JOHN DEWEY'S CONCEPT OF THE DOGMATIC THINKER: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHER*

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Introduction

Those who are familiar with the writings of John Dewey know that he had a great deal to say about thinking. Indeed, two of his most respected books are entitled How We Think (1933) and Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (1938). In these and other works, he described several different kinds of desirable and undesirable thinking and the attitudes and habits that are often associated with them. He also wrote extensively of people who think in these different ways and characterized them according to the dominant traits and attitudes that he thought he could identify. For example, there are people who can be described as uncritical thinkers (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 16), rudimentary thinkers (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 206), empirical thinkers (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 192), and dogmatic thinkers (MW4, 188). His preferred kind of thinker, however, is the reflective one (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 3) and received the most attention by him and students of his thought. Relatively speaking, it is safe to say that the other types of thinkers have been neglected.

Perhaps it is appropriate that the "reflective," "scientific," "experimental," or "laboratory thinker" has been more carefully examined by scholars since Dewey himself devoted much of his time to describing and cultivating this kind of person. This focus is also somewhat understandable if one assumes that it is more important to understand and practice reflective thinking than to understand and avoid dogmatic thinking. Of course, studying one of the two sets of activities—reflective thinking or dogmatic thinking—easily leads into a study of the other. Ideally, engaging in reflective thinking diminishes dogmatic thinking. On the other hand, one may argue that understanding and avoiding dogmatic thinking enhances reflective thinking in ways that studying reflective thinking alone—if such is even possible—does not. Thus, studying either kind of thinker may advance an understanding and development of the reflective thinker. Understanding those practices and attitudes that Dewey wanted educators to discourage may help them facilitate an understanding and practice of those qualities and attitudes he wanted to nurture.

To appreciate the import of Dewey's objections to dogmatic thinking, one need only study a few of his works, such as How We Think or Democracy and Education. But studying only a few of his works could be somewhat misleading, for Dewey's adamant opposition to the dogmatic tendencies he identified in individuals, schools, and society probably needs to be seen in the wide-ranging and lifelong comments he made on the subject. He spoke scathingly of dogmatic opinions and propositions, be they assumptions (LW4, 146), preconceptions (LW11, 440), beliefs (MW4, 176), convictions (Dewey, 1934, p. 319), assertions (MW13, 57, 321), or denials (MW13, 57, 221). He opposed dogmatism whether a person was arguing for or against a position. Dewey, therefore, had little tolerance for the sets of dogmatic statements he found in metaphysics (LW6, 303), social philosophy (LW13, 320), moral theory (MW11, 348; MW14, 147; LW4, 32), history (LW11, 61), religion (MW4, 166), theology (MW4, 30, 228, 242; LW2, 86, 166, 388), politics (MW3, 200; MW12, 171), and pedagogy (MW13, 321). He was equally unfriendly to dogma and the dogmatic attitude found in or associated with specific creeds (MW13, 304; LW11, 460) and theories (Dewey, 1938/1963, p. 22).

Dogmatic thinking that was rooted in laissez-faire individualism also concerned him (MW11, 141; LW11, 366). He specifically mentioned dogma in connection with thinking about natural rights (MW13, 310), self-interest (MW13, 339), the omnicompetent individual (MW13, 338), self-love (MW14, 97), perfect social unity (LW1, 311), social predestination (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 317), ends in view (EW1, 85), and ipse dixitism (MW14, 147). He also noted scientific (LW6, 275), theoretical (LW7, 317), political (Dewey,

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1916/1966, p. 117), Christian (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 46), and democratic dogma (MW13, 338). He was careful, moreover, to warn of dogmatic attitudes (MW12, 262; LW2, 8), appeals to authority (LW11, 454, 456, 459), habits of mind (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 16), and habits of thought (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 39). Thus, in A Common Faith, he argued, "There is no special subject-matter of belief that is sacrosanct" (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 39). Science, religion, politics, culture, art, education, and democracy were open to his intellectual analysis. Facts, speculations, theories, ideologies, and practices had nowhere to hide.

His harshest words, however, may have been directed at dogmatic philosophy or philosophical dogmas (MW12, 222). He claimed, on one occasion, that the "dogma of [the] immaculate conception of philosophical systems" was particularly troublesome (LW6, 17) and that philosophical dogmas retard democracy and its accompanying fruit (LW15, 274). He was comfortable describing absolutists (LW16, 355), Marxists (LW11, 439), and socialists (LW6, 170) as dogmatists and declaring that materialism (MW2, 194), positivism (MW2, 209), skepticism (MW2, 234), rationalism (MW7, 220), fundamentalism, (LW5, 72), progressivism, and traditionalism (Dewey, 1938/1963, p. 22) were—or could be—unquestioning, unreflective systems of thought. While Dewey is probably noted for opposing traditional and conservative ideas and social proposals, he also objected to the dogmas of the left (LW16, 362) and communism, claiming that the latter's position was based upon "a body of dogmas as fixed and unyielding as that of any church" (LW5, 356) and that its faith was a dogmatic, unthinking one (LW9, 92). His criticism of classicism in art was no less stinging: "Its vice, as an 'ism', is that it turns the mind to what is given; the given is taken as if it were eternal and wholly separate from generation and movement" (Dewey, 1958, p. 377).

In the spirit of an experimentalist, Dewey claimed in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry:

> The "settlement" of a particular situation by a particular inquiry is no guarantee that that settled conclusion will always remain settled. The attainment of settled beliefs is a progressive matter; there is no belief so settled as not to be exposed to further inquiry. It is the convergent and cumulative effect of continued inquiry that defines knowledge in its general meaning. In scientific inquiry, the criterion of what is taken to be settled, or to be knowledge, is being so settled that it is available as a resource in further inquiry; not being settled in such a way as not to be subject to revision in further inquiry. (LW12, 16)

Logic was not for Dewey, as it was for Russell and many at the time, either a branch of mathematics or the study of propositions. Rather, as his use of "thinking" and "inquiry" in his titles suggests, it was a larger study of "how we think," particularly when we are doing it well and being successful as thinkers. This interest in the larger context of thought perhaps explains why he was essentially at cross purposes with and outside the mainstream of philosophical studies of logic. One interesting point that he made about dogmatism in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (1938), is that the experimental method leads to "hypotheses directive of practical operations, not truths or dogmas" (LW12, 505).

