And he concludes: "the faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory, is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology."¹¹⁶ Other examples of the positive relationship between science and religion abound, for example, of a later date, the eighteenth century, when science had firmly entrenched itself upon the European mind, G. P. Grant writes:

The ideal of human freedom merges with Judaeo-Christian hope and produces the idea of progress. This means an entirely new kind of humanism. It was a humanism of project and reform. It was a humanism which put science and technology at its center as the mean of redemption.¹¹⁷

In his indictment of the supernatural Dewey, of course, is well aware that scientific investigation of the universe does not need to begin by postulating or presupposing the existence of God. However, what he fails to consider is that while it does not, this in itself does not mitigate against the fact a supernatural God may exist.

Lastly, in contending the supernatural is a hindrance to religion, Dewey is assuming it can be omitted from religion and religion can still retain its identity. Historically, a supernatural God, a God "existing" beyond

nature, has been an integral part of the Christian religion. To insist on its departure from traditional usage is to diverge from the historical usage. To contest that a supernatural God has been a hindrance is also to say that traditional religion has been a hindrance, for they have been inseparable. Dewey, as has been shown, agrees with the latter point and would likewise consent to the former. Therefore it appears he is faced with a choice, either redefine religion and God or drop them completely. Dewey recognizes this for he maintains:

anyone who has faced the full intellectual scope and depth of change in the idea of the universe has no alternative but surrender of the older conceptions of God or else broadening out of it to meet the change in the conception of the universe and history to which the God believed in is related.¹¹⁸

The reason given motivating this choice is his belief that:

. . . science . . . has forced a movement from the idea of a tight confined universe of which the world is the center and crown to belief in indefinite multitudes, not merely of solar systems but of universes.¹¹⁹

The root of Dewey's opinion here can be traced back to a very early conviction and belief, namely, "research into the origin and development of religion destroys the appearance" of a body of ideas "set up and apart as belonging to the religious consciousness."¹²⁰ As far as he is concerned, traditional religionists erred in framing a concept of God apart from significant social and

intellectual factors connected with their surroundings. Subsequently, they have been led to inevitable teachings "deflected and distorted through their medium of interpretation---the existing conditions of nature."¹²¹ This deflection and error is a result, in Dewey's opinion, of the impossibility of the teachings of Jesus being understood in "their direct, natural sense when the whole existing world of action seemed to contradict them."¹²² The upshot of this is that Dewey plainly rejects the view of "an absentee God" set up by the traditional religionists, a God apart from "the conception of God incarnate in humanity."¹²³ Thus he writes:

The supposition that the ties which bind men together, that the forces which unify society, can be other than the very laws of God, can be other than the outworking of God in life, is a part of that same practical unbelief in the presence of God in the world which I have already mentioned.¹²⁴

But one group, that ascribed by Dewey as "liberal modernists," do not follow the traditional prescriptions of a supernatural God. They have, he contends, come to realize the necessity for accepting the full force of science and its implications for the modern world, and this has, as a result, led to a modification in their conception of God. They have attempted to frame the concept of God "in terms of natural and human relationships involved in our straightaway human experience."¹²⁵ This becomes the subject of the 1933 articles, a modern conception of God which Dewey undertakes to criticize.

C. The God of the "Liberal Modernists"

To a point Dewey is sympathetic with the liberal modernist's course of action but only in so far as "this broadening leads to greater tolerance and humaneness."¹²⁶ The close identification between Dewey and the liberal modernists at this point is significant, and Dewey goes as far as to state "that perhaps or probably Mr Wieman is headed toward a position not especially distinguishable, save maybe in words, from that of Mr Otto and myself."¹²⁷ However, a point of departure is evident between them for Dewey finds objections in doctrine involved with the liberal modernist procedure in formulating a conception of God. He charges:

intellectually, it falls in with the change from the God to a God; it chimes with the use of the most colourless and indefinite word in the English language, and with the thinning down and rarifying of the meaning of the object to which the term refers.¹²⁸

Now the problem Dewey is at once faced with is establishing this charge, but he makes it explicit that in examining the deficiency contained in the liberal modernist position his philosophical attention is attracted to the question of the logical issue involving:

a contradiction inhering in the position of those who have broken with the traditional religious machinery and landscape, and who yet insist upon the peculiar importance of belief in a God, and the unique importance attached to particular attitudes of worship and dependence: to special kinds of experience which are alone regarded by them as religious, because alone having to do

with the unique objects which can evoke true religious attitudes.¹²⁹

At the beginning of the article "A God Or The God" Dewey confesses to seeing a difficulty involved in the question: Is there a God? He envisages a problem arising at once not only over the ability to arrive at a satisfactory answer to the question but to establish criterion for determining what would in essence constitute a satisfactory answer.¹³⁰ In fact, to ask such a question represents to his mind an immediate situation giving rise to an undesirable "mental confusion" exhibited by an inability to "define and specify the nature of the object referred to."¹³¹ This difficulty, it is maintained, is inextricably inherent in a failure to separate two questions, namely:

What is the nature of God; what is or what must be God, in case he or it exists? And the other question, supposing an answer to the first question has been reached by way of fixation of the theme of discourse, is: Is there any being or object in existence which answers the description?¹³²

The issue Dewey regards as fundamental and "more important than all the other issues put together" in this problem is the discussion involving the God of a particular creed or church etc., transformed to the notion of a God in general.¹³³ To carry out this transformation is for Dewey to be involved in a contradiction.

He develops his argument observing that attaching characteristic traits like "exclusiveness" to particular

gods, e.g. the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who permits no other to stand before him and demands obedience, is surrendered in time and brought into line with man's intellectual development. Yet in making this shift in the formulation of the concept of God the demand for "that limitation of human response and attitude which was appropriate to the exclusive and jealous God of Israel"¹³⁴ remains operative. Accompanying this shift is the insistence on a God, a particular Being or object known through special methods and channels of approach. The poverty of this reasoning Dewey contends, is the failure to emphatically "surrender all foundations and old goals"¹³⁵ which must automatically follow by the intellectual "necessity of going on to a totally different point of view,"¹³⁶ fostered by a change in "the court of ultimate appeal."¹³⁷ It is in this "court of ultimate appeal" maintained by the liberal modernists Dewey is examining that he finds three philosophical difficulties in their reconstruction of the concept of God. Two of these objections have already been detailed above.¹³⁸ Simply they were: (1) Formulating a supernatural concept of God based on the imperatives of the moral life is illegitimate. (2) Appeal to a channel or organ of experience denominated "religious" presents a problem of verification.

In respect to the problem of verification, it must be mentioned that a primary factor leading Dewey to re-

ject the "reality" (God) set up by Macintosh was that it was not "empirically self-verifying."¹³⁹ By implication, one of the criterion for postulating a concept of God, whatever it may mean, must, for Dewey lend itself to empirical self-verification. This receives further credence from his insistence that: "as revelation, Christianity must reveal. The only tests by which it can be tried are the tests of fact...."¹⁴⁰ Dewey's argument here is directed toward claims made by the liberal modernists that the existence of God is a question of fact, rather than a linguistic usage. The problem is, what do these words mean in this context? Dewey has, it will be remembered, acknowledged the vagueness of this term.¹⁴¹ The problem of verification is both complex and open, but in demanding empirical self-verification he is attempting to strike at the premises from which the existence of God could be deduced, and in doing so echoes a similiarity to the logical positivists' argument against the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God.¹⁴² Though in fairness to the theistic conception of the liberal modernist, the liberal modernist need not submit, and might well reject, the possibility of his views being subjected to the test of fact, meaning empirical self-verification.

Dewey posits a third objection to the liberal modernist conception of God and it follows close on to the second. He finds "The question of the evidence which

would justify a working belief in the actuality of this possibility the existence of a personal will---God,"¹⁴³ "unavailable." That is, he implies it is in some sense unavailable in the follow-up statement that "If the future of religion is bound up with really finding such justificatory evidence I fear for the future of religion."¹⁴⁴ Presumably it is empirically unavailable though he does not explicitly specify this. Dewey applies the objection to those who would seek to establish an object (God) that rightly demands our devotion based upon the findings of conditions and forces in existence generating the goods of living.¹⁴⁵ The problem as he sees it involves a

shift from something which we may be said intelligibly to find in experience, namely, forces making for the production and extension of goods, to something which we do not find: a power which rightfully commands the supreme and exclusive adoration, from the very human fact of love, care and service to some devotion and love of all human beings.¹⁴⁶

Consequently, he charges the theistic conception of God as expounded by the liberal modernists rests on "hypostatization of an undeniable fact, experience of things, persons, causes, found to be good and worth cherishing," and seeking to establish on this "a single objective experience, a God."¹⁴⁷ Noticeably, Dewey is not doubting the "experience" per se, only the justification of establishing a God on it. He willingly maintains:

. . .there may also be persons who get an added ecstasy from an emotional hypostasis, that is, by

concentrating and intensifying emotion in some especial way. But it should be clear that this is a personal idiosyncrasy....those who chose distribution of objects, service and affection rather than hypostatic concentration of times, seasons, objects are wholly within their intellectual and moral rights....experience seems to me to demonstrate that for the great majority of persons this is much the saner course to follow.¹⁴⁸

What leads him to this course is the significance and reliance he places on "the expansion and distribution of valid meanings and goods through large ranges of experiences."¹⁴⁹

Dewey's arguments are left somewhat undeveloped, but his point is clear. He firmly objects in these 1933 conversations to postulating a theistic conception of God as any supernatural "singular being."¹⁵⁰ But he does not object to possible reconstructions in the conception of God provided "it is clear what it is to which is given the name God."¹⁵¹

In denying the liberal modernist's (Wieman's) method of hypostatizing a God, Dewey insists on dealing with the problem in terms of "straightaway experience," that is, without claiming any peculiar revelatory value for the special form of expression called "religious." He charges Wieman with wanting "an objective counterpart for human love and devotion" because of the "alleged need of man for something to love, adore."¹⁵² Consequently, he (Wieman) posits something objective (God) "which generates, supports and constitutes good."¹⁵³ Dewey rejects

this outright for the reasons given above. In addition, he sees no reason to invoke a supernatural God, a God "existing beyond nature," acting as an objective functioning force. Wieman infers or hypostatizes such a God and thereby extends the range of inference beyond the functional correlations among sensible events. Dewey is not willing to go beyond this point. He is therefore placing greater restriction on the limits allowed causal inference. This is a salient feature in the formulation between a theistic and a naturalistic conception of God. Restricting causal inference as he does, frees Dewey of having to accept a possible dualism and thereby placing himself at odds with his naturalistic belief that no evidence supports the real existence of a transcendent God (a postulate he adheres to as witnessed in the quotation on page 63).

D. Conclusions

It has been shown in this chapter that Dewey would reject the formal "proofs" for establishing the existence of God. Essentially he rejects them on the same grounds as other commentators and critics. He is not incorrect in recognizing such arguments are mainly of formal academic interest. Though they may or may not be rationally persuasive, they are irrelevant when it is considered traditional belief in the existence of God has not depended

on formal argumentive proof or demonstration. Rather, traditional belief has depended on faith.

