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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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Résumé de l'article

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Education as Morals in Dewey's Philosophy

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This article explores Dewey's understanding of the nature of education through three seminal works written over a 32-year period. In Democracy and Education *(1916) Dewey developed a concept of education which can be understood through two German words for education, Erziehung and Bildung. Through considering the approach to these concepts by two Dewey scholars, Gert Biesta and Dietrich Benner, the first section of this article seeks to explore Dewey's understanding of education and its relationship to democracy. The second section of the article carries the study forward to Dewey's* Human Nature and Conduct *(1922) to show how Dewey conceived of education even more broadly and equated it with morals. The concepts of Erziehung and Bildung also are important in this section, as they are expanded to show that, for Dewey, education was a guide in how to live. The third section of the article expands the concept of education still further to view education as philosophy. This section discusses Dewey's book* Experience and Education *(1938) which he wrote in light of his metaphysical study* Experience and Nature *(1925). Dewey expanded his understanding of education beyond both Erziehung and Bildung and beyond morals to develop an understanding of education as based upon a philosophical consideration of experience. The goal of the article is to show the breadth of Dewey's understanding of education and to show how his view of education forms the basis of a broad philosophical view of life.*

In this article, I trace John Dewey's understanding of the relationship between education and morals through three important works: *Democracy and Education* (*DE*, 1916/2008), *Human Nature and Conduct* (*HNC*) (1922/2008) and *Experience and Education* (*EE*) (1938/2008). The article examines Dewey's understanding of education in three ways: as *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, as morals, and as philosophy. The article aims to show the large role that morals plays in education and, broadly, to show how Dewey's philosophy of education forms the basis of a broad, interconnected philosophical view of life. I suggest that a focus on wholeness and immanence are central to Dewey's educational thought and to his philosophy, but the development of this suggestion would require an examination of Dewey's naturalistic metaphysical theory.

The first section of this article examines the German influences on Dewey's philosophy of education through the terms *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. The focus is on how *Erziehung* and *Bildung* are critical to education for democratic living. The second section describes how Dewey's understanding of education expands from *Erziehung* and *Bildung* to education as morals. It draws connections between the discussion of morals in *HNC* and the discussion of education in *DE*. The third section moves from a discussion of *Erziehung* and *Bedeutung* through education as morals to an understanding of education as philosophy. It begins with the concluding chapters of *DE* and works through *EE*, which was greatly influenced by Dewey's philosophical commitments developed in his 1925 book, *Experience and Nature*.

In his book *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, Alan Ryan (1997) aptly described Dewey as a "visionary of the everyday." Ryan writes of Dewey: "It was his ability to infuse the here and now with a kind of transcendent glow that overcame the denseness and awkwardness of his prose and the vagueness of his message and secured such widespread conviction. He will remain for the foreseeable future a rich source of intellectual nourishment for anyone not absolutely locked within the anxieties of

his or her own heart and not absolutely despondent about the prospects of the modern world" (p. 269). I follow and attempt to expand upon Ryan's understanding of Dewey.

Education as *Erziehung* and *Bildung*

Dewey began in philosophy under the influence of German idealism and Hegel. Jennifer Welchman's study *Dewey's Ethical Thought* (1995) shows the strong idealist components of Dewey's early work and shows as well how Dewey came gradually to abandon idealism, a process completed well before *DE*. Still, the continued influence of Hegel and of German idealism on Dewey needs to be recognized and should not be underestimated. Among these continued influences was the nature of Dewey's understanding of education. Dewey's lengthy, difficult discussion of education in *DE* draws heavily upon two different concepts of education, expressed in German by the words *Erziehung* and *Bildung*.

Philosophers of education who have explored *DE* within the framework of the distinction between *Erziehung* and *Bildung* have reached varying interpretations. In his book *Obstinate Education: Reconnecting School and Society*, the internationally known scholar Gert Biesta (2019) develops the historical background of the difficult terms, *Erziehung* and *Bildung* (chapters 2 and 3) He points out that these terms continue to be interpreted in different ways. Then in chapter 8, "Education and Democracy Revisited: Dewey's Democratic Deficit," Biesta uses these terms to develop a critical analysis of Dewey's understanding of the relationship between democracy and education in *DE* and to offer broad observations on Dewey's philosophy. He argues that Dewey's theory of education is incomplete because it focuses on *Bildung*, with little attention paid to *Erziehung*, as Biesta develops these terms. Biesta explains:

> To say that Dewey's theory of democratic education is actually not a theory of education becomes possible on the basis of the distinction within the German language – and within educational thought as it has developed within the German-speaking world – between *Bildung* and *Erziehung*, where the former refers to a general theory of acculturation and the latter to intentional actions by an educator to promote a grown-up way of existence. Such a discourse is quite absent in Dewey's writings about education, including his writings about democratic education. (p.128)

Although he finds much of value in Dewey's philosophy, in its moral theory and in its efforts to combat "scientism," Biesta concludes that "there is more to education than the framework that informs Dewey's account" (p. 128). He argues that in his treatment of the relationship between democracy and education, Dewey develops a concept of democracy that is "social and moral rather than political" (p. 128). Thus, Biesta suggests that Dewey's account of the connection is too limited, both for democracy and for education, to be significant for education for democracy in the 21st century (p. 129).

