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# John Dewey : a feminist consideration of his concepts of the individual and sociality.

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**JOHN DEWEY: A FEMINIST CONSIDERATION OF HIS CONCEPTS OF  
THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIALITY**

A Dissertation Presented

by

ANA M. MARTINEZ ALEMAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
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School of Education

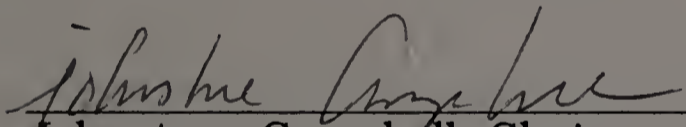
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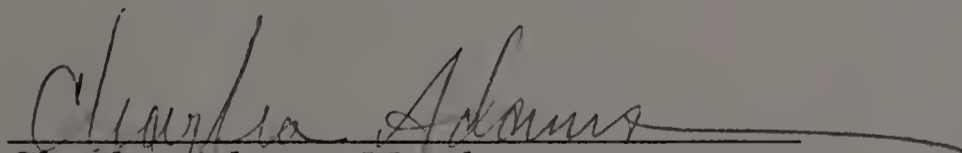
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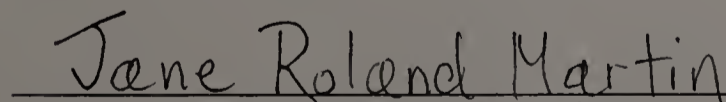
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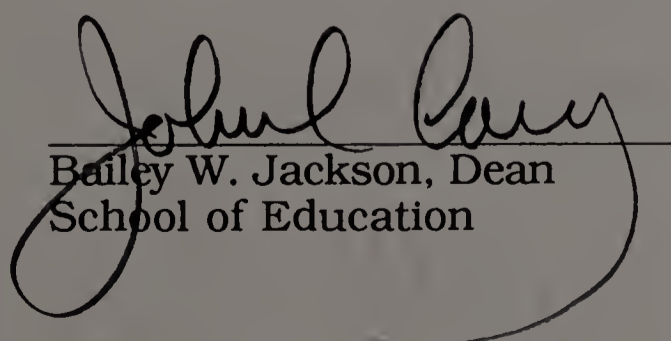
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## ABSTRACT

### JOHN DEWEY: A FEMINIST CONSIDERATION OF HIS CONCEPTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIALITY

MAY 1992

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This dissertation considers selected aspects of John Dewey's educational philosophy from a feminist perspective. As inquiry, it is a critical consideration of an established educational tradition. Most importantly, this inquiry suggests that through consideration, we may find relevant wisdom for our feminist educational theories and practices. The focus of this dissertation are John Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality. Because both John Dewey's and feminist educational treatises are experience-centered, the consideration of the notions of the individual and of sociality is prudent. Through an examination of Dewey's construction of the individual and sociality, we are able to consider whether or not we can we apply Dewey's revisionist philosophy to our personal, political and social worlds. Do Dewey's concepts of the individual and the social have the characteristic connectedness that many feminists require? Do his conceptualizations of the individual and the social have anything of value for feminist agendas? Are feminist goals for the individual and sociality possible through a Deweyan conceptualization? Can Dewey's

individual and sociality help fuel the feminist revolution? Concluding observations present the dangers of neglecting to consider past educational thought, feminist educational theorists' responsibilities, and the worth of reappropriating Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality. By reappropriating John Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality and using them as feminist pedagogical anchors, we are able to take possession of the cognitive powers of interdependence. From the consideration of feminist models of sociality, we can submit that a feminist model of friendship can serve as the means for attaining broader and more heightened intellectual abilities. The writings of John Dewey serve as primary sources while texts on feminist theory provide the parameters for analysis.



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Mujéres, a no dejar que el peligro del viaje y la inmensidad del territorio nos asuste - a mirar hacia adelante y a abrir paso en el monte (*Women, let's not the danger of the journey and the vastness of the territory scare us - let's look forward and open paths in these woods*). (Morága & Anzaldúa, p. v, 1983)

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: A TIMELY CONSIDERATION

Good thinking, noted John Dewey, begins with consideration. It is through consideration, and the process of inquiry that follows, that we gain meaning. (Dewey, 1985, p. 8) When we engage in consideration, when inquiry involves us in a dialectical relationship between ourselves and the subject of our interest, we find new connections and possibilities. A consideration, an inquiry, viewed in this way, is "not a battle, it is communication" (Heldke, 1989, p. 113).

The following pages ask you to consider John Dewey's educational philosophy from a different perspective, or more precisely, to consider Deweyan thought through a composite feminist lens. Since feminist thinking encompasses many perspectives, the view through each lens individually varies to degrees.

For this inquiry to consider each feminist perspective individually and separately is unnecessary. This particular inquiry begins by acknowledging the existence of "species under [feminism's] genus" (Tong, 1989, p.1) and moves forward by suggesting that all feminisms together can engage in a useful consideration of John Dewey's philosophy. To suggest that there is only one feminist perspective, one all-inclusive way in which all feminists everywhere view the world, would be problematic for an inquiry which relies on dialectic and theoretical flexibility. So to facilitate this inquiry, a composite feminist lens, one which combines the typical and essential characteristics of feminisms, is used as a metaphorical tool. Much like Lugónes and Spelman's demand for a "medley of women's voices" to be

heard in feminist theory (1983, p. 21), this lens provides us with a pliable view, a way in which feminisms can engage in the inquiry.

Engaging in this process of consideration requires that we begin with the understanding that all forms of feminism are indeed participating. Feminism in its many forms can enter this particular investigation because we seek to discover the useful, and not to become overly involved in a critical analysis of philosophical antagonisms. There will be times, for example, when the essentialist feminist position will be at odds with the focus of a particular consideration. Nonetheless, such a position is still involved in, and relevant to, this inquiry.

Though the "overarching feminist impulse" in academic scholarship is to reveal masculine bias (Dubois, et al., 1987, p. 16), this consideration will not have this as its particular focus, nor will we be too concerned with proving that Dewey was or was not a feminist. This particular inquiry asks that we engage in a critical consideration of an established tradition and take from it that which is most useful, practical and constructive for our feminist aims. Dewey's writing is itself a "vast territory." What we hope to find are some ideas, concepts and visions which can enrich our own feminist theories and practices.

To engage in consideration is a good thing for anyone but, I assert, it is especially fitting for feminists. It is a feminist concern that traditionally women have not been able to consider or been given the opportunity to ponder the possibilities, to choose what is of value to us. Consideration implies choice; it is an opportunity to view, observe, question, interpret, ponder, judge and decide. For feminists, I believe that consideration is a political act. It is a demand for choice,

for the power of decision-making. It is a position of strength, independence, confidence, maturity; the empowerment derived from a purposeful act. There is nothing inherently weak, intellectually or otherwise, in consideration. It is not an absence of integrity, nor of decided posture. It is a bold and confident voice saying, "Wait! Let *me* decide if this or that is good for me. Let *me* choose *my* path."

As with all acts, a feminist consideration has consequences but this is a reality which is not feared. A feminist engaged in consideration is not faint-hearted. Caution, not an unwillingness to take a risk, characterize the act. When we consider patriarchal philosophies and traditions it is because we are opportunistic. Discerning something useful, we appropriate without fear of compromise. We acknowledge the problematic where it exists but reappropriate what will open paths and secure our aims.

A feminist consideration will engage its participants in "an endless dialectical interplay between the observer who is being observed; and the other, who, in being observed, is also observing his observer" (Barrett, 1979, p. 184). In a sense, the observers, in this case, we as feminist educational theorists, will find ourselves involved in a conversation with Dewey. Each conversant will undoubtedly be changed by this dialogue. Through our consideration, we will present our understanding of Dewey and in the process, at times suggest another interpretation. But of greater importance, is the fact that we may find relevant wisdom for our theories and practices in Deweyan thought.

This consideration of John Dewey's thought has several objectives in mind. First and foremost, we should not lose sight of the

fact that we aim to take what is valuable from Dewey's philosophy and not dwell too extensively on what is problematic. Criticism of the problematic is certainly valuable but in this inquiry, I suggest that it may be a limiting exercise. What we discover to be of value to our feminist agendas will serve to enrich and strengthen the movement, thus to weigh down our investigation too heavily with criticism, thwarts and frustrates the process of consideration and the possibility of reappropriation. Instead, the feminist dialectic we use enables us to creatively observe Dewey as well as ourselves.

This is not to say, however, that we will brush aside or pretend not to see the problematic. On the contrary, we must acknowledge, for example, the fact that John Dewey wrote little directly addressing the education of girls and women and, as a rule, Dewey's commentaries neglected women's experiences. This is clearly an issue given the fact that feminist analyses of social issues are women-centered. Though Dewey wrote about birth control, suffrage and co-education, it can't be said that the central theses in these works concerned themselves specifically with the quality of girls' and women's experiences. The absence of direct attention paid to gender in Dewey's works is suspect, to be sure.

Dewey's attempts to address gender and girls' and women's experience were either critical responses to the political climate ("Symposium on Women's Suffrage"), or to social conditions ("Education and Birth Control"), or to educational policy ("Is Co-education Injurious to Girls"). In each of these articles, Dewey, like many philosophers before and after him, examined a particular issue but kept gender as a secondary, if not absent concern. Women and

girls, or more specifically, their experiences *as* women and *as* girls, are discussed as *objects* to the *subjects* of politics, social policy and education. Gender issues like birth control and voting rights are discussed in the context of their impact on the greater human condition and not as "gender" issues. Though he does recognize that women's experiences differ from men's (Dewey, 1929, p. 846), John Dewey's writings were never explicitly dedicated to an intellectual examination of the female experiential world.

Dewey's failure to place women at the center of his philosophical focus throughout his long life and many writings should be admitted but should not, I insist, foil attempts at consideration. If we were to suggest that only women-centered philosophies were those worthy of intellectual examination and consideration, it would appear that we would find little to consider. But more importantly, such a position, dismisses the possibility that we can gain insight from thinking which is outside of our own particular philosophical frameworks. For a feminist to consider John Dewey's educational philosophy is, to paraphrase Audre Lorde, not an attempt to re-build the master's house. Instead, it is a strategy to reappropriate his tools and build a house of our own (Lorde, 1984).

But because this is a feminist consideration, we must take into account those concerns directly relevant to feminist agendas. Concerns about the nature of humans, about the nature of knowledge and reason, and about the objectives of social life and the life of the individual are at the core of feminist agendas and must therefore be part of our investigation. However, given the scope and depth of each of these concerns, and John Dewey's seemingly endless list of

publications, it will certainly be impossible to engage in an exhaustive examination of each of these themes in this particular essay. Instead, our consideration focuses on the concepts of the individual and social life.

I choose to focus our consideration on the notions of the individual and sociality because both John Dewey and feminist theory securely anchor their experience-centered educational philosophies to the educative potency of our interactions with the organic world. We conduct our lives as individuals within a social environment. As individuals, we act in a social context. For both Dewey and feminist educators, interactions between individuals and their environments lead to the kinds of experiences which form knowledge.

Chapter 2 begins this consideration in earnest by examining how Dewey constructs the individual and sociality. Can we apply Dewey's revisionist philosophy to our personal, political and social worlds? Do Dewey's concepts of the individual and the social have the characteristic connectedness that many feminists require? Do his conceptualizations of the individual and the social have anything of value for feminist agendas? Are feminist goals for the individual and sociality possible through a Deweyan conceptualization? bell hooks writes that "to change and transform [our concepts of] self and society will determine the fate of the feminist revolution" (1991, p. 108). Can Dewey's individual and sociality help fuel the feminist revolution?

As we observe Dewey throughout *this* inquiry, as we consider his ideas on the individual and society, we should seek not to reach a compromise position where Dewey and feminisms can coexist, nor should we simply react against his thinking. Both these postures,



compromise and reaction, suggest that one position can control the other. This is not the aim of consideration. Through consideration, we examine, give attention to, notice and reflect on what we observe. Such a process, such an endeavor, keeps feminist thinking dynamic, fresh, evolving, and rich with possibilities for growth.

I begin this consideration by saying that there is no reason to fear such a journey, because such a critical inquiry can only serve to better our theories and practices. It is important to acknowledge in other philosophical traditions what is valuable, but it is all the more important and good to consider and take possession of, to reappropriate, all that enhances, strengthens, and deepens our own particular theory. As John Dewey, himself, warned:

For in spite of itself, any movement that thinks and acts in terms of an 'ism becomes so involved in reaction against other 'isms that it is unwittingly controlled by them. (1938, p. 6)

This is the foundation of this paper's thesis as well as its perspective.

This inquiry will undoubtedly have implications for our educational theories and practices, but perhaps of more consequence are the implications that it will have for feminist theory. If John Dewey's philosophy proves useful to feminist educational ideals, that is, if it proves serviceable for the feminist political act of teaching, what then does feminism secure? Is feminism at a point in its evolution where it can assume and implement aspects of an educational theory seemingly outside of its own tradition?

Though the point can be made that any time is a good time to consider philosophical postures, this particular consideration is timely for several reasons.

First is feminism's renewed interest in the American pragmatic philosophical tradition. As Charlene Haddock Seigfried points out in her article "Where Are All the Pragmatist Feminists?" American pragmatism has "resources for feminist theory untapped by other approaches" and adds that, in turn, feminism can "uniquely reinvigorate pragmatism" (Seigfried, 1991, p. 2). Seigfried argues that the compatibility of these two traditions, rooted in a liberal base, warrants attention from feminists. Feminism and American pragmatism, according to Seigfried, hold similar positions regarding the relationship between experience and meaning, the aligning of theory and praxis. Both positions are critical of positivistic scientific methodology and each emphasizes the aesthetic informing experience and the validity of social, cultural and political analyses (Seigfried, 1991, p. 5).

Pragmatism, asserts Seigfried, is suitable for feminist restructuring because of its desire to "dismantle the social and political structures of oppression and to develop better alternatives" (Seigfried, 1991, p. 2). According to Seigfried, the "better alternatives" proposed by pragmatism are

criticisms of positivist interpretations of scientific methodology; disclosure of the value dimension of factual claims; reclaiming aesthetics as informing everyday experience; linking of dominant discourses with domination; subordinating logical analysis to social, cultural and political issues; realigning theory and praxis; and resisting the turn to epistemology and instead emphasizing concrete experience (1991, p. 5)

These "alternatives" suggest to me that pragmatists had a vision of the individual that could not be solitary nor detached but engaged in active and intentional correspondence with the social world. It would

seem that the pragmatist's individual, informed by everyday experience, had to be engaged in a reciprocal relationship with others. This idea is expressed by Dewey in Human Nature and Conduct when he writes that "for human beings, the environing affairs directly important are those formed by the activities of other human beings" (1922, p. 84). That the individual is constantly informed by others suggests to me that the pragmatic conception of the social and of the individual could not be dualistic and dichotomous. For how can the correspondence of individuals, how can this reciprocal relationship *not* be fueled (at some level) by shared interests?

Seigfried's suggestion that feminists reclaim American pragmatism is important to this particular inquiry because it introduces perhaps the most salient point of this work: *that by neglecting to consider a past philosophical position, we stand to lose the opportunity to reappropriate what is useful*. I agree with Seigfried when she asserts that there is a feminine side to pragmatism, a side for which it was "relegated to the margins" (Seigfried, 1991, p. 5). Pragmatism's criticism of positivistic interpretation of scientific methodology, its belief in aesthetics informing everyday experience and emphasis on concrete experience and not on epistemology are positions which Seigfried asserts are both feminist and pragmatic (1991, p. 5). In effect, its philosophical marginalization may have been the result of these positions, positions which feminism champions today.

So why specifically John Dewey? Together with Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, Josiah Royce and George Herbert Mead, John Dewey fashioned the American pragmatism that I suggest is so

compatible with feminist thinking. Why not consider one of these other American pragmatists?

Feminists address social issues which affect women in particular and humanity in general. Dewey's pragmatic philosophy was social criticism and, like other pragmatists, called for the inclusion of multiple and varied perspectives (Seigfried, 1991, p. 14). Present day feminists such as Maria Lugones, bell hooks and Trinh T. Minh-ha echo these very concerns. But John Dewey is the focus of this particular consideration because it is Dewey who recognized that philosophy and education were one and the same. John Dewey reasoned that in order to solve social problems, philosophers and theorists must actively engage themselves in educational discourse. In his autobiographical essay titled "From Absolutism to Experimentalism" Dewey addresses this very point:

Although a book called Democracy and Education was for many years that in which my philosophy, such as it is, was most fully expounded, I do not know that philosophic critics, as distinct from teachers, have ever had recourse to it. I have wondered whether such facts signified that philosophers in general, although they are themselves usually teachers, have not taken education with sufficient seriousness for it to occur to them that any rational person could actually think it possible that philosophizing should focus about education as the supreme human interest in which, moreover, other problems, cosmological, moral, logical, come to a head. (Dewey, 1960, p. 14)

Dewey valued education because it was that concrete experience where all theories were tested. His pragmatism positions education as the center of a philosophical circle. This fact alone invites feminist educational theorists to engage in a critical consideration of his work.

The reasons for a feminist consideration of John Dewey extend beyond this, however.

At the heart of feminist theory, no matter what brand we consider, there is a rejection of dualisms and universals, and a belief in the union of theory and practice. John Dewey provided us with an educational theory in which practice and theory are integrated and *a posteriori* reasoning is valued. Nancy Hartsock discussed these issues ten years ago in Building Feminist Theory, but they are still relevant today.

Hartsock's feminist method stresses the examination of experience, an examination which is through our senses as well as through our intellect. It is a methodology where connections are drawn between personal experience and generality, and in which our understanding of the social world is derived from human association (Hartsock, 1981, p. 32). In their critique of feminist research, Liz Stanley and Sue Wise discuss the need for connection between theory and practice, a relationship which demands the absence of traditional dualisms and dichotomies (Stanley & Wise, 1983). The emphasis on objectivity, an integral player in the traditional Western paradigms of knowledge, suggests that knowers and the objects of their knowledge are separated and that knowledge is free of social influence.

Feminist theorist Lorraine Code argues this very point in her analysis of subjectivity, further stressing the need for feminism to dismiss such dichotomies as subjective/objective. As Code writes, in a feminist framework, "dichotomies are especially problematic in that they posit exclusionary constructs, not complementary or interdependent ones" (1991, p. 29), imposing boundaries "unduly

restrictive" (p. 28). And, if, as Code suggests, feminist theory seeks to acquire an understanding of the experiential world, and I would agree that it does, we must consider not so much the origins of dichotomy but rather, the interaction between these so called opposites and the continuum in between. Experience can not and does not exist solely within two polarities, or at least such has been the case in my short life. I can think of few experiences which seem to be categorically either/or. Further, I suggest that we may find that identifying reality as non-linear, allows us to validate reciprocity between the knower and the known, confirming the richness of experience and its primary role in feminist learning.

Dewey made it quite clear throughout his lifetime that adhering to dualistic philosophies created barriers which prevented the "fluent and free intercourse" between women and men (Dewey, 1916, p. 333). In effect, noted Dewey, a tradition of dualistic thinking set up the "different types of life-experience, each with isolated subject matter, aim and standard of values [which marked off] social groups and classes within a group; like those between rich and poor, men and women, noble and baseborn, ruler and ruled" (1916, p. 333). Dualistic thinking was for Dewey, a limiting philosophy. The either/or characteristic of dualistic thinking separated the knower from the known, disregarding the impact of real experience on meaning. Knowledge, Dewey claimed, is a perception of the connections between the knower and the known, and "an ideally perfect knowledge" would reflect the "network of interconnections that any past experience would offer a point of advantage from which to get at the problem presented in a new experience" (1916, p. 340). The

multiple meanings of reality were for Dewey a result of the connections made between the knower and the known and not a product of indifferent dualistic reasoning.