Dewey chooses to develop his case against God by discrediting belief in the supernatural status assigned God by traditional religionists. His polemic centers around four arguments: (1) A supernatural God is the product of hypostatization which is the result of the "fallacy of selected emphasis." He maintains this is an inconsistent procedure and offers the case of Absolute Experience as an example. (2) A supernatural God is a concept initiated by primitive man because of his desire for security. Later philosophy simply rationalized and justified it. (3) The proposition "There is a supernatural God" does not have sufficient warrant to be considered true. The religionist's claim to "know" such an objective existent is invalid. It cannot be the result of directed experimental inquiry. The experimental method of knowing employed by the sciences is the only valid access to truth. This method invalidates that utilized by the religionist to establish his supernatural God. (4) A supernatural God acts as a hindrance to the development of science and religion. It arrests the former and fosters an uncooperative attitude in the latter in human endeavour.

Each of these four arguments was examined in turn and they were found to be weak arguments. With respect to Dewey's first objection it was shown that Dewey

considers the technique of the idealist's procedure of establishing Absolute Experience to be equivalent to the religionist's procedure of establishing a supernatural God. This forces the religionist to adopt the same premise as a starting point as the idealist, namely, "experience." Dewey neglects to consider that the religionist might rely on a volitional response or faith as his starting point. Secondly, it is not made clear by Dewey if his critique of the idealists' procedure is relevant to all forms of supernaturalism. It can only be assumed that he makes no distinction in supernaturalism. It was pointed out that Dewey's example of man's longing for security in the face of insecurity in the world as an example of the "fallacy of selective emphasis" was inadequate. A desire for security does not determine the validity of the existence of a supernatural God. The second objection raised against a supernatural God by Dewey---a primitive desire for security---was shown to be open to the same criticism levelled against Dewey in the first objection. Dewey's third argument, perhaps his strongest contention, is cogent if his assumption concerning scientific method is tenable. But it was pointed out that scientific methodology as the only valid method and access to truth is not itself a scientific proposition and to that extent appears self-contradictory. In addition, it was noted that Dewey fails to consider whether

or not "knowing" as employed by the religionist in making claims about God is similar or different from the scientist's use of the term. The fourth objection does not strike at the heart of the matter but remains limited to the historical observation that science has in the past been hampered by religionists who felt their beliefs threatened. This was accompanied by the assertion that science should be divorced from religion. Neither of these points mitigate against the concept of a supernatural God.

It is worth noting the emphasis Dewey gives to science in his objections and how consistent a part it plays as a counter-point in these objections. Secondly, it should be mentioned that while he makes weighty objections to traditional religion and the conception of God, he exhibits a clear disregard for examining traditional religion from an historical perspective and the meaning of God in the tradition.

In the 1933 articles, Dewey's case against the liberal modernists, the argument against God is advanced. Once more he rejects hypostatizing a supernatural God. It requires some channel or organ of experience denominated "religious." This presents a problem of verification. In addition, he finds no evidence "available" to justify the requirement for such a God. On the positive side, the 1933 articles lead Dewey to the view that

what is required of a concept of God is a God operative within the continuity of natural processes, a God as a working force in life. But this requires, to his mind, a complete break with traditional views. It must be a God capable of overcoming the weaknesses inherent in traditional and liberal modernist constructions. It must be capable of scientific verification---empirical self-verification. Presumably this would indicate any cognitive status he would assign to his God is dependent upon the truth or falsity of establishing it on fact---a posteriori as opposed to a priori. It must be a construction, to borrow a phrase from James Collins, without "any reference of man to an order of being and value that transcends nature."¹⁵⁴ He attempts to provide this concept in A Common Faith.

CHAPTER THREE.

GOD IN DEWEY'S THOUGHT

A. Dewey's Interpretation of God

Having advocated the formulation of a concept of God in which God abides "within" the natural processes as opposed to an order "outside" or transcending nature, Dewey endeavours, in A Common Faith, to effect this construction. In carrying this out he strives to make his proposal adhere to the second of the two alternatives he outlines for the conception of a God---a concept "framed wholly in terms of natural and human relationships involved in our straightaway human experience."

By subscribing to this Naturalistic concept¹ Dewey is siding with a doctrine that commits him to the acceptance of at least one of three alternatives regarding the status assigned God. Samuel M. Thompson, in his discussion of Naturalism, outlines these alternatives. They are: (1) To deny the existence of God since nothing within nature properly applies to the term "God." (2) To identify God with something within nature. (3) To identify God with the system of nature as a whole.²

In so far as the first alternative is directed to a God existing "outside" or "beyond" nature it corresponds

to atheism. Now Dewey, it was shown, objects to the postulation of a transcendent God but does not reject an idea of God outright. Quite the contrary, he retains a professed need for an idea of God in his thought and regards this need as urgent because: "It can unify interests and energies now dispersed; it can direct action and generate the heat of emotion and the light of intelligence."³ He is, however, willing to substitute the term "divine" as a synonym for the term "God" in view of the fact misconceptions can and do arise from utilization of the name "God."⁴ His adherence to the use of the term, in spite of traditional associations connected with it, is attributable to his firm belief that:

A religious attitude...needs the sense of connection of man, in the way of both dependence and support, with the enveloping world that the imagination feels is a universe. Use of the words "God" or "divine"...may protect man from a sense of isolation and from consequent despair and defiance.⁵

But he regards retention of the traditional terminology as "a matter for individual decision"⁶ and of secondary importance when it is realized that the formulation of a concept of God offering "support to religion in action"⁷ is imperative.

To the extent this first alternative converges with an atheistic commitment it is not acceptable to Dewey. He firmly rejects atheism, for in his words, it is "affected by lack of natural piety"⁸ and like supernatural-

ism is "preoccupied....with man in isolation."⁹

A naturalistic interpretation of God adopting the third alternative merges naturalism with pantheism.¹⁰ Certainly Dewey's desire for a God within---immanent in the world---raises a suspicion that perhaps he is inclining toward a pantheistic tack if only tacitly. But an interpretation working from this presupposition or attempting to derive it as a conclusion is appreciably weakened through lack of textual evidence available for citation to support an immanent identification with a single Being encompassing all reality. Alternative number three is foreign to his thought and can be dispelled as representing for him a viable framework within which a reconstructed concept of God can be offered.

Consequently the remaining choice left open to Dewey is the second of the three alternatives---the formulation of a concept of God in which "God" is identified with something within nature. But what is this something and what must its mode of existence be? The importance of pursuing this question is evident in view of Dewey's statement made in a letter to Corliss Lamont on 27 May, 1935 demanding:

. . . why is there so much more concern about the word "God" and so little attention to that which I said was a reality to which the word might be applied.¹¹

At this point, to avoid a misrepresentation in

Dewey's case, it is necessary to emphasize that the object in question, this something, the "reality" to which Dewey's concept of God refers, is not an existent. The clue to understanding this something labelled "God" is given in one of Dewey's comments about names, in particular, names having no definite meaning. In his introduction to the book Universe by Scudder Klyce, Dewey remarks: "in actual use names call attention to features of a situation."¹² The significance of this for his positive construction demands recognition and should not be overlooked.

The reconstruction of the concept "God" Dewey proposes begins with his acceptance of one factor he believes to be common in traditional religion and worthy of inclusion in his formulation, the emphasis on the ideal. The ideal, Dewey remarks, has always been an indigenous element in traditional religion in so far as allegiance has been given to the ideal and its object wherein the object is regarded as "ideal in contrast with our present state."¹³ But traditional religion errs, he argues, in what it ascribes to the object (God). The mistake it makes is clinging to a prevailing idea born of past culture which nurtured an idea of the supernatural and which was subsequently justified at the hands of apologetical efforts. Specifically in centering on the ideal an identification arose between "the existence of

ideal goods with that of a Person supposed to originate and support them---a Being."¹⁴ This development, Dewey cites, had the unfortunate result of inuring men's minds to dissociate the ideal from the physical¹⁵ and, as a matter of course, to denigrate the natural. Attention thus became diverted from ideal values and the exploration of the conditions whereby ideal values can be promoted.¹⁶

In this argument decrying the severance of the ideal from existence and its personification, it is of particular importance to note Dewey's refusal to accept the traditional prescription. He rejects "the identification of the ideal with a particular Being, especially when that identification makes necessary that this Being is outside nature."¹⁷ God, for him, is not a "Personality having objective existence."¹⁸ Secondly, he refuses to acquiesce to conditions for the existence of the ideal as being other than embodied "in physical material and energies and in human capacity,"¹⁹ that is, in "the world of physical and social experience."²⁰

When Dewey contends that a concept of God must be "a working union of the ideal and actual,"²¹ it is thus understood that the ideal referred to in this union contains no attribution of personality and rather than being separate from actual conditions the ideal equates in some manner with them. But this union, he maintains, is not something given it is "active and practical....a unit-

ing."²² Relating this to the above comment it is now clear that by the name "God" Dewey is calling attention to a situation in which the ideal and the actual are features manifesting themselves in a union. But this union is neither predetermined nor static, it is a constant uniting as the situation warrants. The problem remains however as to how this connection between ideal and actual is conceived when taken together with some seemingly conflicting comments concerning God.

Dewey makes the following statements pertaining to God:

1. [the word "God"] denotes the unity of all ideal ends arousing us to desire and action.²³
2. . . .the word "God" means the ideal ends that at a given time and place one acknowledges as having authority over his volition and emotion, the values to which one is supremely devoted, as far as these ends, through imagination take on unity.²⁴
3. "God" represents a unification of ideal values that is essentially imaginative in origin when the imagination supervenes in conduct.²⁵
4. . . .the idea of God....is....one of ideal possibilities unified through imaginative realization and projection.²⁶
5. . . .the meaning [of the concept God] is selective. For it involves no miscellaneous worship of everything in general. It selects those factors in existence that generate and support our idea of good as an end to be striven for.²⁷
6. A humanistic religion, if it excludes our relation to nature, is pale and thin, as it is presumptuous, when it takes humanity as an object of worship.²⁸

7. The powers that generate and support the good as experienced work within as well as without.... And the powers work to enforce other values and ideals than righteousness.²⁹

The first four of these statements correspond God to the ideal. God is portrayed as an imaginative synthesis of ideals. But these ideals, as ideals, possess no actuality. They remain purely possibilities. On these terms Dewey is assigning God an ideal status.