In a later article, "Can the Prevailing Description of Educational Reality be Considered Complete?," Biesta (2020) continues his critique of Dewey through use of the differing meanings of education expressed by *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. Biesta draws a comparison between Rosa Parks and Adolf Eichmann in the responses they made to their educational experiences. Parks resisted what she had been taught by her culture when, in 1955, she refused to surrender her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Eichmann accepted the teachings and the role presented to him in Nazi Germany and insisted during his 1961 trial in Israel that he was only following orders and that his own "I" was not involved in his activities.

The Parks–Eichmann comparison is meant to show the limitations of what Biesta calls "education as cultivation," in which people become who they are through engagement with their culture. Biesta (2020) finds that Dewey presents a paradigm case of "education as culture" (p. 1,015). He claims that "what is remarkably absent in Dewey's theory, so we might say, is the possibility for the human organism to say *no*" (p. 1,017). Learning the "ability to say no" requires a different educational paradigm, which Biesta calls the "existential paradigm," in which a person hears "the injunction to be a *self*, to be an 'I'" (p. 1,018). Biesta links his concepts of "education as cultivation" and "existential education" to education as *Bildung* and education as *Erziehung*. He finds that education consists of two different "orders," one

bio-neuro-socio-cultural and the other existential: "It is this difference that matters" (p. 1,021). Biesta finds Dewey's treatment of education in *DE* deficient in its emphasis on socialization at the expense of the formation of a self. *Bedeutung*, or education through socialization, objectifies the self, for Biesta. The existential paradigm, or *Erziehung*, seeks to "*bring* the 'I' of the student into play, so to speak, and *keep* the 'I' of the student in play" (Biesta, 2019, p. 1,021). It is part of what Biesta calls, in the introduction to his book *Obstinate Education* (2019), the "duty to resist" (p. 1).

The other philosopher we will examine on education as *Bildung* and as *Erziehung* is the German scholar Dietrich Benner. Benner explores Dewey's concept of education and its relationship to democracy in his essay "John Dewey, a Modern Thinker: On Education (as *Bildung* and *Erziehung*) and Democracy (as a Political System and a Mode of Associated Living)" (2017), his contribution to the recent anthology *John Dewey's Democracy and Education*, edited by Leonard Waks and Andrea English. Biesta discusses some of Benner's earlier writings in his 2020 article, discussed above, particularly as they involve the distinction between *Bildung* and *Erziehung*. Both Benner and Biesta have taught me a great deal about Dewey. In my view, Benner offers a fuller, more convincing account of Dewey's thought in *DE* than does Biesta. Further, as discussed in the second and third parts of this article, Dewey develops his understanding of education well beyond the distinction between *Bildung* and *Erziehung* to include education as morals and education as philosophy. The following discussion considers Benner and Dewey in a manner which may suggest questions about Biesta's account.

Benner (2017) begins by defining *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. The former term refers to pedagogy, or as Benner says, "educating someone through pedagogical interaction" (p. 263). Dewey has much to say about *Erziehung* throughout *DE*.

The term *Bildung* is broader and notoriously more difficult to define. It is used, for example, in the term *Bildungsroman*, for a novel that tells a coming-of-age story, of the education of and growth of experience in the life of a young person. Thus, *Bildung* refers to learning through life experiences, not just in the classroom, but in the interactions and relationships between a person and others, and with society. As Benner defines it, "*Bildung* refers to an individual's educative formation that happens through interactions with the world" (p. 263).

Benner shows how "re-reading Dewey through the lens of these two meanings can offer us new possibilities for education, democracy, and their interrelation" (p. 263).

Every chapter of *DE* involves the relationship between *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, sometimes emphasizing one, sometimes the other. In the preface, for example, Dewey (1916/2008) straddles the two. He describes the goal of the book as to "detect and state the ideas implicit in a democratic society and to apply these ideas to the problems of the enterprise of education" (p. 1). There are broad philosophical questions here about democratic society and individual growth – *Bildung* – to be applied to the specifics of educational practices for the young – *Erziehung*.

Just as I came to appreciate Dewey's discussion of education as growth through my experience of continued study, so it is with Benner. Benner (2017) begins with a discussion of his own changing experience with Dewey. I could share Benner's frustration when he "found it difficult to grasp Dewey's ideas in any meaningful way" upon his early reading of Dewey in the only available German translation (p. 264). While aware of the many interpretations of Dewey in Germany as elsewhere, Benner found that the German translation he read over-emphasized pedagogy at the expense of other elements of Dewey's thought.