Dewey viewed the early 20th century advances in physiology and psychology as evidence that the ancient dualism of mind and body held no reasonable ground. As a naturalist, Dewey viewed mind and body as organic entities which are never separated from experiential reality. Mind, in Dewey's view, emerged from action and not from spiritual providence. As the body is involved in interdependent experiences, mind emerges as that capacity to foresee a future possibility, and as the ability to engage in "precisely intentional purposeful activity controlled by perception of facts and relationships to one another" (Dewey, 1916, p. 103). The sciences of physiology and psychology certified for Dewey the organic verity of the mind. The brain, as an organ of knowing, is not isolated from the other bodily organs, especially those of response. The brain is the body's "machinery" for the reciprocal adjustment between stimuli and responses. It is not an isolated, nor purely receptive and passive entity. The mind, wrote Dewey, is not a "passive spectator of the universe" (1967, p. 15). Thus knowing could not be separate from the everyday human realities but rather a process of the "perception of those connections of an object which determines its applicability in a given situation" (Dewey, 1916, p. 340). In knowing, we reorganize realities in order to meet new conditions. Through interaction with universal matter, Dewey's "mind" and "body" work together to construct meaning and theory and direct future actions. The knower and the known in a Deweyan

framework are always bound to each other in a relational interplay of construction and reconstruction.

The separation of mind and body was problematic for Dewey also because, in effect, it served to disassociate thought from our everyday occupations, and most importantly, grounded the "erroneous conception" that knowledge and social interests, and that individuality and freedom, were unrelated. If mind and body are separate, reasoned Dewey, then the individual mind must be unassociated with the organic world. It would follow that individual minds must be separated from each other (Dewey, 1916, p. 292). The purposes of a human sociality based on such dualistic thinking would certainly render individuals intellectually and socially irresponsible, a phenomenon Dewey saw as socially inefficient and immoral. Knowledge, for Dewey, requires knowing people.

Much of the feminist educational discourse involves these same Deweyan ideas. Frances Maher, for example, sketches an "interactive pedagogy" which is Deweyan at its roots. In her 1985 article, "Pedagogies for the Gender-Balanced Classroom," Maher bases her pedagogical alternative on the belief that knowers and objects of their knowledge are indeed connected and socially influenced. Acknowledging that experiences are relevant to learning, Maher's "interactive pedagogy" integrates students' experiences into the subject matter. It recognizes that reality is "shaped by our gender and our sexuality, an identification which separates all class, race and cultural experiences into various male and female versions" (Maher, 1985, p. 50). It is pedagogy which is inductive in nature, whose ultimate goal is "the creation of shared meaning through collective



problem-solving" (p. 51), rather than through the use of universal truths and *a priori* reasoning.

Dewey's Democracy and Education is a testament to his belief that knowledge is produced in multiple contexts. By "conceiving the connections between ourselves and the world in which we live" (Dewey, 1916, p. 344), he writes, we are able to learn and thus able to know. The fact that he constructs his school to be most like society is an indication that he values the opportunities for learning available outside of the transmission of information characteristic of our educational tradition. "Learning in school should be continuous with that out of school" and "free interplay between the two" must take place (Dewey, 1916, p. 358). Thus for Dewey, an "ideally perfect knowledge" would embody a "network of interconnections" (Dewey, 1916, p. 340).

Because Dewey assigns the nature of experience a personal/individual quality, we can presume that feminism would find his views on knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge acceptable. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule suggest that knowledge implies "personal acquaintance with an object" and an "intimacy" between the self and the object (Belenky, 1986, p. 101). Dewey utters much the same when he declares that "every act of mind involves relation" and that "all knowledge occurs in the medium of feeling" (Dewey, 1967, pp. 205, 215). He furthers this idea when he writes

There is no consciousness which exists as wholly objectified, that is, without connection with some individual. There is, in other words, no consciousness which is not feeling. (Dewey, 1967, p. 215)

Death, for example, is something which exists in the universe. We experience the death of a loved one and come to know "loss" through the medium of feeling. In many ways, the "inaccessible knowledge and passion within" women that Mary Daly identifies, becomes more "readily accessible" (Daly, 1984, pp. 235-237) in Dewey's ideology.

Feminist educational philosophies, then, bare striking resemblance to John Dewey's educational treatise. But to say that John Dewey's and feminist educational philosophies are compatible or congruous is not adequate given the definition of and possibilities in consideration. More importantly, it is inadequate for the purposes of this essay. A goal of consideration is the possibility of reappropriating the useful and as such, it will be necessary to present what feminist educational theorists can reappropriate from Dewey. The last and concluding chapter will present what our consideration has determined may be useful, and in the process, inject a cautionary word about the hazards of dismissing the knowledge of the past, the hazards of our outlooks.

In this concluding chapter titled "The Hazards of Outlook, " I consider the implications of philosophical outlook as it pertains to the feminist educator. For the feminist educator, gaining insight from an established tradition and taking what is most useful is both practical and constructive. Establishing such a perspective is, as the founder of the New York Feminist Theatre Lucy Winer suggests, "very difficult and complicated" (1981, p. 304). She warns that the feminist project must maintain distance, yet still be able to focus on what is useful in the cultural heritage being observed. But as feminist educational theorists, we must recognize that we have, as feminists, a special

vantage point that marginality affords. Similar to black women's "special vantage point," we must, as bell hooks demands of black women, criticize, envision and create (1984, p. 15).

Making this consideration timely for yet another reason is the discussion among contemporary feminists about the "second wave" of white American feminism and its need to include the Third World women's perspectives in its theoretical framework. Feminists such as bell hooks, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Morága and María Lugónes write about the exclusion of Third World women in feminist mainstream thought, explaining that Third World women and their experiences are unrecognizable in these theories. Lugónes writes:

I think that the fact that we are so ill at ease with your theorizing [about Third World women] does indicate that there is something wrong with these theories. But what is it that is wrong? Is it simply that these theories are flawed if meant to be universal but accurate so long as they are confined to your particular group(s)? Is it that the theories need to be translated? Is it something about the process of theorizing that is flawed?...Where do we begin? (Lugónes & Spelman, 1983, p. 578)

This contemporary issue in feminist theory relates directly to our inquiry. Feminism, like any other theory, must engage in many dialogues out of necessity. If feminist theory is to evolve, deepen and extend its understanding of our worlds, then its theorists must stop and consider the "vastness of the territor[ies]" placed before them. Issues of gender, multi-cultural and racial differences are pressing issues for present-day feminist theorists. As feminist theorists, we must engage in critical inquiries of our pasts and presents, all the

while, "nourish[ing] the critical spirit of inquiry [that] is always creative" (Freire, 1972, p. 17).

This critical consideration of John Dewey's philosophy examines his views on the individual and sociality. Each of these is certainly relevant in any discussion of any form of feminism but their selection as points to examine and give thought to is intentional in another way. I suspect that how we construct knowledge and our view of ourselves and our socialities are inextricably bound together. Each in a myriad of ways, dictates the shape, form and expression of the others and consequently, has implications for a feminist project. Like Dewey, I am interested in change and growth through continuous self-renewal, and more to the point, believe that an educative experience gives us "an added power of subsequent direction and control" (Dewey, 1916, p. 77). This investigation is a process and not an end in itself. We engage in this consideration hoping that the process will educate us, and as feminists, serve to "add power" to our many directions, and "acarrear con orgullo las tareas de deshelar corazones y cambiar conciencias (*to carry with pride the task of thawing hearts and changing consciousness*)" (Morága & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 5).

## CHAPTER 2

### ABOUT SOCIALITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

All feminisms struggle in some way or another to find the connections between self/individual and the group/sociality. It is indeed a struggle given the prevalence of Western dualistic ideas of the individual and society which place each at odds with the other. Feminisms, on the other hand, where "the personal is political," view self and identity as undeniably related to sociality and solidarity but find that in our personal, political and social worlds, this unity of concepts is largely absent.

John Dewey's educational philosophy embodied an uneasiness with the tensions between the individual and sociality inherent in dualistic thinking. What can we learn from considering Dewey's revisionist concepts of the individual and sociality? Can we discover the connectedness which seems so vital to feminist ends, and particularly to feminist educational ambitions? bell hooks writes that "to change and transform [our concepts of] self and society will determine the fate of the feminist revolution" (1991, p. 108). Will Dewey's construction of the individual and sociality help fuel "the feminist revolution"?

In Meditations on Modern Political Thought Jean Bethke Elshtain remarks that feminism reflects the tensions between individualism and the common good and between individual rights and sociality" (1986, p. 56). It is a reflection, notes Elshtain, which is characterized by individuals with shared purposes and collective identities. Recent feminist scholarship fleshes out the tension

Elshtain describes, suggesting that perhaps the tension between the individual and the group, in actuality, is thicker and more complex (Fox-Genovese, 1991). It is a tension which is the result of a tradition whose definition of the individual and of society sets the two in opposition. The use of the term "tension" alone connotes a contrariety, an antithesis between the two conceptions.

Let's begin here, then, with the idea that feminism reflects the tension between two concepts supposedly in opposition and suggest that a feminist conception of the individual and the social is characteristically harmonious and cohesive. This is the starting point of this chapter's consideration.

In this chapter, we will look at Dewey's conceptualization of the individual and of sociality, a term which I will use to refer to his notions of social life--life within groups, society at large and community, the fact and condition of being associated with others. We will look at how Dewey envisioned the coalescence of the individual and sociality, how his concept of democracy is that social state which unifies the individual and society. What we will find is that Dewey resolves the purported tension producing conflict between the individual and the social not by redefining these terms in the strictest sense but by untangling its tradition, dissecting its evolution and reassembling its definition. In many ways, Dewey's fusion of the individual and the social was a reconsideration necessary for the attainment of what he viewed as a moral and ethical social order.

Our consideration must include a discussion of Dewey's notion of democracy given that it is through this particular conception of social order that the individual and the social are integrated. After having

considered Dewey's model for sociality, democracy, we will engage in a consideration of feminist models. How each model can or can not bring about the integration of the social with the individual, and how each addresses or concerns itself with real world issues, for example, socio-economic class, is a part of our inquiry. Finally, we will consider what, if anything, we can reappropriate as a result of this critical consideration of Deweyan individuality and sociality.

Let's now consider John Dewey's conceptualizations of the individual and of community. Let's consider whether his fusion of the individual and the social can resolve the tensions reflected in feminism, the existence of which makes this consideration once again timely.

### **2.1 Dewey's "Community," "Group," and "Society"**

In Democracy and Education Dewey writes that society and community are equivocal terms. Society, he says, is "conceived as one by its very nature" and the qualities which make up this oneness are those which are emphasized by solidarity. The qualities he attributes to this unity are "praiseworthy community of purpose and welfare, loyalty to public ends, mutuality of sympathy" (p. 82). Society then, should have a shared alliance of interests, objectives and standards, and a concern for the common good. The implication is that in Dewey's society individual interests aren't antithetical to those of the group and taken a step further, that individual rights within the social unit are not suppressed nor are their 'rights' denied. In a very early paper, Dewey assembles a definition of democracy which injects an 'organic' interpretation of the individual and society. He views society

as a whole and perfect organism existing for and by individuals. As an integral part of the whole, individuals are not socially isolated units but rather constitute the spirit and will of all (Dewey, 1888). Though in his early writings Dewey's individual was defined within a Hegelian ideal and though Dewey's later writings don't have such a quality, he continued to believe that the ultimate interests of individuals and society were indeed reconcilable.

As several scholars, such as Frederick Schultz have concluded, the differences between Dewey's "society" and "community" are unclear. In The Public and Its Problems, a text in which Dewey directly addresses communal living, Dewey implies that a society can be transformed into a community, giving the impression that communal living is of a higher social order or, at the very least, a more advanced form of associated living.

In The Public and Its Problems, Dewey writes that the "Great Society" can be transformed through intelligent action into the "Great Community." What he viewed as the "Great Society" was the 1920's pre-Depression America which was rapidly advancing in technology and industry. Dewey, however, saw such advancement as both positive and problematic. In effect, he reasoned, the rise of technology controlled by private profit and a "money culture," prevented the Great Society from acknowledging shared concerns and achieving shared ends. Acknowledging shared concerns and achieving mutual goals was a characteristic of local groups and communities which Dewey viewed as central and primary for the Great Community to evolve. What he envisioned was greater social cohesiveness, larger and an infinitely



more inclusive union of human beings, across and between groups, across and between societies.

In order to transform "society" into "community," Dewey reasoned that members would have to be aware of and acknowledge mutual concerns and develop the method of intelligence to bring about mutually agreed upon ends. In effect, we have to be willing to see that our own individual concerns are similar to, if not the same as, those of others. To do this requires a method of intelligence reflecting the relationship between community and communication, and communication and intelligence. In the modern, technological life, Dewey purported, a life focused on material gain is incapable of seeing and acknowledging the relevance of others' concerns to our own. He reasoned that our ability to become aware of our connections is ultimately what enables us to form communities:

The planets in constellation would form a community if they were aware of the connections of the activities of each with those of others. (1927, p. 25)

Thus, given that as humans we have the capacity for awareness--the capacity for intelligence--we should be able to engage in communal life. The suggestion is that individual intelligence will enable us to understand that sharing mutual concerns and aims is advantageous for all, and that this in itself resolves the "conflict" between the individual and society. Though Dewey never explicitly says that in achieving "community" the individual and society are reconciled and made cohesive, my reading suggests that such is the case with Dewey.

It is important to state and make note of the fact that Dewey's "community" is not a static sociality. Dewey's community is always

incomplete, always emerging. Each generation, in Dewey's view, should re-interpret the human condition, the passions, canons, and customs of the previous generations (Dewey, 1927, p. 154). This makes sense given that Dewey's community is achieved through interaction, through participation in associated life. With each new generation, with each new advance in human intelligence, it becomes necessary to assess, to consider the value of a previous standard in order to progress personally and socially.

"Society" for Dewey is really "societies," the many and different forms of human association. Society is not a useful term for Dewey. Instead, he suggests in Individualism: Old and New that it is better to think in terms of "law, industry, religion, medicine, politics, art, education, philosophy" and to think of these in the plural. He asks us to think of society not in "huge and large ways," but rather as "avenues": law, industry, religion, etc. It is via these avenues that we act upon the world and the world acts upon us (1929, p. 166). These "avenues" are the conditions in which the multiple and varied forms of interactions between individuals take place, according to Dewey. Thus, it would follow, that because human interactions vary from person to person, across time, and because these are not static interactions capable of being repeated precisely the same way twice, "society" can not be static either.

## **2.2 Dewey's Individual and Society**

The requirement that individual personality develop with the influence of societal interactions suggests that Dewey firmly integrated individual and society. Thinking of the individual and society as

opposing abstractions was for Dewey a sure way of preventing true social thinking. In reality, he reasoned, the individual and the social are just categories through which we can gain an understanding of our worlds. To think of either the "individual" or "Society" as a singular, particular entity defined by some abstract, general idea, dismisses the facts of association and interaction. The individual is not the "spatially isolated thing our imagination inclines to take it to be," remarks Dewey (1927, p. 187). Instead, Dewey's individual is a collection of particular potentialities which are elicited and validated through association. In a way, Dewey views the term "individual" as a general term which can not fully describe all of its particular manifestations. The beliefs, purposes, passions and actions of individuals are due to the influences of their associations and interactions, interactions which are not one-way transactions between the "individual" and an ambiguous "Society." Relations are between individuals and not between individuals and Society. And it is in this relation, this "social medium," that individuals live. It is through and because of associated life or "social medium" that individuals are "influenced by contemporary and transmitted culture, whether in conformity or protest. The culture of a period is a determining influence in the "arrangement of the native constituents of human nature. What is generic and the same everywhere is at best the organic structure of man, his biological make-up" (Dewey, 1927, p. 195).

Dewey's individual is not a function of a "ready-made" human nature. As a living organism, Dewey's individual is a "temporal development" whose uniqueness in history is not "something given once for all at the beginning which then proceeds to unroll as a ball of

yarn may be unwound" (1960, p. 230). The potentialities of individuals develop through interactions with cultural conditions, an assertion he defends by stating that if human nature were a relative constant", it could not account for the multitude of diversities" (1939, p. 19). As an unshaped potentiality, a possibility or capacity for becoming actual, Dewey's individuality is incomplete and takes shape only through interactions with real situations. Dewey's individual is not

a mere property of nature, set in place according to a scheme independent of him, as an article is put in its place in a cabinet, but he adds something, that he makes a contribution. (Dewey, 1925, p. 172)

For Dewey, the idea that human nature is inherently individualistic, ie., egocentric and narcissistic, is a product of a cultural condition he called the "cultural individualistic movement" characteristic of the traditions of 18th century liberalism and American democracy (Dewey, 1939). The "liberalism" Dewey disdained so vehemently is the outgrowth of several social forces, two of which, Locke's "natural rights" philosophy and the doctrine of laissez-faire, he found particularly inimical. The "natural rights" philosophy of the late 1600's which created the belief that individual needs were primary, and the laissez-faire doctrine which gave rise to an individual economic blindness were, for Dewey, primarily responsible for the polarization of individual and the social. Even the Church, with its emphasis on the salvation of the *individual* soul seemed to add to the invention of polarity (Dewey, 1930).

The individualism Dewey insisted on is not the "old individualism" which held the interests and rights of the individual as primary. This "old individualism," had its roots in the individualistic

sentiments which rose to prominence in 18th and 19th century England and France. This particular brand of individualism, he felt, gave power and freedom to few. In Chapter V of Individualism: Old and New he provides us with a sketch of the "new Individualism" which stresses the interconnections of the "vast complex of associations" in the modern technological world. These connections, he insisted, introduce harmony and cohesiveness to the state of society (Dewey, 1930, pp. 74-100).

This "old" individualism, Dewey writes, is the consequence of medieval and feudal institutions, institutions which were the means of accomplishing the eternal happiness of the soul, and the secular industrial revolution which fostered the belief that the essential characteristic of all individuals was a motivation for personal gain. Under the influence of Protestantism, individual capitalism, a natural rights philosophy and morals based on "strictly individual traits and values" flourished. The American version of this individualism took things a step further and "equated personal gain with social [economic and class] advance" (Dewey, 1929, pp. 75-77).

The problem with this individualism, purported Dewey, is that in the modern, industrial and technological world, because institutions are run for private, personal profit, institutional aims are not social aims. Industry and technology are private endeavors, avenues to personal, private, individual profit. Individual aims in this view, are "narrow" aims, purely driven by the motivation for individual monetary wealth and social class status. The interest in private profit created our "money culture," a culture which Dewey believed could not allow us to see, and thus address, our purposeful sociality.

Dewey's "new" individualism, in contrast, merged the personal with the social (Dewey, 1930). Dewey's individual should, in a sense, have an integrated individuality whose aims are not purely personal, nor purely social. Such an individuality, he insisted, is not a ready-made essentially human characteristic. It is a capacity for development which is always incomplete and evolving. Given this, it becomes absolutely critical for the environment to provide those conditions under which such potentialities can emerge and be confirmed. For Dewey, communication, intelligence and interaction appear to be those conditions necessary for the development of an integrated individual.