The issue is compounded when passages 5, 6 and 7 are considered. On the one hand, it is not immediately clear that God on 5, 6 and 7 could not include the first four. On the other hand, the last three passages form an attachment not with the ideal but with the actual. This apparent dichotomy would suggest Dewey is evoking a subtle dualism in his construction between the ideal and the real, oscillating emphasis between the two, and in the last analysis harbouring two conceptions of God. If this contention could be validated it would stand as a contradiction to his inclusive philosophical position with its rejection of idealism³⁰ and constant renunciation of dualisms.³¹

It would be a mistake to charge Dewey with idealism or entertaining a dualism in his conception of God. True he is not explicitly aware of the above difficulties in his reconstruction, but he is so implicitly. This is divulged in his attempt to effect a reflex whereby the

actual becomes the matrix of the ideal and unification is guaranteed by the supervention of the imagination.

"We are," Dewey writes, "in the presence neither of ideals completely embodied in existence nor yet of ideals that are mere rootless ideals, fantasies, utopias. For there are forces in nature and society that generate and support the ideals."³² Ideal ends, he believes, are framed out of "goods of human association, of art, and knowledge."³³ Their realization is accomplished through the working of the imagination's idealization of existence. This is carried out when "The idealizing imagination seizes upon the most precious things found in the climacteric moments of experience and projects them."³⁴ Thus ideal ends attain their ideality but retain "roots in existence and....support from existence."³⁵ Imagination as the agent in this process is considered to be natural. It does not, Dewey maintains, "denote fantasy and doubtful reality." On the contrary:

An ideal is not an illusion because imagination is the organ through which it is apprehended. For all possibilities reach us through the imagination. In a definite sense the only meaning that can be assigned the term "imagination" is that things unrealized in fact come home to us and have power to stir us. The unification effected through imagination is not fanciful, for it is the reflex of the unification of practical and emotional attitudes. The unity signifies not a single Being, but the unity of loyalty and effort evoked by the fact many ends are one in the power of their ideal, or imaginative, quality to stir and hold us.³⁶

This reflex construction negates an exclusive identification with either the ideal or the actual independent of one another. God, as reconstructed by Dewey, is a concept corresponding to the resultant relationship, the situation, when these two factors are conjoined by the imaginative faculty forming a union, or as he would have it, a uniting. This enactment is what Dewey means by his oft-quoted, but misunderstood, statement: "It is this active relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name 'God'."³⁷

The union formed as a result of the imaginative faculty's projection of selected factors in existence is not existential but an imaginative construction, and as such "exists" as a natural product (since the imagination is held to be natural) of the human mind. As Dewey phrases it: "The 'divine' [God] is thus a term of human choice and aspiration."³⁸ It does not refer to anything independent of human choice and judgement.

Dewey's debt to the Kantian concept of God is underscored in this construction, though admittedly there are wide differences between the two. Kant's conclusion that God may well be a pure idea of reason would never succeed in gaining Dewey's agreement, but both thinkers' conceptions resemble each other in that God becomes a postulate and not an object of cognition. For Dewey, God is a postulate signifying the unification of specific human

cognitions---ideal ends acknowledged as values.³⁹ What is cognitively real for Dewey in this unification is, however, the "existent conditions" which provide the actual matrix for developing the ideal. And being made "out of the hard stuff of the world of physical and social experience" they are open to "the process of creation [which] is experimental and continuous."⁴⁰ It is thus the antecedent existent conditions forming the foundation for this reconstruction of God and not the consequent God that remains capable of being subjected to empirical verification. In each case the conditions are limited by a dependence upon nature and natural transactions since nothing transcending or "beyond" nature and its transactions is allowed by Dewey.⁴¹ To be otherwise would, for him, be unreligious because: "The essentially unreligious attitude is that which attributes human achievement and purpose to man in isolation from the world of physical nature and his fellows."⁴²

Inclusion of modified traditional religious notions does not end with Dewey's acceptance, and subsequent re-interpretation, of the ideal factor. He undertakes to infuse a moral identity into the unity referred to as "God." This is typified in his comment that the union rather than being mystical "is natural and moral."⁴³ That he should want to induce morality into his concept of God is a matter of obligation and not mere whim. For

having once recognized morality has in the past attenuated the concept of God in religion he is forced back upon his contention that what traditionalists connect with their concept of God can be had "equally well in the course of human experience in our relation to the natural world."⁴⁴ Secondly, rejecting dependence on an external power in favour of natural means requires that he show that such a finite limitation does not lead to "a surrender of human endeavour," despair, or a stoical acceptance of worldly good and evil.

Dewey, of course, readily admits the existence of evil in the world and that existing conditions are not wholly good.⁴⁵ Were conditions otherwise, he argues, "the notion of possibilities to be realized would never emerge."⁴⁶ Desirous of this state of affairs he chooses the good⁴⁷ in preference to evil or a balance between the two. Surely the good "as an end to be striven for" requires some comment of account. But his comment is all too succinct, it passes over the host of issues and traditional difficulties associated with attempts to reconcile good and evil. Instead, Dewey simply contends the good is indicated by ideal ends and its attainment is accomplished "through continued co-operative effort."⁴⁸ The instrument of conduction in this case is communication. Through its occurrence and operation natural events are subjected not only to reconsideration but.

revision as well.⁴⁹ Dewey's intent on giving religion a social context rather than an individual fix, an early and lingering quest,⁵⁰ is evident here.

Satisfied with the correspondence between good and ideal ends, his reconstruction shifts the weight of its concentration to considering the ideal ends. At the expense of philosophical entanglement he begins with the recommendation that authority and value for the ideals does not depend "upon some prior complete embodiment."⁵¹ Attempting to remain consistent with his philosophical commitment he reinforces this comment by maintaining that nature is the agent providing the direction and support.

The examination has already illustrated the natural foundation from which ideals are said to arise but his use of the phrase "ideal ends" requires some clarification. His reference to "ends" in this context is better served when thought of as "goals" in so far as the term "goals" tends to diminish any notion of finality and association with independent fixed realities, both of which he rejects.⁵² It must also be stressed that "ideals" are capable of change as conditions are tested and improved in existent conditions.⁵³ Therefore, taking both terms together, "ideal ends" signifies human perspectives rather than terminations of specific courses of action. They are imaginary syntheses. He amplifies

the correctness of this interpretation when of the "ideal ends" he writes:

The new vision does not arise out of nothing, but emerges through seeing, in terms of possibilities, that is, of imagination, old things in new relations serving a new end which the new end aids in creating.⁵⁴

The imagination seizing on a desired goal selects factors in existence which will support a course of action culminating in the required result. In each and every case these goals are chosen as a result of human choice and due deliberation upon the imaginatively conceived ideals. Further, only those factors in existence are chosen "that generate our idea of good as an end to be striven for."⁵⁵ The coherence and validity resulting from this action is a "unity of all ideal ends [capable of] arousing us to desire and actions."⁵⁶ The mode of existence entailed by this unity of ideal ends is the postulate Dewey labels "God." Is moral quality is embodied in the ideal ends comprising the unity in so far as the ideals themselves represent selected goods of existence chosen by man in quest of a desired end or goal.⁵⁷

As an alternative to traditional interpretations, Dewey's inducement of morality into his concept of God contains a premise foreign to traditional beliefs, namely, "We need no external criterion and guarantee" for the goodness of the goods of human association

idealized by the imagination.⁵⁸ He presupposes, following this premise, that man, and man alone, is capable of establishing the flexible ideal goals necessary to provide reconstruction in existing conditions. He testifies to this when of the religious attitude he writes:

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 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.⁵⁹

In the face of this Dewey urges a devotion of supreme loyalty to this unity of ideal ends, this God born and bred of the human mind. Such a concept, he believes, contains all the necessary and required emotional attachment equivalent to that found in traditional conceptions of God. And the emotional stir derived from this reconstructed God is engendered in the recognition of "possibilities as yet unrealized, and with all action in behalf of their realization."⁶⁰

This construction, to Dewey's mind, remains contingently, intrinsically, and causally dependent upon the natural foundation of the material, finite world. And he regards it as a suitable course capable of meeting modern demand for a faith. The satisfaction resulting from it derives its force from "an intellectual view of the religious function that is based on continuing

choice directed toward ideal ends."⁶¹ The degree in which success will attend it, Dewey believes, depends on the degree in which belief in the supernatural is given up.⁶²

As a faith it is characterized by:

. . .the unification of the self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices.⁶³

Such a faith, he maintains, is fully expressed in "communicative operations of human beings living together"⁶⁴ wherein is contained "all the elements for a religious faith...not confined to sect, class, or race."⁶⁵ This faith, he continues, "has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind. It remains to make it explicit and militant."⁶⁶

B. Critique

Dewey's "case against God" (Chapter Two) was demonstrated to consist of a refutation of the traditional conception of a supernatural existent God, and a liberal modern formulation that fails, in his opinion, to break completely with the tradition. Reacting against these views, he reconstructs a concept of God attempting to overcome the difficulties he ascribes to these two interpretations. The question is however, does he manage to succeed in this task?

A comparison between God as Dewey reinterprets the

concept and the views he opposes reveals, that in general, his objections to supernaturalism can in turn be levelled against his own positive account of God. In his ardent expressed desire to provide contemporary man with a rallying point to offset fears and despair he clearly turns his back on his own criticisms. Three of his four objections illustrate this.

Dewey's first argument condemns supernaturalism because it fallaciously rests on "selective emphasis"⁶⁷ and the converting of eventual functions into an antecedent existence which in turn is made the object of religious devotion. But his reconstructed concept of God, minus a personal antecedent reality, does essentially the same. He holds the meaning of God is not a worship of everything in general; it is selective. "It selects those factors in existence that generate and support our idea of good as an end to be striven for."⁶⁸ Now it is sufficient to say that the traditional choice of certain objects for devotion is hardly to be condemned if it is legitimate for Dewey to select objects he considers worthy of exclusive dedication. And it is also worth asking what is the criterion for selecting some and rejecting others? He gives no attention to this.

Supernatural religion is belaboured in a second argument because its desired object of worship is "an outgrowth of man's need for security."⁶⁹ Dewey argues

it rests on a projection, an hypostatization of traits from experience.⁷⁰ However, as was shown in the above examination, Dewey acknowledges the union of ideal ends (God) to be a product of imaginative projection.⁷¹ Precisely why he finds this desirable, in his own words, is because:

. . .the unification of the self throughout the ceaseless flux of what it does, suffers, and achieves, cannot be attained in terms of itself. The self is always directed toward something beyond itself and so its own modification depends upon the idea of the integration of the shifting scenes of the world into that imaginative totality we call the Universe.⁷²

In the light of this evidence, if it is desirable for the self to achieve a state of integration, then in what sense is the degree of validity greater for basing a faith on it as opposed to a faith based on a desire for security? Certainly choice does not guarantee such a validity. Nor is it the case that in choosing the former the latter is invalidated.

