

# Foucault's Pragmatism and Dewey's Genealogies: Mapping Our Historical Situations and Locating Our Philosophical Maps [Part II]

*Pragmatismo Foucaultiano e Genealogias Deweyanas: Mapeando Nossas Situações  
Históricas e Localizando Nossos Mapas Filosóficos [Parte 2]*

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**Abstract:** In Part I, I focused on the pragmatic facets of Foucault's genealogies. In particular, I highlighted the extent to which experience in a sense very close to the way Dewey used this term was central to Foucault's project. In Part II, I focus on the genealogical aspects of Dewey's pragmatism. This however entails also turning our attention from "practices of freedom" (to use Foucault's expression) to the efforts of Dewey and Foucault to map the historical terrain of human practices, especially the discursive practices of traditional philosophers, for the sake of pointing out unexplored possibilities. The patient, imaginative exploration of such possibilities is connected to the practices of freedom. Moreover, emancipating our practices often requires us to redraw the maps in which these practices might be both reconfigured in their relationship to one another and liberated from some of their inherited goals. For example, the practice of philosophy (precisely as an instance of a practice of freedom) might be weaned from not only the quest for certainty but also any aspiration to transcend the contingencies of history. Put positively, philosophy might transform itself into, first and last, a critical engagement with the historical present, for the sake of transforming or transfiguring that present. Insofar as it can do this, philosophizing effectively transforms itself into a practice of freedom.

**Key words:** Genealogy. Experience. Discourse. Denotation. Narration. Cartography. Pragmatism. Practice. Impiety.

**Resumo:** *Na Parte I, concentrei-me nas facetas pragmáticas das genealogias foucaultianas. Em particular, destaquei a medida em que a experiência, em um sentido muito próximo do modo que Dewey emprega o termo, foi central no projeto foucaultiano. Na Parte II, concentro-me nos aspectos genealógicos do pragmatismo de Dewey. Isto, contudo, envolve também mudar nossa atenção das "práticas de liberdade" (para usar uma expressão foucaultiana) para os esforços de Dewey e Foucault de mapear o terreno histórico das práticas humanas, especialmente as práticas discursivas dos filósofos tradicionais, para apontar possibilidades inexploradas. A paciente, imaginativa exploração de tais possibilidades é conectada com as*

*práticas de liberdade. Além disso, emancipar nossas práticas muitas vezes requer que redesenemos os mapas em que estas práticas podem ser ambas reconfiguradas em suas relações de umas com as outras e libertadas de alguns de seus objetivos inerentes. Por exemplo, a prática da filosofia (precisamente como um exemplo de prática de liberdade) pode ser emancipada não somente da questão da certeza mas também de qualquer inspiração de transcender as contingências da história. Colocada positivamente, a filosofia pode transformar-se, primeira e finalmente, num engajamento crítico com o presente histórico, a bem de transformar e transfigurar este presente. Na medida em que isto pode ser feito, filosofando efetivamente transforma-se em prática de liberdade.*

**Palavras-chave:** Genealogia. Experiência. Discurso. Denotação. Narração. Cartografia. Pragmatismo. Prática. Impiedade.

## 1. Situating the task at hand

John Dewey's pragmatism is no less genealogical than Michel Foucault's genealogies are pragmatic. Dewey's thought is arguably wider than his pragmatism (though there is not a single aspect of his philosophical project separable from his pragmatic commitments), while Foucault's contributions unquestionably go beyond his genealogies (as important as these genealogies are).<sup>1</sup> In Part I of this article (*Cognitio*, volume 13, number 1, 61-98), I devoted myself to rendering plausible the extent to which Foucault's project, in particular, his genealogies, are pragmatic.<sup>2</sup> In Part II, I want to accomplish the other half of my goal: to render tenable the degree to which Dewey's pragmatism is genealogical.<sup>3</sup> While in Part II stressed the *experiential* dimensions of Foucaultian texts, I want in Part II to bring into focus (to some extent) the *discursive* features of Deweyan experimentalism.<sup>4</sup> This is a more difficult task, since Foucault's invocation of experience is far more explicit than Dewey's manner of writing is indicative of the importance of discourse for the

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1 Arnold Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics" in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, edited by David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 221-33; Thomas Flynn, Sartre, *Foucault, and Historical Reason*, volume 2 (*A Poststructuralist Mapping of History*) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), see especially Chapters Six and Seven.

2 I also focused on what Foucault called practices of freedom, in contrast to liberation or emancipation. Here I shift the focus from such practices to the efforts of these two thinkers to map the terrain of our practices, for the sake of opening spaces of freedom.

3 See, above all, John J. Stuhr, *Genealogical Pragmatism: Philosophy, Experience, and Community* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997) and Colin Koopman, *Pragmatism as Transition: Historicity and Hope in James, Dewey, and Rorty* (NY: Columbia University Press, 2009). See also my "Meaning, Situation, and Improvisation: An Aesthetics of Existence in Dewey and Foucault" in *Foucault Studies*, No. 11 (February 2011), 20-40.

4 To signal this shift in focus I have used the subtitle of Part I as the title for Part II and used as a subtitle for Part II "Mapping Our Historical Situations and Locating Our Philosophical Maps" There is however an intimate connection between the practices of freedom (the focus of Part I) and the kind of cartography explored in Part II.

achievement of his goals. While it is impossible to do here much more than touch upon Dewey's understanding of discourse, it is necessary to highlight several of what for our purpose are the most relevant features of his largely implicit theory of this important domain of human practice.<sup>5</sup> Our discursive practices are inextricably tied to our non-discursive ones, our most sophisticated verbalizations to our simplest gestures (including the gesture of pointing to what is publicly observable within some more or less determinate context of human endeavor). In the end, however, both discourse and denotation need themselves to be situated in the context of an effort to map the historical world of human practices (moreover, to conceive philosophy itself as a form of cartography). Our ability to read the features of the terrain in which we are situated cannot be dissociated from that of inscribing these features on a map. Maps are indispensable for discovering where we are and how we might get elsewhere. Maps depend, to a degree we are likely to overlook, on conventions of representation; but such conventions work only because the iconic and symbolic facets of this form of diagram are conjoined to indexical functions. Put more simply, maps (as do all other signs) point beyond themselves<sup>6</sup>: they point to nothing less than a world in which things are at a distance from each other, one in which human motility and human fallibility are linked (our capacity to move about is virtually of a piece with our capacity to get lost), a world in which paths can be marked on the paths themselves but also elsewhere (most obviously, on maps, an especially important kind of diagrammatic representation). For our purpose, however, the metaphor of cartography is even more important than maps in the literal sense. For this metaphor more than anything else allows us to see how discourse and denotation, as Dewey conceives them, function together.

## **2. Discourse, denotation, and cartography**

Dewey identified one of the besetting sins of traditional philosophy to be the extent to which dialectical elaboration became untethered from experiential constraints. In this context, *dialectic* means the process by which we discursively draw out the implications of a claim and also identify the presuppositions of that claim. This is at least one of the main ways in which Dewey uses this ambiguous term. Traditional philosophers have largely ignored, in the name of formal systems and verbal formulation,

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5 Though Dewey's theory of language has received some attention (but far less than one might imagine suppose) – see, e.g., Wilfrid Sellars's excellent treatment of this complex topic in "Language, Rules, and Behavior" in *John Dewey: Philosophy of Science and Freedom*, edited by Sidney Hook (NY: Dial Press, 1950) – his understanding of discourse has hardly received any attention. This would be a good topic for a young scholar to research, especially since it is one that so obviously connects to the dominant preoccupations of contemporary philosophy.

6 There is a sense in which even self-referential signs point beyond *themselves*, since a functional distinction needs to be drawn between such signs in their indexical function (in their role of pointing to themselves) and in their indexed or "object" role (their status as that which is being pointed out).

those irreducible, infinite plural, undefinable and indescribable qualities which a thing must *have* in order to be, and in order to be capable of becoming a subject of relations and a theme of discourse. Immediacy of existence is ineffable. But there is nothing mystical about such ineffability; it expresses the fact that of direct existence it is futile to say anything to one's self and impossible to say anything to another. Discourse can but intimate connections which if followed out may lead one to have an experience. (LW1, 74; cf. 388)

The capacity endowed by discourse to intimate such connections as well as to point in the direct in which an experience might be had and the qualities to which we ought to be especially attentive in our direct encounter with an experiential existent (e.g., the taste of *this* wine or the play of *these* colors on the surface of the snow) is of the greatest importance. It is inseparably allied to our capacity to *have* experience, directly to experience what is or can be made available to us (e.g., the actual fingerprints or other traces of the identity of the person who has broken into an apartment). "Description is of course always an instance of discourse. Moreover, when it occurs, description is but part of a circuitous method of pointing or denoting; index to a starting part and road which it takes may lead to a direct and ineffable presence" (LW 1, 75). While our discursive elaborations are, at bottom, only a part of such a denotative method, our discourses are as important for contextualizing our acts of pointing (hence, for enabling us to see the significance and salience of these acts) as denotation is crucial for tethering our discourses to the disclosures of experience. There is here no denigration of discourse or symbolization, only an insistence that we hold ourselves responsible to what is revealed about things by our *direct* encounter<sup>7</sup> with everyday objects and their distant relatives (the sophisticated results of scientific

7 Like Peirce, Dewey argues for the secondness and thirdness as well as the firstness of experience. Experience is, at once, a *direct* encounter with events and objects other than oneself and the way these objects are mediated by a variety of factors (not least of all our concepts and other signs). That is, experience is direct yet mediated (hence, *not* immediate). To insist upon experience being a *direct* encounter or engagement is a way of doing justice to the secondness of experience, whereas to insist upon mediation is an attempt to do justice to the thirdness inherent in experience. Experience is a brute encounter in which the clash with otherness is always evident; but it is no less a flow of intimations of intelligibility, not infrequently intimations leading to discovery or understanding. In addition to brute otherness and indelimitable intelligibility, however, there are also the immediately felt qualitative dimensions of experience. Herein we see (in Peircean language) the firstness of experience. Dewey in his own way tried to do the fullest justice to the firstness, secondness, and thirdness of experience. But, because so much of traditional philosophy operated at a considerable distance from empirical constraints, he often tended to stress secondness and, closely connected to this, firstness – the direct having of experience, the "immediate" encounter with objects and events in their immediacy. This should not be seen as a denigration of discourse as such; rather it should be taken as one of the ways in which Dewey was disposed to attack intellectualism, especially when such intellectualism was bound up with verbalism (the presumption that words are by themselves adequate). The indexical function of words, even our philosophical utterances, needs to be accorded its due. If only indirectly, words are always pointing to affairs and contexts beyond themselves. See Chapter 6 ("Experience After the Linguistic Turn") of *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010).

inquiry, such as genes and quarks, mirror neurons and black holes). In deference to Kant, we might say that discourse apart from denotation would be empty, while denotation apart from discourse would be blind.