What we see in Dewey's concepts of individual, individualism, and individuality, is similar to what we saw in his construction of sociality. The terms appear to blend into each other, to be parts of a larger, more comprehensive human process. Each is something to be achieved; none is a fixed mold. None are absolute, but rather, each is relative. Nothing about each term seems automatic. It is as if "individual," "individuality," and "individualism" are but parts of a dynamic composite called human being.

Thus it was Dewey's contention that the supposed opposition between the individual and society was the result of social forces designed to legitimize those prevailing individual rights ideologies. In "Time and Individuality" he makes this point quite clearly when he writes:

The weakness of the philosophy originally advanced to justify the democratic movement was that it took individuality to be something given ready-made; that is, in abstraction from time, instead of as a power to develop. (1960, p. 242)

The result of a cultural interaction then, should not be construed as an inherent "nature" or predisposition. Cultural conditions develop individuality, along with genetic inheritance, as a result of unique interactions, therefore, one can not say that human nature is innately individualistic. On the contrary, Dewey's comments imply that the social is part and parcel of the individual, that it is an essential, integral and constituent element of the individual. Further, he holds that "the spirit of personality indwells in every individual and that the choice to develop it must proceed from that individual" (Dewey, 1888, p. 22).

In Ethics, though Dewey does not deny the uniqueness of each individual, he makes the case that there are many individuals and that there is no one single society or form of association. The conflicts which have traditionally been viewed as conflicts between classes or groups are conflicts which exist between *some* individuals and *some* groups, not between the constructs "individual" and "society." Conflicts such as those between the dominant class and the rising class, between private enterprise and public agencies, between the conservative and the liberal or radical have led to the belief that the struggles arise from the antagonism between the individual and society. It is the conflict of interests between these groups that really creates social disputes, Dewey contends (Dewey, 1908, pp. 358-363).

But if there is a constant in humans, Dewey would contend that it is the fact that humans are a part of nature and, as such, are social beings. Plainly put, "individuals are social by nature" (Dewey, 1930, p. 82), and as social beings, they are likely to encounter conditions which will develop a myriad of potentialities, of which individuality

and sociality are inevitable. Human associations can, therefore, not be external but rather are defined by the intricacies of relationship and interaction (Dewey, 1930, p. 82). We are not just *de facto* associated. The very fact that interaction has consequences means that we affect "society" in some way. Though we may think and act individually, the consequences are the result of interaction. We are not just actually associated; we are implicated by our associations.

We become social animals in the make-up of ideas, sentiments and through purposeful behavior. What one believes, desires, and strives toward is the result of interaction and engagement (Dewey, 1927, p. 13). He even proposes that the human dilemma is to protect "the development of each constituent (*individuality and sociality*) so that it serves to release and mature the other" (1939, p. 22), a suggestion that leads one to suspect that in a Deweyan scheme, the private and public spheres may be integrated. In The Human Condition Hannah Arendt states:

No human life, not even the life of the hermit in nature's wilderness, is possible without a world which directly or indirectly testifies to the presence of other human beings. All human activities are conditioned by the fact that men live together... (1958, p. 22)

It is this same idea that Dewey suggests when he states that humans are a part of nature and, as such, are social beings.

This mutual dependence between the individual and the social which Dewey submits is characterized by a reciprocity of interests and varied inter- and intra- group actions. The individuals in Dewey's social unit share purposes, are mutually sympathetic and are loyal to the group's aims. The "worth" of the group can thus be measured by



the degree to which interests are shared among group members and the cooperation with other groups. The "standard" for measuring the worth is one which assures that the ideal society is not the benchmark. Rather, Dewey's criteria avoids this extreme, suggesting a "practicable" appraisal. Worth is thus assessed by the degree to which the interests consciously shared are "numerous and varied" and by "how full and free" the interactions are with other groups (Dewey, 1916, p. 83). If there is minimal common interest between members and if that interest isolates the group, "barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience" are assured. Such barriers, asserts Dewey, make the group or social unit or society "undesirable." The more fruitful the association and intercourse between human beings, the greater their experience. The greater their experience, the more progressive an individual's growth. And progressive growth, according to Dewey, is the distinguishing trait of intelligence, a society's most important asset (Dewey, 1916, pp. 81-99).

What other attributes of individuality does Dewey suggest are compatible with those of sociality? Does Dewey examine these idiosyncrasies as they are actually expressed? In the Ethics of Democracy Dewey's discourse on the difference between a true democracy and aristocracy addresses these questions.

According to Dewey, aristocracy has failed to assert true individuality because its members have "ceased to remain wise and good." They have "become ignorant of the needs and requirements of the many" and leave the many outside the pale with no real share in the commonwealth" (1888, p. 20). He goes on to say that the aristocracy "limits the range of men... in the unity of purpose and

destiny; and it always neglects to see that those theoretically included really obtain their well being" (1888, p. 21). Even when the aristoi engage in philanthropic organizations, Dewey claims that this is "good which is procured from without" and is not a "realization... of the unified spirit of community" (1888, p. 21-22). He is suggesting that personal responsibility, individual initiation, and unity of purpose must begin with the individual, that "personality is the first and final reality" (1888, p. 23). This individualism that is ethical, responsible and lawful is a trustworthy element in his conception of personality. It is "the one thing of permanent and abiding worth" and from it "result the other notes of democracy, liberty, equality and fraternity" (1888, p. 23).

It seems that Dewey is assigning to all individuals a potentiality which when fully and freely realized, is in accord with the ideals of sociality. It would be erroneous to deduce from this implication that humans are all of the same "nature". Dewey underscores the term "potentiality" and means just that, the ability to develop into existence. Further, this is only a most general potentiality and it's clear that he values those potentialities which realize themselves through the democratic process. Liberty and equality are all individual potentialities which are developed within the democratic process but individuals may choose to develop this potentiality or may choose against it. The appropriate cultural conditions must be present for this potential to be realized and, as could be expected, it is education's role to set forth these conditions, conditions democracy can engender.

### **2.3 The Union of the Individual and Sociality**

How does Dewey's democracy unify the individual and society? How does democracy bring about the "perfect man in perfect state" (Dewey, 1888, p. 19)?

Dewey's democracy is much more than a form of government. As an ethical alliance, it brings about a moral individualism which connects the individual with others in society. In many ways, Dewey denied many of our religious traditions which grant the individual a spiritual intimacy with God and, instead, purported that such spiritual intimacy was between individuals (Dewey, 1930; 1916, p. 122). He goes on to submit that the individual is the means for democracy and exacts on the individual the responsibility for attaining democratic ends. This is a classic Dewey equation: means and ends, process and objective, growth and experience, individual and society all interactive and constantly renewing. The individual must be able to adjust and redefine, a course which Western religious traditions obstruct. For Dewey, these traditions dictated "fixed and comprehensive goals" for the individual, objectives which distanced humans from nature. The religious concepts of mortality and immortality turned humans away from the good of all and toward the good of self (Dewey, 1930). Democracy, it would follow, must not separate individuals from nature and must provide the opportunity for individual growth.

The democratic arrangement urged by John Dewey has as its means and ends the integration of the individual and society. More than a political order, Deweyan democracy is a means for realizing truly social goals. It is "a way of life, social and individual." As a way of life, it is expressed as

the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate men living together: which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals. (Dewey, 1937, p. 457)

It is a human way of life which requires in its practice "universal suffrage, recurring elections, responsibility of those who are in political power to the voters" (Dewey, 1937, p. 457). First and foremost, Deweyan democracy is a spirit, an attitude. It is a "spirit of understanding, sympathy, and cooperation within social classes and between social classes" (Horne, 1978, p. 112).

At its core this vision of democracy is founded on the belief in the abilities of human beings, in their capacity for intelligence and in the vitality of collective sociality. Belief in an individual's entitlement to social equality, to freedom of social inquiry, to freedom of thought and expression are all elemental in this democracy and are necessary for the individual and society to live and work as one. As such, this democratic design approximates the ideal of all social systems because, as Dewey pronounces, "the individual and society are organic to each other" (1888, p. 14). Mutual interests must then direct this truly democratic society and it follows that change must be the result of human associations.

As a central point in Liberalism and Social Action Dewey proposes a democracy that is essentially a commitment to a "cooperative intelligence" as a "social asset." Through an organized intelligence, individuals in a democracy can bring claims out into the open and make wise decisions. A "freed intelligence as a social force" is a necessary condition for Dewey's democracy, a condition which can

be brought about by the "full development of the personality" through an education which 'frees' the individual's capacity for progressive growth (1935, pp. 61-81). In this way, the individual can acquire a mind of his own, a mind not isolated from the "knowledge of things incarnate in the life about him." Thus the "intellectual variations of the individual" become agencies of social progress (Dewey, 1916, pp. 95-98).

As a method for "getting knowledge and making sure that it is knowledge and not mere opinion" (Dewey, 1916, p. 339), the experimental method provided Dewey yet another means for proving that a dualistic theory of knowledge is only dogma and that a theory of knowing derived from practice, from experience, could stimulate free interchange and enrich social continuity. Dewey's conviction that full and free interactions are necessary for social progress is undeniably bound to his belief in the values of scientific/ experimental thinking. Genuinely democratic Deweyan sociality demands that each individual be free to engage in trial and error thinking, in hypothesis testing, and observation. The scope of an individual's experiences will consequently dictate the breadth and fullness of his thinking, which in turn, directs his sociality. Sociality, experience and thinking are all interwoven. Experience, practice, and theory; research, theory and experience, are in a dynamic, multi-dimensional interrelation that is by definition, value laden, concerned with the particular, and real.

On the surface, John Dewey's insistence on the use of the scientific or experimental method to bring forward "cooperative intelligence" seems problematic for the feminist scholar. Is there value for us in such a tradition? Scientific methodology's emphasis on

"objectivity," and on deductive reasoning, present us with some ideological difficulties. For example, the importance placed on difference rather than sameness, on the visual rather than the tactile, and in the construction of generalizations rather than the concern for the particulars, appears to remove traditional scientific methodology from the purview of feminist inquiry (Hartsock, 1981; Stanley, 1983, p. 32-43). In Dewey's definition of scientific thinking, these issues are also ideologically problematic.

For Dewey, deductive reasoning was not entirely worthless or without merit. Deductive reasoning, according to Dewey, could be used to "challenge attention" to a problem. But to engage in such reasoning without "first making acquaintance with the particular facts," leads one to close off possibilities, making inquiry inflexible and miseducative. "Acquaintance with the particular facts that create a need for definition and generalization" motivates a kind of inductive inquiry that is educative, that results in knowing (Dewey, 1933, p. 187). Dewey's distrust of deductive thinking was much in line with feminism's. What accepted beliefs had passed for knowledge, in Dewey's view, were the products of an accumulation of an authority's past opinions and had rarely, if ever, been tested by inductive experimental methods, or more importantly, been tested and validated by experience. Most knowledge, much of what one believed to be true, if it had been tested, was done deductively, a method Dewey described as "the only alternative to the imposition of dogma as truth, a procedure which reduced mind to the formal act of acquiescing in truth" (Dewey, 1916, p. 294).

Dewey's view of generalizations and their uses has much in line with feminism's suspicions of the phenomenon. He admits that scientific thinking's generalities give such thinking a "technicality and aloofness" but it is not because they are removed from practice (Dewey, 1916, p.228). Traditional theoretical speculations, argues Dewey, impose abstract knowledge on practice, making past experiences the "master" of the mind (p. 225). Generalizations are the "counterpart" of such abstractions, clarifying and guiding experience, providing a "wide and free survey." Generalizations derived from scientific thinking could serve as good "social devices" precisely because they were the results of "a wide and free survey" and not of restrictive, dogmatic views (pp. 226-227). For Dewey, scientific generalization was the view of any man in a particular place and time.

Dewey's scientific method welcomed difference, or in his words, "unlikeness." "Unlikeness" provides comparison and contrast, allowing us to make inferences and to understand the varieties of experience. Sameness, according to Dewey, prevents us from inferring. He writes that when cases or objects of examination are duplicated, "we are no better off for purposes of inference than if we had permitted our single original fact to dictate a conclusion" (Dewey, 1933, p. 174). Dewey certainly would have been suspicious of scientific methodology whose only goal was repeated replication and its inference derived only from the statistically reliable.

Dogma and beliefs originating in conceptualizations of the ideal, were for Dewey, "crutches" which relieved us of the responsibility of thinking and directing our actions (Dewey, 1916, p. 339). The development of experimental methodology, or scientific thinking, gave

Dewey a means to achieve true knowledge, knowledge that in his view was not opinion or "meanings supplied because of habit, prejudice, [or] by the vogue of existing theories" (Dewey, 1933, p. 172). Because Dewey believed that observation (experience) and thought were interrelated, the process of thinking had to involve the discrimination of what was experienced from what had been inferred or what had been held as true. The experimental method gave him the vehicle to achieve the exclusion of those judgments and conclusions which experience/observation proved false or mistaken. In effect, Dewey rejects those purely empirical qualities of some scientific thinking.

Dewey viewed scientific thinking as a process which allows us to move from facts to ideas and back again from ideas to facts (Dewey, 1933, p. 166). Such a dynamic involves the flexibility to adjust and re-adjust to changes in observations and experience, caused by changes in the environment and by the passing of time. A scientific methodology which is "purely empirical" can not, according to Dewey, cope with the novel and, consequently, has a "tendency to lead to false beliefs" (Dewey, 1933, p. 192). Belief which has a "purely empirical" character is, for Dewey, the result of observation without an understanding of connections. Seeing a connection between the occurrence of thunder and lightning, for example, without understanding the why and how of the connection is a purely empirical observation to Dewey (p. 190). A methodology rooted in pure empiricism was characteristically post hoc to Dewey. It suggested causality that was solely temporal and invariable. Such fixity, argued Dewey, would effect mental passivity and the likely



adherence to unfounded dogmatism, the result of which would be the social crippling of individuals.

Change and the opportunity for growth are paramount in Deweyan thought, so his dismissal of purely empirical methodology makes sense. Change is a positive and progressive process in Deweyan thought. To deny or prevent or control the possibilities for change was, for Dewey, "fatal to progress" (Dewey, 1933, p. 194). Purely empirical methodology, according to Dewey, sets down the track for inquiry to follow, shutting out the novel or the variant. He writes:

Empirical inference follows the grooves and ruts that custom wears and has no track to follow when the groove disappears. (Dewey, 1933, p. 193)

Points of difference or unlikeness are therefore apt to be devalued or dismissed. Adhering to a such an empirically laden theory of knowledge will erase those opportunities for social change and human growth. Prevailing authority can never be challenged under such terms, another aspect Dewey found intolerable and which he punctuated in How We Think:

Certain men or classes of men come to be the accepted guardians and transmitters - instructors - of established doctrines. To question the beliefs is to question their authority; to accept the beliefs is evidence of loyalty to the powers that be, a proof of good citizenship. Passivity, docility, acquiescence, come to be primal intellectual virtues. Facts and events presenting novelty and variety are slighted or are sheared down till they fit into the Procrustean bed of habitual belief. Inquiry and doubt are silenced by citation of ancient laws or a multitude of miscellaneous and unsifted cases. This attitude of mind generates dislike of change, and the resulting aversion to novelty is fatal to progress. What will not fit into the established canons is outlawed. (1933, p. 194)

It seems, then, that Dewey viewed experimental methodology as a way of assuring intelligence as a social force. Speculations became

hypotheses in this view and thus subject to testing by others. The idea of reliability, that knowledge was subject to verification by others, was for Dewey, a way of assuring intellectual responsibility and verity, its value was not replication. Individuals engaged in knowing could question the authenticity of accepted beliefs and in that way, make all individuals accountable. Accepting blindly beliefs transmitted by custom was for Dewey, intellectual inertia but most importantly, certain to sustain an oppressive class hierarchy. Theories developed by those who were privileged were likely to be formed by *their* impressions of *their* worlds, by their impressions of the objects of their observations. Theory constructed in this way would be likely to fashion a view of reality based on a subject-object impression and not on practice. That objects of knowledge are separate from the knower is the centerpiece of the ideal of value-neutrality in scientific thinking. This idea that the observer remains unchanged during, through and after the investigation is an aspect of this type of scientific thinking which is unacceptable for feminists as well as Dewey.

All of this suggests that Dewey's ideal democratic state would develop without a social class hierarchy. After all, would not intelligence guided by scientific reasoning enable us to engineer an alliance without social class distinctions? Interestingly enough, Dewey did not believe that a one-class social system could be the consequence of such a democratic spirit. On the contrary, his belief that social classes would be the result of the strength of individual talents implies that there would be some "sorting out" of individuals by virtue of their abilities. Sounding much like the Platonic "Postulates of Specialized Natures" (Martin, 1985, p. 13), social classes in Dewey's

democracy would be the effect of the expression of individuals' talents. These talents, all of social use, would allow the social unit to be stable, but unlike those in Plato's Republic, would give rise to a dynamic society (Dewey, 1916, p. 88-91). As it is in the Platonic ideal state, Dewey's democracy requires that education, through the implementation of the scientific method, for the good of all, through the implementation of the experimental method, discover, nurture and direct individual aptitudes. Consequently, like Plato, education will be the vehicle through which Dewey's citizens will be stratified.

But why haven't democratic societies been able to release the individualism so necessary for Dewey's ideal? In Liberalism and Social Action Dewey addresses this issue. For Dewey, the inability to achieve the democratic ideal is a function of several cultural conditions in human history: the subject-object formula of knowledge which led to the perception of individualism as being fundamentally a-social; John Locke's philosophy proposed that governments are created to protect individual rights from the claims of the social unit; the view that natural "rights" (rights to property, etc) held sovereign the individual over the masses; the belief that government was the instrument to secure and extend these rights; and Adam Smith's assurance that laissez-faire liberalism would benefit both the individual and society. What has resulted from these and extensions of these conditions is that "the word 'social' has come to be regarded as applicable to that which is institutionally established and which exerts authority" and, thus, the individualistic has become a departure from the social (Dewey, 1946, p. 295). Consequently, that which departs from the social must be anti-social.

In a rather strong statement Dewey also blames the profit motive (which he views as industrialization's traditional value) for "perverting [the] whole idea of individualism to conform to the practices of a pecuniary culture. It has become the source and justification of inequalities and oppressions" (1930, pp. 15-18). He continues in the same text by adding that "anthropologically speaking, we are living in a money culture" (p. 9). Cultural admiration of prestige, competition, power and money have provided for individuals the conditions to develop the economic individualism Dewey regarded as undemocratic.

Dewey's solution to these ills is a democratic conception of education that widens "the area of shared concerns" and liberates the "greater diversity of personal capacities" (Dewey, 1916, p. 87). "What binds people together in cooperate human pursuits and results" (Dewey, 1916, p. 98) should be central to a democratic conception of education. Science and the scientific method of inquiry will allow for the development of intelligent thought which in turn, will bring about intelligent action. Guided by facts and not "custom, personal convenience and resentment" (Dewey, 1922, p. 319), scientific inquiry activates democratic education.

In order for scientific thinking to serve as agent for the kind of education which will bind people together in common pursuits, Dewey must base his democratic education on concepts and beliefs which don't set the individual's aims at odds with those of the group. How, for example, will individuals form social classes which are not determined economically? He must, in effect, view human nature as characteristically social and somehow stay true to his belief in the integrity of the individual. He must, in my mind, consider those

concepts and beliefs inherited from a natural rights philosophy and consider how such ideals as autonomy can be at odds with the interdependency he values. Like feminists, Dewey must somehow struggle with the same tensions between autonomy and interdependence. If feminism is to reappropriate Dewey's democratic theory in order to implement the fusion of the individual and the social, we must consider Dewey's views on autonomy and human nature.