Dewey's third objection to supernaturalism stipulates that it relies on an invalid method of knowing; it fails because there is (on his terms) only one access to truth, the "experimental theory of knowing" employed by the sciences.⁷³ But can Dewey's concept of God meet this requirement? It was demonstrated that the matrix for establishing ideals, out of which the unity of ideal ends is ultimately formed, derives its support and genesis

from existent conditions in the natural world.⁷⁴ These conditions supposedly being empirical are open to scientific study and the experimental method of knowing.⁷⁵ This of course is open to conjecture since it involves judgements of value which may not be open to empirical verification. However this might be, the important point is that the unification of ideal ends requires something other than the findings of science to verify it. Whatever scientific method signifies it at least means verification involving public as opposed to private confirmation. The imagination and its constructs, as Dewey's work shows, is not physical but "mental" and therefore private. Mental states or processes, just in so far as they are not physical, are not open to application of the methods of science and scientific observation. Dewey's concept of God is thus placed in jeopardy on two counts: (1) It is a mental concept and therefore private, but Dewey, it will be recalled, rules the private out of court. (2) It cannot be scientifically verified, hence it fails to meet the very condition he demands the God of the tradition meet. The concept of God formulated by Dewey is thus incompatible with his naturalism. He treats a mental affair, the imagination, as a bodily or physical affair and what is this if not a commitment to materialism⁷⁶--the doctrine that all verified truth is of physical events and properties?

In each of the three above cited cases, Dewey's own criticisms serve to undermine his positive construction of God. To this extent the value of such a concept is thereby proportionally reduced.

Dewey's repudiation of the liberal modernist's concept of God is consistent with his strictures.⁷⁷ His God, as defined, is neither derived from the imperatives of the moral life nor does it act in way as a guarantee for the validity of moral legislation. Morality for Dewey is entirely a human affair. Goods are the result of human deliberation and complex transactions in the course of social communication. Any guarantee they may carry is a result of the successful completion of specific courses of action.⁷⁸ Where the liberal modernist relies on a special channel or organ of experience denominated "religious" Dewey does not. But he does compensate for this by offering a counterbalancing postulate---the imagination as an organ of experience which is responsible for the formulation of his concept of God.

A major issue in Dewey's quarrel with the liberal modernists surrounds the "evidence" which would justify a working belief in their concept of God. He maintains that in the light of empirical evidence being unavailable, they subsequently stoop to relying on hypostatization or inferring the existence of a God transcending nature. However, as the above argument demonstrates, his God is

not open to direct empirical verification either. Dewey criticizes the traditionalists and liberal modernists alike for resting their case on hypostatizations or inferences, yet he does essentially the same with his imaginative projections. Their validity merely appears to follow since their import does not transgress the natural world and natural transactions. But this justification is at best only a verbal one. In what sense then could the God of the liberal modernists be any less valid than Dewey's concept?

The essential difference between the concept of God offered by Dewey and that offered by the liberal modernists is the difference between a naturalistic interpretation and a theistic interpretation. In spite of the fact Dewey's concept of God has been interpreted theistically it is rather curious indeed that by any stretch of the imagination it could be believed to be so. Professors Wieman and Meland however, in their book American Philosophies of Religion,⁷⁹ classify Dewey's religious thought, based on a consideration of his concept of God, as "empirical theism." This categorization is not novel in the case of Wieman, for in 1934, two years before the publication of the book written in conjunction with Meland, he insists, in an article entitled "Is John Dewey a Theist?"⁸⁰ that Dewey is a theist.

Now "theism," according to the Dictionary of Phil-

osophy,⁸¹ combines within its definition the following major characteristics:

(1) A concept of God as a unitary Being (equivalent to monotheism).

(2) A combination of both the transcendence and immanence of God. That is, God's personality transcends things but is immanent in them.

(3) God, removed from human affairs, transcends the natural world as a supernatural agent endowed with supernatural powers.

Relating this to Dewey's concept of God the following can be seen. His rejection of the supernatural status assigned God eliminates him from both the second and third cases. Similarly, it could only be with the utmost difficulty that the first case could be applied to his God. The first case implies a personality maintaining a definite status. Dewey however, it will be recalled, objects to a God characterized as a single Being endowed with personality. This then would rule out monotheism (in the sense that monotheism is the belief in one supreme personal, moral Being who requires an unqualified response from creatures). There is, in addition to this, no question of polytheism being applied to his concept of God. He emphatically rejects such a doctrine.⁸² Corliss Lamont is quite correct in his statement contending: "John Dewey was not, then, in any sense a theist,

but an uncompromising naturalist...."⁸³

As a naturalist why should Dewey want to include a concept of God in his religious thought? Is it really needed? This is a question of importance for one of his students, Corliss Lamont, has challenged: Dewey "did not incorporate that word into his common faith or into his philosophy."⁸⁴

In his book American Religious Philosophy, Robert J. Roth asks the provocative question: "To be a naturalist is it necessary to deny God."⁸⁵ Certainly if one witnesses the militant agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, the anti-religious tendency of Huxley and Bertrand Russell, and the aggressive atheism of the French Encyclopaedists, for example, there is an inclination to want to answer Roth's question in the affirmative. But there is no necessary essential connection, philosophically, between naturalism and agnosticism, anti-religious tendencies, or atheism. At best such associations are the product of historical linkage or purely personal motivations. Naturalists need not necessarily deny God. But they are at least commonly committed to rejecting among other things, theistic interpretations of God.

The naturalist, as John Herman Randall Jr. points out, is devoted to providing a "critical interpretation and analysis of every field," consequently, there "is room for religion....since that is an encountered fact

of human experience."⁸⁶ Likewise there is "room for man's concern with the eternal,"⁸⁷ or as Sterling Lamprecht phrases it, "The existence of God deserves the fairest consideration."⁸⁸ This surely provides an answer why Dewey does direct his attention to these matters, but hardly sufficient reason to explain the inclusion of a reconstructed concept of God in his thought.

To answer this a subtle distinction must first be made. It is not just a question of whether or not Dewey's reconstructed concept of God qua concept is included. Its importance is both as a term and to secure a certain advantage for his naturalistic philosophy.

It was shown in the course of analysing Dewey's concept of God that he feels there is a requirement for such a concept. It is intended to fulfil an urgent need and he expresses a preference to retain the term "God" or synonymously the "divine."⁸⁹ Sidney Hook, who worked closely with Dewey on the manuscript for A Common Faith, mentions, in amplification of this point, that when he asked Dewey why he used the term "God" the latter replied:

. . .the term had no unequivocal meaning in the history of thought, that there was no danger of its being misunderstood (in which he was shortly proved wrong); and that there was no reason why its emotive associations of the sacred, profound, and ultimate should be surrendered to the super-naturalist, especially since for him not religion but the religious experience is central.⁹⁰

Following this Dewey adds (and this is placed in quotation marks by Hook):

Besides there are so many people who would feel bewildered if not hurt were they denied the intellectual right to use the term 'God.' They are not in the churches, they believe what I believe, they would feel a loss if they could not speak of God. Why then shouldn't I use the term.⁹¹

Again, in a final correspondence on the use of the word "God" written to Corliss Lamont on 23 May, 1941, Dewey states:

I think it important to help people to realize that they can save what it actually meant to them free from superstitious elements.⁹²

It is evident from these passages Dewey feels every right to utilize the term "God" and he formally includes it as a term in his religious thought to serve a specific function, namely, a practical emotive effect.

Admittedly, as mentioned above, this runs contrary to Corliss Lamont's conclusion. However, Lamont's conclusion does not seem to follow from the evidence he provides to support it. It suggests something else. And it fails to make a distinction between meaning and use in the concept in question.

In a series of letters exchanged between himself and Dewey, Lamont, puzzled over Dewey's definition of God as the "active relation between ideal and actual," asks of his old teacher, clarification to calm his scepticism. Dewey replies in a letter dated 16 August,

1935, and includes in this retort the following statement:

Thanks for your note which explained something I hadn't been able to understand. I suppose one of the first things I learned in grammar was the difference between would and should. But nevertheless I made a bad slip which accounts for the fact that you thought I was making a recommendation. The meaning in my mind was essentially: If the word 'God' is used, this is what it should stand for; I didn't have a recommendation in mind beyond the proper use of a word.⁹³

Lamont claims, on the basis of this remark, that the meaning Dewey is assigning to "God" is merely a recommendation for a proper definition.⁹⁴ This contention is not entirely wrong nor is it new. It represents a reiteration emphasized by Dewey in the 1933 article "Dr. Dewey Replies."⁹⁵ But Lamont pushes his conclusion from this evidence too far. It does not indicate a refusal on Dewey's part to include a reconstructed concept of God in his thought. Secondly, it completely misses the emotive force Dewey wants to retain by keeping the term "God." At the most, Lamont's evidence seems to indicate by implication Dewey himself does not personally prefer or require a need for the term. This is a choice, it will be recalled, Dewey leaves altogether open for each individual to decide for himself.⁹⁶ If the "reality to which the word might be applied" was meant to have no significance in his thought then it seems silly he would trouble himself about it as he does. Lamont does a disservice to Dewey in advocating his concept of God is

extraneous.

Dewey's intent to remain faithful to human experience with an emphasis on ideals or standards in practice immediately gives rise to a problem he has to overcome. On the one hand, if he seeks the unification of ideals in an integrating principle "outside" of the natural framework he eludes to supernaturalism. On the other hand, if he reduces human values to mechanical conjunctions of material entities he opens himself up to the charge of materialism. Dewey's response to free himself from this difficulty is his concept of God. In effect he attempts to chart a middle course between these two (for him) extremes, both of which he rejects.⁹⁷ Selected human values in addition to their actual basis in the social world are given an ideal status as products of the human mind. This supposedly avoids a materialistic reduction. Postulating a unification of ideal ends provides an integrating principle capable of endearing loyalty and devotion, consequently "divinity" becomes what man discerns in his imagination. This presumably frees him from having to resort to invoking supernatural agents.

Dewey's second reason for the inclusion of the concept God is thus attributable to his commitment to a naturalistic philosophy which attempts to overcome the pitfalls of supernaturalism and circumvent a vulgar material-

ism, yet at the same time secure, as Randall remarks: "what is actually valid in the 'spiritual life' of the great religious visions. It must really interpret, clarify, and criticise the facts and values of man's moral, religious, and artistic experience, and not merely try to analyse them away."⁹⁸

However, as long as Dewey retains his insistence on the application of scientific method as the only acceptable method of verification, he is siding with a subtle materialism. To escape materialism he must demonstrate that the "unity of ideal ends"---a mental construction---is open to verification through the application of scientific method. His only other recourse is to deny the all-sufficiency of scientific verification, but to do this denudes him of a cardinal tenet of his naturalism.⁹⁹

To repeat in summary, the concept of God as redefined by Dewey is included in his thought and it is retained primarily for its practical emotive function as a term. Implicitly it represents an alternative to supernatural and materialistic philosophies. To remain true to the task of naturalism Dewey is obliged to account for ideals and values. But as a naturalist this requires a construct avoiding a materialistic reduction or postulating a supernatural agent beyond nature and the finite world. He feels secure in the thought his

concept of God overcomes these difficulties. But as has been shown, to retain all he renders to scientific method drives him to materialism de facto.