Benner's understanding of Dewey deepened when in around 2000 he read *DE* in English. He then became aware that Dewey understood education in two different ways, exemplified by the German terms *Bildung* and *Erziehung*, and that Dewey's understanding of the nature of education had roots extending back to Plato. Benner no longer understood Dewey as a "dogmatist of progressive education" but rather found that Dewey's philosophy employed an aporetic method "reflecting the idea of a public that pursues its own enlightenment" (p. 265).

Benner's understanding of Dewey changed again when he worked with Dewey scholar Andrea English. He came to understand Dewey as a thinker "who sought to make the educative quality of negative and resistant experiences fruitful for the instructional design of teaching and learning processes" (p. 265). He concluded that Dewey could not be viewed simply either as a progressive educator or even

as a pragmatist. Instead, Dewey philosophized from a long philosophical tradition that "gave central meaning to the thematicization of negative experiences – that is, experiences that resist us and thwart our expectations" (p. 265). This "long philosophical tradition" includes, of course, the German idealism that culminated in Hegel. In the third part of this article, we will see how, as Benner suggested, Dewey came late in his life to give a broad, if reconstructed philosophical underpinning to the nature of education.

Dewey's educational thought emphasizes continued growth. The importance of growth can be seen in Benner's discussion of his long, changing understanding of Dewey. In other words, Benner's discussion of his developing understanding of Dewey itself shows the nature of Dewey's philosophy of education as well as of the crucial role played by *Bildung* and *Erziehung* in this understanding.

The opening chapters (1–7) of *DE* address the nature and purpose of education – *Bildung* – centring on the concept of "education as growth" developed in chapter 4 (Dewey, 1916/2008, pp. 46–58). This discussion culminates in chapter 7, "The Democratic Conception in Education," which examines earlier philosophical understandings of education and focuses upon socialization within the context of a democratic society in which the needs of all persons are respected. Then, in *DE*'s middle chapters (8–21), the focus gradually shifts to *Erziehung* – pedagogy and the particular education of the young – as Dewey examines the aims, goals, and methods of pedagogy, the roles of play and work in the educational curriculum, the importance of specific subjects such as geography, history, the natural and social sciences, mathematics, and the relation between intellectual and liberal studies on the one hand and vocational studies on the other hand.

The last several chapters of *DE*, beginning with chapter 22, "The Individual and the World," with its echo of the title of the idealist philosopher Josiah Royce's great book, *The World and the Individual*, return to an enriched consideration of education as *Bildung* as it applies to broad questions of philosophy, knowledge, and morals. We will return to some of these chapters in the second and third sections of this article.

Benner examines several passages in *DE* which cast light on the relationship between *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. Of these, I want to focus on Dewey's discussion in chapter 2, "Education as a Social Function" (pp. 14–27). Dewey found that the school was a "special environment" with three tasks to perform: 1) to provide a "simplified environment" to help students gain insight into the less controlled, more complex matters of experience; 2) to eliminate, to the extent possible, influences in the environment that had a deleterious influence on mental habits; and 3) in Dewey's words, "to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born and to come into living contact with a broader environment" (pp. 22–26; see also Benner, 2017, p. 268). This third task remains especially important, particularly in the increasingly diverse and divided society of the contemporary United States. Benner (2017) aptly ties this third Deweyan task into a similar thought of Hegel, who wrote that "what the school contributes to the education of the individual is his or her ability to participate in public life" (p. 269).

As we have discussed, Benner sees the school as creating a "special environment" in its efforts to teach students to think methodologically and critically, and to expand their experience beyond the social groups into which they were born. In exploring the relationship among *Erziehung*, *Bildung*, and democracy in Dewey, Benner also explores what he terms the "negativity" of human experience – instances of perplexity and doubt arising from a situation that is addressed in the context of the classroom to elicit the student's ability to deal with obstacles in their relationships with others and with the world (p. 271). Benner explores Dewey's discussion of the plurality of different communities in a modern democratic society and of the possibility of interaction and movement among them. He develops Dewey's broad conception of democracy as a way of life rather than only as a form of government. In another reference to German thought, Benner ties in Dewey's discussion of democracy as a way of life with the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher, who in an 1826 lecture developed what he called *Gesamttätigkeit*, the participation of a person, and citizen, in religion, politics, and a flourishing life, as well as in their professional life (p. 275).