I began this chapter with Jean Bethke Elshtain's proposition that feminism reflected those tensions between liberalism's individualistic ethic common in Western thought and what Elshtain refers to as the "republican ideals" of collective identity and shared purposes (1986, p. 56) and ended with the proposition that perhaps Dewey's pluralistic democracy could provide the means for resolving these tensions. The question that remains then, is whether feminism, in all its multiple expressions, can reclaim and utilize Deweyan democratic theory, a theory I suggest may contain those "republican ideals." First let's consider liberalism's dichotomization of the individual and society, a "romantic vision" (hooks, 1984, p. 24) wherein the "self" is in opposition to the "other" and where autonomy is valued over interdependence.

As a concept inherited from 18th century natural rights philosophies, liberalism is truly a "romantic vision." As an ideal developed for the affluent Western male citizenry, it posits autonomy as a highly valued goal. A fully realized life in such a view, is the consequence of a self-sufficient individualism characterized by a state

of moral preparedness in which alienation and independence become the crowning events of a life lived well.

The suggestion is that humans become fully realized only through progressive social disassociation. This would mean that an individual first born into dependence, must purposely break the bonds of sociality and ultimately live, if not physically, at least spiritually, morally, and intellectually as an isolated being. Self-development would somehow lead an individual from dependence to independence, a paradigm implying a gradual shift towards the objectification of others and towards reliance on difference as reference to Self. Further, the need for this isolated being, one void of relational reciprocity, to maintain self-fulfillment, suggests that this ideal autonomy will necessarily need to control, dominate and oppress others. What follows is the likelihood that the dehumanization of those who for one reason or many are not allowed the right of self-governance, will be objectified and their realities marginalized, or worse, negated. Control over the unautonomous will surely rely on power.

The concept of autonomy is an issue in this consideration because of the implications it has for interaction, experience, and growth. If only certain individuals can be self-governing, or have the right to be self-directive, then Dewey's sociality is impossible. A sociality dependent on the ability of individuals to engage in multiple and varied interactions requires that autonomy not be a right bestowed upon some but rather, a certainty for all individuals. What is really at issue for Dewey is an individual's freedom to engage in the action or

experience, or in Dewey's vernacular, to engage in those "interactions" which give rise to intelligence.

Dewey's sociality necessarily requires the freedom to be autonomous. It must have those "positive conditions, forming the prevailing state of culture," which release individuals from "oppressions and repressions" (Dewey, 1939, p. 7). In effect, it is a sociality which requires autonomy. In Deweyan sociality, it appears, individuals are free to self-direct, self-govern, or, simply put, choose for themselves. It is the freedom of self-determination which must characterize Dewey's "autonomy," not a right to act as one chooses. To have the opportunity for self-determination, to be able to ascertain what I want to do and to be able to act upon this, demands a vast and accessible experiential world to say the least.

All this implies, of course, that the ideal of autonomy deeply entrenched in Western liberal thought is problematic for feminists. Feminist critiques of individualism, argues Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, are specifically focused on individualism's emphasis on the autonomy of the individual. She writes that:

It is to individualism that we owe the model of autonomy, which so many feminist theorists are beginning to criticize as an inadequate image - much less goal - of human identity. (1991, p. 140)

But why? Why is the ideal of an autonomous, self-reliant, self-ruling, self-directing and unrestricted person so problematic in feminist discourse? One can suggest that women could in theory successfully navigate this life principle and be the autonomous ideal beings our liberal tradition highly regards. This is the same tradition, after all, which is rooted in the belief in the human ability to choose

desired ends and demands that the state refrain from imposing upon individuals universal definitions of such things as happiness, good, health and prosperity. Why should feminists, feminists like bell hooks, find such a notion objectionable? Does not the liberal conception of autonomy contain some of the principles necessary for women to claim full and free participation in their worlds? But perhaps this vision of autonomy is part exaggerated fiction and part dark and dirty fact.

What are these fictions and facts and what part do they play in Dewey's notions of the individual and sociality?

Feminist theorists have de-mystified the concept of autonomy in a variety of ways. The concept of autonomy has been linked to the belief in the existence of a human nature. For feminists, this is an arbitrary assumption fashioned from male models of thought, especially those within the Greek, German idealistic and liberal philosophical traditions, which allow women to realize their personhood only as "conceptual men" (Snitow, 1990, p. 26). Such theories of human nature ascribe ideals of capacities and attributes which do not include women's experiences. As Lorraine Code comments:

Feminists have been rightly concerned to contest the alleged 'naturalness' of many capacities and characteristics. There is no doubt that appeals to 'human nature'...derive as much from political interests as from straight forward observation and description. Received theories of human nature are commonly constructs of a privileged intellectual elite and consistently derived from its own experiences. (1991, p. 43)



The very idea that humans have a nature, fixed in a masculine image and unalterable, suggests several things which are problematic for feminists, feminist educators and John Dewey.

Feminist critiques of such theories of human nature focus on the value of reason and its determination of social role occupancy. Those human nature theories which exclude women and slaves from the specific human ability to reason are part of an Aristotelian legacy which has many implications for women in particular and humanity in general. Woman's inability to reason necessarily limits her to certain social roles, roles which are within the functional social castes, roles which for her, are sex-specific. Such occupancy, argue feminists, socialize women and men differently, re-enforcing sex-roles and oppressive social orders (Grimshaw, 1986; Tong, 1989). In addition, such assignment by human type creates the kind of world where only certain human potentialities will be expressed, ignoring other human talents unseen or inhibited. For Dewey, who valued uniqueness and individuality, such a conception was unacceptable.

This idea of an inevitability of our 'natures,' coupled with the assertion that the ideals of human potentiality are masculine, has other implications. For the feminist scholar it suggests that social roles will be determined by capacities expressed in relation to capacities valued. Traits highly regarded will become the reference point for all human expressions. Those falling short of the mark will be valued less, or minimally, classified as adjunct. A conception of a fixed human nature where the masculine is the referential criterion is the same as saying that sex is the determinant factor in human nature. If the most

valued ways of being are masculine, self/mind as an isolated, self-sufficient, inorganic entity, then what are the possibilities for women?

If reason is an inherent human trait but is either absent in women or if women are kept out of those roles in which reason is exercised, then women will always be less worthy. Given that reason is the most highly valued human trait and given that women perform roles outside the realm of reason, women can not possibly be highly regarded. Women are functional in this construction. We labor at those tasks necessary for human survival; we are not part of what is excellent or genuinely good. Our functional roles are devalued, so we, too, are less than the best, less than good. We are inferior to the superior rational man. We are mechanical and not intellectual.

Such a conception of human nature was rejected by Dewey on similar grounds. In Democracy and Education Dewey takes this conception to task specifically because it separates humanity into a "laboring" class and a "leisure" class, a distinction which segregated educational values as well. The leisure class received a cultural education while the laborers learned what was utilitarian. This distinction, he argued, is not the result of something absolute or intrinsic. Rather, it is a function of historical and social forces. Dewey attacked the notion that rationality was a natural and complete power in human beings primarily on the grounds that such a conception dismissed or disregarded "the influence of habit, instinct, and emotions, as operative factors in life" (Dewey, 1916, p. 299). In a discussion about moral philosophies which denied the social quality of reason, Dewey expresses his disagreement with the idea that logic or reason can be complete because it is natural when he writes that "bare

logic [can't] spin new subject matter out of itself" (1916, p. 299). In his view, reason is "just the ability to bring the subject matter of prior experience to bear to perceive the significance of the subject matter of a new experience" (p. 343). Reason is a potential, an ability, a capacity for Dewey. It is neither fixed nor complete.

The division of people into such classes, argued Dewey, was part of the Aristotelian legacy which endowed only the few with the ability to reason, leaving the masses (in which he includes women, slaves and artisans) to be "the means for others". As "means" women, slaves and artisans are believed to have "enough intelligence to exercise a certain discretion in the execution of the tasks committed to them". For Dewey, the idea that some are born to just live and that others are born to live worthily was unacceptable (Dewey, 1916, p. 252).

Given his naturalistic convictions, Dewey also had to reject the idea that mind/self transcended the organic. This rejection and his belief that mind emerges when the body is involved in interdependent experiences, allows for the possibility that roles need not be determined by a preordained set of criteria, but rather, that they develop through experiences, relationships, and associations. He makes this clear in Human Nature and Conduct when he rejects the "emphasis on states of consciousness and an inner private life" because it negates and is "at the expense of acts [all of which] have public meaning and exact social relationships" (p.86). If this is the case, then mind develops through action and not from a contrived spiritual providence, an indication that women's roles in Dewey's scheme may not be limited by virtue of their sex. For if mind must emerge from action and not from predetermination, then anyone who

is experiencing, acting and engaging can develop mind and consequently, take part in chosen social roles.

The availability of choice is a key element here. Will Dewey's women have free choice? Will they be genuinely autonomous?

Freedom to choose among alternatives, associations and interactions is central to Dewey's entire philosophy. If individuals, in order to develop those attributes of individuality and sociality so important to Dewey, need the "full and free" interplay with multiple forms of association ( Dewey, 1916, p. 83), how can choice be arbitrarily limited? Dewey would consider such limitations "coercion" played out in economic, psychological and moral policies. He comments that the "very fact of exclusion from participation is a subtle form of suppression" (Ratner, 1939, p. 401). Such suppression, it would follow, would not allow for the full development of the individual and the social unit. Arbitrary schemes of social action which suppress the range of individuals' associations seem contradictory to Deweyan goals.

Since Dewey's rejection of the view of human nature as a given and constant is the result of his conviction that the value of individuals can not be assessed by "some prior principle" such as "family and birth or race and color or position of material wealth" or by "the position and rank a person occupies in the existing social scheme" (Ratner, 1939, p. 402), we can assume that all social roles would be open to women. Though he neglects to include sex as a "prior principle," Dewey believed so strongly in the potential of each human being, and stated very clearly that oppressive social arrangements were the results of actions taken by the autocratic and authoritarian few who

believed that the intelligence necessary for choice was confined to a pre-ordained group, Dewey must include sex as a "prior principle," even if it goes unstated. If Dewey was true to his own philosophy, he could not ignore the reality of women's lives and experiences, and as a supporter of suffrage, there is evidence to suggest that he was certainly cognizant of at least one aspect of women's subordinate social position (Dewey, 1911).

"The right to control the conduct of others" by "the preordained few" was for Dewey, a rejection of the true meaning of freedom and the right to equality (Ratner, 1939, p. 402), concepts which are inextricably tied to his conceptions of the individual and sociality.

In Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Cooperation in Politics, Economy and Society Carol Gould sets out to reconstruct the foundations of democracy arguing that liberty and social cooperation are compatible. As the basis for her argument to "extend" democracy, Gould rethinks the concepts of equality and freedom in a way almost indistinguishable from Dewey's conceptualizations of each.

According to Gould, and in line with feminist thinking, the traditional liberal theory of freedom ignores the fact that realizing freedom requires the "enabling conditions of action," (Gould, 1988, p. 38) setting up free choice as an abstraction. It is this abstract quality of such an essentialist view of freedom which Gould suggests promotes economic, social, political and psychological domination in societies (1988, pp. 38-41). Freedom, suggests Gould, should be interpreted as "the activity of self-development" which demands "the availability of social and material conditions necessary for the

achievement of purposes or plans" (1988, p. 32-33), conditions which must include self-governance.

Gould's view of freedom as self-development is a temporal process with a "biographical or historical dimension" (1988, p. 41). The capacity for freedom to be realized thus involves the ability to choose among alternatives throughout the course of a life's purposeful actions. There's intentionality in action, an end, an objective requiring means, and clearly, the suggestion that the process has a biography and a history indicates that Gould's individual is as unique and as molded by interaction as is Dewey's.

Gould also stipulates that the process of self-development is earnestly engaged only when choice is available in practice and does not exist solely in the abstract. As process, it must be progressive and because it forms "new capacities" and elaborates and enriches existing ones (1988, p. 47), it demands a wide range of real choices. Choices in the abstract can not 'free' individuals to develop fully.

But doesn't such self-development lead to the detached, autonomous and egotistic individualism that Gould sets out to reconstruct? It is Gould's contention that self-development proceeds through participation in group projects because cooperative activity becomes the means through which an individual can carry out aims. Social or shared purposes allow for self-development but notes Gould, is largely dependent on the group's members to recognize the individual's freedom. This "reciprocity in freedom" requires that members consciously support others' self-development. Such social relations she submits, will extend and enrich "the range of possible human actions, intentions, skills and practices" (1988, p. 50).

The need for cooperation and support of others for self-development is a fundamental part of the substance of Gould's "relation of reciprocity." This social relation, where

each agent acts with respect to the other on the basis of shared understanding, and a free agreement, to the effect that the actions of one with respect to the other are equivalent to the actions of the other with respect to the first (Gould, 1988, p. 75),

becomes the cornerstone for her views on equality and the extended democracy she envisions, both concepts undeniably Deweyan.

Equality as Gould defines it, stems from a belief that distinctions among individuals can't be made with regard to their potential for self-development (1988, p.61). Equal rights means free choice for all at all levels of social and economic life. Access to choices in social and economic situations is what determines equality, a view suggesting that equality is not a value but rather, a right. As a right to social choice, then, equality can only be seen as a political and not metaphysical doctrine.

This is precisely the concept of equality proposed by Dewey:

All individuals are entitled to equality of treatment by law and its administration. Each one is effected equally in quality if not quantity by the institutions under which he lives and has an equal right to express his judgment, although the weight of his judgment may not be equal in amount when it enters into the pooled result to that of others. In short, each one is equally an individual and entitled to equal opportunity of his own capacities, be they large or small in range. Moreover, each has needs of his own, as significant to him as those of others are to them....[but] each individual has something to contribute. (Ratner, 1939, p. 403)

Dewey continues by adding that "each individual shall have the chance and opportunity to contribute whatever he is capable of contributing" (p. 403), and in his Ethics of Democracy states that "in

every individual there lives an infinite and universal possibility; that of being king and priest" (p. 25). But what is peculiar to Dewey's concept of equality is not so much that it requires the freedom to choose among alternatives but that choice frees intelligence which is necessary to direct action. It follows then that if choices are limited, individuals will not be free to develop or that they will develop unequally. The implications for those whose choices are restricted seem obvious.

In both a feminist and Deweyan scheme, sociality and individuality have common aims. This integration is supported in both cases by a reconceptualization of freedom and equality and both suggest that the natures of the group and of the individual are somehow synchronized. This synchronization is what can prove to be of educative value for feminist educational theorists. But what models are given for such a social unit, for such a group? What are their ideals? Both feminist and Deweyan concepts of group stress solidarity, connectedness, common will and the integrity of the individual, but what sets them apart is their parentage.

Dewey's fraternity is part of the triumvirate "symbols of the highest ethical ideal" (1888, p. 23); liberty and equality are the other thirds. His concept of fraternity, rich in the ideals of the French Enlightenment and Jeffersonian democracy, contained the ideals of group association for a common purpose, interest or pleasure. But unlike the tradition of fraternity that synthesized Kantian liberalism and the 18th century notion of social contract, individuals in Dewey's fraternal unions would not hold inalienable rights. As previously



discussed, such a group would not be entitled to suppress individuals or other groups.

Would a sororial conceptualization of group have similar attributes? Certainly there is an element of common interests and purposes in sorority and ideals parallel to those of a Deweyan community. A "community of interests, shared beliefs, and goals around which to unite," "appreciation for diversity" (hooks, 1991, p.40) and shared pleasures are all aspects of the group dynamic feminists call "sisterhood." But what makes one uneasy about both of these is, as previously stated, their parentage, their sex-specific connotation, and in the case of sorority, the possibility that its model was fraternity.

#### **2.4 Choosing Models of Sociality**

What model for the social group can better equip Gould's and Dewey's individual for a life of full and free self-development? What model can provide such an individual with educative relations? The family? Friendship?

I choose these two models, friendship and family, because each in its own way requires associational and interactional relationships, consequently inviting our consideration. But choosing family and friendship as models is deliberate in yet another way. It is a choice decided by what I perceive to be Deweyan sociality's educative value. Deweyan sociality enables individuals to be engaged in a life of full and free self-development, a course which is educative in the Deweyan sense. It is educative because the experiences promote growth in

general, and create conditions for further personal growth (Dewey, 1938, p. 36). This criterion directs my selection of models.

Given this, the models to be considered within Deweyan and feminist frameworks must provide the means for positive individual growth. Immediately I note that the family as model becomes problematic within our feminist frameworks. As Adrienne Rich writes, the individual heterosexual family unit is "at the core of patriarchy" and perpetuates many misogynies. The division of labor by gender, the emotional, physical and material possessiveness of husband over wife, the economic dependency of women on men, the subordination of wife to husband and the "imprinting and continuation of heterosexual roles" are all part of this experience (Rich, 1976, p. 61). Can genuine self-development be gained through such an arrangement? Is there, within such a family unit, the possibility of opportunities for the full and free interactions necessary for personal growth? Is the supremacy of the husband over wife and child, for example, a relationship whose interactions will be growth producing? educative or miseducative? Feminist viewpoints are certainly those which assert that the traditional heterosexual family unit abounds in the problematic and miseducative.

The typical models for social grouping outside the feminist tradition consider family, nation and neighborhood as appropriate paradigms and when feminists adopt or adapt any of these, criticism is sharp. Lorraine Code and Iris Marion Young both dismiss Sara Ruddick's maternal thinking as a model for sociality and both agree that positioning the family as exemplary of positive sociality a la

Elshtain fails to realize the socio-cultural and economic implications of such a theory (Code, 1991; Young, 1990).

Our particular discussion of feminist sociality models will not include the example of family precisely because of what I perceive to be the weight of these implications. I agree with bell hooks when she says that "feminist effort insists on the eradication of exploitation and oppression in the family context and in all other intimate relationships" (1989, p.22). The fact that domination and oppression exist in family relationships is, thus, fundamentally problematic. Though certain aspects of family life, such as the ethics of care, are not in contradiction to feminist ethos, they are part of a socio-cultural ethic that is the impetus for feminist revolution. Again, it is bell hooks who notes:

Thinking speculatively about early human social arrangement, about women and men struggling to survive in small communities, it is likely that the parent-child relationship with its very real imposed survival structure of dependency, of strong and weak, of powerful and powerless, was a site for the construction of a paradigm of domination. (1989, p. 20)

The roots of patriarchal domination and oppression run too deep in the construction of the family. The family, I submit, in all of its multiple forms, has too many skeletons in its patriarchal closet to be of worthwhile use in our investigation.

Is friendship, then, a model better suited for our feminist frameworks?

Janice Raymond writes in A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection, her book on female friendship, that female friendship is the "foundation for and consequence of feminism" (1986, p.13) and "part of the history of feminist discernment" (p. 20).

Inspired and motivated by women's search for meaning, female friendship seems to be a means through which women have attained an understanding of their circumstances and their possibilities. A model of female friendship, then, is less problematic for our feminist consideration.

But what does Dewey have to say about friendship? Can our consideration include friendship in a Deweyan framework?

Dewey wrote enough about the family to validate our choice of family as model but he wrote almost nothing about friendship. He writes about "amiability" as a moral trait having an obvious connection with social relationships (Dewey, 1916, p. 357), and uses friendship as a thematic component when discussing the ideal and the real (Dewey, 1957, p. 118). What we are able to glean from Dewey's rare and cursory mention of friendship is that individuals engaged in a friendship have a mutual understanding of each other and require the means for effective communication. Distance, notes Dewey, is "an obstacle, a source of trouble for friends" because it separates them, preventing intercourse and making contact and mutual understanding difficult (Dewey, 1957, p. 119).