Dewey, then, thought dogmatic thinking both dangerous and widespread. But why, given his admiration for democracy, confidence in education, and faith in humanity, did he believe that dogmatic thinking was so prevalent? Why does it exist? How is it cultivated? His answer to these questions is multifaceted and involves, in part, his understanding of philosophical anthropology, evolutionary science, and social theory.

The Causes of Dogmatism

Identifying causes is a risky, perplexing endeavor. The difficulty is in part attributable to the complexity of causation and is compounded by the fact that some interpret causes in a mechanistic fashion. There is also the problem of our seeing with particular lenses and offering explanations that are somewhat perception determined, because, as Dewey noted, no one ever brings a virgin mind to any intellectual problem (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 125). Even if we follow Dewey's advice and are "reborn into the life of intelligence" as he understood the matter, it is not clear that this problem is overcome (MW15, 7). Indeed, there are those who argue that we would merely be trading our meta-narratives for his worldview.

Regardless of our conclusions concerning the aforementioned questions, it is important to recognize that Dewey saw multiple causes of dogmatism and dogmatic thinking, including natural inclinations, cultural conditions, emotional needs, unsettling circumstances, instinctive tendencies, organizational success, and empirical thinking. Thus, he made numerous observations about the etiology of dogmatism. To begin with, he seemed to believe that

there are natural propensities as well as cultural conditions that influence people to avoid thinking reflectively. He asserted in Experience and Education (1938): "Mankind likes to think in terms of extreme opposites. It is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of Either-Ors, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities" (Dewey, 1938/1963, p. 17). In How We Think (1933), we find statements such as there is a "primitive credulity" and "a natural tendency to believe anything unless there is overpowering evidence to the contrary" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 24). Earlier in Democracy and Education (1916), Dewey had argued that natural inclinations drive people to irrational, unscientific thinking and that such thinking seeks the comfort and support of dogma:

Men still want the crutch of dogma, of fixed beliefs by authority, to relieve them of the trouble of thinking and the responsibility of directing their activity by thought. They tend to confine their own thinking to a consideration of which one among the revival systems of dogma they will accept. (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 339)

Dewey, of course, was not confounded or dismayed by natural propensities and argued in "Does Human Nature Change?" (1938):

> If human nature is unchangeable, then there is no such thing as education and all our efforts to educate are doomed to failure. For the very meaning of education is modification of native human nature in formation of those new ways of thinking, of feeling, of desiring, and of believing that are foreign to raw human nature. (LW13, 292)

Of course, if the tendency to dogmatic thinking is innate, the conditions and occasions which give rise to its exercise are environmental and so open to change. In The Quest for Certainty (1929), Dewey identified social factors that influence people to be dogmatic. In particular, he observed that living in an unpredictable, even precarious, world has "compelled" people to look for security. In fact, Dewey said that "perfect certainty is what man wants" (LW4, 17, 32), in part, because humankind has a "need for security in the results of action" (LW4, 32). The need, therefore, easily leads to "acceptance of dogmatic rules as bases of conduct in education, morals, and social matters" (LW4, 32). In turn, orthodox or traditional thought of all kinds contributes to the growth of dogmatism (LW4, 35; LW8, 271).

For Dewey, the desire for certainty, unpredictable environmental conditions, and human nature seem to collaborate to shove a person toward thinking dogmatically. Dewey elaborated on these forces and added another—the tendency to confuse a feeling of certitude with a public rationale for certainty—when he wrote:

> Tendency to premature judgment, jumping at conclusions, excessive love of simplicity, making over of evidence to suit desire, taking the familiar for the clear, etc., all spring from confusing the feeling of certitude with a certified situation. Thought hastens toward the settled and is only too likely to force the pace. The natural man dislikes the dis-ease [in original] which accompanies the doubtful and is ready to take almost any means to end it. Uncertainty is got rid of by fair means and foul. Long exposure to danger breeds an overpowering love of security. Love for security, translated into a desire not to be disturbed and unsettled, leads to dogmatism, to acceptance of beliefs upon authority, to intolerance and fanaticism on one side and to irresponsible dependence and sloth on the other. (LW4, 181, 182)

On the partially related topic of prejudice, Dewey elaborated on his view of human nature, contending that "the instinct of people" expresses itself in "foolish and unwise judgment" and "precedes ... prevent[s] and distort[s]" genuine judgment. Consequently, he concluded that prejudice divides nations, races, people of different color, religions, sects, classes, groups (LW5, 396-397). His words and commitments are dramatic: the "irrational part of our nature" or the "old animal barbarian" struggles against civilization (LW5, 397). When the "old animal barbarian" combines with the fear of losing prized beliefs, the mind is clearly hampered in its development (LW5, 118). With this orientation, it is easy to see why he would conclude that "the mass of people refuse to look facts in the face and prefer to feed on illusions" (LW9, 77).

Even in better circumstances, however, people may be influenced to think dogmatically. Successful leaders may intentionally or unintentionally nurture a cult of the "infallibility of leadership" and, thereby, cultivate dogmatism in their organizations (LW9, 91). Even great thinkers, organizational leaders or not, may have their ideas "frozen" in time by those who admire their ideas and may eventually have their creative and unorthodox insights turned into "dogma" that cannot be challenged by present or later generations (LW13, 320). Moreover, Dewey maintained that what he named "empirical thinking"—ad hoc thinking rooted

in personal experience which is not reflectively and critically analyzed—has three basic disadvantages, including its "most harmful" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 193) tendency to "engender mental inertia and dogmatism" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 192). In turn, intellectual "laziness, unjustifiable conservatism, are its probable accompaniments" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 193). Furthermore, an unreflective emphasis on past experience often means that failures to agree with the usual order are slurred over and cases of successful confirmation are exaggerated. Since the mind naturally demands some principle of continuity, some connecting link between separate facts and causes, forces are arbitrarily invented for that purpose. Fantastic and mythological explanations are resorted to in order to supply missing links. (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 194)

But people may also tend to be dogmatic because their experience is too parochial or limited or is not informed by discussing ideas with others. He asserted in the essay "Context and Thought" (1931) that:

> Dogmatism, adherence to a school, partisanship, class-exclusiveness, desire to show off and to impress, are all of them manifestations of disrespect for experience: for that experience which one makes one's own through sympathetic intercommunication. They are, as it were, deliberate perpetuations of the restrictions and perversions of personal experience. (LW6, 21)

If dogmatism is as important as Dewey claimed, but largely avoidable if conditions are right, we seem well advised to understand more than its dangers and etiology. A request for a clarification of the nature of dogmatic thinking, then, seems eminently reasonable: What does it mean to be a dogmatic thinker or to think dogmatically? What kind of thinking should educators and schools then discourage? How can we recognize the characteristics of the type of thinking that Dewey so greatly disliked?