In the end, it is for Dewey a matter of pointing, of pointing things out, often things of a rather obvious character.<sup>8</sup> But, the end never actually comes; so it is *in situ*, along the way, a matter of pointing things out, mostly for the sake of re-orienting ourselves to the terrain in which our endeavors take place. In a late manuscript, Dewey stresses the extent to which his naturalistic empiricism (or pragmatic experimentalism) encompasses a denotative method. At times he even identifies his experimentalism with this method: "The experiential or denotative method tells us that we must go behind the refinements and elaborations of reflective experience to the gross and compulsory things of our doings, enjoyments and sufferings – to the things that force us to labor, that satisfy needs, that surprise us with beauty, that compel obedience under penalty" (*LW* 1, 376).<sup>9</sup> No method, including the one Dewey is advocating, insures the success of the enterprise for which the method is employed: "The adoption of an empirical [or denotative] method is no guarantee that all the things relevant to any particular conclusion [or, even more fundamentally, to any particular inquiry] will actually be found or pointed to, or that when found will be correctly shown or communicated" (*LW* 1, 388). The adoption of even an effective method does not eliminate the need for the exercise of human imagination and indeed for much else. "But the empirical method," Dewey is quick to add, "points to when and where and how things of a designated description have been arrived at" (*Ibid.*). To help us discern more clearly the character of our undertaking, Dewey offers an illuminating metaphor: "It places before others a map of the road that has been traveled; they may accordingly, if they will, re-travel the road to inspect the landscape for themselves" (*Ibid.*). This insures the possibility of open-ended correction: "Thus the findings of one may be rectified and extended by the findings of others, with as much assurance as is humanly possible of confirmation, extension and rectification" (*Ibid.*).

Nothing might seem farther from Foucaultian genealogies than this denotative method, a method all too likely greeted by contemporary readers as the simplistic

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- 8 In *Culture and Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), edited by G. H. von Wright and translated by Peter Winch, Ludwig Wittgenstein writes: "God grant the philosopher insight into what lies in front of everyone's eyes" (p. 63e). Elsewhere in this same work, he asserts: "If you want to go deep you do not need to travel far; indeed, you don't have to leave your most intimate and familiar surroundings" (p. 50e). You just have to approach these surroundings in such a way as to render them unfamiliar or strange, so that you can begin to determine where you are and how you arrived at this point. The work of Dewey and Foucault at least as much as that of Wittgenstein himself encompasses this task of estrangement. Especially at this stage in our history, too comfortable a relationship to our world is almost certainly symptomatic of a failure to attend to the actual character of the historical world and our irreducibly complex relationship to the inherited sphere of our personal engagements. Of course, our personal engagements are always more than merely personal ones (certainly more than simply private affairs).
- 9 *The Later Works of John Dewey*, volume 1 (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1988), pp. 375-76. I will however cite this and all other volumes in the critical edition of Dewey's voluminous writings in accord with standard practice. Hence, "*LW* 1, 375-7" refers to *Later Works*, volume 1, pp. 375-76. Citations will be given in the body of my essay.

approach of naïve positivism. But this method is conceived by Dewey to work in the specific contexts of our historical entanglements. The main reason why we might miss the significance – the import, the salience – of what has been pointed out is that our understanding of the actual context in which denotative acts are executed is insufficiently nuanced.<sup>10</sup> What is the point of pointing just *this* out, at this juncture of our endeavor? The salience and significance can only be ascertained contextually; and the context, characteristically a tacit background of our conscious strivings, frustrations, and fulfillments, needs to be made explicit. While the vast, vague background of human endeavor can never be fully explicated and can only be problematically identified,<sup>11</sup> the need for such explication and simply identification is recurrent. The valley or other feature of the landscape to which I point is part of that landscape and, moreover, the salience of pointing it out at a specific juncture is bound up with the course of our journeying (so a guide might point out, “Just a moment ago this valley was hidden by that mountain but now, from this angle, it comes into full view – and when it does we can see how it is situated between that range and another farther away from us when we are standing here”).

What is, thus, easy to miss is that the act of pointing things out derives its significance from the discursively identified and elaborated contexts in which such an act takes place.<sup>12</sup> Acts of denotation, in Dewey’s sense at least, serve both as

10 Just a moment ago, I quoted this text from the Appendix 2 to volume 1 of *The Later Works of John Dewey* (“Experience and Philosophic Method”): “The adoption of a method is no guarantee that all the things relevant to any particular conclusion will actually be found or pointed to, or that when found will be correctly shown or communicated” (LW1, 388). The eventuality of having what is denoted to be correctly shown or effectively communicated is a discursive achievement. The *significance* of our acts of denotation are inseparable from the contexts in which such acts take place; and, in turn, our understanding of these contexts is itself inextricably tied to our efforts to articulate, in narrative and other forms, the constraints and affordances of these contexts. Cf. Dewey’s “Context and Thought” in *The Later Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1985), 3-12.

11 Foucault more than Dewey appreciated the extent to which the seemingly simple identification of the relevant context in which our epistemic and other claims are made is not infrequently a contested affair, always possibly a contestable one. Moreover, the very identification of such a context is, since it is implicated in relations of power, a political act.

12 In a late manuscript, Dewey asserts: “The excuse for saying obvious things is that much that now passes for empiricism is but a dialectical elaboration of data taken from physiology, so that it is necessary for anyone, who seriously sets out to philosophize empirically, to recall to attention that he is talking about the sort of thing that the unsophisticated man calls experience, the life he has led and undergone in the world of persons and things” (LW1, 368-69). More generally, the justification for pointing out the obvious is that it has been denied. (“This description of experience would be but a rhapsodic celebration of the commonplace,” Dewey admits, “were it not in marked contrast to orthodox philosophical accounts.” Bernstein [ed.], 28. ). And there is only one way to do this, to make evident why efforts are being made to foster acknowledgment of the commonplace: that way is by offering an account or telling a story in which the salience and significance of our acts, including those of denotation, are alone determinable. In other words, the denotative method depends upon our discursive elaborations, contextualizations, and indeed contestations.

aids in sketching maps in the first place (see, e.g., *LW* 1, 389) and the means of determining our location either on the map or the terrain to which the map refers. The denotative method hence might be seen as an integral part of what is, in its totality, properly seen to be a cartographical endeavor: the point of pointing things out is to orient ourselves to the world in which we are thrown (in which we are lost often without being aware of our fate) and, as indispensable aids in orienting ourselves, we sketch and revise maps of different forms. If acts of denotation derive their meaning from the contexts in which they take place, and if in turn these contexts can in some manner and measure be themselves identified and detailed, then the denotative method can never stand alone: this method needs itself to be situated in the context of cartography, that is, that of our efforts to sketch the contours of the terrain in which we are actually situated. There is no possibility of locating ourselves outside of this terrain; but the range of our movements within this landscape is hardly so constrained that we are precluded from obtaining a variety of perspectives. This plurality of perspectives carries within itself the exigency of trying as best we can to square these perspectives with one another, to frame a synoptic vision without sacrificing salient details. At the heart of our experience, there is the felt need to doing nothing less than this. For this experience is, as much as anything else, a sequence of dramas in which improvisational actors, implicated in a precarious world, are fatefully implicated.

### **3. The dramatic form of human experience**

Dewey's conception of experience is not in the least narrow or superficial.<sup>13</sup> This becomes evident nowhere more clearly than in a late manuscript in which his historicist convictions are as fully on display as his experimentalist orientation: "When we say that experience is one point of approach to the world in which we live, we mean then by experience something at least as wide and deep and full as all history on the earth, a history which, since history does not occur in the void, includes the earth and the physical relatives of man" (*LW* 1, 370). "Experience denotes," Dewey emphasizes later in this same text, "what is experienced, the world of events and persons; and it denotes that world caught up into experiencing, the career and destiny of mankind. Nature's place in man is no less significant than man's place in nature" (*LW* 1, 384).<sup>14</sup>

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13 Though there are many fine explications of the Deweyan conception of human experience, none are better than those offered by John E. Smith. See especially Chapter 1 ("The Reconciliation of Experience in Peirce, James, and Dewey") of *America's Philosophical Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Chapter 3 ("The New Conception of Experience") of *Thought and Purpose: The Meaning of Pragmatism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). "The Reconciliation of Experience in Peirce, James, and Dewey" originally appeared as an article in *The Monist*, volume 68, number 4 (1985), 538-54.