The choice of models, it appears, seems different for each framework. What seems appropriate for feminism isn't for Dewey and visa versa. Can this consideration examine sociality in a Deweyan framework using the model of family and then engage in an examination of feminist sociality through a different model? I submit that this is a valid condition for practical reasons--Dewey wrote little about friendship and feminisms find the family too problematic--but

more importantly, because our requirement that educative relations be possible can be met in each case.

## **2.5 Family as a Model of Sociality**

"Society," asserted Dewey, is "one word, but many things" existing in many forms, not all of which are desirable (Dewey, 1916, p. 81). Those societies or groups, in which the members are aware of connections between each other and are free to use the knowledge gained from these connections to direct purposeful behavior, are valuable. They are worthy and useful because the consequences of such associated behavior will yield positive change, change in the form of individual and collective growth. Such consequences are not products of simply physical or "organic" association. Instead, they are the results of effective communication between members (Dewey, 1929, pp. 166-167).

"Of all of our affairs," notes Dewey, "communication is the most wonderful" (1925, p. 166). It is the sharing of meanings between members which leads to commonly understood meanings which, in turn, leads to what Dewey suggests is "metaphorically" a "general will and social consciousness" (1927, p. 153). Joint activity and association, whether physically immediate or distant, or whether temporally dissimilar, necessitates communication in order for the group or community to reach desired ends. Change is possible only through communication. Any action or event is "subject to reconsideration and revision" (Dewey, 1929, p. 166) as a result of participation in the exchange of meanings between individuals within the group.

Sharing and communication are critical for the Deweyan construction of sociality because it is through these that the consequences of action can be understood, and consequently, lead to future intelligent action. For Dewey, understanding how our actions and the consequences of our associations affect others is vital for sociality. We affect those with whom we are in immediate association and we affect those outside of that face-to-face. Political boundaries, he notes, are the result of a group's or individual's inability to recognize and understand that the consequences of their associations have implications for others elsewhere. It is erroneous to believe that the consequences of association are confined or that they don't "expand beyond those directly engaged in producing them" ( Dewey, 1927, p. 27). Association, it appears, is not a private matter in the Deweyan framework.

Dewey made it clear that social cohesiveness could only be brought about through communication. For Dewey, there was an important relationship between intelligence, community and communication. Intelligence is the method through which we can achieve community but it requires the sharing of thoughts, needs, desires and concerns through language (Dewey, 1927). As he writes in the introductory pages of Democracy and Education:

There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common. (1916, p. 4)

Thus, being aware of connections between ourselves and others, and understanding how the consequences of actions affect others is a

necessary part of Dewey's conceptualization of sociality. All this suggests, of course, that Dewey's individual is engaged in associations which will require that he be aware of the direct and indirect effects of action, an awareness which is the result of communicating with others. Though we are "not born members of a community," writes Dewey, to learn to be human, is to learn to be social (1927, p. 154). The implication here is that Dewey's sociality requires that individuals responsibly establish an "interchange of thought and growing unity of sympathetic feeling" (Dewey, 1976, p. 10). But one can also wonder what this means for the integrity of the individual. Will Dewey's individual "lose" his self as a consequence? On the contrary, writes Dewey. Learning to be social, learning to be human is to "develop through the give-and-take of communication an effective sense of being an individually distinct member of a community" (1927, p. 154). Individuality is both advanced and preserved by sociality.

This is an important element in Dewey's conceptualization of sociality. Individuality, uniqueness, personality expressed is a necessary component for his construction of sociality. As "intensely distinctive beings" (Dewey, 1976, p. 22) we present ourselves through associations. In full and free interactions between individuals, learning results from the 'give-and-take' of shared communication, and we begin to understand difference and its meaning, sameness and its meaning. Since Dewey believes that it is through sharing in multiple associations that we effectively realize our individuality, group membership can not possibly erase individual distinctions nor blur defined profiles. Further, by underscoring individuality's temporal and

geographic characteristics, Dewey does not make individuals equivocal.

Dewey's plan for education was founded on the notion that schooling should enable us to be competent members of our social group. Using the model of the "ideal home" (1976, p. 23) for a curricular guide, Dewey maintained that incorporating those aspects of family life through which members learn cooperation, respect and reciprocity, would make the school one with society and consequently, its pupils competent human beings. The ideal of family life he envisioned was characteristic of pre-industrial rural life, when the home was the center for all activities. Due to the realities of necessity, responsibility, obligation and all other aspects of communal life were consciously sustained, serving to instill in individuals the moral, emotional and intellectual attributes needed for community. Family members became cognizant of the advantages of combined and associated action and grew to understand the value of shared purposes. Just participating in the everyday chores and work of the family enables Dewey's individual to respect the ideas and rights of others (Dewey, 1976, pp. 23-24).

Dewey makes it clear that this "ideal home" is simply that, an ideal, and that from this he takes what is useful. What is useful for his model for sociality is the idea that the "ideal home" is imbued with understanding and trust. "Well-ordered" family life is, according to Dewey, a cooperative activity in which all members take part and where there is mutual confidence. In such a family, "It is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the group" (Dewey, 1938, p. 54). This suggests that effective



social groups must have these characteristics and, given his vision for group, this seems reasonable. What the idea of the "ideal home" as model for sociality also suggests, however, is that sociality demands some sort of authority. After all, we can suspect that given its prototype, Dewey's "ideal home" has an authority hierarchy where parents rule the roost. Though Dewey doesn't characterize the "ideal home" as the traditional heterosexual-two-parents-some-kids hierarchy, we can assume that he envisioned a home where someone older, more authoritative, took command of the group. "The parent" in the ideal home "is intelligent enough to recognize what is best for the child, and supply what is needed" (Dewey, 1976, p. 23), and "is not a manifestation of merely personal will; the parent or teacher exercises [authority] as the representative and agent of the interests of the group as a whole" (Dewey, 1938, p. 54). Clearly, then, the ideal home has an authority providing guidance and opportunity for growth, and contains a power structure in many respects.

But this makes sense in Dewey's concept of sociality. Authority, in Deweyan terms, guides and supports individual freedoms, consequently stabilizing the social unit (Ratner, 1939, pp. 343-344). Such authority is not rooted in oppression and disabling control but rather in the desire for harmony, change and continued growth within the group. Consequently, individual group members must see the authority figure not as a concentrated self-serving power but as a means of support for shared group ends. One suspects, however, that the authority--the parent--must have some pre-determined goals given that they are wise and experienced. Though Dewey allows such goal-setting because it has the good of the group in mind, one can't help

but wonder how the authority attained this privileged position and how they keep from abusing their positional power. Dewey asserts that it is intelligence which breeds good authority and prevents such abuse. He did acknowledge that in reality this occurs rarely, as evidenced by the multiple societal oppressions (Ratner, 1939, pp. 400-404) but fails to make note of the possibilities for abusive authority in real families. But again, he was working with an ideal, an ideal sculpted from a tradition that saw nothing wrong with a patriarchal scheme.

## **2.6 Feminist Models of Community**

Feminist models for community vary across theorists. Marilyn Friedman and Iris Marion Young suggest that modern urban life can offer insights into human sociality and serve as a "normative ideal" for community life (Friedman, 1989; Young, 1990). Janice Raymond and Lorraine Code propose friendship as the prototype for social communion and in Raymond's view, female friendship as model *sans pareil*.

Let's consider each idea--friendship and urban life--and examine how each reflects or clashes with Dewey's social ideal.

Dewey would concur with Iris Marion Young's thesis that Western traditional philosophical ideals of community fail "to offer an appropriate alternative vision" for a democratic program. Young's rejection, much like Dewey's, focuses on the inability of traditional social ideals to acknowledge social differences across groups and to recognize the difference resulting from "temporal and spatial distancing." According to Young, group members in traditional models

are fused in such a way that exclusion of others unlike them is likely. She takes issue mainly with the idea that individuals will lose identity by virtue of their membership and further, that affirming difference is socially empowering (Young, 1990, pp. 226-227).

Young states her proposition clearly. She proposes "an ideal of city life as a vision of social relations affirming group difference" (1990, p. 227), affirmation without exclusion. Social differentiation without exclusion is the virtue of city life which Young finds most appealing primarily because though groups may overlap and intermingle they do not become homogeneous. City groups, she suggests, have "borders [which] are open and undecidable" (p. 239), the implication being that such groups allow not only for inclusion but for the expression of individuality. This denial of uniqueness in and across members of traditional ideals of society is what irritates Young the most. She agrees with Foucault that the application of the ideals of community of Western thought would lead to "a social transparency" (Foucault, 1980), where understanding of self and others is the same no matter the locus of perception. Such blurring of individuality "seeks to collapse the temporal difference inherent in language and experience into a totality that can be comprehended in one view", thus denying the existence of difference between and across members (Young, 1990, p. 231).

The notion of transparency or in this case, "opaqueness" is taken up by Lorraine Code as well. Code considers the idea valid but makes the case that it is the result of theories which present the individual and the group in opposition. The isolation that results allows for only a "bare recognition of difference-in-isolation, which may be tolerated,

but requires neither understanding nor care" (Code, 1991, p. 80). Her indictment of the traditional ideals of community rests on their "autonomy obsession" (p. 73), a preoccupation which has created social marginalization, exclusion and oppression (p. 72).

Perhaps Young's urban ideal contains much of the autonomy obsession as well. When Young presents difference as erotic, one wonders whether such derived pleasure could be mutual. She writes that spending a Sunday afternoon in strolling through Chinatown with all its exotic sights, sounds and smells is pleasurable because "one is drawn out of oneself to understand that there are other meanings, practices, and perspectives on the city, and that one could learn or experience something more different by interacting with them" (Young, 1990, p. 239). The pleasure seems one-sided and voyeuristic, however. Her affirmation of difference seems a bit self-serving. One learns from seeing difference in Young's city, but does one exchange the favor? Is Young's Sunday stroll through Chinatown self-indulgent tourism at its worst? Dewey would likely think so. Without reciprocity, without interdependence and interaction, an ideal of community maintains autonomy paramount, something antithetical to the Deweyan ideal.

Young also wrestles with the idea that such ideals of community serve to objectify. In affirming others she argues, we objectify them. The objectification does not underscore and celebrate difference but serves to assimilate individuals. The regard of others is always objectifying to Young, an occurrence she insists is absent from her ideal city life.

Young begins her defense of the ideal urban life by appealing to its reality and inevitability. She is convinced that "urbanity is the horizon of the modern, not to mention postmodern, condition" (Young, 1990, p. 237) and, as such, the appeals to anti-urban ideals of community will be unrealizable. It would seem, then, she would dismiss Dewey's proposal to adopt the virtues of pre-industrial rural life into post-industrial America.

Are Young's ideal city's virtues so different from Dewey's democratic vision?

On several points the two seem in congruence. Each populates the ideal community with members who have some commonalities, whether they be problems or interests, and each preserves the uniqueness of the individual. Understanding others is for both Young and Dewey not a denial of uniqueness but rather, a point of relation, of sharing and being understood sympathetically. Each values the individual's on-going development of self when they acknowledge and focus on the impact of time and experience on individual lives. Both Young and Dewey, because of their insistence on the temporal nature of the individual, imply that fully understanding others is impossible. But here is where the similarities end.

Young's ideal city would be problematic for Dewey because despite the fact that groups have "some common problems and common interests" in this city, "they don't create a community of shared final ends, of mutual identification, and reciprocity" (Young, 1990, p. 238), Dewey's conviction that the sharing of common purposes is central to community life certainly goes against this aspect of Young's vision.

But the variety of experiences and the "eroticism" of difference inherent in Young's urban ideal is somewhat sympathetic with Dewey's need for fuller and freer associations. There, "people witness and appreciate cultural expressions that they do not share and do not fully understand" (Young, 1990, p. 241), but individual differences remain unassimilated. Young's urban ideal is much the stewpot but not quite the idyllic melting pot Dewey would prefer.

Unlike Young's idealization of city life, Lorraine Code's vision of friendship as model for sociality embodies a "balance between separateness and appropriate interdependence" (Code, 1991, p.95) and relational reciprocity. Codes goes about achieving such a balance by reconstructing Aristotle's view of friendship so that it can be "less culture-bound, less androcentric and misogynist" (p. 98), a criticism she levels at theories which ideal maternal thinking and the attributes of family.

What Code salvages from Aristotle's notion of friendship would please John Dewey very much. First and foremost, though not unique to our species, friendship is a human capacity. Our need to be involved in association with others, to be social, becomes the foundation for our ability to form bonds of friendship. Friendship demands intelligence, or in Aristotelian language, the capacity for reason. Friendship involves thinking not only because of the cognition involved in choosing friends but because friendships bring to individuals involved and varied claims:

The life of a person enmeshed in these affectionate and dutiful demands will be more complex and ambiguous than the life of a rule utilitarian, who can follow a single moral line. (Code, 1991, pp. 103-104)

The cognitive value of friendship is clear: a relationship of reciprocity, it enables each individual to grow from the association. Even its continuation requires knowledge. Friends are participating in a relational process that demands continued mutual understanding. By continuing to know each other, friends present each other with the opportunities for growth, chances to experience and understand new ideas, and to engage in new associations. This vision of friendship provides us with the conditions necessary for the fuller and freer interactions that Dewey so strongly demands. In this light, friendship keeps the individual unique while still integrating the individual with others. Dewey would look favorably on such a vision.

All of these models for socialities construct some vision of what and how our lives should be. They are "visions" because they are "ideals." Each has been fashioned as a mold for sociality, whether derived from an ancient ideal or reconstructed from an ideal. But there is an inherent tension in vision, a tension that reflects our need for the tangible.

Janice Raymond asserts that this tension is not a contradictory phenomenon, that it is not the dualistic demand for either practice or theory, abstract or concrete, ideal or real. Rather, she believes, vision is undivided; it is near-sightedness and far-sightedness. It is the ability to live in the world as it is and imagining how it could be. The "essential tension" in feminism, notes Raymond, is precisely that: seeking to understand how we live in a world constructed by and for men while creating a world as women imagine it could be (Raymond, 1991, p. 342). It is fitting that our final model for sociality is one based on real experience, one in which practice informs thinking.

Throughout the previous pages the metaphors of fact and fiction, romance and verity, and now vision and reality, have served as a stage for our discussion of sociality and the individual. These scripted symbols have served as a platform for our discussion, a place where models have metaphorically "come to life." But our final model for sociality requires no such platform, no such drama, because it is an established, long-standing, confirmed, durable and habituated reality. Sisterhood and female friendship, a real and verifiable experience, original and exemplary, will serve here as player and not as constructed tale.

"Chosen, negotiated, achieved, not simply given" connections between women (Martin, B., 1988, p. 96) have taken many forms throughout time and space. Informal quilting groups, settlement houses, women's clubs, and consciousness raising groups all exemplify sisterhood. Though the purposes and objectives of each group varied, it appears that the running thread throughout each of these groups, and many others where women gathered in the absence of men, was the desire to, and importance of, making connections with those with whom experiences and meanings were shared. Within these sororities, many of the constraints and obstacles to self-expression, learning, and female relatedness which existed in women's lives were erased. Women came together not just for individual self-renewal or affirmation. Often, women's clubs arose out of an idea of "female fellowship" which would "work to elevate the moral character of society" or, as in the case of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, "organize virtuous womanhood so as to transform the masculine world, to have feminine traits counterbalance men's brutal and animal



qualities." Their founder, Frances Willard, made it clear that the WCTU was not out to have women compete with men, but to reform them (Rothman, 1978, p. 64-67).

Perhaps most importantly, many women's clubs, unions and organizations sought to provide the opportunities for women to form and maintain female friendships where a "sense of freedom" prevailed and where religious and political differences would not dissolve common interests. Cultivating a "spirit of unity" among members was central to these unions (Rothman, 1978, p. 64-66). The General Federation of Women's Clubs founded in 1892 and Sorosis, in 1868, served all of these purposes but their existence alone was evidence of the value of female friendship in a reality hostile to such bonds.

What distinguishes female friendship bonds from those of brotherhood? from those between women and men? What is it about female friendship that makes it such a good example of effective sociality in practice?

These questions suggest the possibility that the answers may lie within the philosophical confines of essentialism or determinism, a possibility which has implications for our thesis. If we proceed from the position that the bonds of female friendship are consequences of an essential female nature, we will be unable to defend female friendship as an effective model for human sociality on multiple grounds. An essentialist posture in this case would dismiss the possibility that female friendship attributes could (and should) be part of all human associations, regardless of the sex of the participants. This same posture would prevent us from maintaining the integrity of the individual and would, I submit, engender the human transparency

which Iris Marion Young fears. And if our point of philosophical departure demands an essential nature that is sex specific, then communion with the other sex can never be fulfilling, productive and purposeful.

Lorraine Code's criticism of such an essentialist position addresses these very concerns. She charges the essentialist theorist with denying the "pitfalls of female essentialism" which entrust women with stereotypically female traits, serving only to relegate and confine women to roles which perpetuate their inferior social status (Code, 1991, p. 54). Such confinement doesn't fit comfortably within a feminist framework such as ours. That women, all women, could have "an essence, an inherent, natural, eternal nature" (p. 17) which was responsible for the vitality of their friendships, is a conviction we must disregard, if not solely on the basis of the evidence that points to the occurrence of difference among women, then on the possibility that essentialist dogma may invite oppression.

What we are left with is the position that feminine attributes, and in this specific case, those attributes necessary for genuine friendship, are socio-cultural constructions. This is the philosophical disposition which will ground our discussion of female friendship as living model of sociality. A biologically determined posture would disqualify such friendship as model simply because men would necessarily be ineligible. Feminism must, in my view, be rooted in reality, and reality comes in two sexes.

It is from a socio-cultural constructivist perspective that Janice Raymond develops her thesis on female friendship. In A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection, Raymond states

simply that women don't have a "biological edge on the more humane qualities of human existence" (p. 21). For Raymond, it is the conditions and realities of women's lives which create the "social trust" called female friendship. The attraction of women for women is for Raymond "neither natural nor ontological" but the manifestation of a desire to recognize relatedness in patriarchal realities. The "hetero-reality" of women's lives, contends Raymond, places women in social, political and economic associations which are "ordained" by men and are only woman-to-man associations (pp. 5-8). Relatedness and freedom to choose relations are missing for women in such a scheme and thus the need for female friendship. Female friendship, then, emerges from "women's search for meaning" about herself and others like herself (p. 20).

Female friendship's starting point is for Raymond the "companionship of Self," the experience of knowing oneself as a unique individual. It is a "Self" which Raymond defines as an "authentic" self which women are "recreating." It is not a self which is "grafted" onto women by patriarchy (Raymond, 1987, p. 4). Given that Raymond believes in a socio-cultural construction of woman, we can take her use of the term "Self" not to be an essential self but rather, an identity which women construct individually and which isn't prescribed by patriarchal forces. For Raymond to say that the female Self is "authentic" and constantly being recreated by woman, she infers not that an essential self is present, but that a self constructed by and for woman is possible.

It is the "affinity a woman has with her vital Self" that enables her to care about others like herself (Raymond, 1987, p. 5-6). This

may hint at a kind of self-knowledge and appreciation that is self-serving and individualistic but I don't think that Raymond is suggesting this at all. On the contrary, the assertion is that through a real knowledge of Self, a meaningful knowledge, one is able to reason and consider the Self in relation to others. The real self, discovered through thinking, is uniquely fundamental and original, yet consonant with others, and not obsessively self-involved (1987, p. 222). Further, given Raymond's socio-cultural constructivist position, we can conclude that knowing the Self is not solely the province of women, further solidifying the case made for female friendship as the model of genuine sociality.