The Nature of Dogmatic Thinking

While there have probably always been people who defended the educational and social value of dogma and dogmatic thinking for social, religious, and political reasons, Dewey was not one of them. He consistently criticized both from his earliest through his later writings. The reasons for his critical opinion have been partially implied heretofore, but understanding more about his view of the nature of dogmatic thinking will further clarify why he objected so strenuously to it.

The Roots of Dewey's View

Writing in 1891, around the time he was abandoning many features of his Christian faith (Ryan, 1995, p. 29), Dewey indirectly revealed some criteria for understanding and describing dogmatic thinking. While not utilizing the words dogmatic thinking, Dewey wrote:

> It is hardly necessary, I suppose, to profess the deepest respect for the Golden Rule, but this is not inconsistent with recognizing that if it were not held open to reflective criticism, to analysis of meaning and bearing, it would surely degenerate into a mere external command. That it, or any other rule, may be a workable tool, that it may give aid in a specific case, it must have life and spirit. What can give it the life and spirit necessary to make it other than a cramped and cramping petrification except the continued free play of intelligence upon it? (EW3, 101-102)

In this early statement, Dewey appears to have attributed four qualities to the kind of thinking he later termed dogmatic: 1) it does not allow reflective criticism of cherished beliefs, 2) it does not allow ongoing analysis of ideas for their meaning and relevance, 3) it does not nurture internalized and reflective regulations, and 4) it has a stymieing and deadening influence on intelligence. Conversely, Dewey seems to have believed that reflective thinking may (1) be consistent with holding a deep respect for religious and other rules of conduct, 2) involve a reflective criticism of the most revered beliefs, and 3) entail a free play of the intellectual abilities.

In 1893, writing for the Monthly Bulletin of the Students' Christian Association of the University of Michigan, he revealed more of his thinking about dogmatism, religion, and philosophy when he argued that religion and all other aspects of life are legitimate fields of investigation for the philosopher. He also suggested a line of division between doing philosophy and scientific inquiry and thinking dogmatically:

> Religion is one phase of all our human experience, and hence is in the region of philosophic investigation. As soon as any fact of life is said to be outside scientific investigation, philosophy is no more and dogmatism has begun. Religion is the subject-matter of philosophy the same as anything else is. Either theology and philosophy have no relation, or theology is philosophy. It is the business of philosophy to go on till it has got to the radical, living unity, which it calls God. From the standpoint of philosophy no two things can do the

> same work. So far as any one sets out to be a philosopher, and sets aside any portion of life which he says is entirely beyond further interpretation and knowledge, he fails to accomplish his end. He may be much better than a philosopher; I do not want to argue that question. Philosophy acknowledges nothing outside or above it. (EW4, 366)

This fully packed quotation tells us a great deal about the young Dewey and his view of dogmatism. In it, he seems to have laid out the ground for positions he would later develop more fully. He believed that certain claims, particularly assertions such as 1) a belief is beyond the scope of scientific inquiry, 2) there is nothing new to learn about a subject, and 3) there are not any legitimate and alternative interpretations of controversial matters, are rooted in dogmatic thinking. This stance may illuminate in part why Dewey moved from idealism to instrumentalism, supernaturalism to naturalism, and theism to atheism. The particular manifestations of the former three isms that he encountered apparently left him intellectually and emotionally dissatisfied.

In his middle years, Dewey's ideas about the nature of dogmatic thinking seem to have been less systematical than implicit in his treatment of many different subjects, sprinkling brief comments and insights throughout his publications. His criticisms were numerous but, if his ideas about dogmatic thinking were evolving, his opposition to it was not. He claimed, on one occasion, that there is a tendency for dogmatists to multiply conceptual distinctions within their dogmas (MW1, 155) and seemed to suggest that there are degrees and different kinds of dogmatism. He spoke of people being "dogmatic in the extreme" (MW1, 155) and the danger of "undue dogmatism" (MW2, 58). Subsequently, in both his middle and later works, he used such adjectives as "hard" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 39), "old" (LW4, 153), "rigid," "authoritative," "irresponsible and indiscriminate," "absolute," "traditional" (MW12, 163, 171, 222, 267; MW15, 47; LW5, 28), "harsh" (LW1, 322), "extraneous" (LW2, 24), and "dead" (LW17, 530) to describe dogma and dogmatism.

One shift in his thinking about dogma and the dogmatist may have occurred when he wrote of "brute dogma" or "something to which no canon of verification can be applied" (MW4, 69). The assertion is open to at least two interpretations. First, he may have been arguing that a belief frequently held by people—namely that certain ideas are outside the realm of public inquiry and therefore sacrosanct—opens them to the charge of being dogmatic. If a person claims his or her ideas are beyond the realm of reflection, we have grounds for believing he or she is a dogmatist. This is a familiar argument, i.e., dogmatists sometimes do not want to argue the merits of their beliefs so they think or claim that their ideas cannot be questioned by anyone. But, second, he may have been making a different claim, namely that the dogmatist's beliefs actually are outside the realm of public, debatable criteria for evaluating warranted or unwarranted assertions. If he was making the later claim, he was essentially making a claim about the verifiability of certain beliefs, arguing that some thinkers make dogmatic assertions that cannot be supported and proved but neither can they be discredited and disproved. Being impossible to substantiate or refute, they are essentially private. These private beliefs, so it may be argued, may be held reflectively and flexibly or unreflectively and inflexibly. Holding beliefs that cannot be supported or discredited, therefore, does not appear to be dogmatic per se. So it appears that the genuinely dogmatic person would have to hold dogmatically his or her beliefs regardless of whether they are private or public beliefs.

In addition, Dewey described what may be viewed as the evolutionary or progressive nature of dogma. His own words are that an idea may sometimes "harden into formal dogma" (LW17, 528) and that "old knowledge" may degenerate "into dogmatic doctrines received on authority, or ... decay into superstition and old wives' [sic] tales" (Dewey, 1920/1957, p. 34). When ideas evolve or devolve into dogmas, of course, the result is a fixity of ideas (MW1, 157). In time, a person's dogmatic thinking probably evolves beyond specific, isolated beliefs into a "closed system," a position that is comprehensive and resistant to external questioning (MW2, 295).