It remains, following this examination, to ask in conclusion what is left of intrinsic worth in Dewey's conception of God. Can it provide the necessary fibre demanded by the "modern spirit" ever in the forefront of Dewey's quest? Or is it, as Charles Sanders Peirce remarked of Royce's Absolute, only God in a Pickwickian sense?

Dewey's recognition that there exists a yearning for a faith or belief, even by those who have abandoned supernaturalism, leads him to substitute satisfaction in the higher possibilities of human nature (human ideals) for dedication to absolute spirit of transcendent God. To overcome the old division of free subject and determinate object he enthusiastically urges participation in creative energies and recognition of human creative responsibility. If there can be any form of "salvation" arising out of this it is entirely attainable in the interactive process of human communication, the context limited by man-in-nature. Likewise, value is relegated solely to a terrestrial quest and obligation is given a factual basis rather than a causal relation of man to God. There is no room for the categorical wrong. An ethical atomism (every situation has its own good) is

all that can be resorted to in answer to the question, what is good? Verbally identifying good with ideal ends, as Dewey does, dodges the whole problem. As Morris Cohen points out:

. . .not only does life fail to divide itself into a convenient number of disconnected "situations," but in every actual ethical problem. . .there is conflict of rival considerations. If, e.g., class exploitation is to be regarded as evil and rejected, it is to be rejected not only when it affects Mr. A or Mr. B, on the fifth or sixth day of the month, but as a general rule to control all judgments in particular cases.¹⁰⁰

To Dewey's everlasting credit however, he strives to render his construction intellectually credible and morally worthy of respect.¹⁰¹ Though he continually decries traditional religion and traditional religious notions, he nevertheless attempts to preserve some of its attitudes. In a very general manner he borrows and utilizes linguistic terms---"ideal," "morality," "God,"---that have had associations with traditional religious beliefs about deity. He even urges "devotion" to the concept of God he formulates and requires "faith." At one point he goes as far as to make the claim:

. . .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....¹⁰²

But God, as he redefines the concept, is not compatible with any recognizable traditional conception and it lacks the "realities" to make sense of attitudes

he imports for it. Perhaps the concept of God, as Dewey conceives it, does "generate the heat of emotion and the light of intelligence" for him. But what can this "unity of ideal ends" signify for others? How much clearer is the phrase "unity of ideal ends" than the term "God" which he criticizes for being vague and amorphous?¹⁰³

At best, his God as a "unity of ideal ends" generates just that, the phrase itself. Willard Arnett's comment concerning a concept of God is pertinent. He remarks:

A concept must be something more than an intellectual thesis in order to have widespread ethical or religious consequences. The concept must be developed in all its aesthetic possibilities and in its practical significance for man.¹⁰⁴

It will be recalled that Dewey intends A Common Faith for those who have abandoned supernaturalism, and he attempts to provide such persons with a demonstration that they still can have within their experience all the elements which give the religious attitude its value. His aim is far from being just an intellectual exercise. If Arnett's comment is correct, then Dewey must be faulted, for he does not go very far in developing the possibilities and the significance of his concept of God for those to whom he intends it.

God as the "unity of ideal ends" is held to be a projection of selected goods from human experience. Presumably these are goods deserving idealization as ends, and as ends possess the capability of being unified. But

why should only those ends capable of admitting of unity as opposed to ends in conflict be desirable? Clearly Dewey is stressing harmony at the expense or neglect of conflict, but this is hardly sufficient justification to establish his contention.

When Dewey turns to the natural world to seek establishment for his God he is transfixed with the idea of the social and harmony within the social sphere. This costs him what his philosophy urgently requires but never attains, a psychology of the individual.¹⁰⁵ He neglects to offer a contemporary ideal of humanness to correspond to his contemporary religious doctrine with its concept of God. His attempt to provide modern man with all that traditional religionists prize and connect with their concept of God must, if the above examination is valid, be labelled unsuccessful. At the most he has provided, as a substitute for the traditional concept of God, a rather diffuse humanitarianism.

CONCLUSION

Having fully agreed that a concept of God is needed to liberate man from a sense of isolation and despair, Dewey attempts to construct a naturalistic concept freed from the deficiencies he attributes to the traditional and liberal modernist views. He offers a concept of God adhering to the alternative open to the naturalist of identifying God with something within nature. His concept represents a radical psychologizing of the idea of God. It is a postulate signifying the situation engendered by the imaginative faculty's effecting a reflex between what is ideal in human life and experience and what is actual. God is considered to be a union, or uniting, of ideal ends that "exist" as an imaginative construction in the human mind, a result of imaginative projections of selected factors in existence.

Dewey's endeavour meets with success on several counts. His concept of God has neither the attribution of personality nor existential identifiability attending it. It does not involve invoking, by hypostatization or inference, any supernatural agent that is "beyond the power of nature." Its establishment does not rely on any special "private experience" denominated "religious," though it does require the intervention of the imagin-

ation as a active faculty. In addition, it is not derived from the imperatives of the moral life and it does not act as a guarantee for the validity of moral legislation. Lastly, it breaks completely, as he believes a contemporary concept must, with the traditional conception of God. But as a middle course between having to accept supernaturalism or materialism, his concept of God is only partially successful. He does, as pointed out, manage to avoid resorting to supernatural agents, but as disclosed in the course of the examination, the same cannot be said for materialism. His insistence on scientific method as the only acceptable method of verification drives him to materialism. Verbally rejecting materialism is no demonstration that he in fact avoids it.

The measure of success accompanying Dewey's efforts to construct a naturalistic concept of God is weakened by several significant deficiencies. First and foremost, his demand for a concept of God that is empirically self-verifying as per scientific method, a criticism he levels against the traditional and liberal modernist conceptions of God, is foreign to his construction. Scientific verification is indigenous to his naturalism. It is the only valid method of verification he allows. But his concept of God, a "mental" as opposed to public concept, is not open to scientific verification. Hence his con-

cept of God is incompatible with his professed naturalism. Secondly, and to his detriment, he turns his back on the arguments utilized to refute the supernatural God of the traditional religion. Three of his arguments were shown to illustrate this. He condemns traditional religionists for selecting certain objects for devotion but engages in the same practice without offering any evidence to support the validity of his choice as opposed to that of the religionists. Dewey criticizes the religionists for constructing a God because of a desire for security yet he constructs a God based on a faith for self integration. No justification is given for the validity of the latter as opposed to the former. Maintaining that the supernatural God of traditional religion is not open to scientific verification is likewise forgotten when he offers his reconstructed concept of God. Thirdly, he emphatically maintains that his concept of God can guarantee what the traditional religionists prize and connect exclusively with their God, and this can be accomplished without resorting to an entity or agent "beyond" or transcending human experience and natural relations. But this crucial claim is left unjustified. He omits entirely to mention what it is precisely traditional religionists prize and connect with their God. His neglect however, cannot be taken to constitute a philosophical refutation. What Dewey does rely heavily on is his refutations of the

supernatural status assigned the antedecedently existent reality of traditional religion commonly termed "God." The arguments comprising his refutation were examined in detail and judged to be weak and inadequate. Fourthly, he offers a choice to contemporary man between two alternatives, either modify the concept of God in line with natural human relations and experience or drop it. Now if these two suggestions can be said to represent genuine alternatives, if one can logically replace the other, then there is some common question to which they give alternative answers. But Dewey is silent, he does not consider the problematic character entailed by this alternative. He merely drops the traditional view after offering a refutation of supernaturalism.

In carrying out his polemic against the concept of a supernatural God Dewey maintains a continual disregard for historical examination of the meaning and significance of God in the tradition. There is no attempt made by Dewey to question or understand the historical usage of the term "supernatural." And there is no recognition of the possibility of varying forms of supernaturalism. Though in fairness to Dewey it is clear that he rejects pantheism, monotheism, and polytheism.

Dewey's concept of God is a concept characterized by continual development, a constant uniting as ideals change and become modified. It is the end product of a

continual amalgamation of the highest possibilities of human nature (human ideals) projected imaginatively into a union of ideal ends. In developing this concept Dewey assumes, and rather optimistically at that, that human ideals are capable of union. No demonstration supports this assumption. Noticeably, there is no mention and allowance for ideals that might defy union or conflict, in spite of the fact the world of human experience is fraught with conflict and competition as well as agreement. Without giving this proper recognition and attention it is difficult to see how his concept of God can be developed or how it can work to act as an instrument of social adjustment. The opinion is registered here, that to carry his concept of God further requires a more detailed program devoted to developing its possibilities and justifying its significance, as a practical concept, capable of meeting the religious needs of contemporary man.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

PREFACE

¹
John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven, 1934).

INTRODUCTION

¹
James Collins, God in Modern Philosophy (Chicago, 1959), p. 283.

²
Sterling P. Lamprecht, "Naturalism and Religion", in Naturalism and the Human Spirit, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York, 1944), p. 18. Categorizing Dewey as a "naturalist" here does present several difficulties. There is no clear indication he agrees with Lamprecht's definition. Added to this is the fact that he never explicitly defines what he means by the term. On the other hand, he does class his general philosophy as "naturalism" and his religious thought as "humanistic Naturalism" (see footnote 65 Chapter One). The closest Dewey comes to offering a definition is to indicate in his article "Antinaturalism In Extremis" (the first article in the above book) that "the naturalist is one who has respect for the conclusion(s) of natural science" (p. 2). What is important is that for Dewey it is not the conclusions of science that receives stress but the method. It is the application of scientific method---experimental verification---he urges be applied to social and moral problems: "application of scientific methods of inquiry in the field of human social subject matter" (p. 3). Clearly the scientific method referred to is the method employed by the physical sciences for Dewey speaks of this method as the "systematic extensive, and carefully controlled use of alert and unprejudiced observation and experimentation in collecting, arranging, and testing evidence" (p. 12).

Scientific method as a means of verification is crucial to his "naturalism" for only that which is empirically verifiable is capable of being known (see pages 48-50). In spite of the fact Dewey does not give an adequate account of what he means by "scientific method" and the term "empirical" is not sufficiently clarified, the follow-

ing is assumed concerning his "naturalism": (1) Empirical verification is the only valid method of verification he allows. (2) Scientific verification is an integral part of his epistemology. (3) He does not allow for, and rules out, a priori. (4) He would argue that "naturalism" is: "The general philosophical position which has as its fundamental tenet the proposition that the natural world is the whole of reality...that there is but one system or level of reality; that this system is the totality of objects and events in space and time; and that the behaviour of this system is determined only by its own character...Nature is thus conceived as self-contained and self-dependent, and from this view spring certain negations that define to a great extent the influence of naturalism. First, it is denied that nature is derived or depended upon any transcendent, supernatural entities. From this follows the denial that the order of natural events can be intruded upon. And this in turn entails the denial of...transcendent destiny...Man is viewed as coordinate with other parts of nature, and naturalistic psychology emphasizes the physical basis of human behaviour...The axiology of naturalism can seek its values only within the context of human character and experience, and must ground these values on individual self-realization or social unity; though...there is disagreement as to both the content and the final validity of the values there discovered. Naturalistic epistemologies have varied...but they consistently limit knowledge to natural events and the relationships holding between them...Naturalism argues that all judgments of good and bad are conventional, with no real basis in nature...Human behaviour is regarded as largely a function of environment and circumstances...." [Dagobert D. Runes ed. Dictionary of Philosophy (New Jersey, 1965), pp. 205-206.]