To engage in positive relatedness or association, then, one must know oneself. But given the patriarchal realities women have experienced, how have women been able to accomplish this if at all? Certainly women have encountered socio-culturally constructed obstacles which prevent them from genuine Self-awareness. How have women scaled these barriers? Clearly, Raymond contends, women found others like them and engaged in a shared process of Self-discovery.

Raymond's belief that women's attraction for other women rests on this very point. It is a matter of Self-survival to engage in freely chosen association with those who share your concerns, affinities, etc. But this relationship is not one-directional. Raymond's female friendships are dialectical. There's an integration, a healthy dynamic between Self and Others, between individual and group. As a "social trust," these friendships involve "reciprocal assurances based on honor, loyalty and affection" (Raymond, 1987, p. 9), a trust which, I

assert, is extremely rare between women and men given our well-practiced patriarchal ethos. That female friendships have managed to get beyond socio-cultural barriers, or what Raymond calls the "female state of atrocity" (1991, p. 350), is testament to the strength of the human "longing for relatedness" (Noddings, 1984, p. 104) and self-affirmation. Somehow, women have known that given the realities of patriarchy, the coming together of women in the absence of men allows for the freeing and subsequent affirmation of Self.

As "an understanding that is continually renewed [and] revitalized" (Raymond, 1987, p. 9), female friendship demands conditions conducive for individual and shared growth. Raymond puts forth four such necessary conditions: thoughtfulness, passion, worldliness and happiness.

It is through thinking that a person can discover her real Self. It is thinking restored of thoughtfulness, however. Raymond views thinking as theory and thoughtfulness as theory applied, theory practiced. Searching for meaning is thinking; thoughtfulness, injects into thinking's rational orientation, a consideration and caring for others and respect for their needs. Knowledge without meaning is useless for association. It is simply "know-how" and lacks the thoughtful experience of knowing "why" something or someone is so (Raymond, 1987, p. 218).

Because Raymond's female friendship begins with knowing the Self, thinking about oneself must be a fundamental necessity of female friendship, and such is the case. Raymond emphasizes what she calls the "duality of thinking...that is, the duality of 'myself with myself'...the one who asks and the one who answers" (1987, p. 222). In Raymond's

view, such meaningful thinking will enable conversation with Others because in understanding Self we understand our need for association. Each participant in friendship conducts the same personal dialogue, setting up the dialectical movement where being an "original Self" and a friend simultaneously is possible. Thinking individuals, then, maintain their integrity while at the same time, attaining group membership through friendship. Intelligent (thoughtful) thinking communicated and shared will undoubtedly lead to intelligent action, a formula which Dewey would find made-to-order.

A "thinking heart" is the manifestation of another condition, that of passion, for Raymond's female friendship. A "thoughtful passion," according to Raymond, does not place thinking and passion at polar ends. Instead, their integration and connection allow for the positive action that ensures the growth of both the individual and the friendship (Raymond, 1987, pp. 223-225). To influence, to act on, to move and impress and in turn, to be influenced by, acted upon, moved and impressed by others, is the thoughtful Gyn/affection of female friendships (1987, p. 8). For Raymond, friendship that is distinguished by "thoughtful passions ensures that a friend does not lose her Self in the heightened awareness of and attachment to another" (p. 225).

Friendship provides a location in the public and private worlds of our realities and this, contends Raymond, is a critical significance for female friendship. Both a personal and political space, worldliness seems to be the practiced intelligent, passionate action of female friends. It is both personal and political and it must be given female friendship's relational thinking. Engaged in association, the Self

transcends the alleged boundaries between private and public and acknowledges both direct and indirect consequences of association. In a sense, Raymond's worldliness underscores Dewey's contention that we do not exist as solitary beings whose involvements are inconsequential or unimportant. For women, Raymond's worldliness introduces her Self as female Self to man-made political space and her subsequent participation thus becomes meaningful. The worldly woman, then, lives with integrity in the world.

But Raymond also adds that it is woman's worldliness which enables her to maintain the feminist vision necessary to change those aspects of the world's realities which are unfriendly to her. This positions the individual, in this case, woman, as agent for change, agency which "acts with respect to the other on the basis of shared understanding" (Gould, 1988, p.75). Such agency, allows for the fuller development of the individual and, in turn, the social unit. Involvement in social action does not suppress the individual, allowing new capacities to develop and perhaps enact change. Dewey's individual by definition must be a participant, must experience, must be provided the opportunities for growth. "Worldliness" as it exists in Raymond's female friendships accomplishes all of this, though granted, does so only for women. So for Raymond's female friendship to be truly compatible with Deweyan sociality, it must be available to men. Though Raymond's model for sociality is sex-based, it does not mean that its values will be unavailable to men. Let's remember that Raymond believes that socialization has been largely responsible for, and influential in, building female friendships.

Striving for the integrity of Self is a process the goal of which is to ascertain and achieve the full use of one's powers (Raymond, 1987, p. 238). Female friendships have historically given women the private and public contexts in which to realize this goal, a goal Raymond defines as "happiness." Most importantly and pertinent to our discussion of Dewey, female friendship "provides encouragement and environment for the full use of one's powers" (1987, p. 238).

"To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness," writes Dewey in Democracy and Education (p. 308). For Dewey, "nothing is more tragic" than to know what one's purposes are and then to find that one has been "forced by circumstance into an uncongenial calling" (Dewey, 1916, p. 308). Are not Dewey and Raymond in harmony here? In order to attain happiness, Dewey's individual is engaged in "full and free" associations which promise self-realization and actualization. It would appear that the worldly environment provided women in female friendship does the same.

## **2.7 Real World Problems and Our Models of Community**

The idea of worldliness also needs to address the realities of existing social difference. If friendship is characterized by a worldliness that positions individuals as agents for change, must friendship bonding transcend class? Must those engaged in female friendship believe in and accept "a re-distribution of wealth and resources" (hooks, 1991, p. 38)? In order "to influence, to act on, to move and impress," as those engaged in Raymond's female friendships do, and in order to share purposes, as Deweyan friends must,



individual economic realities, I suggest, must be considered. Can poor women engage fully and freely in Raymond's female friendship with the affluent? Can the affluent engage in a female friendship with the poor? It would seem that the answers to these questions resist the affirmative simply because inherent in the differences between economically determined classes is the conflict of interests. And herein lies perhaps the thorniest issue in our discussion of sociality.

In each of our models for sociality, in Young's urban ideal, in Code's and Raymond's positions on friendship, there has been no real attention paid to the realities of economic class differences which exist today and have existed for much of human history. Young, for example, does little to address the fact that one of her "multiple group identifications" is economic class and would produce the "undesirable political consequences of oppression and exclusion" she disdains (Young, 1990, pp. 234-236). Such consequences it seems, would certainly lead to differentiation with exclusion. Though she does admit that in reality city life in present day times can be economically oppressive and calls for the re-organization of municipal resources, it is the institution of city she attempts to de-class, not its citizens. Young never makes clear how in the "unoppressive city," the citizen is also relieved of her economic oppression.

As for Raymond's female friendships, the problem lies in the idea of trust. Raymond's female friendships are deeply rooted in a trust, "a social trust," which assures reciprocity based on honor and loyalty. But as Lorraine Code reminds us:

Trust involves making oneself vulnerable, granting other people access to, and even control over, valued aspects of one's life, conferring on them the power as much to damage, destroy, or misuse those things as to take care with them. (1991, p. 185)

The act of "making oneself vulnerable" to those who have economic power over us seems precarious and down right risky, and in turn, to "trust" those with less economic power seems in many ways, empty, meaningless and patronizing. There's no real tangible personal or economic investment in "trusting" those whom one can or does oppress. After all, by even Raymond's definition, trust can not involve objectification nor can it be exploitive.

Under capitalism, our American economic experience, the realities of class difference casts a shadow on each of our models for sociality. As a system which "depends on the exploitation of underclass groups for its survival" (hooks, 1984, p. 101), and which places material values over human values, it is unlikely that the economically self-sufficient would willingly give up material privilege. Further, capitalism's economically self-sufficient individuals are likely to be "reluctant, even unwilling" to acknowledge that any capitalist system, sexist or not, will exploit the lower economic classes (hooks, 1984). The point is, that in any economic system where domination occurs, it is improbable that individuals will be fully free to engage in the shared purposes of friendship, purposes derived from establishing a "social trust." Domination, in any form, is void of Raymond's "thoughtfulness" and "passion" and further, doesn't allow those oppressed to "strive for the full use of [their] powers" (Raymond, 1987, p. 238).

If the issue of class casts such a shadow on these feminist models for sociality, is Deweyan sociality also eclipsed by the same knotty point?

Catherine MacKinnon begins Toward a Feminist Theory of State by claiming that "social power shapes the way we know" and, in turn, "the way we know shapes social power" (1989, p. IX). Since MacKinnon's "social power" is decided by social economic order, we can surmise that her postulate is an indictment of class. Such a charge seems a suitable point of departure for our discussion of Deweyan sociality and class.

It is a suitable point of departure for many reasons. If, as MacKinnon implies, class membership determines our sphere of knowledge and experience, then the Deweyan model for sociality, grounded in experience based knowledge, must either allow for full and free interaction between classes through some uniform universal vehicle or be without such a restrictive social order. Let's first consider the latter condition.

Is Dewey's democratic sociality free of class stratification? Is it a class-less society?

In Democracy and Education Dewey suggests to the reader that a democracy in which "the free interchange of varying modes of life-experience is arrested," is a democracy in which there is a "separation into a privileged and a subject-class" (1916, p. 84). For Dewey, the implications here suggest that good democracy doesn't separate or prevent the free exchange between classes, and that classes are indeed a part of a good democratic framework. An expanding mental life, or the freeing of intelligence, let's remember,

is central to Deweyan sociality. A democratic society which limits inquiry and the "distribution of its conclusions" (Dewey, 1927, p. 166), through class stratification, has lost its true democratic spirit according to Dewey. Such class stratification, Dewey wrote, is fatal to democracy because it is the free interaction between classes that induces social change, a critical requirement for democracy (Dewey, 1916, pp. 81-99). A democratized society in Dewey's view would have different social classes but whose interchanges were full, free and cooperative (Horne, 1978, p. 112).

Dewey's vision of a sociality, where the boundaries of classes are permeable and changing, has a loose footing in the Platonic conceptualization of social order (Dewey, 1916, Chap. 7). Dewey concurred with the Platonic view that society is stable only when individuals use their aptitudes to perform functions of use to all and also agreed with the view that it is the role of education to discover individual aptitudes and to train individuals to put these to social use. But the Platonic model of a three class sociality seemed unrealistic and "superficial" to Dewey given the fact that original individual capacities were, in his view, "indefinitely numerous and variable" (Dewey, 1916, p. 90). Plato's three social classes suggested that only three types of individuals could exist and that an individual could only be educated for one specific class. In this way, Dewey recognized that the Platonic ideal, and all of its incarnations, are static and, thus, troublesome to him.

Dewey believed that the "utilization of the specific and variable qualities of individuals" would allow for the change and betterment of society, a view which placed him at odds with the Platonic. Dewey

remarks of Plato's ideal that it had an end in view and no details alterable, no change hoped for. This was a deductive social plan, while Dewey, true to his definition of scientific methodology, envisioned the inductive, where "happy accident" was not the only hope for social improvement (Dewey, 1916, p. 91). What Dewey's sociality demands is a constant state of moving, progressive change fueled by the realization of individuals' strengths and intelligences, a realization which would guarantee the full sharing of interests and interactions between groups. Such was not the case in Plato's ideal state. The isolation of groups in Plato's Republic made for "the rigid and formal institutionalizing of life" which effected the "static and selfish ideal" (Horne, 1978, p. 107) so antithetical to Deweyan sociality.

There's no doubt that Dewey did not insist on a classless sociality, or for that matter, that all classes become one. It's clear from the construction of his democratic ideal that there are indeed divisions among individuals and groups. Dewey's emphasis on the requirement that each class have a community of interests and that all classes must have a reciprocity of interests clearly implies that Deweyan sociality will be class oriented in some way or another. But just how? How are classes constructed in the Deweyan social ideal?

It appears that Dewey's social classes would develop from individuals' realizations of their strengths. Such a society, writes Dewey, must

make provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and [it must] secure flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life...Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (1916, p. 99)

Thus a truly democratic society must provide equal opportunities for mental growth for all of its members, must affect institutional change, and should promote controlled social reform. Participation on equal terms, changing institutions through inclusion, enlightened education for social modification? This all sounds too much like a feminist manifesto! Certainly Young's criteria for the urban ideal of sociality would be met--institutional change, participation and inclusion, and Code and Raymond would find little with which to quarrel here given their objectives for friendship.

Given Dewey's views on individual development and growth (Dewey, 1916; 1938), this enlightened education to which he makes reference in the above quotation, has a set of consequential features. Such an education must be free and universal and focus on individual self-development. Achieving self-development, some would suggest, requires control over personal activity (Bowles & Gintis, 1975, p.99). If the realization of a truly democratic sociality requires the full and free self-development of each individual and if the "essence" of that self-development is, as Bowles and Gintis suggest, "the acquisition of control over the personal activity" (1975, p. 99), then all forms of externally imposed autocratic control must be absent from Deweyan sociality. Controls dictated by the unequal distribution of power, for example, must be absent from such a scheme. Power imbalances resulting from a belief in racial or sexual inferiority must,

consequently, be nonexistent in Deweyan sociality, and even more to our original concern, so must the imbalance of power consequent of the unequal distribution of wealth.

So if Deweyan social classes must be fully free to interact, and if each individual has the opportunity to develop and engage freely in associations purposely chosen, how then, is Deweyan sociality possible within capitalism?

In a capitalistic sociality such as our American version, economists Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis argue that 'what one knows' is determined by class membership, which in turn, determines how one gets this knowledge and how far one is able to take it. The "corporate capitalism" system operating in the United States is, for Bowles and Gintis, incompatible with Deweyan ideals of social self-development on many different levels (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; 1975).

First, Bowles and Gintis point out, achieving one's highest possible personal growth is impossible for all members of society because, in practice, American corporate capitalism does not provide everyone with the same opportunities for self-development. Classes within corporate capitalism remain stratified by their economic power (or lack of) and schooling reflects this stratification. 'What one knows' is determined by where one lives, and where one lives, is determined by one's capital. Despite free public education, Bowles and Gintis note that there has been little to indicate that there has been a "reduction of class stratification and income inequality (1975, p. 106). In effect, schooling in corporate capitalistic America reinforces class stratification (Bowles & Gintis, 1975; 1976).

Bowles and Gintis also claim that schools "by and large remain hostile to the individual's needs for self-development" (1975, p. 105-106), primarily because corporate capitalism has injected business values into the educational ethos. Competition, discipline, efficiency, control, domination and subservience, have all become a part of the American educational objective. Self-development as Dewey defines it, doesn't have a chance in a system where cooperation and mutual exchange aren't valued, where the "competitive either/or thinking" rooted in a self-serving individualism is reinforced (hooks, 1984, p. 29), and where the quality of the classroom experience is judged not by individual growth, but by standardized norm referenced tests.

Both of these criticisms of Deweyan sociality are valid only if we accept Bowles and Gintis' premise that the applied objectives of the Progressive educational movement and John Dewey's democratic educational goals are one and the same. Though Dewey certainly influenced much of the Progressive educational agenda, he was critical of several principles central to the movement and did not believe himself to be a Progressive (Dewey, 1938).

The Progressive educational movement's insistence on the pupil's freedom to develop naturally troubled Dewey because it neglected to recognize the importance of the curriculum. Such an emphasis on the pupil at the expense of subject matter was far from what Dewey had envisioned. For Dewey, the point was not to choose the child over the curriculum but to bring the two together. In addition, Dewey insisted that neither the traditional education nor the Progressive or "new" education was adequate. What was needed in



Dewey's view, was a theory of experience which did not "condition" students, nor did it leave them to their own devices (Dewey, 1938).

Experience and Education specifically addresses Dewey's criticisms of both the Traditionalists in education and the then new Progressives.

Bowles and Gintis' main criticism of the Progressive movement and John Dewey rests on their belief that "the failure of progressive educational reforms" is the result of the incompatibility or "contradictory nature of expanded reproduction, equality of opportunity, and self-development in a society whose economic life is governed by the institutions of corporate capitalism" (1975, p. 118). What Bowles and Gintis fail to realize, however, is that John Dewey's educational democracy and the realized Progressive agenda were not one and the same, and that, in reality, Dewey also saw the same contradictions.

Dewey blamed the embracing of laissez-faire liberalism in the United States for the "intellectual justification of the status quo" (Dewey, 1937, p. 33). Laissez-faire capitalism was, in his view, socially enslaving because it allowed "economic relations to become dominantly controlling forces", preventing the majority from realizing their potentialities. The "effective liberty of thought and action" so important to Dewey, he judged impossible in such a state (1937, p. 34). In his view, the state, by definition, was a shared intelligence and a sharing of purposes. Government, as an organ of the state, did not "originate the moral claims of the individuals but should "protect all forms [and] promote all modes of human association in which the moral claims of the members of society are embodied and which serve as the means of voluntary self-realization" (1937, p. 25). Thus, the

state is responsible for establishing institutions under which individuals can effectively realize their potentialities. Government should be controlled by the social state and not visa versa. That American government could allow a laissez-faire attitude to prevail and dictate the affairs of the state must have seemed, for Dewey, an unruly tail wagging the dog.

Dewey's proposal of a "constructive synthesis" for social action was based on his belief in the power and "logic of freed intelligence as a social force." Freed intelligence, in Dewey's view, would create an organized social plan where "industry and finance are socially directed" and which in turn, would provide "the material basis for the cultural liberation and growth of individuals" (Dewey, 1937, p. 55). It appears, then, that both maintaining the integrity and importance of the individual and establishing material security is a prerequisite for Dewey's social objectives.

In the latter years of the American economic Depression, Dewey addressed these two points in several of his writings, two of which, "What I Believe, Revised" (1938) and "The Economic Basis of the New Society" (1937) are particularly relevant to the criticisms launched at Dewey by Bowles and Gintis.

Dewey used "What I Believe, Revised" to stress that "individuals are the finally decisive factors of the nature and movement of associated life" and that when free to choose and decide among political institutions, will achieve the "genuine individuality" so socially liberatory. The dangers to the primacy of the individual, argued Dewey, are present in the extreme shifts of political emphases he described as "the decline of democracy, or the flourishing of laissez-

faire corporate capitalism, and the "rise of the totalitarian states." Each polarity, he argued, rendered the individual powerless, making true social good an impossibility. Though political opposites, "capitalistic collectivism in industry and finance" and "state" capitalism are "two sides of one and the same indivisible picture" (Dewey, 1938, p. 32). In both, Dewey's individual has little opportunity, if any, for genuine expression. True to form, the Deweyan remedy for these political ills suggests a balance between extremes in which the state, the collective arrangement of individuals, controls its institutions.

Dewey's prescription begins with an admitted vagueness:

The answer in general is that political activity can, first and foremost, engage in aggressive maintenance of the civil liberties of free speech, free publication, and assemblage. In the second place, government can do much to encourage and promote in a positive way the growth of a great variety of voluntary co-operative undertakings. (Dewey, 1938, p. 38)

The details of his instruction involve:

the abolition or drastic modification of a good many institutions that now have political support, since they stand in the way of effective voluntary association for social ends. (Dewey, 1938, p. 33)

To Dewey, these institutions were: "tariffs and other monopoly furthering devices;" the system of land tenure with discounted taxation on behalf of private profit; the politically protected long-term capital investment which, in Dewey's view, directly taxed the "productive work of others;" and finally, government promotion of product scarcity, whether for private profit in the case of state capitalism, or for "public relief" in a socialist state (Dewey, 1938, p. 33).