Perhaps in anticipation of more recent accounts of the blinding effects of the author's, reader's, and viewer's perspectives, Dewey described the dogmatic thinker as a person who uses her or his "closed system" to give a "prompt interpretation of every new shock into terms of some well established habit" (MW4, 119), refuses to "use intelligence" in evaluating personal beliefs (MW7, 61), upholds a position "at all cost" (MW13, 34), assumes many "unquestioned" propositions (MW4, 96), and refuses to make causal connections that are antithetical to one's system of thought (MW8, 140). Ultimately, he contended that

the dogmatic thinker resists open, public, impartial, and multi-perceptual examinations of her or his ideas. Thus, it is easy to understand why Dewey would apply what he said about religious dogmatists to non-religious ones:

It is the essence of all dogmatic faiths to hold that any such "showdown" [the testing of claims by "common tests"] is sacrilegious and perverse. The characteristic of religion, from their point of view, is that it is—intellectually—secret, not public; peculiarly revealed, not generally known; authoritatively declared, not communicated and tested in ordinary ways. (MW4, 172-173)

Arguing against some of the tendencies of certain communists and tenets of communism in "Why I am Not a Communist" (1934), Dewey made a couple of exciting distinctions between the dogmatic and the reflective thinker. First, he implied that the dogmatic thinker is so steeped in her or his own beliefs that the facts cannot be examined without "changing [them] ... to suit ... special purposes" (LW9, 92). On the contrary, the reflective thinker should be characterized by "fair-play, elementary honesty in the representation of facts and especially of the opinions of others." Moreover, he insisted that these qualities cannot be simply dismissed as "bourgeois virtues" (LW9, 94). In an essay published in the same year, Dewey argued further that the scientific mind needs to be cultivated along with the learning of information in schools. Students need to be brought to the point that they "adopt into the very make-up of their minds those attitudes of open-mindedness, intellectual integrity, observation and interest in testing their opinions and beliefs that are characteristic of the scientific attitude" (LW9, 99).

The Development of Dewey's View

In Dewey's later writings, he reiterated many of his earlier thoughts about the dogmatic thinker (such as her or his "unwillingness to submit a case to inquiry" [LW2, 216]) as well as amplified his concept by noting some of its complexities. He seems to shift the emphasis from the way a person holds a specific belief to a person's disposition toward beliefs in general and questioning attitude toward life. For instance, he elucidated his idea by combining the word dogmatic with other terms, such as "dogmatic and uncritical" (LW1, 303) and "fixed and dogmatic" (LW2, 8). Similarly, he spoke of literalism and dogmatism (LW2, 166). He reiterated that the dogmatic thinker is likely to hold to "unexamined fundamental premises [and] unquestioned assumption[s]" and added that she or he may be "hostile to the theories" that run counter to personal beliefs (LW3, 319). He also spoke of the "dogmatic attitude" (LW2, 8) and the "hopelessly committed" (LW3, 305), implying, perhaps, that there are emotional inclinations and attitudinal tendencies which support the cognitive tendencies of the dogmatic thinker.

Scattered additional ideas in his writings seem to form no particular gestalt until they are placed in the development of his overall thinking. He spoke of "an unquestioning [emphasis added] dogmatism" (LW7, 268) that seems to suggest that not only do dogmatic thinkers not allow others to question their prized opinions but that the dogmatic thinker does not question them either, suggesting that the dogmatic thinker is not inclined to live an examined life in important respects and areas of thought. In this case, the idea that dogmatism is fatal to inquiry can take on a double meaning: the intellectual lives of both the friendly inquirer and the committed dogmatist are mortally wounded (LW16, 325). Unhappily, the thinking of the dogmatist in this situation can never be modified (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 39) and she or he is without intellectual power for growth (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 57).

But it is not only individuals' lives that are in question. Dewey also believed that dogmatism, like skepticism, is an emotional indulgence that serves neither the individual nor society well (LW4, 182), and that it "separates means from ends" (LW11, 259) as well as arrests "choice of means" (LW13, 321). In 1937, Dewey moved beyond the idea of dogmatism arresting the choice of means to claiming that testing hypotheses is also negatively influenced:

> All dogmatism is by its nature an economy of scarcity, scarcity in forming a hypothesis and entertaining alternative ideas. Any liberal creed, on the other hand, must be an economy of abundance in a freedom of developing hypotheses. (LW17, 444)

Perhaps the events leading to World War II influenced him to see as political and social what might have remained largely a logical and epistemological point. In 1938, Dewey may have made his best known summative statement on the dogmatic thinker in Experience and Education. In this work, he argued against the weaknesses of both progressivism and traditionalism, noting that either can be based upon dogma and dogmatic thinking. It is not the belief

which is dogmatic but how it is held and the attitude and disposition behind it. The dogmatic thinker, in short, is any person who is not inclined to question his fundamental or most prized opinions, tenets, theories, feelings, beliefs, practices, and convictions:

It is not too much to say that an educational philosophy which professes to be based on the idea of freedom may become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which is reacted against. For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles. (Dewey, 1938/1963, p. 22)

To obtain an even clearer picture of Dewey's concept of the dogmatic thinker, it is useful to note some of the terms, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors he associated with this kind of person. At a minimum, his derogatory and pejorative associations are enlightening. To begin, there is the association of dogmatism with "narrow-minded, partisanship" and "provincialism" (EW3, 52-53). Similarly, he appeared to associate particular orientations—orthodox interpretations and schools of thought—with dogmatism or dogmatic tendencies (MW4, 82, 92) or with the strong possibility of doctrines becoming dogmas after they are handed down from one generation to another (MW6, 296). Moreover, he seemed to throw dogmas, superstitions, chance opinions (MW8, 62), cultic thought (LW1, 53) and guesswork together (MW10, 327).

His idea of associating certain frameworks with dogmatism went further, however, as he called intellectual paranoia (LW1 229) and intolerance the children of dogmatism (MW13, 308). He also mentioned "blind empiricism," "worship of fact-finding" (LW17, 445), "rigidity, prejudice, caprice" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 124), "ignorance, ... routine, tradition" (LW6, 146), and the doctrinaire (LW9, 68) in the same context with dogma, dogmatism, or the dogmatic thinker. In "Intelligence and Power" (1934), Dewey charged that dogmatism was "reinforced by the weight of unquestioned custom and tradition, the disguised or open play of class interests, dependence upon brute force and violence" (LW9, 108). In addition to these allies, the dogmatic thinker, Dewey believed, is strengthened in his or her opposition to the scientific attitude by "prejudice, ... class interest, external authority, nationalistic and racial sentiment, and similarly powerful agencies" (LW13, 274) and "the pressure of immediate circumstances" (LW13, 283). The allies, companions, and friends of the dogmatic thinker, therefore, were something less than desirable characters in Dewey's mind.