Benner concludes that for Dewey the task of *Erziehung* is "to make every individual capable of leading his or her life and participate in the continued development and transformation of modern society" (p. 276). His discussion bears comparison with that of Biesta. Benner continues:

> What had come to be taken for granted in other state forms and constitutions, namely that education aimed to form human beings according to the state's demands, can no longer be viewed as allowed, let alone demanded, in democracies. In democratic societies, the idea that the state could legitimately prescriptively shape the character of its citizens, an idea seen in Aristotle through to Montesquieu, loses all its validity. The life of the citizen, how a citizen thinks, judges, and acts, has to develop without state paternalism. For that reason, today, perhaps more so than in Dewey's time, we must differentiate between democracy as a mode of living and democracy as a political system. (p. 276)

Democracy, for Dewey, is "the only form of government that explicitly prohibits itself from normatively shaping the personhood and ways of life of human beings" (p. 276). It is this great insight that, for Benner, makes Dewey "a philosopher of modern education, that is, of modern *Erziehung* and *Bildung*" (p. 276).

Morals Is Education

We have discussed how Dewey implicitly differentiates and relates two concepts of education described by the German words *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. As *DE* progresses, Dewey (1916/2008) gradually develops an understanding that "morals is education," which is stated most explicitly in the concluding Summary of *DE*'s final chapter, "Theories of Morals" (pp. 356–370). Dewey writes: "All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. It forms a character which not only does the particular deed socially necessary but one which is interested in that continuous readjustment which is essential to growth. Interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest" (p. 370). The identification of education with morals is also critical to Dewey's great book of 1922, *Human Nature and Conduct* (*HNC*). In this part of the article, I discuss Dewey's view that "morals is education." I begin with *HNC* to discuss morals and then double back to *DE* to discuss education.

HNC is a crucial book for understanding Dewey's thinking. In a short preface, Dewey (1922/2008) summarizes the aim of the book as "seriously [setting] forth a belief that an understanding of habit is the key to social psychology, while the operation of impulse and intelligence gives the key to individualized mental activity. But they are secondary to habit so that mind can be understood in the concrete only as a system of beliefs, desires, and purposes which are formed in the interaction of biological aptitudes with a social environment" (p. 1).

It is difficult to summarize *HNC* fairly and adequately. My aim in this article is limited to showing how and why Dewey came to understand that "morals is education." There is much more to the book. Dewey aims to turn philosophical and ethical thinking on its head. His primary claim is that ethical thinking needs to be based on a scientifically informed account of human nature and that earlier thinkers, whether secularly or religiously inclined, have failed to do this. Dewey's study is naturalistic in that he understands human behaviour as part of the world studied by science rather than as inhabiting some form of separate, perhaps supernatural or subjective realm in which the findings of the sciences do not apply. Dewey sees ethical or moral thinking come into play over the broad range of human activities – whenever there is a choice of conduct to be made. He sees moral issues in the first instance as having a form of immediacy involving a decision to be made in the context of a particular situation. Dewey also has a conception of human personality or human nature in which the individual cannot be analyzed or considered separately from the community or culture of which he or she is a part. As the book develops, Dewey adopts a strongly progressive political stance and also makes strong claims about the potential of the newly developing social sciences to understand and help regulate human conduct. I am not sure about the extent to which Dewey's political stance may be separated from the other issues discussed in

the book and I am skeptical about his claims for the social sciences, as are many readers. I do not self-identify as a progressive and yet find that I am learning from Dewey.

Thomas Alexander's (2017) essay, "The Dialogue of Death and Life: Education, Civilization, and Growth," in *John Dewey's* Democracy and Education*: A Centennial Handbook*, offers an excellent overview of Dewey's understanding of the relationship of morals and education from *DE* to *HNC* and beyond.

Alexander (2017) begins, as does Dewey in *DE*, with a discussion of the human condition, with people being born and dying and endeavouring through education to pass their culture on to the young. He writes that, for Dewey, "what human beings need most is experience that is filled or 'funded' (as he says) with meaning and value" (p. 252). This need is central to both *Bildung* and *Erziehung*. Culture itself, for Dewey, lies in the process of transmission rather than in an outside abstraction to be discovered and attained. Alexander calls the quest for meaning in life the "human eros" (p. 252).

In the process of communication, people try to understand each other and to assume the other's perspective, in a process Dewey frequently links to imagination. Education is thus not only a transmission of the values of the elders to the young (although it is that) but also a process of transformation.

Imagination is a way of thinking through a present situation and seeing the possibility for change. Alexander rightly emphasizes how Dewey understands democracy as a culture that sees itself in terms of possibility – in terms of growth – rather than as merely repeating the patterns of the past. In a democratic society, education becomes a "way of life" rather than a "preparation for life," both for individuals and for the society, as well as for *Erziehung* and *Bildung* (p. 260).

Alexander summarizes his discussion of education in Dewey with a lengthy quotation from the conclusion of *HNC*. At this point, it is appropriate to leave Alexander's essay and to proceed to Dewey's own book.