The way to strike this balance and rid the state of such institutions, is to make possible alliances of voluntarily cooperating individuals. Whether the result of state legislated dictate or through an empowered group's awareness, such alliances serve as examples of the effectiveness of associated and cooperative sociality. Socialized medicine, in Dewey's view, is a good example of a "socially useful, productive activity" which epitomizes the nature of the "functional socialism" he professed to value (Dewey, 1938, p. 34).

A year after Dewey had made a sketch of his "functional socialism" in "What I Believe, Revised," he explained his thesis in greater detail. As a general reaction to the status of the individual in the world and a specific criticism of unemployment, Dewey's "The Economic Basis of the New Society" aimed more directly at what he viewed as the failures of American social order. What generates most of the failures, he suggested, is "the fact that we have had production and distribution organized on a non-social basis - a basis of pecuniary profit," a system which makes it impossible to address the public's needs, and which ignores human potential (Dewey, 1939, p. 420). In the same article, he argues for the implementation of the minimum wage, the building of affordable housing and universal health insurance. But more to the issue of the "modification" or "abolition" of anti-social institutions, Dewey demands a profit sharing, cooperative management system in industry as an essential element for an "intelligent program of social reorganization:"

[There is] the need of securing greater industrial autonomy, that is to say, greater ability on the part of the workers in any particular trade or occupation to control that industry, instead of working under conditions of external control where they have

no interest, no insight into what they are doing, and no social outlook upon the consequences and meaning of what they are doing. This means an increasing share given to the laborer, to the wage earner, in controlling the conditions of his own activity. (Dewey, 1939, p. 422)

It appears, then, that Dewey's criticism of American economically determined social order has much in common with Bowles and Gintis'. Equality of opportunity and self-development are contradictory to what Bowles and Gintis call "expanded reproduction," a term, I suggest, is synonymous to Dewey's "collective capitalism." Both "expanded reproduction" and "collective capitalism" aspire to the same end, private profit and both achieve it through the same means, the economic oppression of the worker. Dewey certainly does maintain that material security must be a prerequisite for achieving self-development. "The failure of our social order" to ensure individuals "steady and useful employment," undermines morale, demoralizes, undermines self-confidence and self-respect and "the faith or belief in the world and in others" (Dewey, 1939, p. 417). But more to the point, Dewey's economic remedies for our social ills have never been appreciably employed. Further, Bowles and Gintis' suggestion that Progressive/Deweyan educational ethos failed to recognize the fact that without economic restructuring, their objectives would be unattainable, is erroneous not only in equating Dewey with Progressivism, but also in missing the fact that Dewey, too, felt that such an equation would put "the social cart before the social horse" (Dewey, 1939, p. 429).

To dwell too long on the fact that many of Dewey's critics "failed" to recognize this or that in Dewey's philosophy serves our query only so much. Certainly, making note of, and examining the bases of

criticisms provides us the springboard for investigation. The investigation, in turn, becomes a process which enables us to see for ourselves, to judge for ourselves, to make note of our perspectives. We are thinking for ourselves when we investigate the roots of criticism, a practice undeniably liberating, an exercise which makes reconsideration and reclamation possible. That being so, what have we considered, what can feminist scholarship reclaim as a result of this investigation of Dewey's notions of individuality and sociality?

As a reflection of the "tensions between individualism and the common good, between rights and sociality, between romantic visions and rationalistic orderings, between equality and difference" (Elshtain, 1986, p. 56), feminisms confront constructed epistemic dichotomies unsympathetic to their purposes. The nature of the confrontation begins with the idea that reality is dualistically ordered, and ultimately, rests on the thorny implication that sex, the primary dualism, is the difference that matters. Reclaiming John Dewey's work must consequently involve the consideration of dualism, of how he addresses these tensions, or for that matter, consider if they even exist in his philosophy. And this is precisely what our investigation has attempted to do.

The individual and the common good are not at odds in Deweyan thought. They are not polarizations, they are not opposites without a continuum in between. Though distinct entities, they constitute an integrated life. The interests of the individual and the interests of groups are reconcilable in Deweyan thought, a fact which serves to relieve this particular "tension" for feminists.

Even Dewey's notion of class serves to present feminism with a social alternative to a stratification based on inequality and difference. Dewey's "classes" are social constructions, not economic constructions. He stays true to his definition of "social." His "social classes" are only those associations of multiple individuals who share multiple interests and purposes. They are not classified by economic status, by race or sex. An individual, as a point in a circle of association, intersects with multiple and varied circles of association. As we, women and men, interact with each other, we are interacting with all those other points, all those other individuals on each circle of association. What interests we have in common, what purposes we share determine the intersection.

Can we ever be completely excluded from any point of intersection? Dewey would argue that because there is no essential human nature other than our need to be social, we should all be able to intersect, to meet, to engage each other, even if only briefly or to a small degree, with every circle of association. It follows then, that women, in a Deweyan framework, can not be considered a class simply because we are not all uniformly the same, because we do not all share an essential nature. We may form social classes in the Deweyan sense because of shared purposes and aims, but not because we are women.

If our examination has revealed anything, it has underscored the importance of the uniqueness of the individual and the absence of an essentialist posture in Deweyan thought. This, above all, serves to relieve dualistic tensions in many feminisms. Without the presence of dualistic thought rooted in essentialism, Deweyan thought becomes congenial and accessible to feminists, ultimately making each

conversive to the other. What it brings to those feminist movements with essentialist leanings is perhaps the possibility that despite women's and men's "essential" differences, fruitful interactions are possible. After all, if indeed a sexually essential nature does exist, is there any guarantee that each and every expression of our unique individualities will be shared by someone of the same sex? I doubt it.

As a feminist who struggles with the tensions of categorizations within feminism, I find that John Dewey's notions of sociality and individuality provide me with useful considerations and possibilities. It's not really important that our investigation suggest that Dewey could gain membership in a particular brand of feminism. Yes, Dewey's construction of class aligns him with feminist theorists whose vision is of an egalitarian sociality. In ways, Dewey's dislike for corporate capitalism is in line with Marxist Feminist claims that capitalism is the root of all oppressions. Perhaps even Socialist Feminism, where both economic and gender factors are responsible for class oppression would find Dewey pleasant company. But what is especially valuable is that we have found in Dewey a past which can deepen and extend our understanding of our present, and most importantly, assist us in shaping a feminist future.

To some, Dewey's belief in the ability of humans to find shared purposes and to acknowledge commonalities may seem solely a "romantic," an impractical and unrealistic vision. I suggest that through a feminist lens, it is optimism and hope which give shape to Dewey's romantic vision, not caprice. In optimism and hope there exists the possibility for change, and that possibility, is for *this* feminist, too important to ignore.



## CHAPTER 3

### SEEING, THE HAZARDS OF OUTLOOK AND CONCLUSION

#### 3.1 Seeing

"To believe that the world is only as you think it is, is stupid," he said. "The world is a mysterious place. Especially in the twilight." (Castaneda, 1972, p. 64)

Carlos Castaneda learns through his apprenticeship with don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian sorcerer, that in order to really "see" the world, he must "stop" it, he must do more than "look" at it. It is through "seeing" the motionless world that Castaneda is able to "break the dogmatic certainty...that the validity of [his] perceptions, or reality of [his] world, is not to be questioned" (Castaneda, 1972, p. xiv). A feminist consideration does much the same thing.

It is a similar journey in which I have engaged us. The questions we have asked of John Dewey's philosophy have given us the opportunity to "stop" and "see" through our feminist lenses, the pale, dim and shadowy "twilight" that Dewey had sketched so many years ago. The purpose of our journey, I've insisted, is not to decide feminism's place in Deweyan thought, but rather to consider Deweyan thought's place in feminism. We searched for the valuable in John Dewey's educational theory. We "stopped" his philosophy and then considered, or perhaps even re-considered, what we saw.

What have we seen?

We 'forgave' John Dewey's failure to place women at the center of his philosophical focus, but can we ignore the absence of gender in his philosophical and educational treatises? Did Dewey consider

bodies to be gendered? If Dewey's ideal democratic education is grounded in the "necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (Dewey, 1938, p. 20), what role do women's and girls' experiences play in schooling and how does he assess their worth?

In 1911, as part of an on-going series aimed at considering the issues which "touch[ed] the interests of women and the family life," The Ladies' Home Journal published John Dewey's article "Is Co-Education Injurious to Girls?" It is in this article that Dewey peels back the layers of his educational convictions to reveal his estimation of women, their capacities, potentialities, character and place in education.

What Dewey reveals in The Ladies' Home Journal narrative, together with his ideas on the nature of humans, suggests that he believed that the differences between the sexes were the consequences of both biology and culture. For example, at the same time that he credits the idea of "weak and dependent femininity" as an ideal for girls and women to 18th century "sentimentalism," he talks about "natures" and "instincts" unique to the sex. Dewey equips girls with "feeling instincts" and "ultra-feminine weaknesses" which can be "worked out," "steadied, clarified and purged" through the proper environment (Dewey, 1911, pp. 22, 60-61).

The "proper environment" Dewey advocates is the co-educational school. His portrait of boys' behavior suggests that boys also have traits peculiar to their sex. But what is important to note, however, is that Dewey seems to imply that though the influences of association positively affect both sexes, boys' "natural attraction" to

girls makes them live-up to their best potentialities, while girls' association with boys can lead them only to traits more "functional" and masculine (Dewey, 1911, p. 22). One of the inferences, then, is that though both sexes grow through the influences of association, the ideals of growth are masculine. Dewey also claims in this commentary that boys' associations with girls make them mannerly, courteous and civil, and that girls' associations with boys make them more productive. It appears then that since masculine traits are valued, and since 'production' is a masculine trait, then the successful citizens of Dewey's democracy must be engaged in 'production' oriented lives. What form 'production' assumes in Dewey's democracy is of consequence for feminists.

Dewey stipulates that the co-educational environment provides the opportunities for attaining effective social ends. In Dewey's mind, "the significant tasks of society - remedial and constructive "will be carried out by both sexes. Thus a co-educational environment will supply the conditions necessary for both sexes to grow as individuals in a democracy. To become better individuals, co-operation between the sexes becomes a necessary enterprise, one which Dewey viewed as an "intellectual and moral necessity in a democracy." What is problematic for feminism in this conceptualization is Dewey's emphasis on the "importance of right family life for all social ends" (Dewey, 1911, pp. 60-61).

Though Dewey acknowledges that "the part of women in industry outside the home" could possibly increase and that women could be given the right to vote, his insistence on the great value of the "right family life" and that "as wife the woman is in relation to a

man," makes one suspect that woman's role in his democracy is limited. Even as participants in higher education, Dewey entrusts women to the co-educational universities because they alone can give women the "scientific preparation for the responsibilities of parenthood and household management." Women's colleges' curricula, he notes, only prepare women for the vocations (Dewey, 1911, p. 62). Dewey seemed to want women to be schooled in the same ways that men were schooled. In a letter Dewey writes to William Rainey Harper dated 16 January 1902, he makes the argument for coeducation at the University of Chicago by saying that the "proper basis of the relation of the sexes [is] the serious pursuit of truth in mutual competition and cooperation" (Gordon, 1990, p. 115). Dewey seems to suggest that women's exclusion from men's intellectual worlds devalued women in some way.

It seems then that women, though certainly capable of entering the "vocations," must also play a specific role in order to complete the "right family life." Is Dewey relegating women to particular roles within the ideals of the "right family life?" Dewey may value family because he sees it as a social necessity, but he sees it as containing sex-specific roles. Is he suggesting that women enlist in what Adrienne Rich describes as "institutionalized motherhood" (Rich, 1976)? Do all women have those "feminine instincts" necessary for the "right family life" to be guaranteed? Is Dewey suggesting that there is a "maternal" instinct in all women? Can women be both vocational and motherly?

Inherent in all of these questions that surround Dewey's judgment of the "right family life," of "natures" and "instincts" unique

to each sex is the hint of a biological determinism which is problematic for many feminists, as it should be for Dewey himself. If biology is the infrastructure of experience, then social roles must logically be sex-determined and specific. Consequently, it becomes important to understand what Dewey insinuates when he refers to "instincts," "natures" and "tendencies."

In Human Nature and Conduct Dewey considers what he terms "The Psychology of Conduct." Within this chapter he unravels his theory of "impulses and instincts." As original, unlearned activity, instincts are merely interests whose meanings are acquired. Dependent on interaction with social media, an instinct or "phenomena" is expressed as a result of reactions to variable and multiple stimuli. "Native tendencies," Dewey notes, are complex, active "realities" and not singular or "separate psychic forces or impulses" (Dewey, 1939, p. 90). What Dewey is suggesting is that behaviors, responses to socialization, are not the results of a peculiar, biologically determined source. Instead, they are an "accumulation of stresses" which when effected "evoke reactions of favor and disfavor" (Dewey, 1939, p. 151).

As "realities" which are the result of responses to multiple interactions with the environment, Dewey's instincts can be neither natural nor inevitable. He defends this contention by pointing out that because humans are biologically consistent, only socialization can be the cause of the "great diversity of institutions and moral codes."

When we recognize the diversity of native activities and the varied ways in which they are modified through interactions with one another in response to different conditions, we are able to understand moral phenomena otherwise baffling. (Dewey, 1939, p. 156)

But in order to negate the assumption that human beings are biologically predisposed to certain behaviors, Dewey must reveal the falsity of the assumption. He does this by stressing that the whole organism is involved in interaction and that reactions to associations are not a singular inborn feature. For example, when one is afraid, it is not that "fear," a singular, native tendency, is released but rather, that the whole organism is reacting to associations. No two reactions, no two fears are the same, Dewey adds. Fear of the dark is different from fear of the dentist, which is different from the fear of ghosts, and so on. But each is "qualitatively unique" because it is the result of "its total interactions or correlations with other acts with the environing medium, with consequences" (Dewey, 1939, p. 155).

Given this view, would social roles in Dewey's democracy be sex-determined and sex-specific? It's true that Dewey's view of instinct would assure that social roles be determined by sex if the governing mode of socialization is sex-biased and/or sex-based, but could the case be otherwise in a Deweyan educational democracy? Will sex still be a difference that makes a difference?

In discussing instincts Dewey uses "maternal love" as an example of conduct inappropriately believed to be a pre-determined, singular, psychic force. If we understand Dewey correctly, such a native tendency is the result of environmental consequences, not the result of a fixed nature. How and when and by whom "maternal love" is exhibited, is the net effect of the organism in time. The whole of

"maternal love" is the compilation of reactions to interactions with ever-changing, ever-modifying environments. If women are those whose "maternal love" tendencies or interests are encouraged, fostered and rewarded, they will undoubtedly be the sex assigned the "mothering" role. Should Dewey's democracy sanction such socialization, sex will clearly determine social roles.

But Dewey suggests that sex may indeed be the biological difference that makes no difference when he considers woman's sexual desire as "instinct." He dismisses the psychoanalytic view of women's sexual desire on the grounds that it "transform[s] social results into psychic causes".

Writers, usually male, hold forth a psychology of woman, as if it were dealing with a Platonic universal entity, although they habitually treat men as individuals, varying with structure and environment. They treat phenomena which are peculiarly symptoms of the civilization of the West at the present time as if they were the necessary effects of fixed native impulses of human nature. (Dewey, 1939, p. 153)

He goes on to discredit the anti-feminist notion of Libido as an "original psychic force," believing that social conditions, not biology, have determined such "libidinal" dispositions (Dewey, 1939, p. 154).

Thus it appears that given sexism-free socialization, women in Dewey's democracy are eligible for all roles. But given the reality of a Western culture steeped in sexism, what roles can women play in a real-life Deweyan democracy? If feminism is to consider Deweyan education as a philosophical vehicle, this question becomes very critical. From his early 20th century comments in The Ladies' Home Journal, it would seem that those roles Dewey finds necessary for

democracy will limit women's experiences. Does Dewey ever expand his notions of women's roles and experiences?

In 1930, Dewey reinforces his philosophy based on "experience as the sole authority in knowledge and conduct" in his essay "What I Believe." In it, he stresses the importance of change in human existence, change which affects the many meanings and purposes of human existences, change which brings about individual growth. He writes:

It is assumed, in spite of evident flux in the actual situation, that the institutions of marriage and family that developed in medieval Europe are the last and unchanging word. (Dewey, 1950, p. 26)

He goes on to add:

it is clear that the codes which still nominally prevail are the result of one-sided and restricted conditions. Present ideas of love, marriage and the family are almost exclusively masculine constructions. Like all idealizations of human interests that express a dominantly one-sided experience, they are romantic in theory...The realities of the relationships of men, women, and children to one another have been merged in this fusion of sentimentalism and legalism. The growing freedom of women can hardly have any other outcome than the production of more realistic and more human morals. (Dewey, 1950, p. 29)

Though he never explicitly addresses the value of women's experiences per se, Dewey comments on the uses of play and work in the curriculum in such a way that one gets the impression that women's traditional roles and experiences are not "arresting," but "liberalizing."

Dewey's "active occupations" contain a "liberalizing quality" (Dewey, 1916, p. 199) making them educationally significant. Their significance lies in the fact that they are occupations which "tap instincts at a deep level" (p. 200) and which "typify social situations"



(p. 199). Gardening, cooking, sewing, weaving, painting, drawing, singing and dramatization are a few of the "active occupations" which, when employed in the curriculum, appeal to students and introduce qualities and skills transferable to other contexts. Growth through involvement in these occupations is inevitable.

It appears, then, that Dewey valued many of the 'occupations' in which women have been traditionally engaged, but one can venture to say that their value to Dewey lies in their "productive" virtue and not in their association with women. Dewey finds significance in these "occupations" because they "typify social situations" and thus "[approximating] the ends which appeal in daily experience" (p. 198). Their purposes satisfy needs Dewey labels "human."

Men's fundamental common concerns center about food, shelter, clothing, household furnishings, and the appliances connected with production, exchange, and consumption. Representing both the necessities of life and the adornments with which the necessities have been clothed, they tap instincts at a deep level; they are saturated with facts and principles having a social quality. (1916, p. 199-200)

Though feminists would agree that the need for food, shelter and clothing are part of women's experiences, it's likely that the dispositions of the "instincts" Dewey's "occupations" tap are masculine. Instead of "production, exchange and consumption," why not "reproduction, sharing and cultivation"? The nurturing qualities necessary for child-rearing and teaching appear absent from these "occupations." Has Dewey ignored those occupations which are not "production" oriented? Has he ignored the reproductive processes Jane Roland Martin defines as conception, birth, child rearing,

tending the sick, caring for family needs, and running the household (Martin, 1985, p. 6)? It seems that such is the case.

Though feminists would not classify the reproductive processes as "active occupations," its absence from Deweyan thought is both conspicuous and incriminating to a degree. When the reproductive processes of society are deleted, and the productive processes emphasized, women's experience is devalued. As Martin comments:

Viewing education as preparation for carrying out societal roles, [philosophers] tie their proposals to some vision of the good society. (Martin, 1985, pp. 5-6)

Dewey's "good society," practical and free of the ills of "private profit" (p. 201), appears to require an education solely emphasizing the practical, utilitarian human endeavors largely carried out by men. Even when he does comment specifically on the reproductive processes, Dewey's focus is on the sensible and the functional.