14 Experience is "a double-barreled word. Like its congeners, life and history, it includes *what* men [and women] do and suffer, what they strive for, love, believe and endure, and also *how* men act and are acted upon, the ways in which they do and suffer, desire and enjoy, see, believe, imagine – in short, processes of experience. 'Experience' denotes the planted field, the sowed seeds, the reaped harvests, the changes of night and day, spring and autumn, wet and dry, heat and cold, that are observed, feared, longed for; [and] it also denotes the one who plants and reaps, who works and rejoices, hopes, fears, plans,



Experience is both *what* is encountered and undergone as well as *how* the world of persons, things, and events is encountered and endured by the participants in this process (LW 1, 28-29). It is not primarily an epistemic affair: we do not stand to the world first and foremost as knowers to objects known or to be known, but as actors in a drama. That the drama is being improvised by the actors themselves, though some of them imagine a playwright has already, at least, in broad outline provided an authoritative script, and that the drama is in no small measure transformative of the stage on which it takes place does not count against it being a drama. Dewey goes so far as to assert: "Every case of consciousness is dramatic; [and] drama [itself] is an enhancement of the conditions of consciousness" (LW 1, 232).<sup>15</sup> The dramatic constitution of human consciousness is a reflection of the dramatic situations into which human agents are ineluctably thrown by the forces of history and, even more fundamentally, the exigencies of life itself. The very form of our consciousness can be construed as a compelling argument against the subjectivist account of human experience. For it carries within itself reference to a world in which we are implicated, one over which we have very limited control ("when all is said and done, the fundamentally hazardous character of the world is not seriously modified, much less eliminated" [LW 1, 45]). Experience does not occur primarily within the consciousness of any one of us or even within us, beyond the limits of consciousness.<sup>16</sup> "No creature lives," Dewey insists, "merely under its skin; its subcutaneous organs are means of connection with what lies beyond its own bodily frame, and to which, in order to live, it must adjust itself, by accommodation and defense but also by conquest" (LW 10, 19). Dewey shortly thereafter adds: "The career and destiny of a living being are bound up with its interchanges with its environment, not externally but in the most intimate way" (Ibid.). The intimacy of these entanglements makes of

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invokes magic or chemistry to aid him, who is downcast or triumphant. It is [however] 'double-barreled' in that it recognizes in its primary integrity no division between act and material, subject and object, but contains them both in an unanalyzed totality" (LW 1, 18).

15 Cf. William James. In *The Meaning of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975) in particular, in the essay entitled "Humanism and Truth" – he argues that rationalist approaches to the human condition "contradict the *dramatic temperament of nature*, as our dealings with nature and our habits of thinking have so far brought us to conceive it" (215). In *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), James suggests: "Things tell a story. Their parts hang together so as to work out a climax. They play into each other's hands expressively. Retrospectively, we can see that although no definite purpose presided over a chain of events, yet the events fell into a dramatic form, with a start, a middle, and a finish. In point of fact, all stories end; and here again a point of view of many is the more natural one to take. The world is full of partial stories that run parallel to one another, beginning and ending at odd times. They mutually interlace and interfere at points, but we cannot unify them completely in our minds" (70-71).

16 "In a word, we live from birth to death in a world of persons and things which in large measure is what it is because of what has been done and transmitted from previous human activities. When this fact is ignored, experience is treated as if it were something that goes on exclusively inside an individual's body and mind. It ought not to be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs." *Experience and Education*, pp. 39-40.



human experience a truly dramatic affair. It also makes of the world an undeniably objective ambience. "The organism," Dewey notes in "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" (1917), "has to endure, to undergo, the consequences of its own actions" (Bernstein [ed.], 25). This is the meaning of *fate*, not in the sense of predetermination but in that of being ineluctably subjected to the consequences of our own actions, exertions, failures, and successes. And fate is the stuff on which dramas are made. To acknowledge this is to realize that: "Experience is no slipping along in a path fixed by inner consciousness. Private consciousness is [in truth] an incidental outcome of experience of a vital objective sort [cf. *Experience and Nature*]; it is not its source" (Bernstein [ed.], 25-26). "Just as we digest food derived from the extra-personal world long before we are aware of processes in our own bodily tissues, so we live in a world of objective acceptances and compulsions long before we are aware of the action of say the nervous system in bringing us into effective relationship with them" (*LW* I, 380). "The adoption of an empirical [or denotative] method is no guarantee that all the things relevant to any particular conclusion [or, even more fundamentally, to any particular inquiry] will actually be found or pointed to, or that when found will be correctly shown or communicated" (*LW* I, 388). More prosaically, experience is for Dewey the processes and practices constitutive of the complex life of the human animal. "Experience is," to invoke Dewey's own words, "the result, the sign, and the reward of the interaction of organism and environment which, when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction [or transaction] into participation and communication" (*LW* 10, 28).<sup>17</sup>

But far more often than not, human experience is arrested. It is *not* "carried to the full." Hence, it falls short, not infrequently tragically short,<sup>18</sup> of transforming itself into "participation and communication." In almost imperceptible ways but also engrossingly dramatic ones, the course of our experience generates situations in which we are at odds with our world. Given the constitution of the human animal and that of the environing world, phases of disequilibrium, instances of conflict, and other agonistic forms of human experience are just what we should expect (see, e.g., Chapter II, "The Live Creature and 'Ethereal Things,'" of *Art as Experience*, i.e., *LW*

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17 *Art as Experience*, volume 10 of *The Later Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1989). Cited here and hereafter as *LW* 10.

18 See Sidney Hook, *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life* (NY: Basic Books, 1974); Cornel West, *Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993); Raymond D. Boisvert, "The Nemesis of Necessity: Tragedy's Challenge to Deweyan Pragmatism" in *Dewey Reconfigured: Essays on Deweyan Pragmatism*, edited by Casey Haskins and David I. Seiple (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999); Naoko Saito, *The Gleam of Light: Moral Perfectionism and Education in Dewey and Emerson* (NY: Fordham University Press, 2005); William Gavin, "Pragmatism and Death: Method vs. Metaphor, Tragedy vs. the Will to Believe" in *100 Years of Pragmatism*, edited by John J. Stuhr (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010); and my "In the Wake of Darwin" in *In Dewey's Wake*, edited by William J. Gavin (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2003), "The Question of Voice and the Limits of Philosophy: Emerson, Dewey, and Cavell" in *Metaphilosophy*, volume 35, numbers ½ (January 2004), reprinted in *The Range of Pragmatism and the Limits of Philosophy*, edited by Richard Shusterman (Wiley, 2004), and "The Tragic Roots of Jamesian Pragmatism," forthcoming in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*.

10).<sup>19</sup> Dewey is himself quite explicit about this: Life “is no uniform uninterrupted march or flow. It is a thing of histories, each with its own plot, its own inception and movement toward its close, each having its own particular movement; each with its own unrepeated quality pervading it throughout” (LW 10, 42-43; cf. “Qualitative Thought”). Quite simply, our lot is to be, time and again, at odds with our world. Uninterrupted harmony is a utopian dream for understandable reasons, i.e., on experiential grounds: disequilibrium, disruption, struggle, conflict, and the innumerable forms in which the human animal can be out of joint so pervasively and deeply define the character of our experience (see, e.g., LW 1, 51-52).<sup>20</sup>

Our impulses to mend the rent fabric, to suture the open wound, to nullify the forces of disruptions, then, have their roots in the soil of our experience itself. The massive, insistent drive toward the recovery of unity, toward making an all too alien world a hospitable habitat (cf. James, *A Pluralistic Universe*), a world in which we are not at odds with either it or one another, also ourselves, tends to dispose us to embrace consoling, spurious forms of unity and harmony. Therein we betray our immaturity, cultural no less than intellectual. For we exhibit the incapacity to enjoy struggle and conflict, when they [and they alone] need to be experienced as means of developing an experience. The only way *out* is indeed *through*<sup>21</sup> but, as often

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19 In *Art as Experience*, Dewey notes: “every integral experience moves toward a close, an ending, since it ceases only when the energies active in it have done their proper work” (LW 10, 47). It is however easy to misinterpret the import of this claim. Hence, Dewey is quick to point out that: “The closure of a circuit of energy is the opposite of arrest, of *statis*. Maturation and fixation are polar opposites.” He then makes a very important point, one crucial for our understanding of the relationship between Dewey and Foucault: “Struggle and conflict may themselves be enjoyed, although they are painful, *when they are experienced as a means of developing an experience*; members in that they carry it forward, not just because they are there. There is [...] an element of undergoing, of suffering in the large sense, in every experience” (LW 10, 45-46; emphasis added). Dewey no less than Foucault is an agonistic philosopher, we might simply say a mature thinker, for he like his French successor exhibits a capacity to enjoy conflict and struggle “when they are experienced as means of developing an experience.” Indeed, it seems hardly possible, in light of their commitments and emphases, for either thinker to develop an experience without at the same time cultivating a capacity for enjoying multifaceted conflicts and protracted struggles.

20 Human experience reveals, Dewey stresses in *Experience and Nature*, a “pathetic longing for truth, beauty, and order. There is more than the longing: there are moments of achievement. Experience exhibits ability to possess harmonious objects. It evinces an ability, within limits, to safeguard the excellent objects and to deflect and reduce the obnoxious ones” (LW 1, 55-56).

21 The expression “the only way out is through” is a modification of a line from a poem by Robert Frost, “A Servant of Servants” (“It’s rest I want – there, I have said it out - /From cooking meals for hungry hired men/ And washing dishes after them – from doing/ Things over and over that just won’t stay done./ By good rights I ought not to have so much/ Put on me, but there seems no other way./ Len says one steady pull more ought to do it./ He says the best way out is always through./And I agree to that, or in so far/As that *I can see no way out but through*” [emphasis added]). Frost: *Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays*, edited by Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson (NY: The Library of America, 1995), 66.

as not, the process of working through the struggles and conflicts of our time and place becomes in itself an inherently fulfilling form of human striving, so much so that the very prospect of working ourselves out of situations in which conflicts are constitutive comes to be seen as utterly utopian, dangerously misguided.