Speaking of Dewey's "naturalism", John Herman Randall Jr. notes: "Dewey's naturalism represents a Hegelian concern with the intellectual problems of human culture, rendered pluralistic and concrete by saturation in biological thought and devotion to scientific methods and procedures". [John Herman Randall Jr. "The Nature of Naturalism", in Naturalism and the Human Spirit, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York, 1944), p. 365.]

It is evident from a comparison between naturalism and materialism that these doctrines have a great deal in common since the latter regards matter as the primordial or fundamental constituent of the universe, and that mental life is dependent on physical conditions and would not exist without it. Contemporary naturalists tend to reject materialism, citing that it is reductionary, human experience and the variety of natural phenomena cannot be reduced to "nothing but...."

For two interesting articles discussing Dewey's naturalism see James Collins, "The Genesis of Dewey's Naturalism", in John Dewey: His Thought and Influence, ed. John Blewett (New York, 1960), and Sidney Ratner, "The Development of Dewey's Evolutionary Naturalism", in Social Research, Vol. 20, 1953.

3

For example see Willard Arnett, "Critique of Dewey's Anticlerical Religious Philosophy", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. XXXIV (October, 1954), p. 256. Howard L. Parsons, "The Meaning and Significance of Dewey's Religious Thought", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. XL (July, 1960), pp. 172-173. Edward L. Schaub, "Dewey's Interpretation of Religion", in The Philosophy of John Dewey (Evanston, 1939). p. 396.

CHAPTER ONE

I

John E. Smith, The Spirit of American Philosophy (New York, 1966), p. 116.

2

John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", in Contemporary American Philosophy. ed. G.P. Adams and W.P. Montague (London, 1930), p. 20.

3

These categories are stressed in his 1925 work Experience and Nature in the statement: "Of all affairs, communication is the most wonderful. That things should be able to pass from the plane of external pushing and pulling to that of revealing themselves to man, and thereby to themselves; and that the fruit of communication should be participation, sharing, is a wonder by the side of which transubstantial pales. When communication occurs, all natural events are subject to reconsideration and revision; they are readapted to meet the requirements of convention, whether it be public discourse or that preliminary discourse termed thinking" (p. 16, *Italics mine*).

4

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 26.

5

The term "secularism" as applied to Dewey's thought here is meant to express his attitude that con-

ditions in, and because of, contemporary life are not conducive to religious life and faith as traditional faith would have it, especially for those who reject supernaturalism.

6

Jane Dewey ed., "Biography of John Dewey", in The Philosophy of John Dewey, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp (Evanston, 1939), p. 7. Further references to this article will be indicated by using Jane Dewey's name followed by the correct pagination.

7

George Dykhuizen, "An Early Chapter in the life of John Dewey", in Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 13, No. 4 (October, 1952), 556.

8

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 16.

9

Ibid., p. 19.

10

Ibid.;

11

Ibid.

12

Jane Dewey, p. 17.

13

Ibid.

14

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 19.

15

Jane Dewey, pp. 17-18.

16

Sidney Hook, John Dewey, An Intellectual Portrait (New York, 1939), p. 7.

17

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 20.

18

Ibid., p. 17.

19

For a more complete description of the influence of Hall and James see Jane Dewey, p. 22f.

20

"From Absolutism of Experimentalism", p. 24. This article is valuable for a detailed account by Dewey of the effect and influence exercised on him and his philosophy by William James.

21

Dewey's distinct break with the Hegelian formal position is the publication "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology", Psychological Review, III (July, 1896), 357-370. More recently this article along with other early works has been published by Joseph Ratner, John Dewey Philosophy, Psychology and Social Practice (New York, 1965), pp. 252-266. In this article Dewey re-emphasizes his early interest in organic interaction (see "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 13f.) and then centering on the reflex arc concept in psychology interprets it functionally as opposed to physically or psychologically. What he does is to interject purpose into behaviour in an attempt to overcome the mind-body problem. The result is that his earlier Hegelian belief in the organic as a cosmic category is now modified and given a naturalistic interpretation. The importance of this article, aside from its sheer historical value, is that it represents, for the first time, a concept of experience radically reinterpreted from classical empiricism's use of experience. In short, this article replaces Hegel with Darwin in Dewey's thought.

22

Dewey's survey of traditional accounts of experience leads him to conclude a new concept is needed. In "An Empirical Survey of Empiricisms" he envisages it as characterized by: "the practise of science, especially with reference to the use of ideas, hypotheses, and experimentation, in the process of verification or validation through results; and secondly, the radically different psychological approach that comes from looking at things objectively, from the standpoint of biology rather than of introspective analysis." (p. 87)

"Experience" concerns the affair of living for a person within the social and physical environment as opposed to being primarily a "knowledge-affair." (See "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," p. 23.). The social and physical environment within which the organism operates is objective as opposed to subjective. (Ibid.) It is not relegated solely to consideration of

the past but through the working of imagination it links past events with future projections. (Ibid.) The ability to carry this out is aided and abetted by the organism being interconnected with the physical and social environment in space and time. (Ibid.) through a heightened rationality gained through inference. (Ibid. See also John Dewey and Arthur F. Bently, Knowing and the Known Boston, 1949, p. 302.) Having framed a concept of experience within the biological frame of life, Dewey believes he has constructed a concept in which: "experience ... is the entire organic agent-patient in all its interaction with the environment, natural and social.... experiencing is just certain modes of interaction, correlation, of natural objects among which the organism happens, so to say, to be one. It follows with equal force that experience means primarily not knowledge, but ways of doing and suffering." (Ibid., p. 45.)

In his work Knowing and the Known, Dewey maintains "experience" is precisely organism as interacting/transacting with the environment. (p. 290.) He amplifies this in the statement: "every experience in its direct occurrence is an interaction of environing conditions and an organism. As such it contains a fused union somewhat experienced and some process of experiencing. In its identity with a life-function, it is temporally and spatially more extensive and more internally complex than is any single thing like a stone, or a single quality like red." (See Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed., The Philosophy of John Dewey Evanston, 1939. p. 544.)

"Experience," for Dewey, "is of as well as in nature," (See Experience and Nature, p. 4a) thus it is one transaction among many and as such is a transaction in which others participate. It is not, as this last statement shows, an all-inclusive category. "Experience" is a temporal affair complementary and constituted by the prevailing relationships between a conscious being and the environment, both physical and social.

23

Jane Dewey, p. 44.

24

For an expression of this see his article "Christianity and Democracy" in Religious Thought at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1893), pp. 60-69. Dewey stresses the concept of democracy in strong terms, for example, "The significance of democracy as revelation is that it enables us to get truths in a natural, every-day and practical sense which otherwise could be grasped only in a somewhat unnatural or sentimental sense." (p. 66.) As for religion and democracy he remarks: "I assume that

democracy is a spiritual fact and not a mere piece of governmental machinery." (Ibid. Italics mine.)

25

Ibid.

26

See his article "Religion and Our Schools" in The Hibbert Journal, Vol. 6, (July, 1908), 796-809. Especially relevant to this point is his remark on page 800f.

27

The term "instrumentalism" is employed here in Dewey's meaning of the word, namely: "Instrumentalism maintains in opposition to many contrary tendencies... that action should be intelligent and reflective, and that thought should occupy a central position in life.... What we insist upon above all else is that intelligence be regarded as the only source and sole guarantee of a desirable and happy future." John Dewey, "The Development of American Philosophy" in Philosophy and Civilization (New York, 1931), pp. 32-33.

28

"Religion and Our Schools", p. 807.

29

"Christianity and Democracy", especially p. 63f.

30

"Religion and Our Schools", pp. 808-809. Italics mine.

31

Ibid., p. 798.

32

John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (Boston, 1920), p. 164. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York, 1922), p. 55.

33

Dewey went to the University of Michigan in 1884 and remained there until 1894, interrupted for only one year spent as professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota. In 1894 he accepted a position at the University of Chicago, remaining there until his resignation in 1904. From 1905 until his retirement in 1930, Dewey was professor of philosophy at Columbia University.

34

Namely, "Christianity and Democracy" and "Religion and Our Schools". Dewey did publish other articles pertaining to religious issues during his early career, for example, in the Andover Review June 1887, The Monthly Bulletin of the Student's Christian Association of the University of Michigan, 8 October, 1886. These articles contribute little, if anything, of major importance for Dewey's religious thoughts, especially of significance for his later mature thoughts on religion. John Blewett, S.J. in his article "Democracy as Religion: Unity in Human Relations", in John Dewey: His Thought and Influence (New York, 1960), pp. 33-58., gives lengthy treatment to these early articles. But his claim of a "mystical experience" undergone by Dewey in his early days, and that Dewey is close to the Christian position, is dubious. There is no textual evidence either by Dewey or in his biography to support this contention. Blewett seems to be reading into Dewey an account that is not Dewey's view and in fact ignores statements made by Dewey with regard to his early religious views as "prophetic" of his mature religious position.

35

John Blewett's article (see note 34) and Edward E. Schaub, "Dewey's Interpretation of Religion", in The Philosophy of John Dewey (Evanston, 1939), pp. 391-416., are two examples of this mistake.

36

John Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder", in The Philosophy of John Dewey (Evanston, 1939), pp. 517-608.

37

"Christianity and Democracy", p. 60.

38

Ibid., p. 69.

39

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 22.
Italics mine.

40

Jane Dewey, p. 21. The reliability of this contention could be called into question since it is not written by Dewey himself. However, the information was supplied by Dewey to his daughter in writing the biography. And in no written form does Dewey take exception.

to it. (See the footnote at the bottom of the first page of the article for an explanation).

41

See the unpublished A.M. dissertation by Edward Franklin Ripley, "John Dewey's Philosophy of Religion" (Columbia, 1953). Exactly where this statement is recorded is not mentioned by Ripley. It appears from the footnote at the bottom of the fifth page that it is a direct communication from Schneider to Ripley.

42

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 20. *Italics mine.*

43

Ibid.

44

Ibid., p. 20f.

45

Ibid., p. 19.

46

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism".

47

"Christianity and Democracy".

48

"From Absolutism to Experimentalism", p. 28.

49

Nolan Pliny Jacobson, "The Faith of John Dewey", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. XL, No. 3. (July, 1960), 191-197. Howard L. Parsons, "The Meaning and Significance of Dewey's Religious Thought", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. XL, No. 3. (July, 1960), 170-190.

50

"The Faith of John Dewey", p. 191.

51

Ibid.