Dewey (1922/2008) defines "morals" broadly in the conclusion of *HNC*, stating that "morals has to do with all activity into which alternative possibilities enter. For whenever they enter, a difference between better and worse arises" (p. 193). Dewey also writes that "the recognition that conduct covers every act that is judged with reference to better and worse and that the need of this judgment is potentially coextensive with all portions of conduct, saves us from the mistake which makes morality a separate department of life" (p. 194). It is important to see Dewey's use of the open terms "better" and "worse" rather than the more usual and emotively charged terms "right" and "wrong," which at best are narrower in scope but which may still be important to some questions of ethics.

Then, in a lengthy paragraph, Dewey makes and explains the crucial identification of morals with education. He writes:

> When we observe that morals is at home wherever considerations of the worse and better are involved, we are committed to noting that morality is a continuing process not a fixed achievement. Morals means growth of conduct in meaning; at least it means that kind of expansion in meaning which is consequent upon observations of the conditions and outcome of conduct. It is all one with growing. Growing and growth are the same fact expanded in actuality or telescoped in thought. In the largest sense of the word, morals is education. It is learning the meaning of what we are about and employing that meaning in action. The good, satisfaction, 'end,' of growth of present action in shades and scope of meaning is the only good within our control, and the only one, accordingly, for which responsibility exists. The rest is luck, fortune. And the tragedy of the moral notions most insisted upon by the morally self-conscious is the relegation of the only good which can fully engage thought, namely the present meaning of action, to the rank of an incident of a remote good, whether the future be defined as pleasure, or perfection, or salvation, or attainment of virtuous character. (p. 194)

Dewey's conclusion that "morals is education" has several strands. He emphasizes that morality is a process in a person rather than a fixed end. He stresses the terminology "better" and "worse" in a person's attempt to resolve an impasse or a specific situation requiring a choice. Morals for Dewey involves matters within one's control, and it is important to remember that many things go on in the world and have an effect on a person that are not within that person's control. Morals, in part, involves

learning what one can do and what one cannot. Perhaps most importantly, morals for Dewey is a matter for the here and now – for the "present meaning of action" rather than a matter of a vague, remote possibility in the future, whether pleasure, perfection, salvation, or virtue. This latter insight makes Dewey's understanding of morals difficult to grasp and sets it apart, while still drawing insights from earlier philosophical treatments of ethics. Gregory Fernando Pappas's book *John Dewey's Ethics* (2008) offers an excellent discussion of Dewey's approach to ethical questions and of how Dewey learns from earlier ethical theories without being consumed by them.

We have considered Dewey's statement "morals is education" from the standpoint of the nature of morals, as Dewey does in *HNC*. "Morals is education" should also be considered from the standpoint of education. Dewey does this in a broad way in the final chapter of *DE*, as we have seen. In order to focus on the particulars of Dewey's understanding of education in his statement "morals is education" and to see why it constitutes morals, I turn to chapter 18 of *DE*, titled "Educational Values" (Dewey, 1916/2008, pp. 240–258). Steven Fesmire offers a useful commentary on this chapter in his companion chapter, "Educational Values: Schools as Cultures of Imagination, Growth, and Fulfillment," in part 1 of *John Dewey's* Democracy and Education*: A Centennial Handbook*. Fesmire (2017) writes that Dewey's goal in chapter 18 of *DE* is to "clarify the role of education in a democratic society from the standpoint of specific areas of study" (p. 167). The particular issue Fesmire identifies is the role of schools in relationship to the workplace, "especially when people representing a cross-section of cultural backgrounds, socio-economic classes or academic goals … try to communicate with each other" (p. 167). Fesmire points out the broad reach of chapter 18 in terms of Dewey's overall thought, making it "slow going" but also "challenging and rewarding" (p. 167). Fesmire's commentary on chapter 18 of *DE* may be read together with his book on Dewey's moral theory, *John Dewey's Moral Imagination* (2003), to see the parallels Fesmire draws between Dewey's theory of education and his theory of morals.

Chapter 18 is difficult and pivotal to *DE* and to the understanding of the relationship between *Erziehung* and *Bildung*. In the preceding chapters, Dewey has been discussing the importance of various subjects in the educational curriculum. He shifts in this chapter from a focus on pedagogical practice to a broader, informed consideration of the role of *Erziehung* in a democratic society, including the broad role of morals. When Dewey writes that "morals is education," this chapter helps explain what he means.

As Dewey would have encouraged, I begin with my own experience. As a lifelong amateur pianist who loves and who has performed both classical and ragtime music, I could understand Dewey's discussion of the relationship between the two, written when rag was still in its heyday.