But how are we to work ourselves *through* the thicket of history, the inherited entanglement of human affairs? How are we to see ourselves clear, insofar as this is possible? The answer is: broadly, in the way our primordial ancestors did so – by telling stories and sketching maps, by enlarging our perspectives by consulting others and revising our accounts (including our stories) in light of those consultations, and finally by painstakingly returning, time and again, to the disclosures of experience. Apart from our capacities for storytelling and mapping, for (on the one hand) relating events to one another in illuminating sequences and (on the other) relating places to one another in an intelligible manner, we are utterly at a loss as to who and where we are. But our different purposes require different maps (think here of the difference between a predominantly geological map and a political one), just as our different aspirations demand different forms of narration. Stories of origin are almost always more about the present than the past, since they *function* to underwrite the inherited forms of our shared practices. At critical junctures in human history, however, our inheritance is (at least) as much a hindrance as an aid or resource. While there is no possibility of ever simply jettisoning one's inheritance, there is, at such junctures, no possibility of simply endorsing that inheritance. The inherited forms of our shared practices must be turned against one another and indeed themselves; only thus can practices be emancipated, above all from constraints suffocating historical actors in their actual circumstances. What the Polish poet Tadeusz Różewicz said of contemporary poetry – it is “a battle for breath” – might with equal justice be said, more generally, of contemporary thought. This is, at any rate, true of such contemporary thinkers as Dewey and Foucault. But what does it mean to turn our practices against themselves, indeed why is the present such a time in which the “battle for breath” so frequently recurs? Only a genealogical thinker is in a position to address such questions effectively. But such thinkers might be found in lineages other than that tracing its inspiration to Nietzsche. Their genealogical orientation might, therefore, require the exercise of hermeneutic imagination.

#### **4. Dewey's genealogical pragmatism<sup>22</sup>**

If we turn to the inaugural chapters in such major works by Dewey as *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920) and *The Quest for Certainty* (1929) as well as the newly discovered manuscript *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*,<sup>23</sup> what we encounter are discourses akin to genealogies in Foucault's sense. The matter might be put more strongly (that is, we might say that what we encounter *are* such genealogies), but

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22 This expression is not John Dewey's but John Stuhr's. Even so, Stuhr captures with this expression something truly integral to Dewey's project.

23 *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, edited by Phillip Deen (Carbondale: SIU Press, 2012). The story of how this manuscript was “lost” and years later in effect discovered, at least in fragments, among Dewey's papers is told by Deen in his informative “Introduction” to this important work.

there is no necessity to insist upon such identity. For our purpose, indeed, affinity not only suffices but also seems to be more appropriate, since it signals the irreducible difference between two thinkers who were trained in very different philosophical traditions and lived in dramatically different circumstances (though chronologically proximate, the historical differences between a philosopher whose writings span from 1882 to 1952 and one whose work first appeared in 1954 and last “text” was composed in 1984.<sup>24</sup> Dewey’s first publication was roughly a century before Foucault’s last writing; his last writing just two years from Foucault’s first publication.

In *Experience and Nature* (1925), Dewey’s *magnum opus*, the opening chapter is not (or, at least, not obviously) akin to a genealogical rendering of critical phases in our cultural history, so much so that they might not appear to many of us to be genealogies at all. Later chapters, especially Chapters 3 (“Nature, Ends and History”), 4 (“Nature, Means, and Knowledge”), and 9 (“Experience, Nature and Art”), are however manifestly akin to this disruptive genre of philosophical discourse. Even so, Dewey’s narratives in general often seem, especially to us today,<sup>25</sup> less contentious or disruptive than Foucault’s genealogies. This appearance is however deceiving. One of the main reasons why we might be deceived in this regard is that Dewey so frequently sounds<sup>26</sup>

24 Foucault’s are almost always – and always appropriately – counted among his texts. I am not certain whether his last text was one he wrote or an interview he granted, but it makes no difference. He was active to virtually the untimely end of his remarkably prolific life.

25 In their own time, however, they were immediately and widely felt to be contentious and disruptive. The vehement and vitriolic responses to Dewey’s writings by *his* contemporaries need to be recalled here, in order to work toward a fair assessment of their historical function. One of his colleagues at Columbia University, Frederick Woodbridge, took Dewey to be insufficiently appreciative of such major figures as Aristotle. Largely under his influence, Dewey came to a deeper appreciation of Aristotle (one sees this perhaps most clearly in *Experience and Nature*). See George Dykhuizen, *The Life and Mind of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1973), 173 but especially 209. But it is important to recall that one of his students “learned” from Dewey an appreciation of tradition, including that in which Aristotle. In *Nature and Historical Experience* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1958), John Herman Randall, Jr., disclosed: “What I have learned from my teachers “is presumably not what they intended to teach. Doubtless John Dewey did not set out to impress me with the overwhelming importance of tradition.” But this is just what Dewey impressed upon Randall. “Being great teachers, they [Dewey, Felix Adler, and other teachers of Randall] made me see the world, in spite of myself, perhaps in spite of themselves” (2). For Randall’s creative appropriation of this “unintended” teaching, see his *How Philosophy Uses Its Past* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1963). It is as good a treatment of tradition, especially in reference to philosophy, as any with which I am familiar.

26 The *sound* of a philosopher’s voice is of considerable importance in interpreting and evaluating the force of their arguments and even the substance of their claims. No contemporary writer has done more to alert us to this than Stanley Cavell. How an author’s words sound and resound in our ears should never be discounted. Our *experience* of their texts needs to be accorded in our theories the place and importance it has in our lives. Texts, the ones to which we return time and again, are instruments of transformation, including self-transformation. The sound of the author’s voice *as experienced by us* is far from an extraneous or adventitious impertinence in our interpretation and critique of a text by that author.

like a dutiful son of the European Enlightenment, whereas Foucault (especially in his engagement with such critics as Jürgen Habermas) sounds like a radical critic of the Enlightenment project.<sup>27</sup> This is certainly how Dewey sounds to Stanley Cavell. In “What’s the Use of calling Emerson a Pragmatist?” (1998), “Dewey wanted to get the Enlightenment to happen in America while Emerson was in the later business of addressing the costs of the way it has happened” (78-79).<sup>28</sup> I will return to this point. For the moment, however, let me simply say that this characterization of Dewey distorts the complexity of his project.<sup>29</sup> Just as Foucault made clear in “What Is Enlightenment?” (1979)<sup>30</sup> his debt to the Enlightenment, so Dewey in countless writings made manifest his ambivalence toward the project so intimately tied to an earlier period of Western history. There were, undeniably, facets of the Enlightenment to which Dewey was resolutely committed (in this sense, then, he was working strenuously “to get the Enlightenment to happen in America”), but there were equally aspects against which he was fundamentally opposed. To a greater extent than Cavell and others are willing to acknowledge, Dewey was himself an Emersonian and an Emersonian in precisely the sense in which Cavell justly wants to rescue (that is, Emerson in his role as a critic of the Enlightenment). Dewey was far from indifferent to the need to address the costs of the way the Enlightenment has thus far happened and continues to happen in America. He was himself engaged in the Emersonian task of assessing the liabilities and simply the costs of our largely unreflective commitment to the abstract ideals of the European Enlightenments. He was acutely aware of the degree and manner in which, say, the ideal of freedom served the forces of enslavement and exploitation or how a purely formal ideal of equality aided the institutionally entrenched forms of inequality. Dewey was far from a dutiful child of the European Enlightenment; as much as Foucault, he was a radical critic, one who realized that his critique was at once immanent (inescapably an enactment of the defining ideals of the Enlightenment project) and transformative (a reconstruction of those very ideals, beyond anything imagined or even imaginable by the architects of the Enlightenment). Moreover, Deweyan meliorism is a much more modest project than the grand hopes for human

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27 Even so, see Christopher Norris, “‘What is enlightenment?': Kant and Foucault” in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, edited by Gary Gutting (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 159-96.

28 Though Emerson was Dewey’s predecessor, he was, in Cavell’s judgment, in advance of Dewey (or Dewey was vis-à-vis Emerson belated). It is not impertinent to bring Emerson into this discussion, since he deeply influenced Nietzsche and, in turn, Nietzsche deeply influenced Foucault. The lineage of Emerson, Nietzsche, and Foucault holds within itself a genealogical tale yet to be told, one especially disruptive for interpreters who read Foucault in an exclusively European context without any reference to American thought. But history, at least in the hands of a genealogist, can make strange bedfellows.

29 Thelma Z. Lavine does far greater justice to this complexity in “Pragmatism and the Constitution in the Culture of Modernism” in *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, volume XX, number 1, 1-19. See also her “America and the Contestations of Modernity: Bentley, Dewey, Rorty” in *Rorty and Pragmatism*, edited by Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995), 37-49.

30 This essay can be found in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow (NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), ; and also in *Essential Works of Foucault*, volume 1 (*Ethics Subjectivity and Truth*), edited by Paul Rabinow (NY: The New Press, 1994), 303-19.

progress animating his Enlightenment predecessors. Exalted, cosmopolitan ideals of progress tend to work against the piecemeal, painstaking work of human betterment in the concrete situations in which human actors are so ineluctably caught up.