52

In his autobiographical account, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism", Dewey mentions that during his early university days philosophy was dominated "almost to a man" by clergymen and concentrated on the re-

quirments of religion or theology with "the vital issue..
..that between intuitionism and a sensational empir-
icism". (p. 15)

53

"The Meaning and Significance of Dewey's Relig-
ious Thought". p. 173.

54

A Common Faith, p. 29.

55

"The Meaning and Significance of Dewey's Relig-
ious Thought". p. 173.

56

John Dewey, "Dr. Dewey Replies", in The Christ-
ian Century, Vol. 50, (March 22, 1933), 394.

57

There are two major views regarding Dewey's
philosophical development. James Collins regards Dewey's
naturalism as "well established in its main lines by 1909,
and thereafter it was only necessary to work out in fuller
detail its various aspects and extend them into the part-
icular facets of human experience". [James Collins, "The
Genesis of Dewey's Naturalism", in John Dewey: His Thought
and Influence, ed. John Blewett (New York, 1960), pp. 1-
32]. Richard J. Bernstein believes "Dewey's most import-
ant and enduring work was done after 1925...." [Richard
J. Bernstein, John Dewey (New York, 1967), p. 167].

58

Though Dewey published six books between the
years 1935 and 1949, only two, Logic: The Theory of In-
quiry (1938) and Knowing and the Known (1949) are major
philosophical works. The former draws heavily on what
has already been established in Dewey's philosophy while
the latter is written as a work designed to clarify im-
portant aspects of his philosophy. Of the remaining
twelve books to Dewey's credit those which can be con-
sidered as major are published by 1934, specifically
between the years 1920 and 1934.

59

John Dewey, "One Current Religious Problem", in
The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. XXXIII, 1936, 325-326.

60

The Christian Century, Vol. 50, (January-June,
1933), 725.

61

"The Faith of John Dewey, p. 192.

62

For some examples see: (1) Richard Niebuhr, "A Footnote on Religion", in The Nation, Sept. 26, 1934. (2) Henry Nelson Wieman, "John Dewey's Common Faith", in The Christian Century, Vol. 51. Nov. 14, 1934. 1450-1452. (3) A. Eustace Haydon, "Mr. Dewey on Religion and God", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. XV, Jan. 1935. No. I. 22-25. All three witness varying reactions to Dewey's work but in general look favourably upon it and its possibilities.

63

"Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder", p. 597.

64

Ibid.

65

Many commentators and critics have attempted to attach a label to Dewey's religious thought. Henry Nelson Wieman in 1935 classified it as "empirical theism", while more recently (1959) George Geiger, an ardent student of Dewey's thought, called it "Scientific Humanism". Dewey's thought on religion has been referred to constantly as "Humanism" mainly because in 1933 he signed the Humanist Manifesto. This was misleading to commentators. Until his death in 1952, Dewey constantly disliked the use of labels being applied to his thought. However, it has recently come to light that he was willing to have the terms "humanistic Naturalism", with the "h" of the prefixed adjective in the lower case and the "N" of "Naturalism" in the upper case, applied to his religious thought. This is established in a series of letters exchanged between Dewey and Corliss Lamont in 1940 and published by Lamont in an article entitled "New Light On Dewey's Common Faith", in The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 58, No. I, (January, 1961), 21-28.

Use of the term "religious secularism" (see note 5) is not intended to act as a label replacing Dewey's actual terms "humanistic Naturalism". It is intended to be synonymous with it and capture the spirit of his efforts by retaining the word "religious" he favours being used in A Common Faith. "Secularism" is employed to be indicative of what his religious thought is and in opposition to the sacred and profane associated with traditional religion. It is also used by Dewey in A Common Faith to express his characterization of his age and its spirit.

66

"Dr. Dewey Replies", p. 394. Italics mine.

67

Ibid. Italics mine.

CHAPTER TWO

1

p. 1. John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven, 1934),

2

Ibid., p. 2.

3

Ibid., p. 1.

4

John Dewey, "A God Or The God", in The Christian Century, Vol. 50. (Feb. 8, 1933). 194.

5

A Common Faith, p. 11. Italics mine.

6

Saint Anselm, The Proslogium, trans. S.N. Deane (Chicago, 1962), pp. 1-10.

7

Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1963), A597, 598; B625, 626. Further references to Kant are from this translation.

8

p. 218. John Dewey, The Problems of Men (New York, 1946),

9

Anton C. Pegis ed., Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas (New York, 1945), Part I, Q 2, art. 3. pp. 21-24.

10

Critique of Pure Reason, A196 B241, 243.

11

Ibid., A 621, 622; B649, 630.

12
John Dewey, Experience and Nature (New York,
1925), p. 273.

13
Ibid., p. 275.

14
Ibid., p. 100.

15
Critique of Pure Reason, A625 f.

16
Experience and Nature, pp. 98-99.

17
Ibid., p. 99.

18
Ibid., p. 112.

19
Ibid., p. 103.

20
Ibid.

21
Ibid., p. 88, 90.

22
Ibid., p. 131.

23
"A God Or The God", p. 195.

24
Ibid.

25
A Common Faith, p. 23.

26
Ibid., p. 21.

27
Ibid., p. 22.

28
"A God Or The God", p. 195.

29

Ibid.

30

A Common Faith, p. 13.

31

Ibid., p. 12.

32

Ibid., p. 14.

33

Ibid., p. 39.

34

Ibid., p. 40.

35

C. B. Martin, "A Religious Way of Knowing", in New Essays in Philosophical Theology eds. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre (London, 1963), p. 79.

36

Ibid., p. 78.

37

Ibid., p. 82.

38

Ibid.

39

See the the quotation on page 29.

40

"Dr. Dewey Replies", p. 395.

41

Ibid.

42

In an article entitled "What I Believe", published in Forum, 1930 p. 177, Dewey writes that the supernatural is "that which lies beyond experience". In addition to this Dewey describes the supernatural as "the home of assured appropriation and profession", as contrasted with the natural, the realm of "striving, transiency, and frustration". It is the "eternal and infinite" in contrast with the "temporal, finite, and human". (Experience and Nature, p. 55.) It is that which in

contrast with instruments and acts, is uncontrollable. (The Quest for Certainty, p. 13.) It is the ideal in contrast with the actual. (A Common Faith, p. 21-22.) It includes the unseen power or power "controlling human destiny to which obedience, reverence, and worship are due," (A Common Faith, p. 7.) though it is not identical with God. (Ibid., p. 51.) Immortality is a part of the supernatural, as well as the realm of values. (Ibid., p. 1.)

43

See page 27.

44

A Common Faith, p. 1.

45

John Dewey, Experience and Nature (New York, 1925), p. 42.

46

Ibid.

47

Ibid., p. 43.

48

Ibid., p. 45.

49

Ibid.

50

Ibid., p. 46.

51

Ibid., p. 47.

52

Ibid., p. 52.

53

Ibid., p. 54.

54

Ibid., p. 26.

55

Ibid., pp. 26-27.

56

Ibid., p. 26.

57

Ibid., p. 27.

58

Ibid.

59

A Common Faith, p. 73.

60

Experience and Nature, p. 29.

61

Ibid.

62

Ibid., pp. 32-33.

63

Ibid., p. 61.

64

This, it will be recalled, was part of his objection to arguments from religious experience. But in addition to this, Dewey argues against the subjectivity of experience in Human Nature and Conduct, Experience and Nature, The Quest for Certainty, and in A Common Faith with his discussion of the mystical experience. It appears that the only latitude Dewey is willing to allow for subjectivity is in the aesthetic experience. For an analysis of this see his work Art as Experience. It is not the "having" of the experience he doubts only the interpretation and the basis for it.

65

Two works in particular refer to anthropology and the work of anthropologists, Experience and Nature and A Common Faith.

66

This follows George Geiger's classification in his book John Dewey in Perspective (New York, 1959), p. 145. Geiger presents an interesting and informative account of Dewey's social behaviourism. It should be mentioned that what Dewey means by the term "behaviourism" in this context bears no resemblance to that generally associated with the psychologists Wundt and Watson.

67

Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion (New York, n.d.), p. 34.

68

Ibid., p. 20.

69

Ibid., p. 40.

70

There is no doubt Dewey was aware of Freud's thought. This is clear from a reading of Human Nature and Conduct (see Chapter VI for example). Perhaps Dewey did read The Future of an Illusion published in 1927 (two years before The Quest for Certainty). But there is no evidence to suggest it influenced Dewey's thinking on religion in this work. The comparison drawn here should not be pushed too far for there are wide differences between Freud's views and Dewey's.

71

John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York, 1929), p. 3.

72

Ibid., p. 9.

73

Ibid., p. 10.

74

Ibid., p. 11

75

Ibid.

76

Ibid., p. 13.

77

Ibid., p. 39.

78

Ibid., p. 33.

79

Ibid.

80

A Common Faith, pp. 69-70.

81

Experience and Nature, pp. 79-80.

82

The Quest for Certainty, p. 33.

83

A Common Faith, p. 70.

84

Ibid., p. 30.

85

Ibid., p. 31.

86

Ibid., p. 32.

87

The Quest for Certainty, p. 171.

88

Ibid., p. 196.

89

Ibid., p. 71.

90

Ibid., p. 258.

91

Ibid., p. 171.

92

Ibid.

93

Ibid., p. 221.

94

Ibid., p. 196. It should be mentioned that for Dewey there is antecedent existence independent of verification but it is just data; it becomes objects as a result of verification. (See The Quest for Certainty, p. 137.)

95

Ibid., p. 86-87.

96

Dewey does deny the soul (Experience and Nature,

p. 294.) And he rejects psychological dualism (Ibid., p. ix.), the double aspect theory (Ibid., p. 74.) and epiphenomenalism (Ibid., p. 315.). He believes mind and body are different characters of natural events (Ibid., p. 74, 261.). As to whether or not Dewey would consider the individual of supreme worth this is difficult to say with certainty. Practically, it appears that he would (Reconstruction in Philosophy, p. 47, 186.).

97

See A. D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology: in Christendom (New York, 1960). 2 vol.

98

John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York, 1922), p. 242.

99

John Dewey, The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy (New York, 1910), p. 92.

100

Ibid., cf. p. 6.

101

A Common Faith, p. 76.

102

Ibid., p. 77.

103

Ibid., p. 78, 80.

104

Ibid., p. 83.

105

Ibid., p. 77.

106

The Quest for Certainty, p. 305.

107

A Common Faith, p. 32.

108

Ibid., p. 26.

109

Ibid.

110

Ibid., p. 9.

111

Ibid., p. 19.

112

Ibid., p. 83.

113

Ibid., p. 84.

114

A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology: in Christendom.

115

Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (Cambridge, 1946), p. 15.

116

Ibid., p. 16.

117

George F. Grant, Philosophy in the Mass Age (Vancouver, 1959), p. 51.

118

"A God Or The God", p. 194.

119

Ibid.

120

John Dewey, "Christianity and Democracy", Religious Thought at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1893), p. 60.

121

Ibid., p. 66.

122

Ibid.

123

Ibid., p. 67.