Dogmatism in Education

Dewey had a strong faith in both humanity and education. This "faith in education," he believed,

> signifies nothing less than belief in the possibility of deliberate direction of the formation of human disposition and intelligence. It signifies a belief that it is possible to know definitely just what specific conditions and forces operate to bring about just such and such specific results in character, intellectual attitude and capacity. (MW13, 318)

Yet, he warned in "Education as a Religion" (1922), that faith "becomes insincere and credulity injurious ... when aspiration and credence are converted into dogmatic assertion" (MW13, 321). Accordingly, he objected to a "dogmatism and intolerance" that forbid discussion of ideas (LW14, 234) and a pedagogy that always pushes for "a certain view as the correct one" and has a "tendency to develop closed minds" (LW9, 160). He farther warned against "an atmosphere of fundamentalism" in scientific, economic, and political matters, arguing that such an "atmosphere has penetrated the schools" (LW9, 162).

Unsurprisingly, Dewey expressed great concern about and disdain for dogmatism in all education and in schooling in particular. Speaking of the dogmas that are passed on in schools and educator preparation programs and the classroom teacher's difficult, complex, and critical roles in directing, stimulating, informing, and feeding the student, he cautioned:

> The teacher ... has to avoid all dogmatism in instruction, for such a course gradually but surely creates the impression that everything important is already settled and nothing remains to be found out. He has to know how to give information when curiosity has created an appetite that seeks to be fed, and how to abstain from giving information when, because of lack of a questioning attitude, it would be a burden and would dull the sharp edge of the inquiring spirit. (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 40)

Dewey also warned saying:

> In some educational dogmas and practices, the very idea of training the mind seems to be hopelessly confused with that of a drill which hardly touches mind at all—or touches it for the worse—since it is wholly taken up with training skill in external execution. This method reduces the 'training' of human beings to the level of

> animal training. Practical skill, modes of effective technique, can be intelligently, non-mechanically used only when intelligence has played a part in their acquisition. (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 63)

Dewey specifically attacked dogmatic instruction when he found it in moral education (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 66) and claimed that such instruction destroyed "the spirit of wonder" in children (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 39). Consequently, he asserted that "material should be supplied by way of stimulus, not with dogmatic finality and rigidity" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 258), while recognizing that the teacher

> has to protect the growing person from those conditions which occasion a mere succession of excitements which have no cumulative effect, and which, therefore, make an individual either a lover of sensations and sensationalism or leave him blasé and uninterested. (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 40)

Dewey also appeared to be concerned with the potential of dogmatism in both progressivism and traditionalism when he wrote "Progressive Education and the Science of Education" (1928) (Archambault, 1964/1974, p. 169ff). He warned against a "closed orthodoxy," "a rigid orthodoxy, a standardized set of beliefs to be accepted by all" (Archambault, p. 172), claiming that closed-mindedness about educational questions means that different sciences of education

> are not only possible but also much needed. Of course such a statement goes contrary to the idea that science by its very nature is a single and universal system of truths. But this idea need not frighten us. Even in the advanced sciences, like mathematics and physics, advance is made by entertaining different points of view and hypotheses, and working upon different theories. (Archambault, pp. 171-172)

And he added in familiar words that since:

> there is no one thing which is beyond question ... and since there is no likelihood that there will be until society and hence schools have reached a dead monotonous uniformity of practice and aim, there cannot be one single science. (Archambault, p. 172)

Dewey had additional concerns about dogma and dogmatic thinkers in the field of education in ways that touch the teacher's own professional development as much as the growth and education of students. Among these is the concern that dogma, in social settings, may stymie reflection, intelligence, and choice of means or methods in pursuing certain ends or goals. In particular, he contended, "Every arrest of intelligence (and every form of social dogma) obstructs and finally suppresses free consideration and choice of means" (LW6, 290). He saw intelligence similarly arrested if a specific kind of indoctrination became a tool or means of a dogmatic educator or an educator in a dogma-driven education system. Arguing that the resulting kind of indoctrination is

> the systematic use of every possible means to impress upon the minds of pupils a particular set of political and economic views to the exclusion of every other. This meaning is suggested by the word "inculcation," whose original signification was "to stamp in with the heel." This signification is too physical to be carried over literally. But the idea of stamping in is involved, and upon occasion does include physical measures. I shall discuss this view only as far as to state, in the first place, that indoctrination so conceived is something very different from education, for the latter involves, as I understand it, the active participation of students in reaching conclusions and forming attitudes. Even in the case of something as settled and agreed upon as the multiplication table, I should say if it is taught educatively, and not as a form of animal training, the active participation, the interest, reflection, and understanding of those taught are necessary. (LW11, 415)

Again, Dewey saw logic and epistemology entwined with social and political philosophy. In "Panel Discussion: Education Today," (1937), Dewey elaborated on his objections to indoctrination when he said:

> I do not think that indoctrination regarding a new social order is either desirable or possible. The wisest person in the world does not know what that new order is going to be, and the best way to get ready for it is to take care of the present. (LW11, 574)

He added:

> schools have been guilty of a great deal of indoctrination of a bad kind—indoctrination in nationalism, miscalled patriotism. Everybody ought to have public spirit, but the indoctrination of "patriotism" has given us a narrow, vicious type of nationalism and party strife. (LW11, 574-575)

In Liberalism and Social Action (1935), Dewey warned too of the dangers of "meeting dogmatism with dogmatism" (LW11, 58), propaganda (LW11, 51), and "the fruit of dogma," interestingly choosing as his

example belief in the inevitability of social progress (LW11, 55). In 1938, Dewey tied together some of his thoughts about propaganda, indoctrination, and dogma in a brief essay entitled, "What Is Social Study?" In the essay, he argued for the integration of studies and a social perspective within various studies rather than for discrete realms of inquiry, concluding that his argument

> has a definite bearing upon what is called indoctrination, or, if one prefer, teaching, with respect to preparation for a different social order. Social studies as an isolated affair are likely to become either accumulations of bodies of special factual information or, in the hands of zealous teachers, to be organs of indoctrination in the sense of propaganda for a special social end, accepted enthusiastically, perhaps, but still dogmatically. (LW13, 341)

Safeguards against the Dogmatic Thinker

Though he wrote of a utopia without schools, we might expect Dewey to recommend a society with schools and other educational entities that is ultimately antithetical to the dogmatic educator, teacher, politician, and parent. Unquestioningly, the dogmatic thinker would not be at home in Dewey's ideal society. But what can society do to inhibit the growth of dogmatic thinkers?