Dewey's narratives are self-consciously re-narrations of some of the dominant stories in Western thought, especially the stories that inaugurated or sustained the modern epoch. Here as in other places the prefix *re-* (think here of reconstruction, renegotiation, renewal, recovery, and renovation) is as pragmatically significant as the prefix *trans-* (transaction, transformation, transfiguration, translation, and transuasion,<sup>31</sup> to name but a handful of words that derive their force from *trans-*). These re-narrations are unfolded for the sake of nothing less than transfiguration: they are designed by Dewey to transfigure our discourses, practices, and institutions (most immediately but not most importantly, the practice of philosophy itself) and thus our relationship to these. Such transfiguration is of a piece with altering our modes of participation (e.g., the meaning of philosophy cannot be changed without altering our identity as philosophers). In "Philosophy and Civilization" (1927), Dewey underscores the cultural function of philosophical thought.<sup>32</sup> The writings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, and other European thinkers can be indispensable instruments in the ongoing work of transforming American culture into a more self-conscious and self-critical affair. Of course, they can and, it often seems, they more likely divert our attention and energy from the task of transforming our culture in this fashion. It is especially instructive to recall today what Dewey wrote in 1927. Philosophy, Dewey claimed in this essay, "sustains the closest connection with the history of culture, with the succession of changes in civilizations. It is fed by the streams of tradition, traced at critical moments to their sources *in order that the current may receive a new direction* [...]" (LW 3, 7; emphasis added). So understood, the philosophies "which emerge at distinctive periods [including of course Dewey and Foucault's own] define the larger patterns of continuity which are woven in effecting the enduring junctions of a stubborn past and an insistent future" (LW 3, 6). But the language of continuity should not mislead here, for what Dewey devoted himself to as much as anything else was to counteract the pressures of a stubborn past and to strengthen the intimations of a barely imaginable future (e.g., a seemingly fantastic future in which debilitating forms of ineconomic equality are rendered less determinative of human opportunities). Defining the larger patterns of continuity could in his hands be accomplished alongside of instituting effective strategies of disruption. In the sense being attached by Dewey to the word *philosophy*, "we are dealing with something comparable to the meaning of Athenian civilization or of a drama or a lyric" (LW 3, 5). That is, philosophy is an adventure of the imagination; and it is such an adventure precisely because its preoccupation is with the articulation of meaning rather than the discovery of truth. The discovery of novel truths mostly falls outside its precincts,

31 This is a word coined by Peirce as one of his names for this category of thirdness. In Chapter One of *The Minute Logic*, Peirce suggests originality, obsistence, and transuasion as names respectively for firstness, secondness, and thirdness. The relevant portion of this chapter can be found in volume 1 of *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (#79-117).

32 Cf. Gilles Deleuze on thought as envisioned by Foucault.



whereas the articulation of novel meanings – especially emancipatory ones<sup>33</sup> – falls squarely within its purview. Significant history *is lived* in human imagination – and it is indeed lived (to some extent, relived) there. But this too is likely to be misleading, for it all too readily can be taken to imply a withdrawal from the world, by way of an escape *into* our imagination (cf. again *Experience and Nature*). This is however not at all Dewey's intention. What he means is better expressed by saying that he is encouraging us to live *in the world* imaginatively. In any event, philosophy is not a flight of fancy so much as a confrontation with the actuality of our own time and place. But this encompasses an engagement with our own endeavors, failures, and accomplishments; or, as Dewey himself puts it, “a further excursion of the imagination into its own prior achievements” (*LW* 3, 5). “Philosophy is,” according to him, then, “a conversion of such culture as exists into consciousness, into an imagination which is logically coherent and is not incompatible with what is factually known” (*LW* 3, 9). In 1926, he took this to be a task yet to be seriously undertaken, let alone one actually realized. He saw clearly the danger confronting philosophical reflection as such reflection increasingly became a professional affair, if not primarily a professorial game: “If American civilization does not eventuate in an imaginative formulation of itself, if it merely re-arranges the figures already named and placed, that fact is itself the measure of the culture which we have achieved” (*LW* 3, 9). Of course, what Dewey meant was that this fact would be a measure of the culture we have *failed* to achieve.

The imaginative formulation of what America means cannot but be a re-formulation: the imaginative narration of how this culture came to be – and has yet failed to come into being (cf. especially Stanley Cavell's *This New Yet Unapproachable America: Lectures After Emerson and Wittgenstein* [1989]) – cannot but be a re-narration. Such reformulations and re-narrations have, at least in Dewey's hand, the function of (at least) rendering suspect our inherited formulations and traditional stories. Arguably, they are *by design* disruptive: their function is to rent the fabric of our inheritance, to counteract the pressures of an insistent past and to assist the birth of an infant threatened by strangulation by the cord attaching it to the being from whom it is, in the throes of this stage of its maturation, struggling to extricate itself.

It is however imperative to become clearer about the most basic meaning of Foucaultian genealogy. More than anything else, the depiction of Dewey's pragmatism as genealogical depends upon such clarification. *Genealogy*, no less than *pragmatism*, can be used in an all too loose sense, so that nothing precise – hence, nothing illuminating – is gained by describing Dewey's pragmatism as genealogical or Foucault's genealogies as pragmatic. While some measure of vagueness is ineliminable, this is no excuse for leaving the margins of precision either too expansively or too sloppily drawn.

*Genealogy* in Foucault's sense is to be understood primarily in functional terms, not formal ones. To be sure, certain formal features of this Foucaultian genre are

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33 In a very different context, namely, the context of *The Big Typescript*, Wittgenstein suggested: “The philosopher strives to find the liberating word, and that is the word that finally permits us to grasp what until then had constantly and intangibly weighed on our consciousness” (p. 302e). Dewey and Foucault would more likely say the word that allows us to throw off what weighed on our lives, so much so that we could not move. It is arguably likely that Wittgenstein himself would accept this as an implication of his statement, if not its innermost meaning.

directly related to the defining function(s) of this distinctive mode of philosophical discourse. If the function of a knife is to cut,<sup>34</sup> without unduly exposing the user of this implement to being cut, then certain formal features pertaining to the blade and handle of the instrument are dictated by this function (cf. Eco).<sup>35</sup> But form follows function, however much the formal properties of various materials constrain the choice of materials for the realization of the function: the former is *determined* in Peirce's sense of that word by the latter (to determine in this sense – *bestimmen* – is to delimit the range of possibilities, not to necessitate any particular). Stone and wood might in some instances cut as well as metal. It is however hard to imagine any circumstance in which a cobweb or cotton might serve as a blade or any in which pudding might serve as material for a handle.

The function of genealogies in Foucault's sense is indeed to cut, both to expose the gaps in traditional historical narratives and also to inflict incisions of their own along previously unnoticed fault lines. They are designed to be disruptive, to reveal ruptures covered over by traditional historiography and to institute a discourse having the power to insert cuts of its own. In a word, *discontinuity* is the hallmark of genealogy, functionally conceived (see especially Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"). Though this might be the most prominent function of Foucaultian genealogies, it might also not be the sole one. Arguably, they function like needle and thread no less than knife or scissors. What they offer us is a patchwork, one in which salient fragments from largely unexplored archives are stitched together for the sake of producing disorienting configurations. But the patchwork allows us to trace patterns and affinities no less than differences and ruptures of a quite remarkable character. More often than not, disorientation is a step toward re-orientation: our relationship to the discourses, practices, and institutions in which our actions, undertakings, and indeed lives are inextricably entangled is, as a result of these genealogies, rendered more conscious (or alert), more critical, and therein a wider range of creative responses is secured. Such a patchwork results as much from stitching together these fragments as from the activity of cutting. In characterizing their own work or projects, philosophers or theorists (at least as much as other human beings engaged in other historical practices) might misdescribe their own undertaking or project. Often they

34 "History becomes 'effective'," Foucault in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," an essay to be found in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), insists, "to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being – as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. 'Effective' history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, and it will not permit itself to be transported by a voiceless obstinacy toward a millennial ending. It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; *it is made for cutting*" (154; emphasis added).

35 In *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, edited by Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Umberto Eco in effect makes this case in response to one of his critics: "Rorty suggested that I can use a screwdriver for turning a screw, for opening a package, and to scratch my ear inside. This is not a proof that everything goes but rather that objects can be focused from the point of view of the relevant features [what I have called their formal properties] – or pertinences – they display" (145).

do so by one-sided emphasis. That seems likely in this instance, for Foucault's work encompasses stitching together fragments into new patterns as much as cutting out traditional configurations for the purpose of allowing new ones to be inserted. In any event, Dewey's "genealogies" (insofar as this term is appropriately used in reference to him) involve stitching (or pasting) as much as cutting. To go beyond a schematic understanding of his genealogical pragmatism, however, it is necessary to attend to specific illustrations.

## 5. Some salient examples

Accordingly, allow me to consider in some detail several of Dewey's genealogies or, at least, imaginative re-narrations of pivotal episodes in our cultural history, beginning with a story about the origin of philosophy in Athens. It is a story about impiety. Though it would be hard to imagine a language farther from that of Foucault than that of piety and its opposite,<sup>36</sup> the substance of Dewey's re-narration needs to be, at least provisionally, comprehended in a manner not unduly distorted by contemporary skepticism regarding such seemingly quaint language.<sup>37</sup>

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36 It is pertinent here to note that Nietzsche occasionally refers to reverence in a positive manner. For example, the compulsion to denigrate everything is for him not an indication of strength but a symptom of decadence or worse. The capacity to admire the heroic – a respect spilling over into reverence – is praised highly by Nietzsche. Foucault himself in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" highlights aspects of Nietzsche's nuanced stance toward a reverential attitude when he celebrates, in Nietzsche's hands, especially in a work such as *Untimely Meditations*, "the critical use of history, its just treatment of the past, its decisive cutting of the roots, its rejection of traditional attitudes of reverence, its liberation of man by presenting him with other origins than those in which he prefers to see himself" (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Bouchard, 164). What Foucault goes on to say, however, is no less important than this celebration of the work accomplished by genealogy: "Nietzsche [...] reproached critical history for detaching us from every real source [of our being] and for sacrificing the very movement of life to the exclusive concern for truth" (ibid.). But this is, at least arguably, an expression of reverence toward life in its irrepressible capacity for self-overcoming and self-transformation (cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). Moreover, Foucault's own stance toward Nietzsche might be itself seen as an instance of reverence (at least, deep respect spilling over into or moving toward something akin to reverence). For Foucault sees in Nietzsche one of the sources of his being and, for such a Nietzschean as Foucault, this can only mean having been made different from his original inheritance and even having an abiding resource to continue the task of self-transformation.

37 The meaning of piety, at least in the sense most relevant to this discussion, can be gathered from volume 3 (*Reason in Religion*) of George Santayana's *The Life of Reason* (NY: Collier Books, 1962): "Piety, in its nobler and Roman sense, may be said to mean man's reverent attachment to the sources of his being and the steadying of his life by that attachment" (125). Whereas Santayana sees the need to "plant ourselves on a broad historic and human foundation," absorbing and interpreting thereby "the past which has made us," thinkers like Nietzsche and Foucault are disposed to stress the need to unmake that past and ourselves in this process. However that may be, Santayana's disambiguation of *piety* accords almost exactly with Dewey's own use of the term in writings such as *A Common Faith* (see, e.g., LW 9, 18).