124

Ibid.

125
John Dewey, "Dr. Dewey Replies", The Christian Century, Vol. 50. (March 22, 1933), 394.

126
"A God Or The God", p. 194.

127
"Dr. Dewey Replies", p. 395.

128
"A God Or The God", p. 194.

129
Ibid.

130
Ibid. p. 193.

131
Ibid.

132
Ibid., p. 194.

133
Ibid.

134
Ibid.

135
Ibid., p. 195.

136
Ibid.

137
Ibid.

138
See pp. 33-34 and pp. 34-37.

139
In his article "Dr. Dewey Replies", Dewey writes:
"more and more persons find a completely satisfactory religious experience, and an empirically self-verifying one, in objects and interests that have no connection with sanctions and realities which Mr. Macintosh sets up". (p. 395)
The "reality" set up by Macintosh referred to here by Dewey is a "superhuman spiritual being, an essentially personal

cosmic power, an intelligent loving moral mind and will, one standing in a definitely favourable relation to special interests of mankind". ("A God Or The God", p. 194.)

140

"Christianity and Democracy", p. 62.

141

See pp. 193-194 of his article "A God Or The God".

142

See A. J. Ayer, Language Truth and Logic (New York, n.d.), p. 114 f.

143

"Dr. Dewey Replies", p. 395.

144

Ibid.

145

"A God Or The God", p. 191.

146

Ibid., p. 195.

147

Ibid., p. 196.

148

Ibid.

149

Ibid.

150

"Dr. Dewey Replies", p. 395.

151

Ibid.

152

"A God Or The God", p. 195.

153

Ibid.

154

James Collins, "The Genesis of Dewey's Naturalism", in John Dewey: His Thought and Influence, ed. John

Blewett (New York, 1960), p. 15.

CHAPTER THREE

1

See footnote 2 of the Introduction for some characteristics of naturalism.

2

Samuel M. Thompson, A Modern Philosophy of Religion (Chicago, 1955), p. 219.

3

John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven, 1934), pp. 51-52.

4

Ibid., p. 50.

5

Ibid., p. 53.

6

Ibid., p. 52.

7

Ibid., p. 11.

8

Ibid., p. 53, pp. 1-2.

9

Ibid.

10

"Pantheism" is defined as "the doctrine that reality comprises a single being of which all things are modes, movements, members, appearances, or projections". Dagobert D. Runes ed. Dictionary of Philosophy (New Jersey, 1965), p. 223.

11

Corliss Lamont, "New Light on Dewey's Common Faith", in The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. 58, No. 1. (January, 1961), p. 24.

12

Sidney Hook, The Quest for Being: and Other Studies in Naturalism and Humanism (New York, 1963), p. 159.

13

A Common Faith, p. 41.

14

Ibid., p. 45.

15

Ibid., p. 43-44.

16

Ibid., p. 46.

17

Ibid., p. 48.

18

Ibid., p. 43. This was also asserted in the
1933 articles.

19

Ibid., p. 49.

20

Ibid.

21

Ibid., p. 52.

22

Ibid.

23

Ibid., p. 42.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid., p. 43.

26

Ibid., p. 50.

27

Ibid., p. 53.

28

Ibid., p. 54.

29

Ibid.

30

Dewey's break with idealism comes in his 1896 article "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology". For examples of his criticisms of idealism see his 1917 article "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" and the specific comments interspersed throughout his major work Experience and Nature.

31

Again see the 1896 article "The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology". Historically it represents the beginning of his constant rejection of dualisms, e.g., the mind-body problem, two worlds, etc. His major works Human Nature and Conduct, Experience and Nature and The Quest for Certainty contain further evidence. As a naturalist Dewey is committed to "continuity".

32

A Common Faith, p. 51.

33

Ibid., p. 48.

34

Ibid.

35

Ibid., p. 47.

36

Ibid., p. 43.

37

Ibid., p. 51.

38

Ibid., p. 54.

39

See footnote 23 page 75.

40

A Common Faith, p. 49.

41

See Dewey's arguments against supernaturalism in Chapter Two and his polemic against the liberal modernists in the same Chapter.

42

A Common Faith, p. 25.

43

Ibid., p. 52.

44

See page 25.

45

A Common Faith, p. 45.

46

Ibid..

47

In referring to "the good" Dewey does not employ upper case letters on the "t" or the "g".

48

A Common Faith, p. 45.

49

See Chapter One footnote 3 page 8.

50

See Chapter One footnote 2 and 3 on page 8 and also page 18.

51

A Common Faith, p. 49.

52

See Dewey's discussion of "ends" in Chapter Three of Experience and Nature. In addition, Richard J. Bernstein in his book John Dewey (New York, 1967) provides an excellent discussion of "ends" in Dewey's thought, see especially Chapter Nine.

53

A Common Faith, p. 50.

54

Ibid., p. 49.

55

Ibid., p. 53.

56

Ibid., p. 43.

57

For Dewey all natural transactions have their own unique qualitative endings. In human experience these

termini are the source of all direct or immediate values. The existence of these immediate values is dependent on complex transactions. Valuation is a deliberative process culminating in a value judgement. Immediate values may conflict thus a judgement of what I ought to do demands an evaluation of the alternative actions in order to decide. Dewey does believe the scientific method can be applied to moral life but "value" or "good" is not an empirical property in some sense discovered by empirical science. Dewey does not however, believe an objective science of ethics is possible. He does believe deliberations can be pervaded with a scientific spirit, and that deliberations can be effective if the habits and skills required for intelligence are developed in our social life. The point Dewey is making with respect to science and morality is that scientific inquiry may be relevant to making moral decisions not that science dictates these decisions. Secondly, he advocates that the same traits employed in scientific deliberation should be developed in connection with making moral decisions. See John Dewey, Theory of Valuation (Chicago, 1939), p. 31. John Dewey and James H. Tufts, Ethics (New York, 1908), p. 323. John Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York, 1922), p. 255. John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York, 1920).

58

A Common Faith, p. 48.

59

Ibid., p. 25.

60

Ibid., p. 57.

61

Ibid., p. 56.

62

Ibid., p. 57.

63

Ibid., p. 33.

64

Ibid., p. 86.

65

Ibid., p. 87.

66

Ibid.;

67

See page 38.

68

See page 75 footnote 27.

69

See page 44.

70

See pages 38-44.

71

See page 77.

72

A Common Faith, p. 19.

73

See pages 48-52.

74

See page 79.

75

See footnote 57 of Chapter Three for an explanation of Dewey's position.

76

One of the defining characteristics of "materialism is that "mental entities, processes, or events (though existent) are caused solely by material entities, processes, or events and themselves have no causal effect". Dagobert D. Runes ed. Dictionary of Philosophy (New Jersey, 1965), p. 189.

77

See pages 33-34, 59-65.

78

See John Dewey, Theory of Valuation and John Dewey and James H. Tufts, Ethics.

79

Henry Nelson Wieman and Bernard Eugene Meland, American Philosophies of Religion (New York, 1936), Chap. XV, pp. 272-286.

80

Edwin Ewart Aubrey, Henry Nelson Wieman, and John Dewey, "Is John Dewey a Theist?", in The Christian Century, Vol. 51, (December 5, 1934), 1550-1553.

81

Dictionary of Philosophy, p. 316.

82

See Dewey's comment on polytheism in the article "Is John Dewey a Theist?", p. 1551.

83

"New Light on Dewey's Common Faith", p. 25.

84

Ibid.

85

Robert J. Roth, American Religious Philosophy (New York, 1967), p. 13.

86

"The Nature of Naturalism", p. 358.

87

Ibid.

88

Sterling P. Lamprecht, "Naturalism and Religion", in Naturalism and the Human Spirit, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian (New York, 1944), p. 30.

89

See page 71.

90

Sidney Hook, "Some Memories of John Dewey", in Commentary, Vol. XIV, (July-December, 1952), p. 253.

91

Ibid.

92

"New Light on Dewey's Common Faith", p. 25.

93

Ibid., p. 24. Dewey as well fails to distinguish between meaning and use clearly in this statement and quite often elsewhere.

94

Ibid., p. 25.

95

John Dewey, "Dr. Dewey Replies", in The Christian Century, Vol. 50, (March 22, 1933), 395.

96

See page 71.

97

His rejection of supernaturalism has already been shown. For his explicit rejection of materialism see his article "Antinaturalism In Extremis", in Naturalism and the Human Spirit, ed. Yervant H. Krikorian, (New York, 1944), especially page 5 f. Dewey is of the opinion he avoids materialism. But if he does so it is only verbal. What is being contended here is that he does not do so in practice. He attempts to deny it by carefully defining it. Certainly naturalism is not materialism in the sense of believing in matter as a fixed being (see page 3 of the article). The crucial issue is the question: can what we call mental or spiritual exercise a control over what is called physical, to some degree independent of any spatio-temporal redistribution; or if what is going on when minds seem to control bodies is understood, are the spatio-temporal redistributions the sole factors? To adhere to the latter is to be a materialist.

98

"The Nature of Naturalism", p. 376.

99

Dewey urges the application of scientific method---experiment, verification---to our social and moral problems. His stress on scientific method is not, or does not appear to be, as ridged as that of the logical positivists since he does make allowance for non-cognitive experience, e.g., values, rather than ruling them out a priori. However, a good case could possibly be made out to show that this is merely verbal. When it comes to testing some religious insight the test always follows: behaviouristic methods since it is the only method applicable to verification of phenomena. Herein lies the difficulty. He allows for the non-cognitive, an "inner aspect" or "mental" affair, yet demands the only test of truth is that which can be socially, publically, confirmed by the application of scientific verification. The problem is: how to get this "inner", "mental" aspect confirmed. It is no demonstration to simply rule out everything which cannot be confirmed by scien-

tific verification.

100

Morris Raphael Cohen, American Thought: A Critical Sketch (New York, 1962), p. 371.

101

In A Common Faith Dewey states: "it is the intellectual side of the religious attitude that I have been considering" (p. 56). Likewise, morality is a central issue since the problem of God is an entailment for him with the question, "Are the ideals that move us genuinely ideal or are they ideal only in contrast with our present estate?" (p. 42) being asked.

102

A Common Faith, p. 52.

103

See page 59.

104

Willard Arnett, "Critique of Dewey's Anticlerical Religious Philosophy", in The Journal of Philosophy, Vol. XXXIV, (October, 1954), 265.

105

It would be quite incorrect to say Dewey totally neglects the individual. His book Human Nature and Conduct illustrates otherwise. It represents his most sustained systematic treatment of the psychology of the individual but it is definitely limited in its approach. It neglects the more unfavourable traits of human existence, e.g., fear, anguish, remorse, death, tension, despair, etc. Dewey himself admits at one point: "I have failed to develop in a systematic way my underlying psychological principles". [John Dewey, "Experience, Knowledge and Value: A Rejoinder", in P.A. Schilpp ed. The Philosophy of John Dewey (Evanston, 1939), p. 554.]

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