Of the many ways Dewey's society would guard itself against dogma, dogmatic education, and dogmatic thinkers there is one endeavor that supports and furthers all others, namely the unending pursuit of new information and understanding. More precisely, like Bacon before him, he believed that we must encourage new knowledge if for no other reason than to ensure that old knowledge does not become blinding beliefs:

> Continued progress in knowledge is the only sure way of protecting old knowledge from degeneration into dogmatic doctrines received on authority, or from imperceptible decay into superstition and old wives' [sic] tales. (Dewey, 1920/1957, p. 34)

In "The Intellectualist Criterion for Truth" (1907), Dewey argued that the "essential difference between truth and dogma" is that truth is "to some extent remade" while dogma is not (MW4, 74). "Indeed," he added, "it is only through such application and such remaking that truths retain their freshness and vitality" (MW4, 74). As a result,

> If we put ourselves in the attitude of a scientific inquirer in asking what is the meaning of truth per se, there spring up before us those ideas which are actively employed in the mastery of new fields, in the organization of new materials. (MW4, 74)

So we find that Dewey argued in favor of understanding the field of philosophy so that both professional and unofficial philosophers contributed to the development of society. What was needed was "the candor, courage and sympathetic insight of minds which move outside any technical fold," mind characterized by "a spirit free from petrification and wooden literalness" (LW3, 345). Overall, then, we find that he wanted society and schools to emphasize an instrumentalist view of truth (MW4, 75).

A second way of contributing to an overall answer to how we guard against becoming or cultivating dogmatic thinkers is to examine Dewey's notion of the reflective or experimental thinker or the activity of thinking. In "The Bearings of Pragmatism upon Education" (1908), he explained how his view of education could be operationalized and also clarified a crucial difference between the dogmatic and the experimental mind:

Instruction carried on upon this basis would teach the mind that all ideas, truths, theories, etc., are of the nature of working hypotheses. One of the chief obstacles to the progress of the race has been the dogmatic habit of mind, the belief that some principles and ideas have such a final value and authority that they are to be accepted without question and without revision. The experimental habit of mind, that which regards ideas and principles as tentative methods of solving problems and organizing data, is very recent. An education based upon the pragmatic conception would inevitably turn out persons who were alive to the necessity of continually testing their ideas and beliefs by putting them into practical application, and of revising their beliefs on the basis of the results of such application. (MW4, 188)

Thus, "the dogmatic character of the assumption" in what is thought to be known is abandoned in favor of "the experimentally tested character of the object known in consequence of reflection" (LW4, 146). Consequently, all claims become "hypothetical, non-dogmatic" (MW7, 144). It is easy to see why Dewey found it

> worth noting that the capacity (a) for regarding objects as mere symbols and (b) for employing symbols instrumentally furnishes the only safeguard against dogmatism, i.e., uncritical

> acceptance of any suggestion that comes to us vividly; and also that it furnishes the only basis for intelligently controlled experiments. (MW4, 95)

The stimulation, cultivation, and practice of reflection, becomes an important objective and means for the school and society: "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 9). But in nourishing reflection, it was important from Dewey's perspective or orientation that there must be a rejection of "formal logic, with its creed of absolute certitude," for it "abhors the very mention of adventure and risk, the life-blood of actual human thinking, which is aroused by doubts and questions, and proceeds by guesses, hypotheses and experiments, to a decision which is always somewhat arbitrary and subject to the risk of later revision" (MW7, 133).

If development of the reflective thinker is a safeguard against the emergence of the dogmatic thinker, then what some call academic freedom is a necessary condition. He argued before the American Federation of Teachers in 1929:

> Freedom of mind, freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, is education, and there is no education, no real education, without these elements of freedom. An attack upon what is called academic freedom is an attack upon intellectual integrity, and hence it is an attack upon the very idea of education and upon the possibility of education realizing its purpose. (LW5, 332)

Consequently, "the highest testimony that could be given to an educator" is that a student had an intellectual awakening, developed the "power to think," and had learned "to face facts and to face them regardless of the consequences" (LW5, 333). To develop in students "habits of doubt" through philosophical study, then, is to be admired (LW6, 272). Or we could say that the development of "the laboratory mind" or "attitude of experimentation," as Peirce would say, is a desired outcome of philosophical study and a deterrent to dogmatic thinking (LW6, 276). Importantly, Dewey believed that the experimental attitude views a generalization differently than the non-experimental perspective, seeing it as an instrument for further inquiry or as "a hypothesis, not a dogma" (LW7, 343).

The implications of these rather abstract thoughts and directives for the teacher are somewhat complex and not necessarily obvious. Certainly, an empty, knee-jerk skepticism, misinformed by some knowledge and the tools of inquiry, is no help. Indeed, it may engender anti-educative tendencies. But it is clear in Education and the Social Order that one goal is the development of

> a spirit of curiosity that will keep the student in an attitude of inquiry and of search for new light. If the result is simply to leave the student with the idea that there are two sides to the question and there is a great deal to be said on both sides, the effect may be only a new version of the right answer affair; there are now two sides instead of just one. But the open mind is a nuisance if it is merely passively open to allow anything to find its way into a vacuous mind behind the opening. It is significant only as it is the mark of an actively searching mind, one on the alert for further knowledge and understanding. The basic trouble with much teaching, which on some grounds is excellent, is that it does not create wants in the mind, wants in the sense of demands that will go on operating on their own initiative. (LW9, 180-181)

For Dewey, then, schools and educators in a democracy do have a role in countering and avoiding dogmatism:

> A democratic system of education cannot go the length of prescribing conclusions. It leaves no room for dogmatism in this sense. In the end it must rest its case on faith in intelligence. In some instances this faith will presumably be disappointed. With some persons the invitation to rely on their own intelligence will doubtless be met with refusal. With others the attempt to apply intelligence will perhaps result in serious perturbation or even panic; and the conclusion may be reached by these that intelligence, apart from some higher authority, is unequal to the task of devising acceptable principles of conduct. Still others may be expected to lay down certain absolutes, such as racial superiority or instincts, as a justification for undemocratic modes of behavior. If earnestness and sincerity may be presupposed, then all such persons must be accorded a full measure of freedom in thinking, unless our profession of faith in intelligence is to be reduced to a mere sham. A truly democratic system of education must be content to encourage proficiency and sincerity in thinking, amid surroundings that