In his discussion of classical music and ragtime, Dewey (1916/2008) begins with standards of valuation. He points out how "every adult has acquired, in the course of his prior experience and education, certain measures of the worth of various sorts of experience" (p. 242), including moral and aesthetic experiences. For example, people, Dewey writes, have "learned to look upon qualities like honesty, amiability, perseverance, loyalty as moral goods" (p. 243), and they have absorbed views about what is aesthetically valuable in literature, music, and the like. Dewey observes that rote application of standards learned when young may be merely conventional and verbal and may differ substantially from "what an individual has himself specifically appreciated to be deeply significant in concrete situations" (p. 243). Dewey then writes as follows about classical music and ragtime:

> An individual may have learned that certain characteristics are conventionally esteemed in music; he may be able to converse with some correctness about classical music; he may even honestly believe that these traits constitute his own musical standards. But, if in his own past experience what he has been most accustomed to and has most enjoyed is ragtime, his active or working measures of valuation are fixed on the ragtime level. The appeal actually made to him in his own personal realization fixes his attitude much more deeply than what he has been taught is the proper thing to say; his habitual disposition forms his real "norm" of valuation in subsequent musical experiences. (p. 243)

Dewey states that his discussion applies to judgments of "moral and intellectual worth" as well as to musical experiences (p. 243).

This little passage served as a wedge for me in understanding the chapter and in understanding Dewey's view of morals and education. In my own experience, I played classical music for many years. At a visit with a friend many years ago I saw a simplified ragtime score on the piano that one of his children was studying. I played the piece and fell in love with it. I began practising ragtime on my own, together with continuing to play Scarlatti, Beethoven, Schubert, and the like. Having played largely classical music, not from anyone else's expectation but for myself, I was able to respond to ragtime when, at a fortunate moment, I was exposed to it and able to appreciate it for what it was. Because I had experienced both classical music and rag for themselves, I could integrate them and not bring pat or conventionally taught standards to bear upon one or the other. I have continued for many years to play classical music and rag. I have played both types of music at "outreach" programs for senior citizens under the auspices of a local classical music club. The ragtime music of Scott Joplin is always the most favourably received of the music I play at these venues. This past summer, I prepared a recital, "Scott Joplin and Friends," of ragtime and performed it at three venues for seniors.

Let us expand what Dewey says beyond the example of classical music and ragtime.

Dewey differentiates two senses of "value" in chapter 18. The first means roughly "to appreciate" and has links both to William James's essay "The Tigers in India" (the distinction between reading about tigers in one's study and encountering a tiger in the wild for oneself) and to Royce's distinction in "The Spirit of Modern Philosophy" between the world of description and the world of appreciation. Dewey stresses the importance of "appreciation," as opposed to "symbolic" or "representative" experiences. He criticizes a concept of rote learning or of simply parroting the opinions of others without appreciating the subject for oneself.

In his discussion, Dewey (1916/2008) states what he sees as the crucial function of education: "the achievement of a life of rich significance" (p. 245). With this statement, we are already close to the tie-in of education to morals. Dewey distinguishes between intrinsic appreciative values, which occur for example in hearing or performing a work of music, and instrumental values, which come into play when there is a difficulty, a felt need to order goods or to choose one thing over another – say, listening or playing music or having one's dinner. In the abstract there is no such thing as order, either for education as *Bildung* or for education as *Erziehung*. There is only a need to learn to make choices in specific situations. An important way of doing this involves the use of imagination, as Fesmire emphasizes in both his essay and his book.

Fesmire (2017) uses his own imagination in his essay on chapter 18 of *DE* to underscore the relationship between appreciative and instrumental values, in discussing "Wonderful World," Sam Cooke's song of adolescent love. The singer bemoans his lack of knowledge about the biology, history, French, and mathematics he was taught in school. Yet, he promises to intensify his efforts to learn these subjects if it would help him win the love of his girl. The singer's "passionate dedication," in Fesmire's words, to his girl is moving and deeply valuable. It has intrinsic value. But it would be more valuable for the young man to also be able to appreciate and to pursue his studies for their own sake, not only to impress another person (pp. 173–174).

Dewey again turns from education as *Erziehung* to a broader consideration of education as morals, with morals referring to a person's living of a full, engaged life. Dewey (1916/2008) writes: "Since education is not a means to living but is identical with the operation of living a life which is fruitful and inherently significant, the only ultimate value which can be set up is the process of living itself" (p. 248). So, in classroom education, the subject matter, Dewey says, should become "an end in itself in the lives of students – something worthwhile on account of its own unique intrinsic contribution to the experience of life" (p. 249).

Dewey moves from this broad understanding of the nature of education to turn to the relationship of the various subjects in the educational curriculum, which he had examined in earlier chapters, to each other. How do various fields of study, such as business, science, and literature, and the subsequent different career paths of students relate to each other? The goal, for Dewey, is to teach various subject matters without compartmentalization and with a "unity of spirit" (p. 257). In concluding chapter 18, Dewey identifies the educational question of how and what to teach with the moral question of how to live in a democracy. He writes: "Ultimately the question of values and a standard of values is the moral

question of the interests of life. … How can the interests of life and the studies which enforce them enrich the common experiences of men instead of dividing them from one another? … It is the business of education in a democratic social group to struggle against this isolation [separate, segregated curriculum studies] in order that the various interests reinforce and play into one another" (p. 258). Education and morals have become integrated as largely identical in their goals of providing "cultures of imagination, growth, and fulfillment" (Fesmire, 2017, p. 176). To be precise, the "is" in "morals is education" is of identity, not merely of predication. Morals is education, and education is morals. Dewey describes this integration from the standpoint of morals in *HNC* and from the standpoint of education in *DE*.