In *Experience and Nature*, then, Dewey tells, yet again, the story of the emergence of philosophical reflection in ancient Athens. He contends here that philosophy originates in an act of impiety, an unjustified denigration of the “common arts.”<sup>38</sup>

History is full of ingratitude. All existences are something more than products [something more than a derivation from antecedents]; they have qualities of their own and assert independent life. There is something of Lear’s daughters in all offspring. This ingratitude is reproachable only when it turns to deny its ancestry. That Plato and Aristotle should have borrowed from the communal objects of the fine arts, from ceremonies. Worship and consummatory objects of Greek culture, and should have idealized their borrowings into new objects of art is something to be thankful for. That, after having enforced this loan, they spurned the things from which they derived their models and criteria is not so admirable. This *lack of piety* concealed from them the poetic and religious character of their own constructions, and established in the classic Western philosophic tradition the notions that immediate grasp and incorporation of objects [...] (LW 1, 90; emphasis added)

This tendency toward impiety then is evident throughout the entire history of Western philosophy: it involves a failure to acknowledge, let alone to celebrate, the origin of philosophy in sources outside of this enterprise. In particular, it contributes to an altogether too insular conception of philosophical thought, as though it occurs in a vacuum (as though the degree of autonomy obtainable by philosophers allows them to extricate themselves entirely from the vicissitudes of history and a more or less determinate locus in the temporal flux).

If Socrates was accused of impiety by youths who exemplified in their actions and indeed lives a distorted understanding (not simply a superficial one) of the radical claims of our defining attachments,<sup>39</sup> Plato, Aristotle, and other Athenian philosophers

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38 A thoroughgoing valorization of the common arts is central to Dewey’s project. This can be seen in *Art as Experience* but also in countless other texts, including a newly discovered one (*Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, see especially Chapter II, “The Story of Nature”).

39 Socrates defined himself as much by his attachment to or, better, identification with Athens as that with the activity of philosophizing. For him, his commitment to Athens was of a piece with his commitment to philosophy; philosophical exchange was for him a civic responsibility as much as anything else. In endeavoring to protect Athens from Socrates, his accusers were ultimately successful in striking a blow at the very heart of their polis. In *A Common Faith* (1934), volume 9 of *The Later Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1989), Dewey notes that: “Tradition and custom, especially when emotionally charged, are a part of the habits that become one with our very being” (LW9, 11). (See my “Human Agency: The Habits of Our Being” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, volume 26, number 2, (1988), 153-68.) Although he insists on the *possibility* of transferring our allegiance from the tradition and customs in which we were reared to another set, there are instances (and Socrates would be a dramatic example of this) when such transference is felt by the individual as a betrayal of one’s self and the community to whom one owes one’s very being. Better death than exile (such, at least, was the decision of Socrates).

were accused by another seeming impious “youth” – the upstart American philosopher John Dewey who so often seemed to his contemporaries to lack reverence or even simply minimal respect for the tradition of philosophy or (even more so) for that or religion.<sup>40</sup> But no one of us is without deep attachments, ones so deep as to be definitive attachments. Some of these attachments are, somewhat paradoxically, to figures and approaches enabling us to detach ourselves from ourselves, to twist free from our inheritances and traditions so as to improvise a life of self-overcoming (cf. Colapietro, “Meaning, Situation, and Improvisation” in *Foucault Studies*, number 11 [February 2011]). Such attachments are nevertheless attachments and, as such, they are integral to our identity (even when the project of undermining any fixed form of identity is the most salient – at least, a rather prominent – feature of that identity).

Dewey's own attachments were varied though deep, above all to the tradition of democratic practices and to that of experimental inquiry, “which if not thoroughly established is yet far from embryonic” (LW11, 117). The character of these attachments was nothing short of *religious*, in his sense. He bound himself to a democratic, experimental form of life, realizing however that scientific inquiry is conducted in some respects very differently than democratic deliberation. As he envisioned these

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40 Explicitly in reference to questions regarding religion (above all, the question “Do the specialized observances of the great tradition, which in the western world at least are those of the Christian churches, constitute the sole observances by means of which the needed organization [better, re-organization] of the ‘spiritual’ life, the formation of a unified pattern of imagination and emotions, can be achieved?”), Dewey stresses: “About the importance of tradition – or, better, traditions – in effecting the desired organization [of our ‘spiritual’ life] I have no doubt. But I am highly skeptical of all arguments that assume that there is but one available tradition. We have at our disposal many traditions. There is the great tradition of autonomous literature, of music, of painting, of all the fine arts, in each of which, moreover, there are many significant traditions. There is the tradition of democracy; there is the tradition of experimental science, which if not thoroughly established is yet far from embryonic. For many persons it is a current problem whether from these traditions, apart from those of historic religion, there can not be extracted the equivalent of the observances which, indeed, no longer nourish their ‘hearts.’ Considering the variety of rich traditions that exist, there is something provincial in suggesting [as Percy Hughes, the person to whom Dewey is responding in this piece does] that ‘responses to buildings, paintings, music, decorative symbols, songs of praise, gestures and forms of prayer, right rendering of admonitions’ can be drawn only from a single confined tradition” (LW11, 117). These sentences are from “One Current Religious Problem” (1936), originally published in *Journal of Philosophy*, volume 33, 324-26; reprinted in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, volume 11 (1935-37), edited by Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1991). This volume is cited as LW 11. At the very conclusion of *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), volume 14 of *The Middle Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1988), Dewey had already offered his own position regarding this matter. There he noted: “Religion as a sense of the whole is the most individualized of all things, the most spontaneous, undefinable and varied” (MW 14, 226). Dewey brings this work to a close by suggesting: “Within the flickering inconsequential acts of separate selves dwells a sense of the whole which claims and dignifies them. In its presence we put off mortality and live in the universal. The life of the community in which we live and have our being is the sit symbol of this relationship. The acts in which we express our perception of the ties which bind us together are *its only rites and ceremonies*” (MW 14, 227; emphasis added).

two traditions, both were able to claim his deepest allegiance since they never required a violation of his rational integrity. The reason for this is that both are inherently self-corrective processes and, as such, self-transformative undertakings (see, e.g., *A Common Faith*, specially *LW* 9, 22-23).<sup>41</sup>

Closely allied to these attachments, however, there is Dewey's deep appreciation for the arts of everyday life. His charge of impiety leveled at such philosophers as Plato and Aristotle only makes sense against the backdrop of this appreciation. Indeed, the significance of Dewey's accusation draws its force not from any irreverence toward these philosophers but from his reverence *for* the artisans and crafts persons, not just the artists. His aim is, thus, not to disparage the achievements of the individuals with whom philosophy originated in Athens but to reclaim the innumerable, unknown contributors to the artistic practices in and through which the polis was rendered a truly human habitat. Ancient Athens attained its singular status and arresting form, in no slight measure, by the ceaseless efforts of skillful artisans. It is not irrelevant to recall here that in his *Apologia*, Socrates himself singled out the artisans for at least qualified praise. In contrast to the rhetoricians and politicians, they truly possessed *know how* and, moreover, they were less disposed than the others to presume an intellectual competence beyond their specific expertise.

The story of philosophy originating in wonder is, at most, but a small part of a complex tale. The inaugural impiety of Western philosophy entails not only an ungracious slight of the historical conditions in which ancient philosophy actually emerged but also sustaining neglect of the cultural matrix from which philosophical reflection ever afterwards has sprung. Philosophy has to own its indebtedness to a wide range of shared practices, above all, the productive arts especially before any altogether sharp distinction between menial and fine has been historically instituted. The *function* of Dewey's narrative is both to call into question the traditional account of the origin of philosophical reflection *and* to tell a story in which the issue of antecedently fixed purposes becomes eclipsed by historically emergent – and indeed yet emerging – goals. Attention is wrenched away from putative origins sanctioning traditional aims; it is directed toward historical emergence and concrete possibilities of contemporary innovation (or renovation).

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41 Dewey maintains, “new methods of inquiry and reflection have become for the educated man [and woman] today the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence, and intellectual assent. Nothing less than a revolution in the seat of ‘intellectual authority’ has taken place. This revolution [...] is the central thing. In this revolution, every defeat is a stimulus to new inquiry; every victory won is the open door to more discoveries, and every discovery is a new seed planted in the soil of intelligence, from which grow fresh plants with new fruits. There is but one sure road of access to truth – the road of patient, cooperative inquiry operating by means of observation, experiment, record and controlled reflection” (*LW* 9, 23). Whereas Foucault tended to focus on the ways and degree to which institutionalized practices of scientific investigation have subjected human beings to cultural regimes consistently operating at odds from their professed goals, Dewey was disposed to see in experimental inquiry an emancipatory force. But Foucault was not unappreciative of the efficacy of “patient, cooperative inquiry” of the kind extolled by Dewey, just as Dewey was not blind to the potential dangers and indeed actual destructiveness of institutionalized science.



The opening chapter of *Art as Experience* ("The Live Creature") can be read as a genealogy, since it has the function of displacing traditional accounts of the origin of art by tracing this origin to the ignoble sources of human ingenuity taking delight in performance and production for their own sake. So, too, can the opening chapters of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, *The Quest for Certainty*, and a number of other works by Dewey. It does not take a fantastic stretch of the hermeneutic imagination to read these texts in this fashion. It simply requires an appreciation of the function of these re-narrations.