> furnish social incentives, without assuming responsibility for the conclusions that may be reached. It will proceed in the faith that in the main, reliance on intelligence under such conditions will vindicate itself progressively by producing flexible personalities within a genuine democratic social order. (LW11, 559)

Given this perspective, we are not surprised to find that Dewey made several claims regarding the advantages of his general position and stated: "They rule out all dogmatism, all cocksureness, all appeal to authority and ultimate first truths; they keep alive the spirit of doubt as the spring of the work of continually renewed inquiry" (LW11, 484). Thus, he argued against censorship and for "the discussion of a wide variety of opinion, unorthodox and orthodox, with an intelligent teacher in the classroom" (LW14, 373). This kind of discussion, he felt, is

> the best protection the schools can afford against our students being later misled by unscrupulous propagandists of one doctrine or another. It is surely better for our young people to face controversial issues in the open atmosphere of the schoolroom, than to seek out what is forbidden in some dark, unwholesome corner. No thought is so dangerous as a forbidden thought. (LW14, 373)

In what may sound like—or even be—a contradiction, Dewey claimed that the "only ultimate protection against dogmatism" is a scientific attitude that displays a willingness to reconsider, to examine alternatives, and to question existing and emerging possibilities (LW17, 443). Or as he stated it elsewhere, "Absence of dogmatism and prejudice, presence of intellectual curiosity and flexibility, are manifest in the free play of the mind upon a topic" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 286). This scientific spirit, then, he characterized as a new approach to thinking which had already resulted in "new methods of inquiry and reflection [that] have become for the educated man today the final arbiter of all questions of fact, existence, and intellectual assent" (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 31). Ultimately, then, Dewey argued that each person should come to think for her- or himself although he noted that such language is tautological, for "any thinking is thinking for one's self" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 258).

Conclusions

We have now reached a point where we may wish to raise a variety of questions about and objections to Dewey's descriptions and claims about the dogmatic thinker. We may wish to query Dewey about, for instance, his (1) explanation of the causation of dogma and dogmatic thinking, (2) conceptual boundaries for the idea of a dogmatic thinker, (3) association of nearly the entire universe of negative outcomes with dogmatic thinking, (4) philosophical anthropology in view of his evolutionary theory, and (5) instructional practices given his pedagogical theory. But, most important, most basically we may wish to ask if Dewey made an absolute and, eventually, a dogma out of reflective thinking. Does his emphasis on the idea lead blindly to asking questions that minimize and depreciate intuitions, feelings, and instincts? Conversely, we may wish to apply and extend his views about dogmatic thinking, an atmosphere of fundamentalism, and cultic thought to present-day controversies. This study will conclude with an exploration of another question or related set of questions: Was Dewey himself a dogmatic thinker by his own definition? If he was, is being dogmatic an inescapable intellectual, attitudinal, and dispositional evil?

In answering these questions a person may somewhat easily draw the conclusion that he was a dogmatic writer if not thinker. He was fond of using terms and making statements that have a ring of absolutism and finality about them. He did, after all believe in what he advocated. He also wished to reform schools and society and to convince others that he was right. One could, by way of illustration, make an interesting study of how often and in what ways Dewey used the word only to describe the options he perceived on a variety of topics. Even in How We Think, he was not shy about using the four letter word: "Only when things about us have meaning for us, only when they signify consequences that can be reached by using them in certain ways, is ... deliberate control of them possible" (Dewey, 1933/1960, p. 18; see also LW1, 4). Many of his "only statements" appear to suggest that his ideas cannot be legitimately questioned or debated and that he is not asking himself questions that are unsettling.

His socially, economically, and politically oriented writings sometimes leave a similar impression. Steps to Economic Recovery (1933) illustrates this point in its opening paragraph: "I propose this evening to concentrate attention upon one step, a step absolutely fundamental to permanent recovery of the sick patient as distinct from remedies that dope the patient into a temporary hectic burst of activity; a step so simple and so basic as to be generally neglected" (LW9, 61; italics

added).

Indeed, Dewey could write on nearly any topic in each period of his life and leave the impression that he was dogmatic. Aware of this, he attempted to offset how his writings sounded to others by providing a rationale for what he considered merely a perception. As early as 1897 when writing "Ethical Principles Underlying Education," he said that the material in the essay was presented "in somewhat dogmatic shape" because of constraints of space and inadequate time to qualify his thoughts (Archambault, p. 108). Even so, he hoped that the shape of the discussion would not lead to the conclusion that he was "dogmatic in spirit" (Archambault, p. 109).

In the same year (1897), Dewey made both a space and a pedagogical defense of dogmatism, claiming that:

> From limitation of space, I can only state salient points quite dogmatically, and cannot undertake to prove what I have to say. But the dogmatic statement may at least serve to put the reader in possession of a point of view which is a possible alternative. (EW5, 413)

Dewey also attempted to disarm his readers when he admitted, as he did in 1906, that he "may seem dogmatic" about his theory of knowledge at times but really was not when his views were well understood (MW3, 112). Later (1922), he acknowledged that he wrote "somewhat dogmatically" when recapitulating his criticism of a position but did so because he was not making an argument as such for or against the position. He was merely synthesizing previously stated objections (MW13, 51). Four years later in 1926, he made a related admission saying that he had "written somewhat dogmatically" to save space (LW2, 68).

While writing against unquestioning ideas of human history in "Social Absolutism" (1921), Dewey went beyond a pedagogical defense of making a point to the reader to asserting that seeming to be dogmatic and, thereby, making a point might cause an opponent to question his own dogmatic or "absolutistic point of view" (MW13, 312). This defense sounds curiously like fighting "dogmatism with dogmatism" (LW11, 58). But fighting epistemological dogmatism with pedagogical dogmatism appears at least somewhat different from fighting epistemological dogmatism with another form of epistemological dogmatism. Conversely, pedagogical dogmatism seems to run some of the same risks as epistemological dogmatism under certain conditions: When a reader or listener is unaware of a writer's or speaker's intentions or teaching style she or he may be inclined to accept ideas dogmatically or, alternatively, reject them because of the writer's dogmatic tone.