Education as Philosophy

We have discussed Dewey's philosophy of education through the German concepts of *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, and then through the relationship of education and morals. We next discuss how Dewey's understanding of education ultimately folds in the last three chapters of *DE* into his understanding of philosophy and of his reconstructed philosophical enterprise. We have discussed earlier the relationship Dewey found between education and morals in the final chapter, chapter 26. In chapter 24 of *DE*, "Philosophy of Education," Dewey (1916/2008) described philosophy as "at once an explicit formulation of the basic interests of life and a propounding of points of view and methods through which a better balance of interests may be effected" (pp. 341–342). Dewey continued: "Since education is the process through which the needed transformation may be accomplished and not remain a mere hypothesis as to what is desirable, we reach a justification of the statement that philosophy is the theory of education as a deliberately constructed practice" (p. 342).

Following his discussion of the nature of philosophy in chapter 24 of *DE*, in chapter 25, "Theories of Knowledge," Dewey briefly sketched his own philosophy. He rejected traditional philosophies that involved dualisms between subject and object, the knower and the known, or sensationalism and rationalism. He insisted instead upon the unitary nature of experience and the character it displayed of continuity. Dewey identified his philosophy as pragmatic. He said: "Its essential feature is to maintain the continuity of knowing with an activity that purposely modifies the environment" (pp. 353–354). He continued: "Knowledge as an act is bringing some of our dispositions to consciousness with a view to straightening out a perplexity, by conceiving the connection between ourselves and the world in which we live" (p. 354).

In 1938, more than 20 years after *DE*, Dewey developed the philosophical principles underlying educational pedagogy (*Erziehung*) in his short book *Experience and Education* (*EE*). In this book, Dewey responded to criticisms of *DE*. He tried to correct misunderstandings of "new" or "progressive" education that had arisen among some of those following his work. He also tried to correct the "either/or" attitude towards pedagogy that had arisen between traditionalists and progressives following the publication of *DE*. Dewey wrote *EE* in the wake of the major work he had written and revised several years earlier, *Experience and Nature* (1925; revised in 1929), in which he tried to develop a broad, metaphysical understanding of experience. *EE* basically applies this difficult work to the particulars of education. In *Experience and Nature* and in *EE*, Dewey appears to stretch the limits of pragmatism and to return in a limited way to the metaphysics and epistemology of the earlier philosophies that he had criticized. Some recent studies of Dewey's metaphysics have argued that *Experience and Nature* represents a shift away from the pragmatism of his earlier works, such as *DE*, and toward a complex philosophy of metaphysical naturalism (see Boisvert, 1988; Cherlin, 2023). Again, this subject is important but beyond the scope of this article.

Dewey drew contrasts throughout *EE* between the traditionalist and the progressive approach to education and made clear what he found new and valuable in the progressive approach. In the book's opening chapter, Dewey (1938/2008) differentiated traditional from progressive education while warning against the dangers of polarization. Dewey understood traditional education as involving the imposition on the young of adult standards, subject matter, and methods. He contrasted traditional

education with the "new" or "progressive" school, which held in its more polarizing practices that education was "development from within" and "based upon natural endowments." Progressive education, Dewey said, supported the "expression and cultivation of individuality" more than the imposition of standards. It supported "free activity" rather than "learning from texts and teachers"; and it advocated "learning through experience" as opposed to "acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill" (pp. 5–10).

Dewey found that the progressive approach was based on the "idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education (p. 7). He warned that the application of this view by some progressives, as in the above statements of their views, risked it becoming as rigid and dogmatic as the views of some traditionalists. To avoid this risk, Dewey found it necessary to develop an understanding of the nature of experience through philosophical reflection. He set out to do this in chapters 2 and 3 of *EE* (pp. 11–30).

As Waks (2013) develops in his useful study, *John Dewey's Experience and Education*, Dewey explained in chapter 2 of *EE* the nature of a theory of experience and why he believed such a theory was needed. For Dewey the claim that "genuine education comes about through experience," made by educational progressives, requires a distinction among experiences between those which are useful and those which are not. He found that "any experience is miseducative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (Waks, 2013, ch. 2).