Allow me to call attention, though briefly, to the newly discovered work by Dewey (*Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*) and, in particular, to highlight several features of the opening chapters especially pertinent to our main concerns.<sup>42</sup> Philosophy emerges out of conflict even more than wonder. The solitary thinker being struck by amazement is one portrait of the philosopher. The dialogical subject being disconcerted and even stymied by the claims of others is an alternative depiction, arguably truer to the historical form first assumed by ancient philosophy. The story of nature is just that – a story, albeit one in which *logos* eventually differentiates itself from *mythos*. It becomes an account (*logos*) in which the force of evidence replaces the authority of the storyteller (Chapter III is "The Discovery of Rational Discourse" and this discovery is, as much as anything else, an appreciation of evidence as such, i.e., the logical force of rational discourse). It's somewhat belated twin is the story about storytelling itself. Central to this story is the emergence of the need for *logos* to distinguish itself from *mythos* (Chapter III is, after all, entitled, "The Discovery of Rational Discourse"). But, in Dewey's telling, the agricultural arts associated with the countryside and the productive arts more characteristic of urban life are important parts of this largely untold story. The arts of cultivating the land as a source of nourishment, those of crafting objects as means of fulfilling inherited needs and, in no small measure, generating new needs, and the arts of knowing are, on his account, more intimately tied together than we have appreciated thus far. In general, the function of Dewey's re-narrations, then, is nothing less than a re-orientation of philosophy itself. They are, by design, meant to disrupt the continuity of our inherited self-understanding, to undermine the authority of traditional modes of disciplinary narration, not least of all by tracing our most exalted activities to humble beginnings and patchwork histories. The myriad fragments in these patchwork histories need to be seen both in themselves and in their often tenuous connection – their even accidental juxtaposition – to one another. Continuity is not necessarily precluded. It is simply rendered far more suspect and problematic than the dominant forms of disciplinary historiography, even those apparently stressing rupture, help us to appreciate. The patchwork needs to be seen for what it is; even more so, do the merely juxtaposed fragments not held together by any stitching at all (at least any other than a retrospective consciousness committed to insuring the continuity of some human endeavor that has, after the fact, managed to insert).

If it is sustained for any length of time, the story of nature (as we noted above) cannot help but transform itself into a story about storytelling.<sup>43</sup> Our direct

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42 Specifically, I have in mind Chapters I ("Philosophy and the Conflict of Beliefs"), II ("The Story of Nature"), and III ("The Discovery of Rational Discourse"), but especially I and II.

43 "The earliest philosophies were stories of nature. As Homer told the stories of the Trojan War and the wanderings of Odysseus, so Thales and the others recounted the epic of

engagements, time and again, take a reflexive turn. The story about reflexivity itself is a long and intricate one. It needs to be retold, if only because our attempts to do so increase the likelihood of twisting ourselves free from the all too constraining forms of our inherited practices. That is, such stories would be in the service of emancipating our practices, even those practices purporting themselves to be practices of freedom.

As unfolded in *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, then, the story of philosophy must be re-told in conjunction with that of the arts (cf. *LW* 1, 290),<sup>44</sup> including those of agriculture and pottery, architecture and carpentry.<sup>45</sup> The point in doing so concerns the present far more than the past; it aims at disrupting continuity, undermining authority, emancipating practice, and thus facilitating improvisation. This story is, in a word, genealogical.

Even so, a contemporary reader is perhaps likely to see in *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy* an advocacy of scientism. But nothing Dewey asserts here retracts what he wrote in *Experience and Nature* (1925); in some respects, greater nuance and also a greater sensitivity to the irreducibly cultural dimensions of human experience are added to the earlier work, but these additions do not amount to retractions. One of the emphases common to both works is that upon the primacy of the arts and the derivation of our epistemic practices from our productive ones. In *Experience and Nature*, Dewey goes so far as to assert that, at bottom, science

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the doings and works of nature, relating the movements, strifes, and return home of the elements that formed its dramatis personae. They told the tale boldly and naively, not questioning the capacity to compose the actions of nature into a single coherent story. The different tales disagreed, however; they competed with one another for listeners and for credence. This scene of conflict gradually and piecemeal brought about a shift in attention. Instead of devoting themselves wholly to the outward scene, the story-tellers began to ask about the worth of the witnesses of the scene" (*Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, 35). From the worth of the witnesses, however, attention eventually shifted to the weight of the evidence to be brought forth in support of an account (one of the principal meanings of *logos*).

44 Dewey argues at the conclusion of Chapter III ("The Discovery of Rational Discourse") of *Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy* that: "The experimental method could not have arisen [...] until there were at hand tools and techniques of an analysis of objects which could reveal things not present to the eye or ear, and until the things of the industrial arts had ceased to be matters of contempt" (52). This returns us to the theme of impiety. The inaugural impiety of Western philosophy was, according to Dewey, in part this contempt for the industrial arts. On this account, the level of our epistemic achievements is inseparably tied to that of our technological innovations. Experimentally controlled inquiry requires technologically sophisticated means.

45 In Chapter II ("The Story of Nature"), Dewey suggests: "Now among the arts the sharpest contrast [...] was between the agrarian and the mechanical. The former had to do with living, growing things; the latter with making objects by means of reshaping materials. This contrast showed itself in philosophy, at first vaguely, then with definiteness. The outcome was the formulation of two opposed ideas of Nature: on the one hand, the organic, vital, spiritualistic; and on the other, the mechanical, two views that persisted in one form or another throughout the whole subsequent philosophical tradition" (*Unmodern Philosophy and Modern Philosophy*, 26). Think here, e.g., of the contrast drawn by nineteenth century German thinkers between the dead nature of Newton and the living nature of Goethe.

is itself an art (*LW* 1, 268).<sup>46</sup> The import of this assertion is far from obvious or straightforward, even if facets of that import are. For example, experimental inquiry grew out of the patient observation of skilled artisans directly exploring the various properties of commonplace substances (many of these properties being hidden from casual observation or the customized routines of our quotidian handling of these diverse materials).

Dewey contends, “the history of human experience is the history of the development of arts. The history of science in its emergence from religion, ceremonial and poetic arts is the record of the differentiation of arts, not a record of separation from art” (*LW* 1, 290).<sup>47</sup> Put the other way around, the history of science is a chapter in the history of the development of the arts. The experimental method arguably deserves to be designated the *artistic* method, since painstaking, patient, innovative *handling* of things<sup>48</sup> was the characteristic form or artful engagement long before scientific investigation as a distinct practice emerged in the tangled history of human artfulness.

Though Dewey is often, wrongly, accused of being a champion of scientism, a more just, though only slightly less unfair, charge would be that he is guilty of aestheticism. A judicious assessment of Dewey's full contribution to the effective appropriation of our cultural inheritance and, inseparably linked to this (at least, in Dewey's judgment) an ever deepening critique of that complex inheritance, would help us to see that his advocacy of the experimental method does not preclude his appreciation of our artistic practices in their irreducibly plural forms. Put somewhat

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46 “If Greek philosophy was correct in thinking of knowledge as contemplation rather than as a productive art, and if modern philosophy accepts this conclusion, then the only logical course is relative disparagement of all forms of production, since they are modes of practice which is by conception inferior to contemplation [or *theoria*]. [...] But if modern tendencies are justified in putting art and creation first [i.e., *before* contemplation or *theoria*], then the implication of this position should be avowed and carried through. It would then be seen that science is an art, that art is a practice, and that the only distinction worth drawing is not that between practice and theory, but between those modes of practice that are not intelligent, not inherently and immediately enjoyable, and those which are full of enjoyed [or consummatory] meanings. When this perception dawns, it will be a commonplace that art [...] is the complete culmination of nature [i.e., our artistic practices, including the vastly extended family of scientific inquiries, would mark not a break with, but a fulfillment of nature processes]. Thus would disappear the separations that trouble present thinking: divisions of everything into nature *and* experience, of experience into theory *and* practice, art *and* science, of art into useful *and* fine, menial *and* free (*LW* 1, 268-69).

47 Cf., however, C. S. Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, volume 2, edited by the Peirce Edition Project (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 38-39.

48 It is certainly not amiss to recall here that, in “The Fixation of Belief,” C. S. Peirce stressed that the chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier's approach or “way was to carry his mind into his laboratory, and to make of his alembics and cucurbits instruments of thought, giving [thereby] a new conception of reasoning, as something which is to be done with one's eyes open, *by manipulating real things* instead of words and fancies” (*The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, volume 5, edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, paragraph #363; also in *The Essential Peirce*, volume 1, edited by Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel, 110; emphasis added)

differently, it would help us to see that Dewey's abiding preoccupation with the experimental logic of inquiry did not deflect his attention from the qualitative dimensions of all our endeavors (far from it!), just as his sensitivity to the political and economic dimensions of human existence<sup>49</sup> were never allowed to eclipse the importance of the personal and local facets of human experience. Indeed, very few philosophers have been as inclusive and balanced as Dewey. Art no less than science is given its due, the tacit dimensions of everyday life no less than the systematically articulated rules of formal moral codes and (in addition to such rules) philosophical articulations (or visions) of allegedly comprehensive theories of the good life, or moral obligation, or the requisite virtues for human flourishing.<sup>50</sup> Though no philosopher has ever done justice to the full range of human experience – indeed, no thinker could ever do so – no philosopher has worked more tirelessly and imaginatively to approximate this objective than Dewey. Given the scope of his project, however,

49 In “The Crisis in Human History: The Danger of the Retreat to Individualism,” an article originally published in *Commentary* in 1946, thus shortly after WW II, Dewey proclaimed: “That economic activities in production, commerce and finance are carried on by ‘individuals’ in their individual capacity [rather their irreducibly social roles] is probably the most successful as well as the most harmful myth of modern life. [...] No doctrine could be possibly as effective in shielding the actual human consequences of actual economic conditions from judgment in humane or moral terms as the view that they are *merely* means, *merely* material. The economic aspect of human association decides the condition under which human beings actually live. The decision includes their effective ability to share in the accumulated values of culture and to contribute to the latter's further development.” Volume 15 of *The Later Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1989), 218. Even earlier, in *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), volume 4 of *The Later Works of John Dewey*, he suggested, “the life which men, women, and children actually lead, the opportunities open to them, the values they are capable of enjoying, their education, their share in all the things of art and science, are mainly determined by economic conditions. Hence we can hardly expect a moral system which ignores economic conditions to be other than remote and empty” (*LW* 4, 225). Even so, Dewey's relationship to socialism is as difficult to pin down as Foucault's to Marxism.