Dewey, of course, was aware of the accusations of his critics as he showed in his defense of instrumentalism from Royce's charge of absolutism. In essence, he dismissed Royce's charge by saying that Royce's "own conception of instrumentalism is logically compatible only with absolutism" (MW7, 65) but that his viewpoint led to no such conclusion. His extensive response to the charge that pragmatism has preconceived and dogmatic ideas of particular outcomes that are good was as follows and clarifies a shift from a common sense, everyday use of the terms pragmatic and instrumental to his technical uses of the terms:

> We conclude with a brief reference to the bearing of the account upon pragmatic method. Critics have often stated that the pragmatic test implies a prior conviction or judgment that certain consequences are good. Hence the working of the pragmatic method implies a prior judgment which is non-pragmatic: the conclusion certainly follows if the premise is sound. But it is not. The uncritical pragmatism of ordinary life doubtless often falls into an assertion that some consequences are intrinsically good and to be unhesitatingly asserted or acquiesced in. But it does so in virtue of departure from the pragmatic method. The latter says that it is good to reflect upon an act in terms of its consequences and to act upon the reflection. For the consequences disclosed will make possible a better judgment of good. Thus the good of foreseen consequences or of attained consequences is not final nor dogmatically determined. It is good as a "better than"—better than would exist if judgment had not intervened. The case is similar with that other dangerous epithet, "instrumental." It is not meant that reflection is instrumental to preconceived and pre-existently determined consequences, much less those of bodily needs or economic success or even social betterment. It is meant that reflection is instrumental to the creation of new consequences and goods when taken in its integrity—or experimentally. Being the sole agency of transformation of old goods into new ones, the agency is continuous with the ends, and hence like them is, esthetically and morally speaking, an intrinsic good. But we must distinguish between its strictly intellectual structure and its esthetic and moral value, which are personal and immediate. To say that knowledge in its cognitive quality is instrumental is not

inconsistent with holding that in its direct and personal aspect it is a thing of beauty and delight. (MW13, 27-28)

In summary, then, one may conclude that Dewey appears to have been dogmatic at times. On some of these occasions, he contended that this was only appearance because of time or space considerations or for pedagogical reasons. On other occasions, he explicitly rejected claims that as an instrumentalist or pragmatist he was blind to his own preconceived epistemological and moral beliefs or that he was as dogmatic as any other person who assumed some fundamental ideals. His writings, of course, are strewn with dogmatic sounding propositions that appear to come from the typewriter of a dogmatic thinker. But he offered no disarming qualifications on some of these occasions. Whether Dewey was successful when he did offer defenses and explanations remains debatable. Given that he wrote and spoke so much on so many topics for so long under a such variety of conditions, it seems rather futile to argue that each example of claimed dogmatism is nothing more than the perceptions of his critics. Yet, one may appreciate many of his ideas, pedagogical and otherwise, without claiming that he was exceptionally good at practicing what he recommended. History seems to support the claim that nearly every great thinker has had habits or practices that deviated from her or his values and ideals.

Two further points need to be made. First, it seems safe to say that Dewey like Froebel expected

> his followers [and critics?] to exhibit their following [and disagreeing?] by continuing his own study of contemporary conditions and activities, rather than literally adhering to the plays [and ideas] he had collected [and developed]. Moreover, it is hardly likely that Froebel [or Dewey] himself would contend that in his interpretation of these games [or claims] he did more than take advantage of the best psychological and philosophical insight available to him at the time; and we may suppose that he would have been the first to welcome the growth of a better and more extensive psychology [and philosophy] ... and would avail himself of its results to reinterpret the activities [and practices], to discuss them more critically, going from the new standpoint into the reasons that make them educationally [and epistemologically] valuable. (Dewey, 1980, p. 84)

Whatever Dewey or Froebel may have said, this comment certainly does not reflect a dogmatic attitude.

Second, critical insight into Dewey's overall understanding of the dogmatic thinker is provided by what may be termed his paradoxical epistemology. While he held that philosophical, political, religious, economic, and social doctrines and beliefs—and, perhaps, absolutes—could and often do influence people to think and be dogmatic, they need not. The person's attitude toward and the way she or he holds doctrines, assumptions, and opinions are the pivotal considerations. That is to say, will the person genuinely allow or encourage criticisms by others as well as by him- or herself? Will she stop others from questioning? Will he keep on reflecting? Does the person keep learning, questioning, and considering? Does the person keep asking her- or himself uncomfortable questions? For these and other reasons, Dewey's epistemological paradox is well summarized in A Common Faith (1934):

> A "creed" founded on this material [the experimental method of intelligence] will change and grow, but it cannot be shaken. What it surrenders it gives up gladly because of new light and not as a reluctant concession. What it adds, it adds because new knowledge gives insight into the conditions that bear upon the formation and execution of our life purposes. (Dewey, 1934/1962, p. 85)

Dewey may well and understandably leave the impression that he was dogmatically committed to experimentalism or to an instrumentalist creed which was unshakably rooted in naturalism. Perhaps he was. Then again he may have been just as willing to abandon his instrumentalist faith as he was his Christian one if there were sufficient and warranted reasons for doing so. Then again, maybe his non-virgin mind was incapable of such an intellectual and emotional move. If he kept raising uncomfortable questions about his experimentalist faith, it seems that he cannot be rightly called a dogmatic thinker—or at least not said to have been characterized by dogmatic thinking. It is important to distinguish between a thinker, writer, and speaker who is sometimes dogmatic and a thinker, writer, and speaker who leaves behind a dogmatic gestalt.

One final question: Does it really matter whether Dewey fully practiced what he recommended and encouraged? To some, any inconsistency between Dewey's ideal and his practice is extremely important. Certain critics may hope to discredit his ideal by noting

an inconsistency. To others, his inability to practice what he preached is revealing of a logical problem. But our question can be better stated: Should it matter if Dewey was sometimes operationally inconsistent with his theory? Perhaps it should, especially if the inconsistency helps educators demonstrate how difficult it is—or philosophers to demonstrate how impossible it is –to be reflective rather than dogmatic. On the other hand, Dewey's perceived or real inconsistency does not automatically and seriously discredit, much less give cogent reasons for completely rejecting, his ideal. Other grounds and arguments will be needed before many people will feel intellectually compelled to abandon many important features of his ideal. And those who abandon some aspects and particulars of his general position need not conclude that educators and students should be encouraged to be unexamining, unquestioning, unreflective, unthinking, and uncritical people.

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Documentation

Two kinds of documentation appear throughout the text. The first is the one created by the editors of Dewey's works at Southern Illinois University Press. Their Index provides references to the early, middle and later works by employing, for example, the simple indicators of EW5: 289 to refer to the Early Works, volume 5, page 289. Their system has been modified slightly, namely the colon is replaced with a comma (EW5, 289). For other sources, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (4th edition) is followed.

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