Take, for example, the issue of birth control. In 1932, Dewey is one of several prominent figures asked to submit to The Nation commentary on the birth control movement. In his essay he calls for the removal of the "arbitrary restrictions" of the law and cultural sentimentality which forbid birth control education. Educating individuals on methods of birth control assures Dewey that the "intelligent control" of the reproductive processes will be exercised, resulting in a "supreme" quality of life. Families with "too many children and those badly spaced" can not provide for children the opportunities necessary for physical, moral and intellectual growth. Dewey's concern is not that birth control will grant *women* "intelligent control" over "blind natural processes." His uneasiness is with the

actuality that quantity is in this case, impractical. Is Dewey saying, in effect, that what is practical is what is valued? It appears that this is the case.

What is a feminist educator's response to this? The first question that emerges relates to the idea of social efficiency. If the goal of our teaching is to shape social policy, and social policy is characterized by efficiency, what are the implications for subject matter? for entire curricula? for method? for the social roles our students occupy now and those for which they are schooled?

If we hold social efficiency and utility as educational goals highly valued, are girls and women at risk of being schooled for those roles in which we can be truly functional? Will *both* men and women be educated for those roles to which they are particularly suited? What characteristic, what aspect of their personhood will determine their roles? And what does this mean in Deweyan terms?

In an Aristotelian tradition this means that we would educate girls and women to enter those roles that best fit their natures because it is from their true natures that education follows:

Both children and women must be educated with an eye to the constitution. (The Politics, Book I, Chapter XIII, p. 97)

The "constitution" for Aristotle is first determined by sex, the primary distinction of nature. Dewey, on the other hand, believed that we discover a person's nature, a discovery whose aim is not the identification of some absolute, fixed and complete essence. On the contrary, human nature should be understood in terms of a progression and movement through time, a course that is always in relation to other people and things. Consequently, Dewey could not

suggest that we deduce our educational aims from the idea of a fixed universal human nature and could not take girls' and women's natures as a given. He had to acknowledge socialization in the make-up of natures. In his article on co-education for example, he does so. Those traits traditionally considered part of the female nature, such as dependence and weakness, he attributes to the social context of the 18th Century (Dewey, 1911; 1950).

This seems to suggest that Dewey did not view sex as the primary distinction of human nature but there remains the thorny point of sex and social efficiency and utility. From what we read in "Is Co-education Injurious to Girls?" it appears that the best education for women is that which will enable us to assume "the responsibilities of parenthood and household management" (1911, p. 62), responsibilities which Dewey views as part of an efficient social scheme. Women will run their households with scientific efficiency, let's remember. But why can't men do they same? If they, too, are schooled in the scientific method, could not the "house *husband*" be as efficient as the "house *wife*"? Probably not, because despite the fact that boys can learn to be mannerly, courteous and civil, traits which we can submit may be necessary in running a household, there remains the question of reproduction.

Bearing and begetting children are necessary social roles but whose realities are a sticking point in this consideration of Deweyan thought. If Dewey wants what is best for the group, what is best for his ideal democracy, then men's and women's best potentialities must find an opportunity for expression. Does he consider the ability to bear children a potentiality? Does he neglect the obvious distinction

between men and women, the reality that one sex must be the child bearer?

This consideration has not given us a clear answer to these questions perhaps because Dewey's writings are characteristically ambiguous. Morton White notes in Social Thought in America: The Revolt Against Formalism that Dewey waffles between rejecting formalism and being a social engineer. He writes:

By refusing to formulate ends of social behavior for fear of being saddled with *fixed* ends, Dewey hardly encouraged systematic political engineering. (1952, p. 244)

The failure to articulate specific means and ends in education and its repercussions is perhaps the most useful thing that feminist educational theorists can learn from Dewey and choose not to reappropriate, choose not to repeat.

As feminist educational theorists, refusing or neglecting to "formulate ends of social behavior for fear of being saddled with fixed ends" (White, 1952, p. 244), we run the risk of enacting no lasting social change. Feminist educational theorists can't waffle for this very reason. We can be social critics, a position which Dewey chose for himself (Randall, 1939, p. 91), but we can not fail to articulate clearly our specific guidelines for social change. Unlike Dewey, we can not just trace the contours of curricula (Hofstadter, 1962, p. 375), we must list in detail curricular content and clearly define and describe our teaching methods. When we reappropriate Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality and use them as the basis for our curricula and our methods, we teach women and men to consciously assess and understand their membership in society, an act which some of

Dewey's critics noted that humans *just don't do* (Flew, 1977, pp. 90-92). But this *is* something we want our sons and daughters to do. To get them to do so requires, that as feminist educators, we admit partisanship. It demands that we engage in the political act of feminist teaching and not just feminist educational theorizing. It demands that we become practicing social engineers.

### **3.2 The Hazards of Outlook**

The world that the feminist educational theorist sees is a world that demands change and action. But what if we commit the same mistake that Castaneda initially makes on his journey? What if we don't "stop" Dewey's philosophy? What if we only "look" at it?

If we only "look" and not "see," we could be blinded by the hazards of our outlooks. All outlooks, all ways of viewing the world, can exclude, whether knowingly or inadvertently, or unintentionally, dismiss the possibility of consideration. Our "ideologies," our "frameworks" can prevent us from considering some "mysteries," something long ago said, or thought or written about. Our lenses become rigid, constant and steadily focused, which fixes our perspective, which in turn, fixes us, the viewers, as well. Given its tradition of inclusion, it is unlikely that feminism would be too susceptible to these hazards, but it is precisely because feminism has an ethic of inclusion that it can ill afford to ignore these dangers.

As a feminist educational theorist, I would now like to consider just a few of these hazards.

First, there is the danger of dismissing or ignoring the valuable in other philosophical traditions. This particular investigation has

been an exercise in reappropriating the valuable from a tradition viewed outside, or at the very least, different from, feminist mainstream thought. We have sought to understand what, if anything, Deweyan thought could offer a feminist educational agenda and discovered that indeed, several Deweyan tenets could be reappropriated. Had we ignored Dewey, had we dismissed his theory as part of a tradition unsympathetic to feminist goals, we would have lost the opportunity to incorporate and expand Dewey's notions of sociality and the individual in our educational scheme, and consequently, been ideologically weaker. In Liberalism and Social Action Dewey warns that old habits and ways of thinking must be remade by the "new and disturbing." But here is a case where we look to the past to help guide, support and stimulate a "new and disturbing" force called feminism (1935, p. 49).

Some may balk at the very idea that a radical position such as feminism could take away anything of value from Dewey, or from a past typically antipathetic to feminist aims. But let us see what this dismissal would mean.

In essence, dismissing Dewey without investigation would be contradictory to feminism's belief in the value of experience. Converting past experience into useful knowledge for particular action is an integral part of feminist knowing. The use of autobiography and biography in feminist education, for example, epitomizes the value feminists place on past experience for present knowledge and future action. It is part of the feminist framework of knowing. Present and future action refers to past experience as a source of context for hypothesis testing. We look to experience to provide us with that

all-important personal context which enables us to devise and revise our theories and practices. Often, feminist scholarship transforms the past by discovering or re-discovering those voices silenced because of their sex or race or class. This is, itself, a reappropriation of experience that seeks to transform and modify the past because of a present day need. This is not to say, however, that we limit our vision. On the contrary, past experience, or traditional ideology, should be transcended in order to enact purposeful change.

What I am also suggesting is that, in a way, for the feminist educational theorist to blindly dismiss Dewey because of his place in history is logically inconsistent. Valuing past experience means just that. The past, when reappropriated by the new, can provide us with relevant wisdom. We may decide that the value of past experience or thinking is that we find it contradictory to our needs. Very well then, but we have indeed referred to it in order to structure and direct our present and future actions. In effect, we have valued past experience.

Let's consider one last case in point: bell hook's idea that radical feminist pedagogy is a political act and Dewey's belief in teachers and schools as agents for social change.

In many ways, feminist agendas are revolutionary, and as such, they must go beyond prevailing thought. Successful revolutions, it seems to me, are those which eclipse reigning opinions and beliefs, and as a result, take hold. If they do not transcend the object of their displeasure, they remain movements, never really transforming ideology.

Dewey defined education as a social process and the school as its principal agent for change. The school, in Dewey's view, should be



that institution which eliminates "the unworthy features of the existing environment from influence upon mental habitudes" and in so doing, transmits that which will "make for a better future society" (Dewey, 1916, p. 20). It should be active in engineering social change and shaping social structures. Schools and teachers, in Dewey's view, must stay connected to the realities of the world; neither can be isolated so that students are not also isolated. Dewey charges teachers with the task of keeping students aware of the conditions, values and forces in a changing world. This, he says quite plainly, is the educator's "calling" (Ratner, 1939, pp. 695-696). Hence, teachers and educational institutions can't really be value neutral. A teacher's philosophy, then, will be practiced.

Because there is no "spontaneous germination in the mental life," teaching, in Dewey's view, involves suggestion and guidance, sharing of experiences and participation in learning activities (Dewey, 1929, p. 37). Teachers must leave behind the idea that subject-matter and that knowing are ready-made and outside of the student's experience. Instead, it is the responsibility of the teacher to know enough about her students and their needs in order to direct their inquiry. And the kind of guiding and directing that Dewey suggests is specifically purposeful. Dewey wants teachers to be those "leaders in social work" which give students the opportunity to engage in critical and investigative thinking, an activity which truly "frees" the individual (Dewey, 1923, p. 517). His fear is that if teachers don't provide the guidance, the suggestion or direction, students will develop their knowledge and values from hearsay, innuendo or casual recommendation. He writes that if the student "does not get the

suggestion from the teacher, he gets it from somebody or something in the home or in the street" and goes on to purport that this suggestion is likely to lead to a superficial understanding of an event, a people, a phenomenon, etc (1929, p. 37). Dewey wants teachers to guide the process of "sympathetic and discriminating knowledge of what has been done in the past and how it has been done" (Dewey, 1929, p. 40). Though he doesn't, and can't, deny the value of these out of school experiences, he clearly felt that only teachers could give students the opportunity to make intelligent sense of their worlds.

Dewey's insistence on the social responsibility of teachers is rooted in his belief that it is "sympathetic and discriminating knowledge" which frees individuals socially, economically and intellectually. Sympathy, not empathy, for what was the way of life in the past, enables thinking individuals to move beyond the habits of past or present social orders, and partake in present and future multiple and varied associations. Individuals guided by teachers through inquiry, will learn to take intelligent action within multiple spheres of interactions (Dewey, 1916, p. 301). Teachers become the hand assisting the individual towards self-realization and in doing so, become the vehicles through which a social philosophy can be actualized and not remain theory.

Characteristic of her candid, "no punches pulled" scholarship, bell hooks' treatise on radical feminist pedagogy is not abstract, and it is definite in its shape and form. It is a pedagogy which has "transformative power," a power which arms students with critical consciousness and enables them to resist and rebel against the oppressions of sexism and racism. Because students' worlds are not

neutral, because students, as individuals, are attached to real worlds, they confront ideas which may not make personal sense. It is one of the goals of this radical feminist teaching to provide students with an arena for their "crisis of meaning." Students need a place where they can make critical sense of things. Their studies, then, must provide them with that "dialectical context" through which personal meanings can be attained (hooks, 1989, pp. 50-51).

hooks' feminist teachers are, like Dewey's educators, engaged in social work. Theirs is "a true calling, a true vocation," a responsibility with political implications (hooks, 1989, p. 50). Their work is admittedly the union of a practice and a theory which seeks to change social ethos and order. The feminist classroom is one in which, according to hooks, teachers accompany their students through their process of critical thinking, keeping them "attached" to their worlds. As individuals, students in our feminist classrooms are not "abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world" (hooks, 1989, p. 52). To deny this is to suppress their critical consciousness and ultimately, deny them their freedom.

The radical feminist teacher must, in hooks' view, apply those pedagogical tools consistent with a feminist ethic. Feminist teachers must know individual student's needs. Who feels at risk in the classroom? Who needs more, or less, of an opportunity for personal confession? hooks reasons that as feminist teachers, we can not transform consciousness if we do not know our students' intellectual or psychic conditions. We must talk to our students about our pedagogical strategies. Will I take attendance? How will I appraise your class participation? Teacher and student are mutually engaged in

this learning relationship, a relationship which seeks to empower both.

Like Dewey's educational techniques, the feminist pedagogical tools hooks recommends have as their basis, the value of personal experience. In her teaching, hooks uses personal confession and autobiography to bring to the subject matter, students' experiences. She does this for many reasons. When much of human experience is theorized, especially those of women and ethnic and racial minorities in the United States, confession and memory serve to validate students as individuals in a real world. It places students in multiple contexts and not in reference to, nor makes them solely the objects of, the dominant culture. Most importantly, given their feminist grounding, these techniques politicize personal experience. Students' identities in context, are reinforced as real, appropriate, essential, significant and of great consequence.

Can hooks' notion of pedagogical revolution eclipse Dewey's? As stated previously, it seems that successful revolutions eclipse reigning opinions and beliefs. Does hooks' radical feminist pedagogy have the necessary elements for success?

What we see very easily is that hooks dramatically and purposely takes a political position, while Dewey leaves us without a specific political agenda, hooks' pedagogical position is clear, and though as a result of intense investigation we can submit that Dewey's pedagogy had political implications, we can't really say that he made explicit, any particular political objective. Dewey's desire for social change, if we recall, was not characteristically civic or political. We know that hooks' revolution is seeking feminist ends, but can we say that Dewey

had this or that specific political end in mind? hooks' pedagogical foundation is feminism, an explicitly political condition. Dewey's pedagogical grounding, on the other hand, is his ethic of democracy, a virtue or conscience lacking a partisan conviction.

The power to change the social world which Dewey confers on teachers is in a way, the result of Dewey's dismissal of external forces. Now, he doesn't and can't negate out-of-school experience and influences. But by saying that the external, out-of-school influences are alleviated and righted by teachers, he insinuates that life's contextual realities are awkward, or at least problematic to the pursuit of real knowing and learning. hooks, on the other hand, realizes and acknowledges the power of the worlds external to our classrooms and takes a firmer, more radical, more definitive stance. Teachers, in hooks' mind, can influence, can guide, but they invite the outside realities into the classroom. It is only through this inclusion that hooks reasons teachers can match the strength of patriarchal worlds. It is almost as if hooks arms teachers more effectively. hooks knows that in order to have real "transformative power" in our worlds, teachers must resist, confront, rebel, and must do so blatantly.

Dewey makes his teachers a bit too passive for any real effect to be felt. Yes, Dewey's pedagogical stance is subversive but it is not forceful, nor is it insistent. hooks' teachers, on the other hand, lead a public and unshrouded charge.

So here we see after some consideration that though we can reappropriate some of Dewey's pedagogical theory, we must be aware that it can only take us so far towards our feminist educational aims. Had we reappropriated Dewey's "wait-and-see," gradual and passive

pedagogical posture, we would most likely find ourselves living the same fate as Dewey: never really taking hold, never really changing society. This fate, I'll submit, is not a feminist desired end. It was through "stopping" and "seeing" Dewey that we were able to consider what is valuable to our cause, and what we can do without. We did not dismiss the valuable solely because of the aspects we deemed worthless.

But what if, in our efforts to be truly revolutionary, we harden our theory and practice, becoming rigid and unresponsive?

The obvious matter is that the social world is in a state of flux, and... we go on teaching as if the Constitution and our forefathers had finally determined all important social and political questions (Ratner, 1939, p. 690)

There is the need for change and flexibility in our educational theory and practice. For educators, the message is that a fixed pedagogical ethos freezes the status quo in time, and in doing so, preserves it beyond its usefulness. The absence of change and flexibility in pedagogy has a limiting effect and herein lies our second hazard.

Maintaining a rigid pedagogical posture preserves tradition which can ultimately limit our students personally, intellectually, socially. Theory must be flexible if it is to respond to our changing needs and consciousness. Just as hooks advises the feminist educator to reassess pedagogical tools with each new group of students, so must the theory grounding her practice adjust.

This is not to say, however, that as feminist educational theorists we should allow our pedagogy to be co-opted or lose its fundamental conscience. We should view ambiguity and doubt within our theory or

approaching our theory, as an opportunity for inquiry and growth. We should not stiffen our theory, outlook, or the scope of our vision, for fear of losing theoretical integrity. We lose nothing when we engage in critical consideration and inquiry. If we genuinely care about our theory and our practice, we will welcome those opportunities to explore and expand. If we engage in an open and free exchange of ideas, our pedagogy stands ready to move forward. A pedagogy resistant to change and dispositionally recalcitrant will surely fall prey to the dangers of rigidity.

Especially for feminist pedagogy, the prospect of rigidity is problematic. If the primary value of feminist pedagogy is that it can empower us all, boys and girls, women and men, and if our educational aims are to better understand ourselves, our humanity and our experiences, then feminist educational theory and practice can not determine its boundaries. We should view feminist pedagogy as developmentally infinite. Whether as theorists we stay engaged in a conversation or critical inquiry with mainstream theories, or we consider new and yet uncharted theoretical terrain, we, because we *are* our theory, will stand ready for positive, progressive change. Armed with the tools of critical inquiry and consideration, ours will not be an ill-fated experiment.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

He pointed to the dark valley in the distance. "If you don't feel that it is your time yet, don't keep your appointment," he went on. "Nothing is gained by forcing the issue. If you want to survive you must be crystal clear and deadly sure of yourself." (Castaneda, 1972, p. 268)

The end of Carlos Castaneda's journey turns out to be the beginning. From Don Juan he learns that he has to be "deadly sure of [him]self" before he can stop the world and learn to see. The lesson for us, I imagine, is the same. Are we, as feminist educational theorists, "deadly sure" that our theory and its foundation are secure enough to engage in critical dialogue and consideration with mainstream epistemology? We stand to be changed by this particular journey. Can we confidently begin this journey? Or will we discover, as Castaneda does, that it is not time yet, that we are not ready to keep our appointment?

I'll answer these questions in this way: If feminism requires that we fully understand and identify the distortions of androcentric epistemologies, then we have no choice but to learn how to see that world more clearly. If feminism is itself a way of asking questions, then we must be ready to ask those questions of all ideologies by confidently taking part in journeys of critical consideration. If a focus of feminism is every person's self-development, then as a living theory, it too, must grow and evolve. Unlike Castaneda, feminism can not decline the invitation to a journey to "see" the world. What we see will challenge feminism. But how else will we learn to ask significant questions and suggest new and far-reaching directions? We must begin somewhere.

If we are to be truly revolutionary with our teaching, I believe that we must instill in our students and our colleagues, the value of shared purposes, the worth of interdependency. This feminist consideration of John Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality suggests that we begin with a reappropriation of these concepts. I



submit, that by reappropriating Dewey's concepts of the individual and sociality and using them as feminist pedagogical anchors, we can take possession of the cognitive powers of interdependence. Further, as we have seen through our consideration of models of sociality, it is through a feminist model of friendship that we can begin to achieve that interdependence. Engaged in such friendships is engagement in full and free interactions and in affective relations. Through these interactions, I believe, we become better able to broaden and heighten our intellectual abilities. In effect, friendship becomes both the means and aim of our feminist education. It is through friendship then, that we can engage in good feminist education.

Mujéres, a no dejar que el peligro del viaje y la inmensidad del territorio nos asuste - a mirar hacia adelante y a abrir paso en el monte (Women, let's not the danger of the journey and the vastness of the territory scare us - let's look forward and open paths in these woods). (Morága & Anzaldúa, 1983, p. v.)

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