50 In addition to his *Ethics* (1932), co-authored with James Hayden Tufts, volume 7 of *The Later Works of John Dewey* (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1985), see especially “Three Independent Factors in Morals,” a lecture first given at the Sorbonne. A translation of this paper by Charles Cestre, “Trois facteurs indépendants en matière de morale” appeared in a French journal in 1930, but it was not until 1966 that the English version was published in *Educational Theory*. It is also found in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, volume 5 (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1984), 279-88. What is especially important for our purpose is Dewey's emphasis at the outset of this paper: “There is a fact from which all the evidence is an integral part of moral action which has not received the attention it deserves in moral theory: that is the element of uncertainty and of conflict in any situation which can properly be called moral. The conventional attitude sees in that situation only a conflict of good and evil; in such a conflict, it is asserted, there should not be any uncertainty” (*LW* 5, 279). In opposition to such an attitude, Dewey contends that conflict is a more pervasive, profound, and often intractable feature of our moral life than conventional perspectives grant. Herein he shows himself to be an agonistic philosopher, one with a keen – indeed, unblinking – awareness of the centrality and inevitability of conflict and struggle.

this means that in many instances other theorists and inquiries need to be consulted to fill in the gaps and point out the details of diverse terrains broadly and often only very schematically (if nonetheless suggestively) mapped by Dewey himself.

## 6. Conclusion

In the end, the differences between Dewey and Foucault are likely more important than the affinities between these two thinkers, not least of all a temperamental difference.<sup>51</sup> Dewey was primarily preoccupied with the work of reparation (he devoted himself tirelessly to repairing what he perceived, accurately, to be a broken world), whereas Foucault was principally engaged in deploying strategies of disconcertment (he strove indefatigably to unsettling what he took, again rightly, to be unjustifiable constraints on human improvisation).<sup>52</sup> But even this difference cannot be pushed too far. Dewey saw and indeed felt the need for a deliberate disruption of countless forms of social “harmony” and alleged efficiency. No less, Foucault (if less often) discerned the need for insuring the maintenance and refinement of those procedures, regulations, and practices by which social groups might carry out their work in an effective manner.

Foucault's genealogies were designed to do specific cultural and *personal* work. In turn, Dewey's pragmatism was conceived and, various times, re-imagined as a resource for orientation. Both in their own way were absorbed in the question, just where are we at this moment? That is, both took aim at the heart of the present (cf. Habermas); and both knew that the only way to steady their aim was to take their bearings by a survey at once minute in detail and sweeping in scope.

Their differences are best identified and assessed in reference to one of the root metaphors structuring their philosophical engagements. Both were cartographers. A metaphor at the base of their endeavors is sketching, from various angles, the cultural terrain, Dewey however offered sketch after sketch of maps drawn for those whose world had come apart. Such individuals were thrown by the movements of history into situations for which their inheritance was as much a hindrance as an aid. In contrast, Foucault's cartography reveals his sensitivity to the condition of those whose world is too rigidly in place, even - or especially - when the self-understanding of the

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51 This is of course an allusion to James's claim that the clashes of philosophers are, at bottom, ones of temperament or sensibility. In *Pragmatism*, he writes: “The history of philosophy is to a great extent a certain clash of human temperaments” (11). But acknowledgment of this factor is, in philosophy, rule out of court. “There arises thus,” James notes, “a certain insincerity in our philosophic discussions: the potentest of all our premises [our temperament or sensibility] is never mentioned” (*ibid.*).

52 In this regard, Foucault proved himself to be more of an Emersonian than his countryman. What I most of all have in mind is Emerson's claim in “Circles”: Do not set the least value on what I do, or the least discredit on what I do not, as if I pretended to settle any thing as true or false. I unsettle all things. No facts are to be sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past at my back.” *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays*, edited by Larzer Ziff (NY: Penguin Books, 1982), 236. Dewey however was far from insensitive to the need for instituting “a Ministry of Disturbance.” He even assumed this role, attentive to “the importance of getting outside of the grooves into which the heavy arm of custom tends to push every form of human activity, not excluding intellectual and scientific inquiry” (*The Middle Works of John Dewey*, volume 12, 262).

inhabitants of this world is that their condition is one of freedom. If the pragmatist in his genealogies was a guide for the lost, the genealogist in his surveys of the terrain of our practices was a goad to the settled. To be sure, Dewey not infrequently set about unsettling affairs, just as Foucault resolutely devoted himself to open spaces for the more spontaneous, local forms of strategic, effective solidarity.

For us today, that is, for historical actors whose actual world is *at once* imploding and ever more strenuously insisting upon thoroughgoing acquiescence to the inherited arrangement of human affairs,<sup>53</sup> our need is for a goad such as Michel Foucault no less than a guide such as John Dewey. In response to Richard Rorty, hence in response to a version of pragmatism,<sup>54</sup> Foucault insisted:

[...] it would be just as wrong to think that there is a political formula likely to resolve the question of crime and put an end to it [as to think that there is such a formula available or even imaginable to resolve, once and for all, the question of madness]. The same is true of sexuality: it doesn't exist apart from a relationship to political structures, requirements, laws, and regulations that have a primary importance for it; and yet one can't expect politics to provide the forms in which sexuality [or, for that matter, madness or criminality] would cease to be a problem. (Rabinow [editor], 384)

It is not only the *experience* of the insane, the incarcerated, and others, but also our *experience* (also *our* experience) of the problems arising in conjunction with “political structures, requirements, laws, and regulations” that calls for critical attention.<sup>55</sup> Foucault is quite explicit about this.

It is a question, then, of thinking about the relations of *these different experiences of politics*, which doesn't mean that one will seek in politics the main constituents of these experiences or the solution that will definitively settle their fate. The problems that experiences like these pose to politics have to be elaborated. (385).

The question hence becomes, *how* is such elaboration to be accomplished? How are “we” to accomplish this task – or is there even a “we” present, specifically one in a position to formulate the requisite questions, much less execute the necessary task of addressing these questions in an effective manner.

And it is just at this point that Foucault underscores a disagreement with Rorty. The “we” consequent to the work of problematization – the work of elaborating the problems confronting us on the basis of our experiences of our relationship to the practices by which we have been constituted – however is always already entangled

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53 This is discernible in the rise of various forms of absolutism and fundamentalism, not least of all the fundamentalist advocacy of unrestrained capitalism.

54 In the relevant respect, Rorty *is* unquestionably a pragmatist in this instance. Whatever his differences from Peirce, James, and Dewey on other matters, his stance here regarding community is deeply in accord with that of the earlier generation of American pragmatists.

55 This emphasis on experience is one of the most important ways in which Part II is connected to Part I of this essay.



with the “we” antecedent to such work. The task of acknowledging the communities in which we are situated is accordingly integral to the task of critique, including those critiques struggling to re-imagine the possibilities of human solidarity. But the dangers of such acknowledgment – in particular, the risk of re-inscribing ourselves in the circuits of power as they now operate – ought not to be blinked away.

What makes possible the formation of a “we” on the basis of our *experience* of the problems confronting us is, in no small measure, a cluster of associations (or “communities”) in which we are always already entangled.<sup>56</sup> What makes these antecedent associations so precious – what grants them their authority and claim on us – is that they offer possibilities for a figure such as Foucault, that is, for an abiding commitment to truly novel forms of human solidarity (a “we” consequent to the problems we are posing), ones breaking decisively with traditional forms (cf. *A Common Faith*). The experience of individuals so deeply and variously at odds with their world that they take themselves to be in the position to form a “we” after elaborating the problems on the basis of their experience, without undue deference for the principles and values of any antecedent “we,” needs to be taken seriously. Such individuals ought never to be too quickly or completely domesticated (e.g., they ought never to be seen merely as a variant on the theme of the Enlightenment). The practice in which such individuals engage and the norms by which they regulate their own conduct – above all, those pertaining to “the game of question and answer”<sup>57</sup> – however need to be seen for what they are: a contemporary form of Socratic dialogue, one in which the point and efficacy of such dialogue are as much a matter of dispute as anything else. Radical self-transformation can only result from radical self-interrogation. Dewey’s pragmatism and Foucault’s project(s) not only underscore the truth of this but also enact just this form of interrogation. This does not render insignificant the differences between them, though it does provide a perspective from

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56 In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf conjures the names of women authors who preceded (or, in the case of “Shakespeare’s sister,” merely might have preceded her) for the sake of imagining a lineage in which she stood, a tradition of which she was a part. In a sense, this lineage or tradition did not exist until she conjured it in her imagination. But her imagination here, as in some many other instances, disclosed an actual entanglement in human history, a previously unacknowledged “family” to which she might relate her own authorial aspirations and experiments. The “I” inevitably feels itself to be part of a “we,” even (perhaps especially) when that “we” is for historical (thus, for political) reasons inchoate and undefined.

57 “In the serious play of questions and answers, in the work of mutual elucidation, the rights of each person are” – Foucault points out in “Polemics, Politics, and Problematizations” (1984), an essay in which he draws a sharp distinction between polemics and “discussion” (or dialogue) – “in some sense immanent in the discussion. They depend only on the dialogue situation” (*The Foucault Reader*, 381). He adds shortly thereafter: “[...] by the logic of his own discourse he is tied to what he has said earlier, and by the acceptance of dialogue he is tied to the questioning of the other. Questions and answers depend on a game – a game that is at once pleasant and difficult – in which each of the two partners take pains to use only the rights given him by the other and by the accepted form of the dialogue” (381-82). But participation in this form of engagement inevitably, as Foucault himself implies in this interview, means that a “we” of a recognizable form is antecedently in place.

which even those differences require to be seen in a more nuanced and historical light than they have been thus far. If I have done anything in this article and its predecessor to contribute to this, then my efforts have been worthwhile.

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