Dewey's goal is to explore the types of experiences that produce a concept of growth that is conducive to individual and societal growth rather than to stultification. It is a matter of the "quality of the experience which is had" (Dewey, 1938/2008) Accordingly, in chapter 3 of *EE*, "Criteria of Experience," Dewey turns to a philosophical analysis of the nature of experience and of growth. As Waks (2013) explains, Dewey's underlying idea is that "the growth of the person in his or her physical and social surroundings is cumulative. Every experience has a 'moving force,' has ripple effects that flow into every subsequent experience" (ch. 3). Dewey (1938/2008) identifies two inter-related criteria which he says, "in their active union with each other provide the measure of the educative significance and value of an experience."

The first criterion is continuity, which Dewey also discussed in chapter 25 of *DE* as showing the unitary character of experience rather than its division into philosophical dualisms such as mind and body. Continuity is valuable when it promotes growth. Dewey's discussion of growth parallels the discussion of loyalty in the philosophy of his contemporary, Josiah Royce, in his book *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. A person may be a gangster "loyal" to his fellows and he may "grow" in his criminal skills and ability to avoid detection. But the gangster's loyalty or growth in these situations are self-defeating, for both Royce and Dewey, because they contradict expansive understandings of loyalty to others and growth in one's broad ability to respond to life.

The second criterion is interaction. Dewey holds that normal experience consists of both objective and internal conditions, rejecting again a philosophical dualism of the two. Dewey maintains that valuable education experience must honour both objectivity and internality, and not slight the latter, as educational traditionalists tend to do, or the former, as some progressives were tempted to do. Valuable educational experiences, for Dewey, meet the criteria of both continuity and interaction. They involve a holistic respect for the individual and for knowledge, for the present and the future rather than one or the other. Dewey (1938/2008) concludes his discussion of the criteria of experience and their importance for education as follows:

> But the relation of the present and the future is not an Either-Or affair. The present affects the future anyway. The persons who should have some idea of the connection between the two are those who have achieved maturity. Accordingly, upon them devolves the responsibility for instituting the conditions for the kind of present experience which has a favorable effect upon the future. Education as growth or maturity should be an ever-present process. (p. 30)

Much of the remainder of *EE* is concerned with the application of Dewey's understanding of education experience to questions of *Erziehung*, matters of disagreement between traditionalists and some

progressives. These questions are outside the scope of this article. However, the short concluding chapter of the work, "Experience the Means and Goal of Education" (pp. 61–62), is crucial to understanding how Dewey views philosophy and education. Dewey wrote that "the fundamental issue is not of new versus old education nor of progressive against traditional education but a question of what anything whatever must be to be worthy of the name education" (p. 62). His goal was to develop "just what education is and what conditions have to be satisfied so that education may be a reality and not a name or a slogan" (p. 62). The goal was not to engage in polemics or to promote dogma. Instead, it involved exploring what was valuable in *Erziehung* under a philosophical understanding of experience and then moving ahead. The suggestion is that neither traditionalists nor progressives have a better understanding of *Erziehung* in all situations but that compromise is possible under the principles of experience Dewey has developed. Thus, in *EE*, Dewey has extended his understanding of education further than *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, and further than morals, to rest upon philosophical reflection on and understanding of the nature of experience.

Conclusion

It is time to tie the threads of this article together. We have seen how Dewey's understanding of education gradually expands from *Erziehung* and *Bildung* through education as morals and, finally, to education as philosophy with a reconstructed metaphysical bent. The article began with a discussion of my own late study of Dewey and related my experience to Dewey's view of education as growth. The theme of growth in the study of Dewey was explored in the experience of scholar Dietrich Benner and in the work over time of Dewey himself. We explored different, related ways of understanding education in Dewey through the German concepts of *Erziehung* and *Bildung*, followed by a strong focus on morals and conduct, and a suggestion that education is philosophy and a way of life. The article considered performing and hearing music as a way to understand Dewey and imagination, both in my own experience and in that of Steven Fesmire. We discussed the importance of understanding conduct in terms of better and worse, where possible, rather than only in terms of the more frequently used concepts of right and wrong, praise and blame. I was reminded of Spinoza in this and other aspects of Dewey's thinking. I suggested throughout that Dewey is more of a systematic thinker than is sometimes realized and that the idealistic impulses that he learned early in his philosophy and then tried to put aside remained strong, albeit transformed. In particular, Dewey returns frequently to reconstructed religious themes and to the need to understand the particulars of human life in terms of the whole. For example, in the concluding pages of *HNC*, Dewey (1922/2008) writes:

> Yet the last word is not with obligation nor with the future. Infinite relationships of man with his fellows and with nature already exist. The ideal means, as we have seen, a sense of these encompassing continuities with their infinite reach. This meaning even now attaches to present activities because they are set in a whole to which they belong and which belongs to them. Even in the midst of conflict, struggle and defeat a consciousness is possible of the enduring and comprehending whole. (p. 226)

Education is a never-ending process, and the time I have spent studying Dewey has been short. What I understand as the strongly holistic and idealistically influenced cast of Dewey's thought is a subject that would deserve exploration in my further studies of Dewey.

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